



*belgium  
design*

# **BELGIAN MATTERS**

*fuorisalone  
palazzo litta  
12-17.04.2016  
design week  
milan*

## **PRESS KIT**

A Matter of Perception : Tradition & Technology  
Palazzo Litta — Corso Magenta 24, Milan  
Open daily : 11am-9pm  
Press preview : 11 April, 3-7pm  
Opening reception (by invitation only) : 12 April, 7-12pm

*an initiative by*

Belgium is Design  
[belgiumisdesign.be](http://belgiumisdesign.be)

*exhibition concept*

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# BELGIAN MATTERS

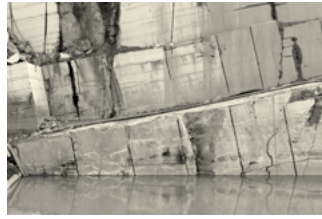
For Milan Design Week 2016, the organisations and institutions that support and promote Belgian design under the collective name Belgium is Design, have joined forces with the international contemporary culture magazine DAMN°. Taking part in the group event A Matter of Perception: Tradition & Technology at the Palazzo Litta, the seventh edition of Belgium is Design's presentation in Milan, Belgian Matters, features the results of pairings between 13 designers and companies, the latter often coming from sectors far removed from that of furniture design. Each project has been commissioned especially for the event and will be seen for the first time during the Salone.

For DAMN° together with Mosca Partners it is a return to the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Palazzo Litta, having hosted A Matter of Perception: Products & Materials at the location in 2015. Centrally situated on the Corso Magenta, it is a place filled but not overwhelmed by centuries-old stories of the people engaged in culture, politics, economics and the art of socialising that have passed through its doorways. This time DAMN°, an independent publication founded in Belgium 11 years ago, invites Diébédo Francis Kéré to reflect on A Matter of Perception. The Berlin-based architect, who was born in Burkina Faso, transforms the courtyard into Neo-Africana: a meeting pavilion, which celebrates and animates the timely and timeless themes of tradition and technology, alongside a series of talks and activities that includes live-interviews with the Belgian contributors. It is within this context that Belgium is Design has worked closely with DAMN° in selecting and

matching the participants for Belgian Matters, who come from all three regions of Belgium (Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia) and occupy three rooms of the Palazzo. The partnerships have been forged and supported by Belgium is Design and present a series of ad-hoc products and prototypes that stress confrontations and commonalities between designers and manufacturers, as they work both with their fields of expertise but also outside their normal experiences. Designers use a range of materials (bluestone, leather and wood) or techniques (glass blowing, tapestry and tanning) with different degrees of familiarity. However, for the mix of manufacturers, artisans, industrial producers and research centres, it is often the first opportunity to experiment and encounter design as a collaborative act or in a way that expands and exploits the potential of their role beyond that of a supplier of materials or the tools of production. What links these diverse approaches and mixed typologies (accessories, small objects or furniture) is the emphasis on the creation of each project, the process of making and mutual learning, and the dialogue that has arisen out of these carefully crafted relationships.

Thomas Lommée & Christiane Högner, who are participating as designers, are also responsible for the scenography and Kidnap Your Designer is the team behind the graphic design of the Belgium is Design 2016 edition. Ultimately it's all about connections, from the content to the setting: this is Belgian design, made in Belgium, but decidedly for the world and uninhibited by borders of experience.

## JULIEN CARRETERO PIERRE BLEUE BELGE



images © Julien Carretero

Julien Carretero is a Parisian who, after studying in France, England and the Netherlands, started out his professional career in Brussels in 2012. He designs objects, furniture, lighting and installations, but his interest lies predominantly in processes and production methods. Furthermore, he forges the link between craft and industry, by converting traditional techniques into serial production processes, or by simplifying industrial techniques into straightforward procedures.

These experiences led him to choose to work with the bluestone of the Carrières de la Pierre Bleue Belge for this project. This is a natural and living material, with its patina increasing in beauty as the years go by. Due to its low porosity and its hardness, the stone is particularly resistant to impurities and requires no specific maintenance even when placed outdoors. Working with Belgian Blue Stone draws on three centuries of traditional knowledge, in addition to modern industrial capabilities in sawing, mechanical sizing and finishing.

