

FORM AND FUNCTION

Changeable Products for Altered Spaces
The pandemic has redoubled the need for flexible furnishings.

By SAM LUBELL

A legacy of the pandemic — maybe a long one — is that our homes and offices are becoming the same. More than ever we look for versatility in furnishings, and design companies are stepping up with a new generation of do-it-alls. Former novelties like morphing desks and mechanical beds are entering the market with the look of serious purpose (which doesn’t erase their fun), and much customizable lighting seems to respond to the challenge, “Don’t just gleam there; *do* something!” Here are several newly available products that move, expand and even change skins to bring convenience and relieve the boredom of our concentrated, homebound lives.

- 1. HAKO** The Italian convertible furniture company Campeggi specializes in the marriage of sculpture and surprise. A recently introduced product called Hako looks like a pair of bright yellow and gray cubes sitting side by side; when pulled apart, the piece turns into two upholstered lounge chairs and a table.

“I like things that get people curious, make them want to interact,” said Hako’s Japanese-born, Milan-based designer, Sakura Adachi. Named after the Japanese word for box, the product has an elemental form that invites all kinds of activities: sitting, chatting, reading, working or dining. “I always think about how people behave,” Ms. Adachi said. “I try to imagine all the scenarios.” \$1,425; [campeggidesign.it](#)
- 2. LUD’O LOUNGE CHAIR** Designed by Patricia Urquiola, Cappellini’s recycled plastic Lud’o Lounge chair swivels and reclines atop a metal cone or four-legged wood base, and it is dynamic in other ways. The chair comes in a choice of colorful quilted covers in fabric or leather that you can slip on and change like a coat; \$2,790-\$6,000; [cappellini.com](#)
- 3. CLOUD BED, TABLE EDITION** Ori, a Brooklyn company, creates transformable furnishings that allow people to “live large on a small footprint,” as its founder and chief executive, Hasier Larrea, put it. The company’s Cloud Bed, Table Edition, converts a bedroom into a living, dining or office space in a mere 42 seconds. Operated by an electronically controlled counterweight system, a popular plywood table folds flat on the floor, while a queen- or king-size bed descends gently from a ceiling nest to take its place. (When the bed reaches bottom, the table’s attached shelving unit becomes its headboard.) Touch a button, and the bed glides back up.

“The bed is the biggest space killer in the home,” Mr. Larrea said. He pointed out that this system also spares users the daily tedium of folding and unfolding a Murphy bed or sofa bed. You don’t even

have to remove the pillows.

Ori products are not yet available for home purchase, but you can find them in a growing number of rentals and condos in the United States and Canada.

4. GIRO Resource Furniture has sold transforming pieces since 2007 through multiple showrooms. It now offers Giro, a customizable wall storage unit with a nested table that swings out perpendicularly and expands to double its width. The storage component can be fitted with any

combination of shelving, closed cabinets, file drawers or other accessories, depending on whether the piece is being used as a dining table or a home office. From \$2,050; [resourcefurniture.com](#)

5. OE1 STORAGE TROLLEY Herman Miller’s new OE1 workspace collection puts flexibility at a premium. “OE” stands for “optimized essentials,” and most of the pieces serve multiple functions.

Even the group’s unassuming trolley punches above its weight. It can include a

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cushion for seating, a hook for hanging bags and optional integrated hinged file cabinets. If you want more length, you can join two together.

Sam Hecht, a founder with Kim Colin of the British studio Industrial Facility, which designed the collection, said he had heard of units being used as television cabinets or sanitizing stations.

“Work is no longer a place. It’s activity based,” he said. “These activities need to be able to happen anywhere.” The single trolley starts at \$395, the extended version at \$895; [hermanmiller.com](#)



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SERENA & LILY



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6. CHIME Based in Queens, Stickbulb manufactures lighting that looks as simple as its name. Then there is Chime. This lamp is a series of thin wood rods inlaid with LED strips and hung from steel rings. The connector is a ball joint that allows each rod to sway with the touch of an air current, like a wind chime, imparting an outdoorsy sensation to a room. You can twist the light strips in any direction, and up to three tiers of rods can be assembled into a 10.5-foot-tall extravaganza known as the Chime Cascade. Stickbulb's co-founder Russell Greenberg described

the Cascade as what would happen "if a tree and a chandelier had a baby." Single Chime starts at \$17,500; Chime Cascade starts at \$62,500; stickbulb.com

7. EXD DOUBLE WALL SOLUTION Michelle Cianfaglione, a co-founder with Victoria Benatar of EXD Architecture in New York, prototyped a multifunctional wall unit two and a half years ago as an alternative to moving with her husband and child from their cramped Upper East Side apartment. The Single Wall Solution contains shelves, an entertainment nook

and a fold-down bed in one neat package. "It's about maximizing every square inch," she said.

Recently, she and Ms. Benatar developed a Double Wall Solution that multiplies the possibilities for order. It consists of three wall components: One contains storage for kitchen and living room items as well as a media center; another is fitted with built-in desks and space for seating; a third includes pegs to hang coats, and cubbies for stowing away children's toys or office supplies. Price on request; exdarchitecture.com



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The Cascade is what would happen 'if a tree and a chandelier had a baby.'

8. TRACER BAR II Luke Lamp Company's Tracer Bar II is the latest version of a light that reshapes a room. An LED rope of braided polyester is entwined, snakelike, around a hanging rod to create what looks like a floating scribble. The company just released 48 new configurations, but you can loop it however you like. The LEDs come in a variety of temperatures, and the rod finishes include raw brass, polished nickel and satin copper; \$4,200-\$6,200; lukelampco.com



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