



PHOTO: JOSEFINA EYZAGUIRRE.

NATURAL INSTINCT

INFLUENCED BY THE IDYLIC LANDSCAPE OF HER NATIVE CHILE, A NATURE-CENTRIC CERAMICIST EMBARKS ON A NEW ENDEAVOR WITH BERNHARDT DESIGN.

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Ignacia Murtagh's personal connection to pre-Hispanic native cultures began in the place she calls home: Southern Chile. "I fell in love with Chile's poetic tradition that reinforces design as the vehicle to turn tiny but relevant details of nature into useful and significant interior elements," she says. As a young designer, Murtagh has always attributed her design sensibility to the exuberant geography of her surroundings. Her most recent project—a series of three side tables for Bernhardt Design—directs that credit to the Andes Mountains. "The Los Andes tables were inspired by mountains that are strong and imposing but at the same time graceful and slender," she describes. This

sculptural elegance was achieved with the tables' unpredictable heights, organic angles and contrasting sharpness. Murtagh spent a year with the designers at Bernhardt sketching, modeling and ultimately learning to work with a new material: wood. "Ceramics are malleable. You can accomplish complex designs in a short time and change elements quickly," explains the designer. "Wood is out of your control. The character of the grain, colors and textures are expressed differently in every piece. Once you understand the material, however, wood becomes limitless." Armed with an aesthete's eye and an ever-growing material repertoire, Murtagh is proving to be just as limitless herself.