

*fuorisalone
palazzo litta*

BELGITUDE

*4-9.04.2017
design week
milan*

PRESS KIT

A Matter of Perception — Linking Minds
Palazzo Litta — Corso Magenta 24, Milano
Open daily : 11am-9pm
Press preview : 3 April, 3-7pm
Opening reception : 4 April, 7-11pm

an initiative by

Belgium is Design
belgiumisdesign.be

exhibition concept

DAMN° Magazine — Siegrid Demyttenaere
damnmagazine.net

communication

Giovanna Massoni & Emma Firmin
designstreams.net

photos

Laetitia Bica
laetitiabica.be

scenography

V+ (Jörn Aram Bihain, Maximiliaan Royakkers)
vplus.org

graphic design

Siegrid Demyttenaere
waterproof2000.be

Kidnap Your Designer
kidnapyourdesigner.com

BELGITUDE

10 creative teams from Belgium at Palazzo Litta

Belgium is Design is strengthening its commitment to promote design companies & designers during the Milan Design Week. This year, as in 2016, the regional Belgian institutions Flanders DC (formerly Design Flanders), MAD Brussels and WBDM – Wallonia Brussels Design Fashion, are not only coordinating Belgian design actions during the Milan Design Week, but actively generating the exhibited work of designers and companies.

As such, from 4–9 April Belgium is Design returns to the spectacular location of the Palazzo Litta where it will contribute to the DAMN° Magazine and Mosca Partners group project A Matter of Perception. Here the theme is dedicated to ‘Linking Minds’ and features a courtyard installation by renowned architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro. In the words of the organisers: ‘The goal is to create an exhibition that lends insight into the creative process between two or more persons, ideas that grow from scratch through a mix of friendship, mutual trust, experience, as well as lots of amore & umore that results in a wonderful final product...’

A beautiful room on the first floor of the 17th century Palazzo will host the Belgian platform, curated by DAMN° Magazine / Siegrid Demyttenaere, under the title Belgitude. Rather than defining affinities or peculiarities, this title is a simple declaration of pride in diversity: different historical roots,

different languages, different backgrounds, skills and industrial specialities. Fearless to innovate, or to open up new horizons, or to mix identities. This is Belgium.

Elaborating on the 2016 approach, Belgium is Design and DAMN° Magazine asked the designers to select the companies they wanted to collaborate with. The reasons for their choices are boundless: affinity, continuity or curiosity... Belgitude is about exchanging know-hows, collaborative excellence, friendly dialogues, but most of all, it is about local production, and definitely, about time. The time that is behind creation is both fast and slow. Six months to design and make an object sets the stopwatches ticking, yet this small-scale country has a major quality: a poetic, ironic and surrealistic attitude to make everything possible. Parallel to this, a slower dimension lies equally with the ability of each selected company to produce long-term and enduring products, but also in the nature of the collaboration with designers that deeply understand the skills and limits to overcome. Yes, because that is design: the capacity to transcend the limit and take a risk – together, designers and entrepreneurs. And it’s not surprising that such intense collaborations often turn into friendships.

Displayed on white surfaces of different materials by the Brussels-based architecture studio V+, each object becomes part of the Belgian

landscape. Made of a variety of textures and scales, typologies and orientations, this multitude tells us about industry, art and craftsmanship; products, prototypes or one-offs; as well as about the fertile links and cross-pollinations between techniques, production technologies and, above all, human beings.

The skill of participant designers and of their interlocutors, be it craftsmanship, high-quality labour, art or cutting-edge technical know-hows,

is made visible. And the story is enhanced by the work of a photographer: this year is the turn of Laetitia Bica, who will interpret the essence of each collaboration in pictures that will be featured in the exhibition and accompanying catalogue. No need for anonymity or secret recipes that hide the project and the process. Belgium's renown openness invites you to discover the behind-the-scenes of its legendary creativity.

