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In a letter to a friend, the great German playwright and philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once declared that architecture was frozen music. American designer Christopher Streng, plainly on the same wavelength nearly two centuries later, has called his creations “frozen emotion.” Not frigidity, mind you, but emotion arrested, captured in an eternal instant, preserved forever, inviolate. Pressing that point, Streng—a graduate of the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design and a design consultant for Kohler, the Wisconsin plumbing and furniture manufacturer, and Magis—has long imbued his products with anthropomorphic missions: a chair that basks in “pride and dedication”; a chandelier that “gives you her soul”; a clock described as, among other things, “loving, sinister, encompassing, unforgiving, healing.”

Behind Streng’s mystical narratives, however, is an increasing array of startlingly beautiful examples of futuristic furniture and accessories. The most recent are arguably Aristotelian in their logic and simplicity. A minimalist wall light made of a slab of clear cast resin that encases a single fluorescent circle suggests an illuminated block of ice. An even thinner slab of clear resin, also embedded with a fluorescent light source, is molded into a footed tray with vaguely Asian overtones. The LoLa lounge and ottoman, in reinforced plastic, complement the cultural dominance of brilliant transparency in the home-electronics industry, their opaque white surfaces and carnal-pink underbellies as alluring as the latest laptop and as smoothly crafted as a bit of Fabergé enamel. And Streng’s Ubu stool is an icon in waiting, a hollowed chunk of sturdy colorful foam or composite plastic that can be used as a seat, a table, or a totem, its open center serving, perhaps, as a portal to some imagined beyond. **MO**

**1**  
**TRAY LIGHT**  
Cast resin, compact fluorescent light source, 2001  
Designer: Christopher Streng  
Photography: Courtesy Streng Studio

**2**  
**WALL LIGHT**  
Cast resin, compact fluorescent light source, 2001  
Designer: Christopher Streng  
Photography: Courtesy Streng Studio

**3**  
**UBU STOOLS**  
Composite plastic or flexible foam, 2001  
Designer: Christopher Streng  
Photography: Blue Moon Studios

**4**  
**LOLA LOUNGE AND OTTOMAN**  
Reinforced plastic, 2001  
Designer: Christopher Streng  
Photography: Streng Studio

