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The Elegant ASHTRAY

Designer **Vladimir Rogov** masters the mundane BY MONA DE CRINIS



Designer Vladimir Rogov speaks through his creations. Pieces from his elegant Desk Architecture series wax poetic about the human condition.

The sleek collection — which includes a picture frame, letter tray, letter opener, clock, and 10-pound ashtray — unites social rituals, human interactions, function, and fine art.

The ashtray, for example, represents the social transactions occurring when people share a smoke — a ritual that has survived centuries, Rogov explains.

“Imagine the stories and experiences that Desk Architecture ashtrays will witness over the generations they are designed to last,” he observes. “I believe that objects carry karma. The artifact is a catalyst in expressing a quality of human interaction.”

Rogov’s experience designing items of use, from housewares and medical supplies

WATCH FOR THE DESK
ARCHITECTURE COLLECTION
TO STAR WITH NICOLAS CAGE
AND NICOLE KIDMAN
IN *TRESPASS*, A NEW THRILLER
BY JOEL SCHUMACHER.

to toys and cars (his impressive portfolio includes Aston Martin interiors), spans decades. With Desk Architecture, a complementary palette of modernism, art, and design facilitates the marriage of creativity and utility: the stylish love child of architect and poet. Made of polished black nickel, silver, or 24-karat gold plate, Rogov’s masterpieces move the mundane into the realm of magnificent.

While it’s difficult to imagine crushing a cigarette into a signed piece of art valued at around \$4,000, it’s part of the karmic sacrifice. “The ash is a secondary function, that’s the utility,” Rogov says during a visit to Palm Desert Tobacco. He taps ash from a Cuban cigar into a once-pristine sea of polished black nickel. “We seem to have devoted a lot of energy into banning things,” he adds with a sly grin. “And we realize we wiped out some of the things that bring people together.”

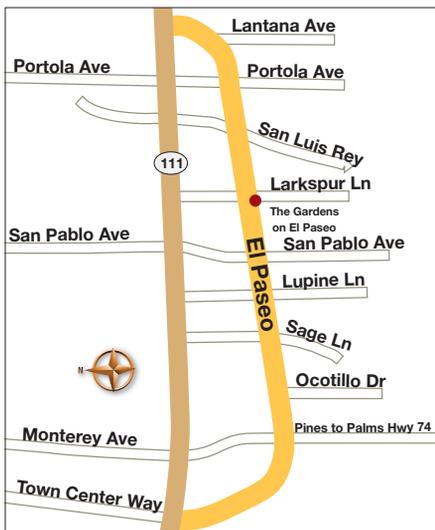
Bert Brunning, owner of Palm Desert Tobacco, the valley’s exclusive carrier of Desk Architecture ashtrays, appreciates Rogov’s support of the art of the smoke. Carrying the exclusive product fits well with Brunning’s other high-end items, such as a \$6,000 Davidoff cigar humidor.

“I suggested he needed something to match the quality of his humidors,” Rogov says with a quick laugh, adding that he chose

the upscale smoke shop on El Paseo because of its ambiance, charm, and Old World class. “It represents what Desk Architecture is all about,” he says, “respecting rituals and human interactions. I wanted to place a piece of artwork in the store.”

Brunning understandably keeps the ashtrays under lock and key. Each signed piece comes in a white lacquered gift box, along with a numbered certificate of authenticity.

As a family business, Palm Desert Tobacco has been around since 1969 and on El Paseo for about 15 years, successfully celebrating the ritual of tobacco with a style and elegance that even nonsmokers appreciate. ✨



Palm Desert Tobacco on El Paseo is the desert’s source for Rogov’s distinguished ashtrays.

Vladimir Rogov presents “Parallel Universe,” a multimedia overview of design styles that co-exist and flourish in parallel, on Feb. 17 as part of Palm Springs Modernism Week’s lecture series (www.modernism.com). Rogov Desk Architecture is available in limited editions at www.rogov.com and select stores in Southern California. The ashtray is available at Palm Desert Tobacco, 73580 El Paseo, 1-760-340-1954; www.pdtobacco.com.