# MAARTEN DE CEULAER ALTON



## *c h a n d e l i e r*

ø 45 x H 145 cm

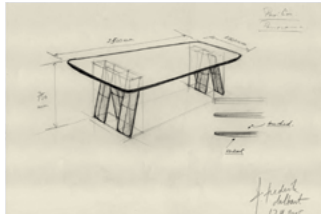
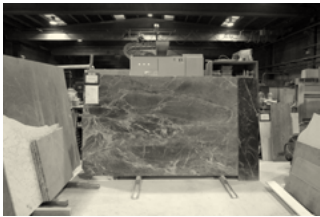
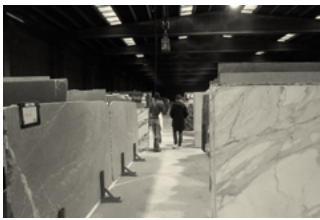
images © Maarten De Ceulaer

Furniture design is a means of expression for Maarten De Ceulaer. He tells a story, a conceptual tale where the impact of the furniture on its environment and the user is as important for him as the function. It's a detailed approach and he is always on the search for new materials and techniques to convey the thinking behind his work.

For this project De Ceulaer devised a light object based on sundials, where shadow is as essential as the light itself. Irregular discs are mounted on a vertical beam, with a strong LED light on the top of each disc in an aperture integrated in the metal. The light reflects on the disc above, while at the same time it casts shadows in different directions due to the random positioning. This play is further emphasised by the edges of the discs that are not illuminated, with these providing a dark rhythmic element. The discs are made of anodised aluminium to allow for several finishes within a single object.

A search for a producer brought De Ceulaer to Alton, the design label of Wuyts Aluminium. Wuyts' history dates back to 1889 and the blacksmith's forge. Over the decades it has grown from a tiny SME into a specialist in aluminium, steel and glass processing, best known as a producer of windows, doors, street furniture and cladding. The partnership exposed De Ceulaer to the company's experience with materials and machining, utilising customised processes in milling, cutting and polishing to fulfil his concept.

# FREDERIK DELBART VAN DEN WEGHE



## *t a b l e*

tabletop – LxWxT: 240 x 100 x 4 (H 75) cm  
6 feet – LxWxT: 80 x 27 x 4 cm

images © Frederik Delbart

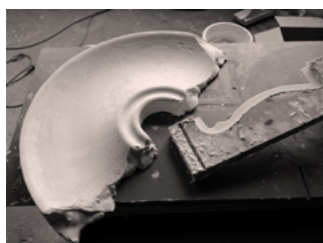
Frederik Delbart studied product development at La Cambre (Brussels). In his relatively young career, he has built an impressive portfolio, ranging from product development and strategic design management to consultancy. Inspired by textures and structures and working with materials and techniques that respect nature, he wants to create sustainable and simple objects. For him, an open mind and a broad cultural background are the basis for every successful product. He critically examines what objects look like and how they function, analysing each step of the design process from the perspective of the user, creator and the producer.

Delbart is keen to study new possibilities for materials, explore their boundaries, acknowledge tradition but also innovate. Passionate about materials like wood, glass, metal, porcelain and paper, he had wanted to experiment marble for a long time. To pair this desire with know-how and understanding was the role of natural stone processing company Van Den Weghe. Based in Zulte, it has an international reputation and is currently working on the new Louvre museum in Abu Dhabi. The company is committed to a symbiosis of art, technology and craftsmanship and has previously worked with Belgian designers like Michaël Verheyden and Muller Van Severen.

The result of the collaboration is RectoVerso, a trestle table made entirely of Indian and Italian marble. This product launches Van Den Weghe Items collection.



## DAMIEN GERNAY DELVAUX



### *centerpieces*

LxWxH: 130 x 35 x 6 cm

LxWxH: 71 x 53 x 6 cm

Ø 71 x H 6 cm

images © Damien Gernay

Delvaux is the oldest fine leather luxury goods company in the world, an authentic Belgian brand since 1829. The house has designed over 3000 handbags and continues to create contemporary classics, which are characterised by elegance, imagination and a dash of humour.

Damien Gernay places emphasis on experimentation and inhabits a world bridging art and design. For those who want it, his objects may be given and have a function, but they can equally be regarded as purely aesthetic forms.

Gernay is a designer who also loves working with leather and has used it throughout his career, so the meeting with Delvaux is a wonderful match of skills and creative minds. The collaboration has produced three sculptural objects that suggest the swift movement of an instantaneous act in combination with master craftsmanship of the highest level, the latter defined by time-consuming work of precision and meticulousness. The three shapes have been created by the technique of 'tirage en platre' to provide a plaster model that is then carefully clad in white leather. From afar and up close the pieces take on different identities, the nuances deepened by the colour achieved by dip-dyeing the finished works, which allows them to transition gradually from black to white. The objects can also be used as serving dishes.