CREATIVE TEAMS

ATELIER LACHAERT DHANIS (SOFIE LACHAERT & LUC D'HANIS) / ART CASTING

are working on a complex cast piece, playing with visual perceptions and decontextualised domestic archetypes. Trio is three bronze chairs soldered together, wherein sophisticated conceptual design combines with the foundry's speciality of casting for artworks.

NICOLAS BOVESSE / KERAMIS

are challenging ceramic throwing techniques in order to create a solid and durable small table of earthenware and steel. The final result will be for sale via Keramis, a Walloon ceramics museum and research centre.

JEAN-FRANÇOIS D'OR / MAISON VERVLOET

carry on a successful collaboration investing design accessories with poetry and a surrealistic 'clin d'œil' that transforms anonymous fittings (door handles, door bells, umbrella holders) into a precious landscape of functional reveries. Maison Vervloet has been creating high-end hand-crafted hardware for over 100 years.

BENOÎT DENEUFBOURG / CRUSO

decided to seal their mutual love for wood by completing the Paddle chair collection with stools and barstools. As a Belgian design manufacturer, it's also a reflection of Cruso's goal to unite outstanding designers with the finest craftsmen.

NATHALIE DEWEZ / VAL SAINT LAMBERT

is a first-time collaboration that reinterprets the traditional crystal-cutting skills and archives of the Walloon crystal company, which has been handmaking its collections for nearly 200 years. Focusing on inner light projection and emphasising the shade of the cut material, three lamps will be formed by two layers of left-over crystal with LED light fixtures in the centre.

JAN & RANDOALD / LABT

are once again working together on a project that engages the former's skills as graphic designers and the latter's as specialist studio-maker of customised furniture. The Rontgen Rack is a stackable and adaptable series of modules that change their function, focusing on the idea that repetition is a form of change.

LAEND (CHEVALIER MASSON + DIANE STEVERLYNCK) / VALERIE_TRAAN

sees the three designers brought together by the Antwerp gallery and editor to develop a collection of carpets that provides the knitted surface with different patterns depending on the observation point. Key to this effect is the invention of an experimental thread, for which collaboration with the specialist spinning mill of Diese Wolle and the expertise and infrastructure of Belgian producer and editor of carpets Limited Edition has been instrumental.

XAVIER LUST / CHARLES SCHAMBOURG BY NACARAT

is a long-standing relationship and here the designer has chosen to work with the luxury woven leather workshop to create a prototype seat worked in aluminium, upholstery and woven leather, highlighting the respective craftsmanship of both partners.

MULLER VAN SEVEREN / EMAILLERIE BELGE

is a partnership that brings the distinctive assemblies of the design duo together with an enamelling company that has evolved from its industrial past to artisanal future. This prototype project sees high-end finished surfaces interplay in elementary architectures, one steel plate folded to form a small desk, rack and/or folding screen and then enamelled in colours that accentuate the shape.

JULIEN RENAULT / KEWLOX

is a recent relationship in which the young designer has been collaborating with the 1950s icon of self-assembled furniture as artistic director to develop a complementary collection. Challenging the patented historical system, the designer is developing a new interpretation of the modular architecture that plays with transparencies and introduces glass into the pieces.

ATELIER LACHAERT DHANIS – ART CASTING



t r i o

bronze
95 x 65 x 82 cm

A work in which three bronze-cast chairs are soldered together, playing with visual perceptions and domestic archetypes by composition and context. The piece is a limited edition of three.

photo © atelier lachaert dhanis

Meanings and connections. This project exemplifies the conceptual strategy of atelier lachaert dhanis, which subtly intervenes with the familiar and daily to create new interpretations. And with surface the first clue to understand and classify an object, here an anonymous yet archetypal chair confounds expectations and memories: for it is not the soft unevenness of wood but smooth bronze that meets the tips of the fingers.

