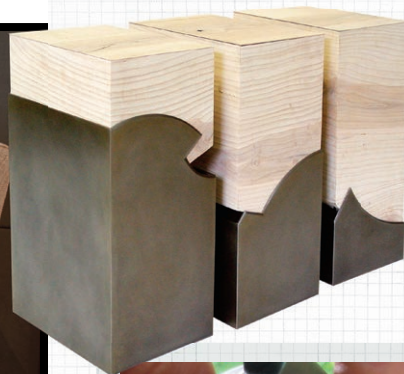


“He’s more attentive to the structural facets of our work, and I usually ponder the symbolic aspects of our pieces.”

—Elizabeth Hayes

**ART COMPOUND** Carried at A. Rudin in the Merchandise Mart, the Membrana table was inspired by orthographic drawings, mitochondrial surface folds and the English Wheel’s ability to form compound curves.



**MARRIED MATERIALS**  
Steel and ash are married with jigsaw-puzzle perfection in the couple’s Junctures tables, which are produced in a series of three but can stand together or alone.



**LOVE NEST**  
On a recent camping trip, Fiersten gave Hayes a teeny stainless steel house he made alone. It opens to reveal a wedding band and was a marriage proposal after 10 years together. They were married in September.



**IN YOUR VASE** Metal + works designed their Slab Table with multipurpose openings on the surface, perfect for displaying flowers.

**PEDDLING METAL**  
The Terrace Nesting Tables, which sport staggered notched edges and powder coated finishes, are available in custom colors (\$1,170 at Post 27).

## Ross Fiersten Elizabeth Hayes

Master metalsmiths,  
metal + works  
[rmetalworks.com](http://rmetalworks.com)

Welding is a seductive mistress. So seductive that Elizabeth Hayes was hooked when her boyfriend, Ross Fiersten, taught her how to do it 10 years ago. “It’s a blast,” she gushes.

Today the couple is still welding, and more, they’re master metalsmiths who produce pieces for Holly Hunt and others, as well as their own studio furniture and limited-edition work. And they love what they do, though an age-old adage relates well to their craft: The devil is in the details. “Making each piece is arduous. They require meticulous workmanship,” explains Fiersten, who opened metal + works when he moved to Chicago 10 years ago. “We think of it as jewelry-quality detailing and finishing,” says Hayes, who joined him three years later. By then, business was booming. “When I moved

here, I had a strong portfolio from my work with a high-end architectural metalwork studio in San Francisco, so I made cold calls and lined up work,” he explains.

In fact, Fiersten snagged a client base of renowned architects and designers who can’t be named, but account for the inventive nature and complexity of the couple’s commissioned work, which ranges from technically demanding fireplace surrounds and accessories to sleek yet intricately detailed tables and benches.

Their own work is equally imaginative and challenging, and the result of shared yet singular aesthetics. “We both tend toward modern, clean lines,” says Fiersten, “and like to incorporate organic features like naturally oxidized patinas or unexpected edges and curves.”

**PERSONAL SPACE**  
A recent personal move from Pilsen to Edgewater is a source of inspiration to the couple. “We’ve redone every place we live with custom pieces,” says Hayes. For their new home, a fireplace screen with doors is in the works.