# KASPAR HAMACHER TANNERIE RADERMECKER



Kaspar Hamacher loves wood and his chainsaw. As the son of a forester, he grew up in the forests around Eupen and these childhood experiences have obviously had their influence. His designs are identified by the use of solid wood that he cuts, saws, burns... They are monolithic volumes with a soul. Hamacher sees himself more as a craftsman than a designer, focusing on the physical aspects of design rather than conceptual ones.

The Radermecker tannery from Warneton was established in 1870. In the workshop it seems as though little has changed since that time; one of the few remains of an ancient industry that has almost completely disappeared.

The partnership between this company and designer seems one based in poetic pragmatism. In one of Hamacher's earlier works he made a bookshelf from a leather belt, so here he wanted to work with saddle leather, a really strong and natural material. Radermecker was the ideal match, not only in terms of resources but also in the passing on of knowledge. The company supplied Hamacher with the leather and advised him on how best to understand the material, allowing it to be used and integrated in the production of new objects: a table, chair and seat.

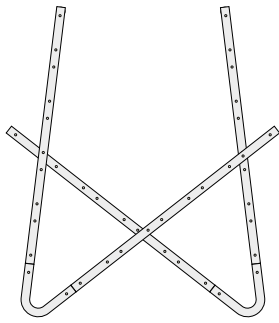


## *stool & low chair*

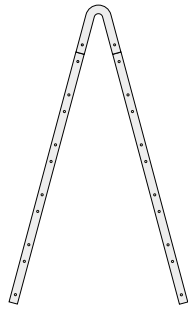
stool – ø 40 x H 45 cm  
low chair – LxWxH: 91 x 41 x 71 cm

images © Kaspar Hamacher

# T. LOMMÉE & C. HÖGNER COMPANY TBC

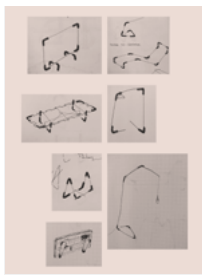
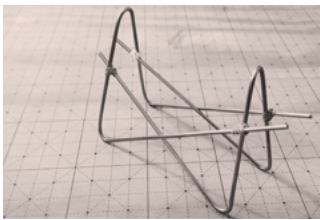


shraag – vooraanzicht



shraag – zijaanzicht

In 2007, Thomas Lommée and Christiane Högner established Intrastructures in Brussels: a utopian, pragmatic design studio dedicated to the design of products and services as spatial interventions for a more social and sustainable society. The studio is also one of the driving forces behind OpenStructures, a project that explores the possibility of modular construction models based on a geometric grid and an open system. For Lommée and his collaborators, the hope is that the consistent application of simple and clear principles in the field of design and manufacture will lead to the creation of objects that may evolve and be adapted over time.

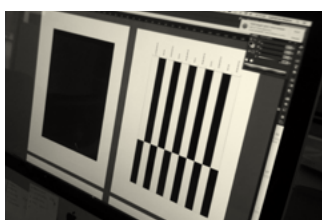


In this project Lommée & Högner wanted to create a connecting element. OpenStructures compatible, the design connects two tubes with a 20 mm diameter.

images © T. Lommée & C Högner



## M. MEES & C. BIASINO VAN CASTER



### *c a r p e t*

LxW: 120 x 180 cm  
40 kg

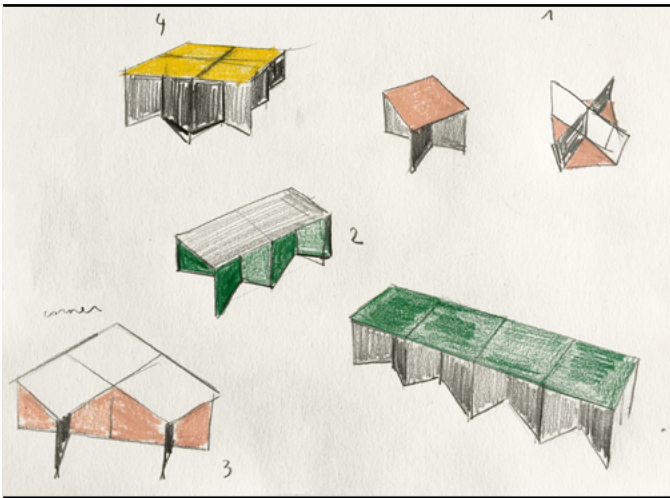
images © M. Mees & C. Biasino

Van Caster celebrates its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and over the generations has become a renowned specialist in contemporary rungs. In the past 10 years the company has also been active in the production of its own designs. Creation and development is carried out at its Mechelen headquarters in Belgium, while production takes place in India and Nepal, where strict attention is paid to fair trade and the use of sustainable and ecological materials.