The designers chose to work with bronze precisely because of its relationship to art and sculpture. As partners, Art Casting is a specialist art foundry that considers the act of casting as important as the sculpture itself, an extension of the artist's vision which maintains all its original details and concept. Together, Lachaert & d'Hanis and the highly-skilled team of Art Casting spent over a thousand hours meticulously creating a wooden model at first, then cut it into pieces to be cast, cleaned, and soldered back together into an almost fluid, effortlessly merging form. Entangling the viewers gaze, Trio is a testament to the power of the surface.

atelierlachaertdhanis.com + artcasting.be

NICOLAS BOVESSE – KERAMIS



‘A magic moment for a project that grows with four hands.’ The warm words of designer Nicolas Bovesse characterise his first collaboration with Keramis and its craftsman-ceramist Guy Woestyn. Bovesse is fascinated by the craftsman-ceramist relationship, especially the potter’s wheel: the way the form develops in front of his eyes; the calmness and focus required; the willingness to allow oneself to be tamed by the material.

Basing his project on tornadoes, Bovesse aims to signify a tumult in our interiors...to talk about climatic changes from the perceived safety of our homes. Initially he only wanted to work from photographs and a kind of telepathy, the form echoing the concept of the piece, which as a natural phenomenon has no definitive form. Yet Woestyn wanted more. Meeting several times, it was a process full of subtle adjustments, where the complexity of making an object of natural beauty emanates from the tension between the human intervention and the specific properties of the clay – an organic transformation rather than an artificial mutation.



t o r n a d e

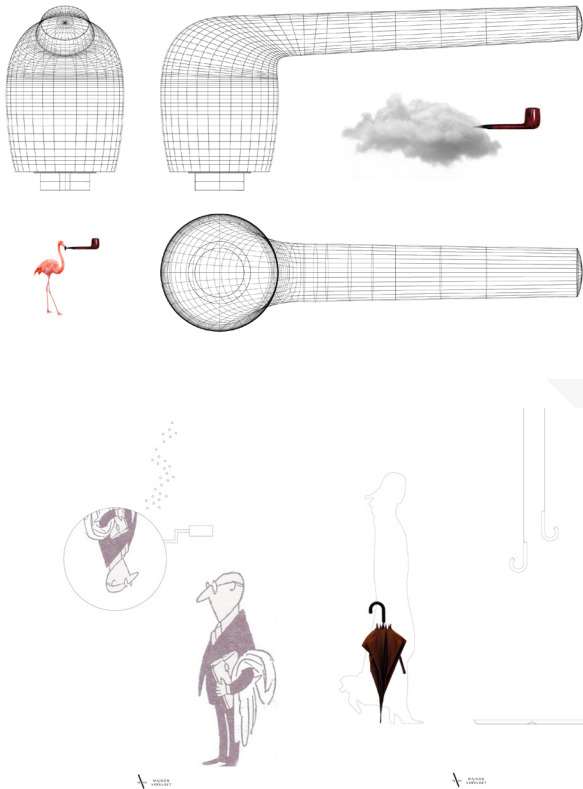
Earthenware, steel
45 x Ø45 cm

Small table featuring an earthenware base turned on a potter’s wheel. The piece will be for sale via the ceramics museum & research centre Keramis.

photo © Nicolas Bovesse

nicolasbovesse.com + keramis.be

JEAN-FRANÇOIS D'OR – MAISON VERVLOET



Feeling and sensitivity. Designer Jean-François D'Or has been collaborating with Maison Vervloet for six years, drawing on its century-old skills as a maker of high-end hardware. From workshops, to concept and object, it's been a shared adventure in which the mutual appreciation of each other's qualities and craft has been a joyful and open experience. D'Or describes Maison Vervloet as 'a jewel home', one full of meanings, sensibilities and knowledge of its abilities that is precious to him and by consequence, to the wider design industry.

