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SHOPPING WITH JOHN MASCHERONI

## Acrylic Pieces

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**THERE** was a time when some considered the name John Mascheroni synonymous with acrylic furniture, because of the popular collection of modernist pieces he produced in the late 1960s and early '70s.

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Andrea Mohin/The New York Times

John Mascheroni checks out Neal Small's "R" table lamp at MSK Illuminations; \$595, (212) 888-6474, [mskillumination.com](http://mskillumination.com). He said he liked its curve.

**Mr. Mascheroni, who is now 78, sold the line through his showroom in the D&D building, and when he shuttered the showroom in 1981, he kept just one piece: a small stacking table. Many others, however, can be found in antiques stores or on sites like [1stdibs.com](http://1stdibs.com), where they sell for thousands of dollars.**

The exhibition of acrylic furniture that opened Tuesday at the [Material ConneXion](#) in Manhattan, celebrating the 75th anniversary of Lucite, does not include any of those pieces, since Mr. Mascheroni worked in Plexiglas, a different brand of acrylic.

Still, it offered the designer, who now creates collections for Swaim and American Leather, an excuse to revisit the world of acrylic, scouring the market for interesting pieces.

At MSK Illuminations, on East 57th Street, he picked up a table lamp by Neal Small. “Neal and I were sort of design competitors, but he did more sculpture,” Mr. Mascheroni said. “I originally saw these lamps years ago when I was working with Just Plastics. I love the curve and the straight back.”

He added: “Look at the red one! Wow, it’s super-fantastic.”

Many of the items he gravitated to at Kartell’s SoHo store turned out to be polycarbonate, not acrylic. “It’s a moldable plastic,” he explained. “It’s stronger and lighter, but unfortunately wasn’t available when I was designing.”

One of the few acrylic pieces on the floor was the Toobe floor lamp by Ferruccio Laviani, which Mr. Mascheroni liked for its transparency. “You can see the electrical wire,” he said. “It’s not hiding in a tube.”

The Vapor side chair at CB2 he deemed “a simple, nice, attractive chair that’s well designed.”

And at MoMA’s SoHo store, he held the Vasa cubes up to the light, proclaiming them “clever and fun — all kinds of wonderful things happen when you look through these.”

The Moon bowl by Mario Bellini also brought a huge smile to his face.

“It’s not a serious piece,” he said. “It’s playful. Italian designers sit down with a bottle of wine, and it’s amazing what happens!”