Marie Mees and Cathérine Biasino have been working together as textile designers for a long time and have their own label The Alfred Collection, which includes bed and table linen, rugs and curtains in natural materials such as linen, cotton and wool.

Fittingly, the cooperation between the partners developed organically after a meeting at a trade show in the Netherlands. A shared passion for high-quality and natural textiles brought them together and they immediately established a relationship of mutual trust. Mees and Biasino largely work with a palette of grey, white and black, yet the rug that features in this project represents the different ways the partnerships have evolved. The beauty and natural colours that the designers saw on their first visit to van Caster made a huge impression, shaping their approach, and the finished work is the result of a welcome challenge to use colour.

# MULLER VAN SEVEREN VALERIE\_OBJECTS BY ALTON



## *alu bench*

LxWxH: 45 x 45 x 45 cm  
bench/side table/stool  
anodised aluminium

3 colored anodised aluminium sheets  
assembled in a bench. Multiple linked  
together to obtain other functions.  
(for example a bench/stool/side table)

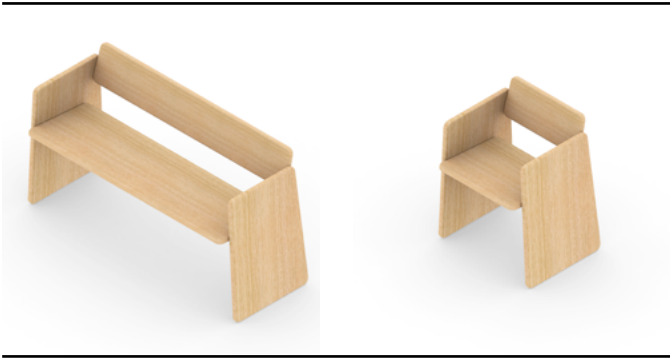
images © Muller Van Severen

It's barely five years ago that Fien Muller (photographer) and Hannes Van Severen (sculptor) launched their first furniture collection: tables with lamps attached and colourful chopping boards. Their work is a fine balancing act between art and design, where furniture becomes sculpture yet functionality is paramount. Merging their different backgrounds, the pair explore material and formal boundaries, determining their individual qualities, while all the while testing limits within coherent concepts. Also evident is a lively exchange of colour, used to create a playful tension with the restraint of the design.

For this project Muller Van Severen designed a piece that weaves through typologies. A bench/stool/table, it has been made from anodised aluminium, with two sheets sliding into each other, and a third coming on top. The way the different parts of the structure relate to each other allows the function to shift: for one, two or more people, it can be a seating plank, corner piece or a low table. The overall effect is an object that is an interplay of volume and colour.

The objects will go into production in a series edited by Belgium's valerie\_objects, yet first Muller Van Severen turned to Alton, the design label of Wuyts Aluminium to prototype and develop the design. Afterwards, the parent company's specialist experience with aluminium as a material was invaluable, as was its customised processes of milling, cutting and polishing.

# JULIEN RENAULT ATMOSPHÈRE ET BOIS



Julien Renault is both a designer and a photographer. From these two worlds he pays attention to the everyday objects surrounding us and the special moments in our life. This process of scrutiny and impression is part of his creative process, as he inventories all these experiences to draw inspiration from in his new works.



The initiators behind Atmosphère & Bois have been equally inspired by the beauty of what they have seen, in this case reclaimed wood from houses and barns in the United States and Canada. Out of this grew the idea to import the wood to Belgium and preserve it. The charm and warmth of the natural colour, matured with age, or with traces of old paint, makes it a great product for decoration and tables, wall panels or garden furniture.