Conceptually, one of the starting points for this collection reflected D'Or's existing desire to group a series of objects around the surrealist label that Belgium holds dear – however, there is nothing non-functional about this sideways look. The development is an intricate process of prototyping, step-by-step, choice by choice, decision by decision. As D'Or says, in this project God really is in the detail and this approach is echoed by Maison Vervloet, which despite its experience always looks to each new project as a challenge.

welcome home weaving of clouds

Door handles
Mirror-finished brass, silver
55 x 38 x 135 mm

Door bell / music box
Mirror-finished brass, silver, musical
mechanism
40 x Ø65 mm

Umbrella support
Mirror-finished brass, aluminium reinforced
in white enamel, stainless steel
Hook: 120 x 220 mm / ground plate:
30 x 800 mm

All three objects are prototypes that feature mirror-finished brass hand-polished by the artisans of Maison Vervloet's workshop. The pieces go into production as part of Maison Vervloet's Edition collection this year.

photo © Jean-François D'Or / Maison Vervloet

loudordesign.be + vervloet.com

BENOÎT DENEUFBOURG – CRUSO



p a d d l e s t o o l

Ash
44 x 30 x 75 cm
44 x 30 x 65 cm
44 x 30 x 45 cm

UA series of stools (stool and barstool)
made in solid wood and plywood.
The ash structure is carefully assembled
to compose a solid architecture of
simple and elegant lines.

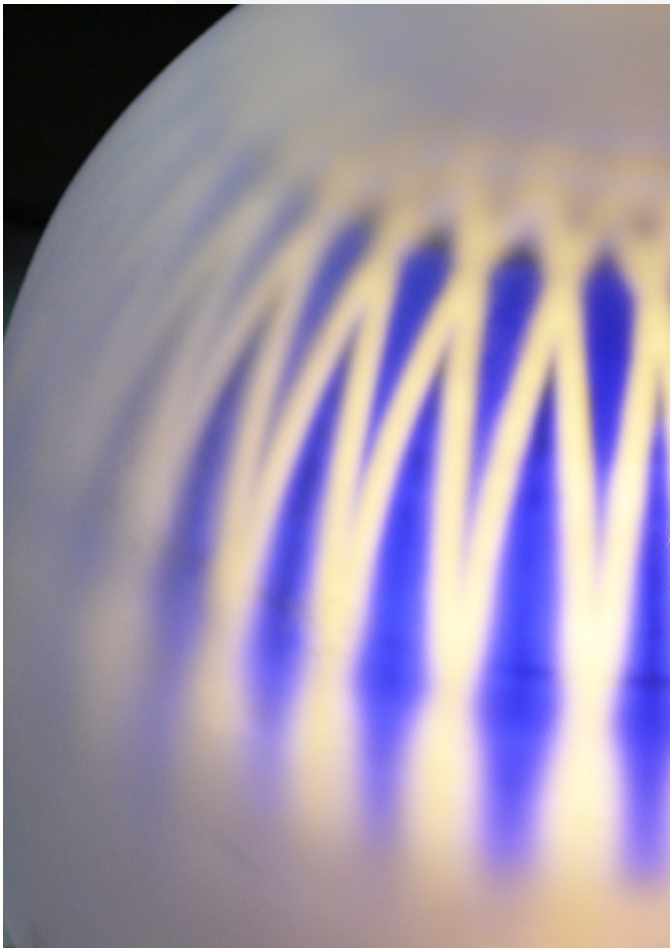
photo © Benoît Deneufbourg

Infectious energy. When Benoît Deneufbourg first met Olivier Stévenart, founder of Cruso, the designer was struck by his passion for wood and woodworking. The scene was set for a creative process that has been fostered in a spirit of exchange; a common-ground partnership from the beginning, in which Deneufbourg and the young Belgian company were always keen to learn from one another.

The Paddle stool is the second collaboration between Deneufbourg and Cruso, joining the Paddle collection that was launched in 2016. Like the Paddle chair, it is inspired by the soft curves of a paddle's blade – a tool full of movement and meaning. For the designer it was important to share the language of the maker: to match the meticulously crafted balance of proportions, details and assembly of elements with Cruso's commitment to the skills and knowledge of the artisan. Poetic and functional, the CNC machined component pieces have been finished by hand in an act of refinement that extends the vision of the design.

