

HOUSE

metro

back porch

Primal POWER

ERIC LAXMAN LOOKS FOR SIMPLE FORMS THAT EXPRESS DEEPLY GROUNDED—YOU MIGHT SAY ALMOST ARCHETYPAL—SOURCES OF POWER.

At heart he's a sculptor, fascinated with the unique characteristics of the material he works with, whether stone, metal, or glass; the furniture he creates from his deeply felt yet eclectic artistic sensibility borrows without prejudice from 20th-century modernist, traditional Asian, and African tribal art.

Laxman characterizes his approach as "taking simple forms and making them interesting." Sometimes repetition is the key, while at other times he makes imaginative leaps of translation. The inspiration for his Sogoni table, for example, came originally from the forms of an African ceremonial mask, which he transformed into a functional piece of furniture by rearranging the mask's motifs and then adding a horizontal plane of glass to serve as the tabletop.

Most of his furniture is designed for specific clients. Not only does he take into account the function of the piece—how tall does the bedside table need to be, what are the safety requirements for a handrail—but he also tries to understand the whole environment in which the work will live, adapting his aesthetic so that the work will flow harmoniously with the specific space, the existing decor, and any other furniture to which the piece will relate. Given this tremendous flexibility, range of influence, and capacity for adaptation, it comes as a bit of a surprise to note that Laxman's work (whether in furniture or in pure sculpture) always retains the unique stamp of his particular sensibility, a recognizable thread that extends through the whole oeuvre. Perhaps it arises, ultimately, from his deep desire to make work "with guts to it," tapping into the energy presented in the primal forms that so inspire him—and the energy that resonates through any space lucky enough to house his furniture. —Beth E. Wilson

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Sogoni Side Table