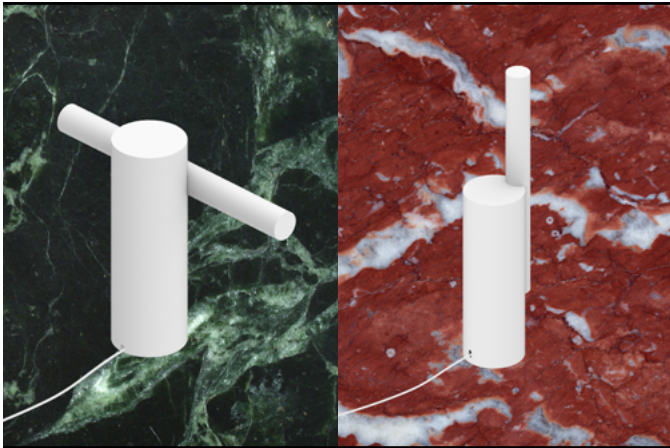
Until now this material, due to its timeless character, has been used mainly in country-style designs. However, the partnership with Renault has given it a new, parallel dynamic, which has resulted in the creation of the Board bench and chair. A fusion of Renault's modern sensibilities with the sensitivities of the material, these designs also represent the start of a new contemporary collection for Atmosphère & Bois.

## *board bench & chair*

bench – LxWxH: 130 x 51 x 71 cm  
chair – LxWxH: 57 x 51 x 71 cm

images © Julien Renault  
& Siegrid Demyttenaere (1/2/3)

# LEVISARHA COMPANY TBC



## *l a m p s*

LxWxH: 39 x 4,5 x 25,5 cm  
LxWxH: 12 x 10 x 50 cm

images © LeviSarha

LeviSarha is a Brussels-Parisian design studio set up in 2014 by Sarha Duquesne and Levi Dethier, who met while studying at the ECAL in Lausanne. Their designs are renowned for their simplicity, in particular the way in which they allow volumes to coalesce.

For this project LeviSarha designed two lamps, a horizontal table lamp and a vertical floor lamp. Both pieces are based on a single idea: a cylinder with LED lighting that slides into a rectangular marble volume.



## BEN STORMS HET GLAZEN HUIS



### *g l a s s   s h e l v e s*

LxWxH: 120 x 90 x 35 cm  
400 kg

LxWxH: 160 x 40 x 40 cm  
different panel thickness

images © Siegrid Demyttenaere

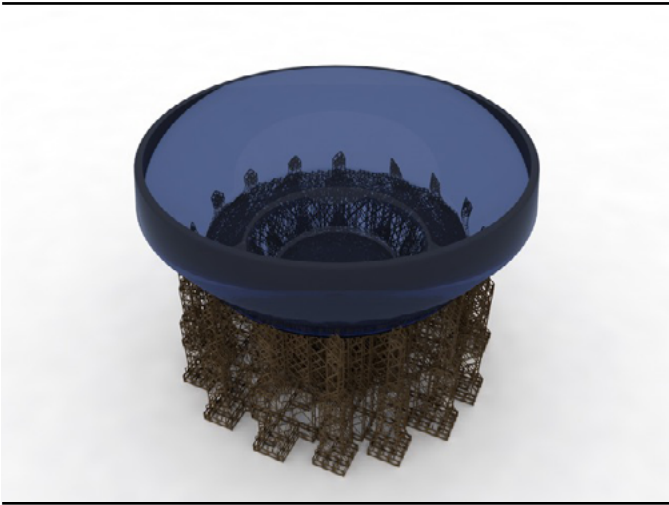
Ben Storms always starts from the material. With a father who trades in recovered stone and other salvaged building materials, it's where his fascination and know-how stems from. Now he combines form, material and technique in innovative and surprising ways. However, it is by pushing the boundaries of the material that he creates the most impact, as difficult materials such as stone and glass undergo amazing transformations.

The idea for a glass collection originated when Storms came across a pallet of glass tiles. He found the stacked glass beautiful and inspiring in itself. For this project Storms wanted to glue the tiles together to form figures like hollow boxes. The dimensions of these geometric shapes refer to the size of a piece of furniture and/or architectural element: a 40 cm-high beam has a seating function, put vertically it becomes a pillar. He has created an object that plays with colour, transparency and the incidence of light.