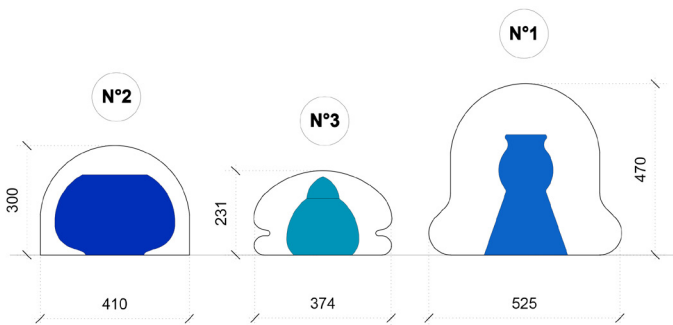
benoitdeneufbourg.com + cruso.com

NATHALIE DEWEZ – VAL SAINT LAMBERT



A hand-in-glove relationship. Career histories may differ by a few hundred years, but first-time collaborators Nathalie Dewez and Val Saint Lambert share a willingness to reinterpret materials, to develop the dialogue between designer and maker. The result is not only an intellectual exercise for both parties but also a physical experience. A design process informed by days spent surrounded by the gritty glitter of a factory floor laden with thousands of crystals, and the close dynamic of working with a small team.

The skill of Val Saint Lambert's craftsmen's for precision-cut crystal is central, yet Dewez was conscious that this cut aspect can have an impact that is more yesterday than tomorrow. As a result, she focuses on the shade of the cut, using two layers of leftover crystal, one inside the other, with the inner surface cut with drawings and the outer sanded to catch the projection. Conceptually grounded in reinvention, these works are equally formed by the fashion-immune qualities of communication: a mutual experience of listening and learning, adaption and exploration, a carefully crafted conversation defined by its openness.



inner light

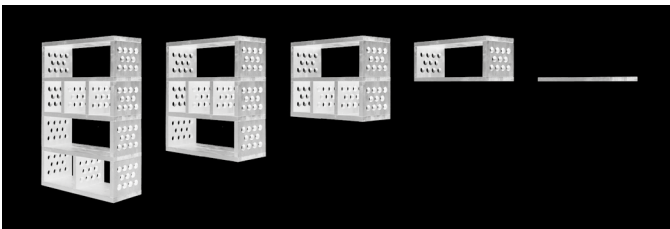
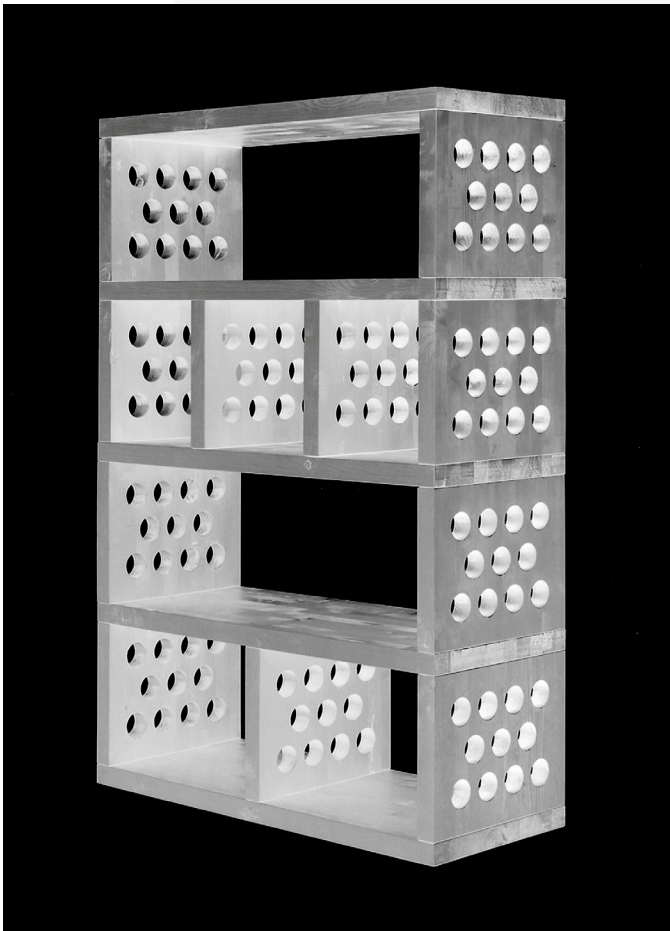
Crystal, LED
300 x Ø410 mm
231 x Ø374 mm
470 x Ø525 mm

