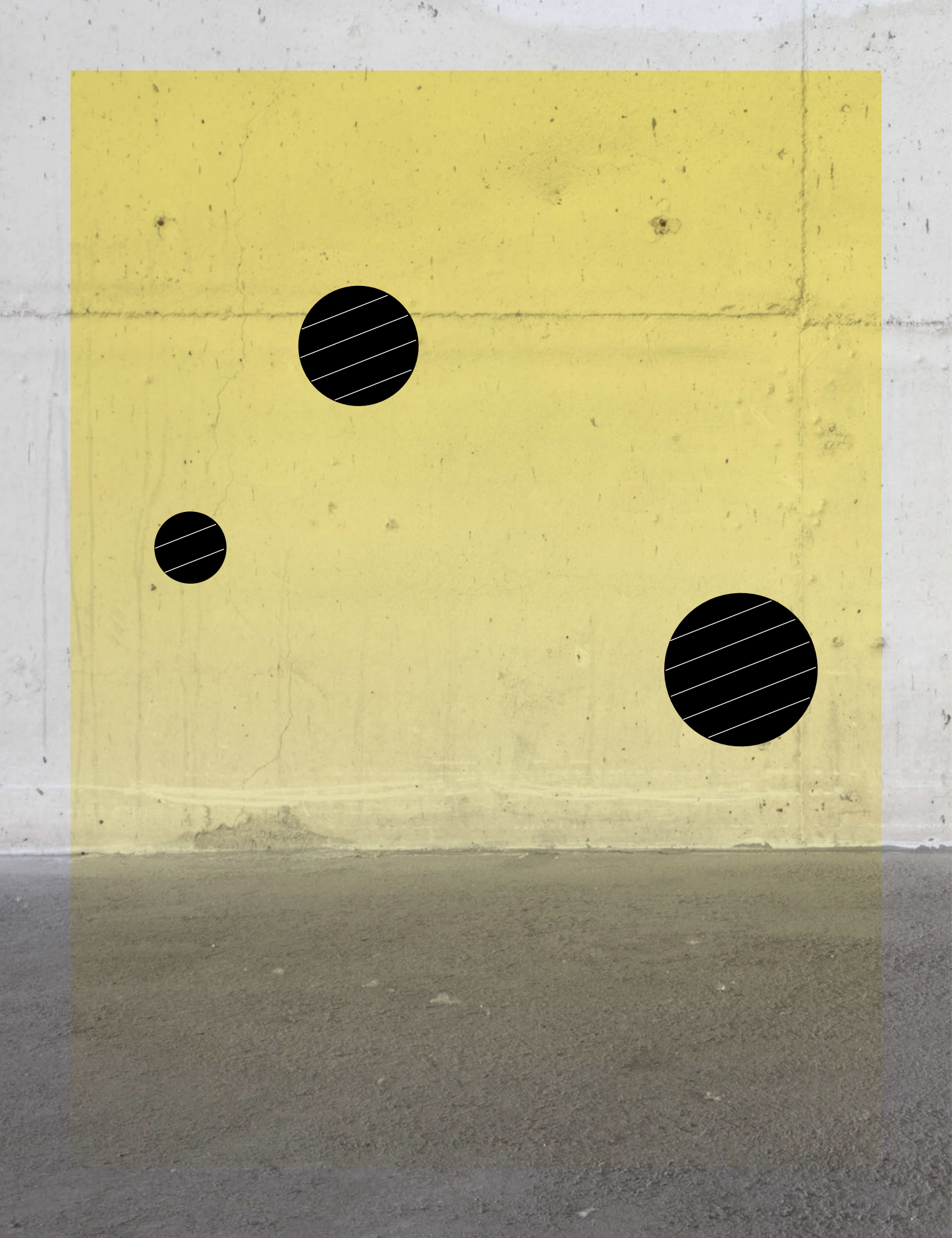






06 Introduction
Prototypes 30 64

One-Offs
Edition X 110 164

The New Patrons
Auctions and Attitudes
224 Contributors 250

Come
writers and
critics

Who
prophesize
with your
pen

And keep
your eyes wide
The chance won't
come again

And don't
speak too
soon



For the
wheel's still
in spin

And there's
no tellin' who
That it's
namin'.



For the
loser now
Will be later
to win

For the times
they are
a-changin'.

Bob Dylan

Lyrics: © Special Rider Music





introduction

Our modern world is hard to pin down. It is filled with complexity and an ever-expanding wealth of interconnecting layers. We are experiencing an era of flux defined by change, hybridisation and exploration. The fruits of centuries of experience are being remixed with innovation and digitalisation. These are exciting yet confusing times. The realm of design, like many other disciplines, is now challenged to fulfil an increasing number of roles: to keep up with new materials and technologies; to facilitate interfaces with our increasing technological dependence; to help make the world a better and more sustainable place, yet balance that somehow with the demand for the trophies of conspicuous consumption and an unquenchable desire for novelty. Added to this burden of responsibility is the fact that the discipline itself has become a huge field with no clearly defined boundaries.

