

This desk and stool, designed by Rena Dumas with Peter Coles for the Paris-based luxury brand Hermès, are made of pearwood, leather and polished brass, all lavish and sensuous materials. They are part of the firm's Pippa furniture collection, along with eight other pieces. Space-saving collapsibility is a convenience not usually associated with luxury furniture. With a practicality that recalls **campaign furniture**, Dumas' designs explored ideas about portability, modern interior spaces and their furnishings, and transcending the limits imposed by fixed furniture structures.[1] This highly practical desk is completely collapsible, folding to the depth of a briefcase. The folding stool speaks to luxury through its elegant minimalist aesthetic, fine materials and engineering. Subtlety is emphasized in the focus on simplicity and the lack of embellishment. Dumas believed that folding furniture should be made with only the most perfect materials because of its complexity and, whatever the form, it must be impeccably finished. In Dumas' words: "Beyond beauty or ugliness, [folding furniture] has a supplementary dimension, a kind of added value.... Well made, it lives in harmony with its user." [2]

As an architect, the Greek-born Dumas focused on interiors.[3] Training in France, Greece, and the United States, she opened her Paris-based firm, Rena Dumas Architecture Intérieur, in 1972, and within a few years was responsible for the design of Hermès locations worldwide. Her work on the firm's various global locations featured light and airy environments, influenced by her upbringing in Greece.[4] Simplicity of expression is also present in her designs, whether in harmony of materials or colors. She believed the essence of Greek architecture was functionality, which is reflected in the simple nature of her interiors and furniture. She cited her relationship to Jean-Louis Dumas, the then-chairman and artistic director of Hermès – and her husband – as giving her experience and a deeper understanding of the rapport between client and designer.

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[1] Rena Dumas, 1937-2009, RDAI, <http://www.rdai.fr/fr/about>

[2] Writing Desk," Hermès Paris, <http://usa.hermes.com/home/furniture/collection-pippa/writing-desk/configurable-product-m-m-pippa-writing-desk-75248.html>

[3] Rena Dumas, 1937-2009, RDAI, <http://www.rdai.fr/fr/about>

[4] Suzy Menkes, "Rena Dumas: Interior Design With a Soft Touch of Simplicity: From Greece, a Heritage of Light," International Herald Tribune, New York Times, Sept. 12, 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/09/12/style/rena-dumasinterior-design-with-a-soft-touch-of-simplicity-from-greece.html?mcubz=1>