Three one-off lamps that emphasise the inner projection of light, each formed by two layers of leftover crystal and with LEDs placed in their centres.

photo © Nathalie Dewez

nathaliedewez.com + val-saint-lambert.com

JAN & RANDOALD – LABT



Statements and questions. Graphic designers Jan & Randoald and Labt have worked together a number of times, the latter a label of Atelier Ternier that presents a collection of custom-made and limited edition furniture in collaboration with designers from different disciplines. Allowing ideas to gradually germinate, grow and mature, in this project a series of proposals investigate the multiple identities of a structure.

Conceptually Rontgen Rack is an exercise to encourage lateral thinking, drawing on *Oblique Strategies* created by Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt in which 'a set of cards contains a remark that can help break deadlocks in creative situations.' The designers utilised more than the technical skills of Frank Ternier to highlight the pragmatic and cryptic nature of the approach: 'Repetition is a form of change.' 'Use an old idea?' 'What to increase?' 'What to reduce?' 'Are there sections?' 'Consider transitions.' And in an alternative nod, the work also gives thanks to the Swiss artist duo of Peter Fischli and David Weiss: 'Be calm. Smile. Accept change as inevitable.'

r o n t g e n r a c k

Metal, Acrylic One
200 x 40 x 160 cm

Rack, cabinet and/or bench,
the functions of this modular piece of
furniture can be transformed according
to the needs and perception of the user.

photo © Jan&Randoald

janenrandoald.be + labt.be

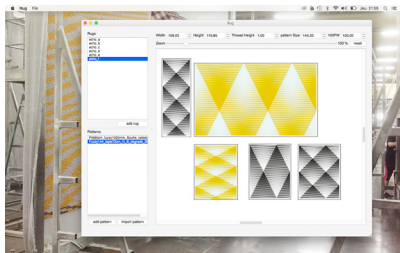
LAEND – VALERIE_TRAAN



Radical and experimental. Since 2014, designers Diane Steverlynck and Chevalier Masson (Eric Chevalier & Anne Masson) have joined forces to produce textile works under the label Laend. Drawn to their approach to processes and materials that form timeless objects in our homes, this project has been given visibility by long-term supporter Veerle Wenes, founder of the valerie_traan gallery in Antwerp.



Echo is the result of long-standing research by Laend, in which the invention of a thread explores its rhythmic potential. Producing effects that are never identical, instead the chromatic graphic identity offers subtle and sensitive surface variations. Intrinsic to the project is the collaboration with Diese Wolle, a specialist spinning mill with production facilities in Belgium, and Limited Edition, a Belgian editor and producer of carpets, which offered its expertise and infrastructure in the prototyping. Forming a design language together, Echo offers the possibility to unfold in different products and patterns, like an alphabet full of unique characters.



echo

100% wool
180 x 90 cm

Prototypes of a tufted rug collection in which the knitted surface changes pattern depending on where the viewer stands. Its size invites mobile use and the possible combination of several non-identical parts.

photo © Christian Aschman
photo © Yvan Guerdon
photo © Diane Steverlynck

laend.be + valerietraan.be

XAVIER LUST – CHARLES SCHAMBOURG

by *Nacarat*



bee

Aluminium, upholstery, woven leather
54 x 47 x 81 cm

Prototype chair that contrasts the dynamic aluminium construction with the softness of the woven leather upholstery.