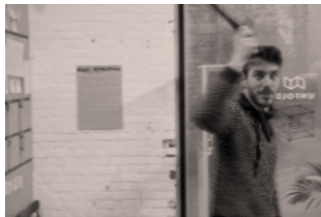
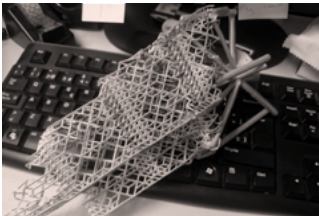
One of the project's main challenges was the technical development and handling of what is a heavy material. For this Storms drew on the expertise of Het Glazen Huis in Lommel, which is the Flemish Centre for Contemporary Glass Art. Here glass is approached from all aspects: artistic, functional and conceptual, craft and industrial, contemporary and historical. The Centre runs workshops and has a glass studio for hot and cold glass techniques, and undertakes private commissions so unique objects can be produced by professional glassblowers.



# UNFOLD MATERIALISE & HET GLAZEN HUIS



Claire Warnier and Dries Verbruggen, the founders of Unfold, continuously orchestrate a dialogue between physical manufacturing and digital design. As ad hoc interpreters for whom neither computer code or traditional craftmaking forms part of their native language, they create unusual scenarios in which they enter into the confrontation between the two. In Belgium they were one of the pioneers of 3D-printing, when they started to experiment printing with clay in 2009.



Materialise, a spin-off of the University of Leuven established 25 years ago, has developed into an international leader in additive manufacturing or 3D-printing. Called upon by diverse clients across the world, from industry to artists, it's renowned for its software to operate 3D-printers and in research for its application in the biomedical field. It's no surprise that Unfold and Materialise found each other for the Watertorens project. Unfold had previously used glass blowing techniques in a ceramic form. They have refined the process, making a vase and side table that incorporates bronze, glass and wood. Materialise's software was used to create support structures to assist in the printing process keeping these a feature of the work.

## *bowl & side table*

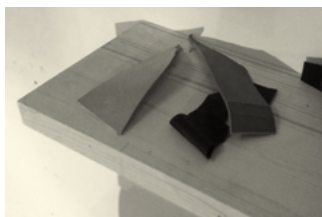
bowl – bronze & glass  
LxWxH: 28 x 28 x 19,5 cm

side table – LxWxH: 45 x 45 x 40 cm

images © Unfold  
& Siegrid Demyttenaere (3/4/5/6)

When viewed in themselves they have a rather neo-gothic or industrial structure. Such forms, based on photographs of industrial sites, have been cast in bronze from a 3D-print and then glass is again blown through the form. Unfold also sought the expertise of Het Glazen Huis for the glasswork involved and the services of professional glassblower Gert Bullée.

# MATHIAS VAN DE WALLE RALPH BAGGALEY



## *w a l l - b o x e s*

LxWxH: 25 x 12 x 31 cm

LxWxH: 35 x 20 x 25 cm

images © Mathias van de Walle

Mathias van de Walle plays with geometric shapes and the way these are interpreted and required within a certain space. His designs are playful yet functional, modular and flexible, meaning they can be adapted to a client's any needs.

The American Ralph Baggaley travelled round the world in the 1970s, yet has made the outskirts of Brussels his home for 30 years. Earning a living selling leather handbags, belts and wallets, over the years his experience translated into a level expertise that continues to grow. Always in search of the perfect finish, his clarity and exquisite attention to detail caught the attention of both design companies and individual designers. He was closely associated with the work of Belgian designer Maarten Van Severen and in more recent years Maarten De Ceulaer, in particular the latter's Suitcases collection.

Mathias sought out Ralph's advice for this project and their discussions inform all aspects of the work. At first glance the objects that have resulted from their collaboration resemble bags hanging on the wall, yet they are in fact leather-clad wooden volumes that provide the structure. Deliberation over the choice of material was the essence of the process and in the end they opted for a Spanish vegetable leather with a light Bordeaux tint. The bags are available in various sizes, or can be brought together into a rack.

## DESIGNERS PRODUCERS

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Muller Van Severen + Valerie\_Objects by Alton  
[mullervanseveren.be](http://mullervanseveren.be) [valerie-objects.com](http://valerie-objects.com) & [alton.be](http://alton.be)

Julien Renault + Atmosphère et Bois  
[julienrenaultobjects.com](http://julienrenaultobjects.com) [atmosphere-bois.com](http://atmosphere-bois.com)

LeviSarha + Company tbc  
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Unfold + Materialise & Het Glazen Huis  
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Mathias van de Walle + Ralph Baggaley  
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## PRESS SERVICE

Hi-res images are available  
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Belgium is Design website  
[belgiumisdesign.be/press](http://belgiumisdesign.be/press)

For further information and  
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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), Design Flanders and 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.

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