

SHOPPING WITH RINAT ARUH AND JOHAN LIDEN

Coat Hooks



Nicole Bengiveno/The New York Times

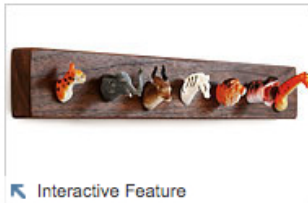
Johan Liden and Rinat Aruh, the founders of the design firm Aruliden, with a wooden elk trophy coat rack; \$93.60 at Playing Mantis in TriBeCa.

By TIM McKEOUGH

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RINAT ARUH and Johan Liden, the founders of [Aruliden](#), a product design and marketing firm in Manhattan, spend their days rethinking products that seem ripe for reinvention, and dreaming up concepts for companies like Motorola, Puma and Microsoft. A recent pet project focused on a surprisingly ordinary object — the coat hook.

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[Shopping With Rinat Aruh and Johan Liden](#)

“A category that companies either don’t like to do, or overdo, is coat hooks,” said Ms. Aruh, 34. “If you don’t want to go with something standard, or desire things with a bit of a twist, you have to dig deep.”

Particularly in New York, she said — where storage space is at a premium and there are heavy coats, hats and scarves to contend with in the winter — consumers deserve better.

Mr. Liden, 36, added: “Pure function isn’t enough for this kind of object,” because it often occupies such a prominent place in the entry hall. “There needs to be a love connection,” he joked, between you and your coat hook.

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He and Ms. Aruh recently developed three products for [Areaware](#) that they hope will inspire such devotion: Wire, a zigzagging rack with a recess to hold hats and mittens, introduced last year; Clip, a hook in the form of a super-size clothespin, coming out later this year; and Fungus, mushroom-shaped aluminum pegs, to be introduced this year as well.

In search of other hooks and racks that hold the eye as well as they hold outerwear, Ms. Aruh and Mr. Liden bundled up on a blustery day and went shopping.

At [Just Scandinavian](#) in TriBeCa, they found a hook with clean lines and flexibility: the Arrow hanger, which rests close to the wall, but has a bar that folds down for extra storage. “It seems seasonal — summer one way and winter another,” Mr. Liden said. “And if you have a narrow hallway, it’s not always sticking out.”

A few blocks south, at [Playing Mantis](#), a store filled with handmade wooden objects and toys, Ms. Aruh admired the Safari coat rack decorated with hand-carved trees and animals. “It’s a cross between craft and kitsch,” she said. “In a hypermodern apartment, it would look so chic.”

Mr. Liden found wooden mushrooms that he thought could be repurposed as wall hooks. “All you have to do is drill a hole in the back,” he said. “And add a screw.”

Online, they found the Symbol coat rack from [Desu Design](#), another piece with flip-down hooks that can be “super-flat when you need it to be,” Ms. Aruh said.

It was on the [Future Perfect Web site](#), though, that they found the most playful piece. The Pack Rack, which uses toy animal heads as hooks, Ms. Aruh observed, is more than just functional and good-looking — it’s “smile generating.”

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