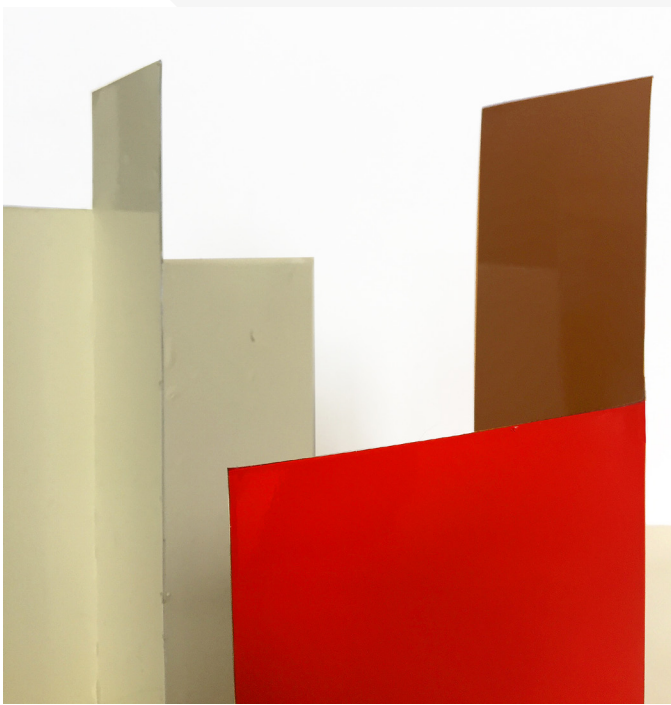
photo © Xavier Lust

Passion and harmony. The pairing of Xavier Lust and Charles Schambourg by Nacarat is an established one, having already worked together on the limited edition piece Skin Touch Bench. The designer and workshop of luxury woven leather share a deep understanding of craftsmanship, what it means to be seduced by beautiful materials and importantly, the nature of the 'with' in terms of collaboration. It's an organic team, both partners portraying a common vision of design and relationship framed by what Nicolas Berryer of Nacarat describes as 'an epicurean sense of humour.'

The chair takes its inspiration from the natural world, in particular the bee, the symbol of supreme social organisation. Composed of a light conical shell supported by thin aluminium legs and leather upholstery woven in a hexagonal pattern, these elements respectively recall the thin legs of the insect and the perfect construction of its hive. In Bee, Lust's skill for working in metal and the leather craft of Nacarat's team of experienced artisans finds an exquisite sense of equilibrium.

xavierlust.com + nacarat.be

MULLER VAN SEVEREN – EMAILLERIE BELGE



fireworks *fw#1*

Enamelled steel plate
70 x 70 x 110 cm

Prototype piece of furniture in which one steel plate is folded to form a small desk, rack and/or folding screen and then enamelled in colours that accentuate the shape.

photo © Muller Van Severen

Architectural interplay. The pairing of Muller Van Severen (Fien Muller and Hannes Van Severen) and Emaillerie Belge is one that brings the distinctive assemblies of the design duo together with a company that has evolved from its industrial past to artisan future. A first-time partnership in some ways, Emaillerie Belge was taken over by Belgian stone manufacturer Van Den Weghe, a company that Muller Van Severen has often collaborated with, and provided the opportunity to work with enamel.

A project full of challenges. For Muller Van Severen it was crucial to create a useful piece of furniture without losing the aesthetic of sculptural comfort. And for Emaillerie Belge, the form and size of the objects were the main issues. Adapting its production processes of cutting, folding, cleaning, degreasing, drying, baking and enamelling, in particular it was the limitations of its oven – the steel is heated to 830°C and could have easily deformed or bent the shape – that had to be overcome. Additional supports were the answer and typify the fine balance that lies behind the design.

mullervanseveren.be + emailleriebelge.com

JULIEN RENAULT – KEWLOX

Taking history forward. This project is a work of development and consequence that takes in designer Julien Renault's role as artistic director of Kewlox, an icon of Belgian design for its modular storage system since the 1950s but keen to evolve its brand sensibilities for today's market. A collaboration that started in 2016, Renault's approach isn't about deconstructing or reinvention but changing perceptions: making without breaking.

