



Colin Selig's Lips Bench, featured at LongHouse Reserve, is made from fusing together the parts of a deconstructed propane tank.

## Pucker Up

ARTIST COLIN SELIG DISPLAYS HIS DALÍ-ESQUE LIPS BENCH AT LONGHOUSE RESERVE'S EXTERIORS EXHIBIT. BY ERIN RILEY

“I wanted to take a ubiquitous, utilitarian object that would otherwise go to waste and transform it into something sensuous in form and sophisticated in function,” says artist Colin Selig about his striking Lips Bench, which will be on display at LongHouse Reserve through October 4. The “Exteriors” exhibit, the largest in the foundation’s history, features 81 outdoor sculptures from a global array of artists, including Martin Puryear and Mira Nakashima, as well as pieces by Hamptonites such as Max Eicke, Nico Yektai, and Silas Marder.

While surrealist master Salvador Dalí used wood and satin to create his iconic *Mae West Lips Sofa* in 1937, Selig used a less conventional medium: He dissected a discarded propane tank and reassembled the parts without imposing any additional shaping to the metal. The Lips Bench is made from a single 250-gallon tank. “As an experienced metalworker, the first

thing I recognized when I saw the tank on my property is how much energy must have gone into forming the thick steel into that capsulelike shape,” says Selig.

Though the Lips Bench’s design pays homage to Dalí, its form is inspired by the work of Charles and Ray Eames and their innovative approach to molding plywood. “Not only was their visual style groundbreaking, but their process of molding plywood resulted in a whole new set of design methods,” says Selig.

As unusual as salvaged propane tanks are as a medium for art, the fact that they exist all over the world and present a large ecological hazard is one of the motivating factors for the artist. “My ultimate goal is to license my designs so that these seats can be made locally, anywhere in the world.” *“Exteriors” is on display through October 4 at LongHouse Reserve, 133 Hands Creek Road, East Hampton, 329-3568; longhouse.org* **H**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY COLIN SELIG