

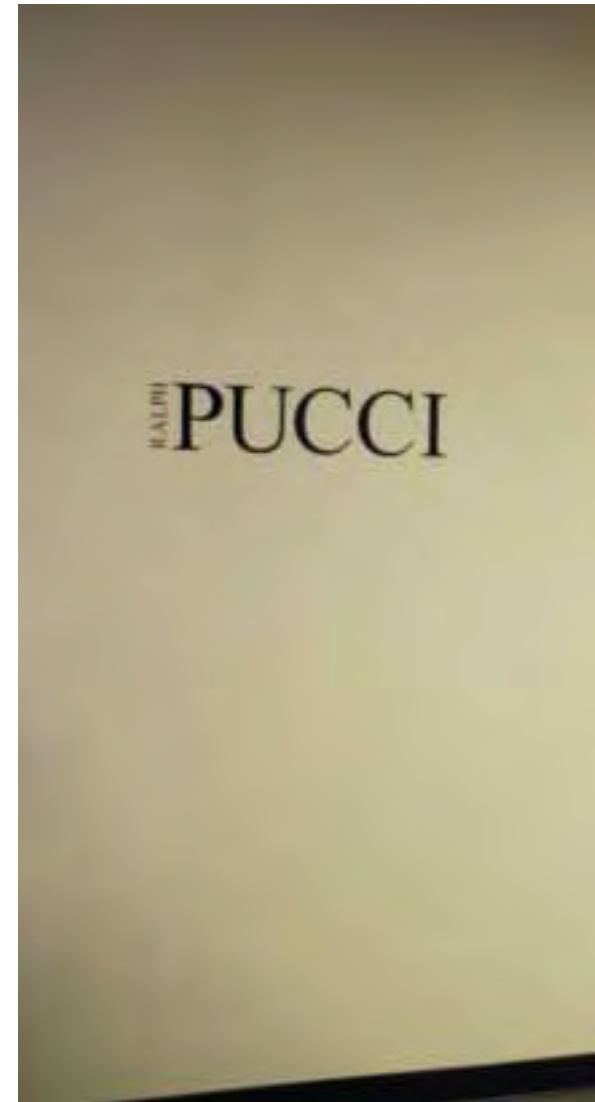
Ralph Pucci

FINDING BEAUTY IN SIMPLICITY by Victoria Charters

Ralph Pucci is an innovator of mannequin design. What started in his parents' basement in 1954 as a mannequin repair company blossomed in 1976 when Pucci started to manufacture four-limbed figures of his own.



Ralph Pucci. Image courtesy Ralph Pucci International.



With years of experience under his designer's tool belt, Pucci draws inspiration from the bohemian nature of the city in which he lives. "There's a lot of energy in New York—the positive and negative, the push and the pull," the designer says of his home. Today, operating from a spacious loft on West 18th Street, Pucci and his team design, manufacture and unveil new mannequins twice yearly.

In recent years, Pucci's interests have expanded to include furniture design as well. And while always the forward-thinker, he isn't afraid to draw inspiration from predecessors. This

distinguished creator with a flare for austere simplicity is bringing Jens Risom furniture back.

But this is no rehash. "His work is beautiful and relevant," explains Pucci of mid-century superstar furniture designer Risom. "We have reintroduced the collection that he designed in the 50s. We tweaked it, we used fabrics that are more relative to today's lifestyle, but the designs reflect the quality, luxury and taste of the 50s."

"There is beauty in simplicity," asserts this innovator in the field of design. "I'm not interested in trendy ideas."



Top: The front doors of Pucci's Pacific Design Center showroom. Photo by Steven Barston. Right: The showroom during its *Jens Risom – Furniture* show. Image courtesy Ralph Pucci International. Above: Figures from Pucci's *Manikin* series. Image courtesy Ralph Pucci International.

For a verification of his philosophy, look no farther than the bare-bones modernist space Pucci has created at the Pacific Design Center, which first opened its doors March 1st. "We stripped the space and painted the floor, ceiling and walls white," the designer recounts. "Where some designers may carry 500 pieces in a space this size, we display 150 pieces and let the product speak for itself."

Art shows are planned every four months at Pucci's Pacific Design Center showroom; currently showing is *Tribute to Noguchi*, featuring five Hawaiian artists. Showcases for Pucci's furniture as well as the art on display, exhibitions promise to complement the decor just as well as a Pucci-designed mannequin enhances the presentation of the clothes it wears. ■



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