Not seeking the needless new, Renault has maintained the logic of the classic structure of the Kewlox system, and instead used a palette of materials and finishes to achieve his interpretation. Like over-sized lockers, the format plays to the strengths of the brand while acting as an intelligent complement to its existing collections. And because design is not just about the designer, what this relationship also highlights is the experience and skill of Kewlox in handling different materials and products, resolving the technical challenges, reviewing supply lines, seeking logistical solutions, adapting distribution, organising communication – actions that are not behind-the-scenes but central to the stage of creativity.



m i s t

Steel, aluminium, textured glass
80 x 42 cm x variable heights

Modular storage system, which creates a window frame of textured and translucent glass to reveal the colour and objects contained within the furniture.

photo © Julien Renault / Kewlox

julienrenaultobjects.com + kewlox.eu

PRESS SERVICE

The press kit and hi-res images,
are available to download at the
Belgium is Design website:
belgiumisdesign.be/press

For further information & to
arrange interviews with the
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BELGIUM IS DESIGN

Belgium is Design is a common label that unites the actions of regional organisations WBDM (Wallonie-Bruxelles Design Mode), with the support of AWEX, Flanders DC (formerly Design Flanders) and MAD Brussels (Mode and Design Centre) with the support of Brussels Invest & Export. This joined-up approach has been active since 2011, stimulating and developing initiatives to showcase Belgium's designers, manufacturers and producers in foreign markets.

belgiumisdesign.be

THE INSTITUTIONS

FLANDERS DC

Flanders DC stimulates the creative sector to turn its skills into business. It aspires to increase stronger and more future-oriented creative entrepreneurship in the whole of Flanders. Flanders DC reaches this goal by strengthening, connecting and promoting the Flemish creative economy. Flanders DC works for the whole of the creative sector, with special focus on design, fashion and gaming.

Since 2016, Design Vlaanderen and Flanders Fashion Institute have been integrated into Flanders DC. The specific efforts related to design are organised by Flanders DC for Design. Two of its most significant actions are the Henry van de Velde Awards, the Flemish design prize that has

acknowledged the achievements of design and designers since 1994, and varied participation in design fairs across the world, which often take place in collaboration with other Belgian partners.

Ultimately Flanders DC aims to inspire creatives and those passionate about their work. Those engaged in the industry can increase their professionalism by using its guide to entrepreneurship, participating in labs on specific topics or in individual consultancy sessions.

Flanders DC is the coordinator of the international Districts of Creativity Network (districtsofcreativity.org), which unites 12 of the most creative and innovative regions of the world.

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**MAD BRUSSELS
MODE AND DESIGN CENTRE**

MAD Brussels is a platform for expertise in the fashion and design sectors. It is a unique shop window in which the values of Brussels fashion and design are showcased. Looking towards the future and with innovation at its heart, MAD Brussels' mission is to promote (young) entrepreneurs. Both inside and outside Brussels, the Centre encourages new initiatives and supports those passionate

about fashion and design in order to strengthen their development and growth in these fields.

MAD Brussels' new building is located in the heart of Brussels and opens on the 20 April 2017. Inside MAD's new home, it is white all the way creating an eclectic white cube to highlight current Belgian design.

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WBDM

WALLONIE-BRUXELLES DESIGN MODE

The main objective of Wallonie-Bruxelles Design Mode (WBDM) is to present its regions's fashion and design on the international market. Initiated in 2006, the organisation's role is to support, promote and advise companies, designers and stylists who want to export their creations. In order to showcase the work of Walloon and Brussels creatives, the WBDM team brings together Belgian talent in international events such

as the Salone del Mobile in Milan, Maison & Objet in Paris, and in both these cities fashion weeks. WBDM also works in association with many experts, creating gateways between the worlds of industry and design and offering specific services in terms of export support for the targeted industries. At its heart, innovation and long-term stability are key virtues advocated by WBDM.

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