



## UP AND COMING Amanda Williams

While growing up in Chicago's South Side, architect-turned-artist Amanda Williams recognized stark differences in the built environment during crosstown bus rides to her school in Hyde Park: Its well-manicured buildings weren't part of her home neighborhood, which suffered from neglect, underutilization, and lack of resources. "I thought I could help communities by building better buildings," says Williams, 41, who is African-American and studied architecture and fine art at Cornell University. "Later, I realized putting a pretty library somewhere doesn't really fix anything." Her latest project, "Color(ed) Theory," began with a palette informed by buildings, businesses and products prevalent in black neighborhoods on the south side of her hometown, including Harold's Chicken Shack, Currency Exchange, Newport/Loose Squares, and Pink Oil. Over the past two years, she has applied each color to a structure slated for demolition in South Chicago, highlighting the pervasive imbalance of space and race. The eighth (and final) building in the series was painted Flamin' Red Hots (named for the Cheetos flavor) last fall during the Chicago Architecture Biennial. The public was invited to help complete the deed and return to the site a few weeks later, post-demolition, to discuss its future. Looking back, Williams says, "Color(ed) Theory" had its share of glitches: only a fraction of participants showed up for the conversation, and residents didn't seem invested in what would happen next. Meanwhile, half of the buildings she painted still stand due to a backlog of condemned houses, making her intended-to-be-temporary interventions semi-permanent. "Can \$100 of Home Depot paint have more of an impact than 100 community centers?" Williams asks. "It's an ongoing question mark I don't have the answer to yet. But this project brings that to the table." The next color Williams plans to use to explore the value of space? Gold. —**Tiffany Jow**

## LIMITED EDITION Railing Series by Aranda Lasch

Metal pipes may be a hallmark of many furniture designs, but for its new Railing series of seating—presented at Gallery All's booth at the Design Miami fair in December—Aranda Lasch reinterpreted the material in an unusual way. "Steel pipes are at the root of so much 20th-century design," says Chris Lasch, one of the New York- and Arizona-based architecture firm's eponymous principals. "This is our way of entering that language." The two chairs and stool comprising the series (so far) are all different, but each is crafted in the same way: One steel rail is looped in many circles to create a sittable form that is then upholstered in materials ranging from silicone foam to hand-sewn leather. Though one of the chairs takes a relatively classic form—a backrest is perceptible—the other two seem more like sculptures. As the firm's other principal, Benjamin Aranda, puts it, "The pieces have an internal logic, and it's our job as designers to tease that out, to see what it wants to be." Considering the wackiness of the forms, one might say that logic is also in the eye of the beholder, or he who must figure out where to perch his rear end. —**Hally Wolhandler**