Design is traditionally about working to find solutions and achieve goals within a set of limitations or restrictions usually dictated by materials, manufacturing techniques, price, function and aesthetics. But today many designers do not simply deliver products, they design processes, interfaces and systems, working in two, three and even four dimensions. While for some the workplace may be almost entirely in the virtual realm of calculations and CAD programmes, others are to be found in their workshops, ankle-deep in wood shavings, forming and shaping objects by hand – much as other craftspeople have done for thousands of years before them. Still other designers make objects that appear to have no function at all, or intentionally create self-referring sketches of ideas that seem to solve nothing and go nowhere.

Limited Edition is about designers who make furniture objects outside of the industrial manufacturing system. Although some employ the same criteria, tools and materials as those required to produce many hundreds or thousands of copies of an object, this book is about individuals working on the peripheries of that system, and the work of those who have chosen to step outside it completely. Many of the designers in this book think of themselves as explorers, testing the boundaries of materials, process and medium. For them, the product almost seems to be an afterthought or added extra. These designers are committed to experimentation; to exploring not just the nature and forms of what they produce but also the systems within which they are commissioned, created, received, displayed, appraised and used. There is also a growing band of gallerists, patrons and curators who are nurturing and encouraging these experiments in the form of one-offs, prototypes or limited editions. They are helping to create new connections between design and the market, between product and object, between industry and ideas: changing attitudes and challenging structures.

Tord Boontje • The Fig Leaf
Hand-painted enamelled copper leaves, lost wax cast patinated
bronge tree, hand-dyed and woven silk, hand-formed tracery
support structure, trompe l'oeil back
Client: Meta
© Marcus Gaab



Bewusst oder unbewusst stellen solche Individualisten zentrale Fragen: Was ist Design? Was heißt es überhaupt, ein Designer zu sein? Welche Funktionen haben Objekte und Produkte eigentlich? Doch wenn Design so viele Problemlösungen liefern soll – wie kommt man dann dazu, über sich hinauszuwachsen und die eigenen Grenzen zu überwinden? Und welche Beschränkungen der Disziplin an sich sind verhandelbar, und welche sind unumstößlich? Es ist nicht leicht, auf diese Fragen Antworten zu finden – erst recht nicht, weil diese Fragestellungen ja noch derart neu sind, dass es dafür noch nicht mal ein geeignetes Vokabular gibt, um sich damit auseinanderzusetzen. Viele Designer, mit denen ich während der Arbeit an diesem Buch gesprochen habe, taten sich schwer, ihre Arbeit zu beschreiben oder einzuordnen. Dafür ist ein größerer zeitlicher Abstand nötig. Momentan ist nur möglich, Tendenzen auszumachen und nach Beispielen und Gestalten Ausschau zu halten, die neue Entwurfs- und Produktionskonzepte entwickeln.

„Limited Edition“ wirft ein Schlaglicht auf den aktuellen Stand des Möbeldesigns am Rande und jenseits der industriellen Fertigung. Es sind die Gedanken und Äußerungen aus mehr als vierzig Interviews mit Designern, Herstellern, Galeristen, Auktionatoren und Kritikern eingeflossen, die ich nach Gemeinsamkeiten und Parallelen zu weitgefassten Gruppierungen zu bündeln versucht habe. Vielleicht ist es ja altmodisch, dennoch habe ich versucht, die neuen experimentellen Designobjekte in Kategorien einzuteilen. Nicht in Form einer Systematik – denn dafür sind die Stile, Formen und Materialien viel zu unterschiedlich –, sondern nur im Hinblick auf die Ziele, die die Designer, Kuratoren und Mäzene verfolgen und darauf, wie sie zusammenarbeiten. Denn Kategorien – und seien sie auch noch so grob – fördern die Diskussion und Verständigung. Gleichwohl ist dieses Buch bei weitem nicht vollständig: Es zeigt nur eine kleine Auswahl, und natürlich gibt es auch noch andere Stimmen, die gehört werden sollten. Meine Absicht ist, einen kurzen Einblick in die schwindelerregende kreative Vielfalt dieser Arbeiten zu bieten und die weitere Diskussion angustoßen, nicht aber, voreilige oder dogmatische Schlüsse zu ziehen. Wenn mir das gelungen sein sollte, ist „Limited Edition“ nicht nur ein Buch über schöne Dinge, sondern regt hoffentlich auch zum Nachdenken an.

Pablo Reinoso • Spaghetti Bâle
Galerie: Carpenters Workshop Gallery
© Pablo Reinoso Studio

Pablo Reinoso • Spaghetti Ballade
Bank
© Pablo Reinoso Studio







Design today,
with its myriad
manifestations, does
not bear the same kind of
broad, unified theoretical
foundation that some
believe once
underpinned
Modernism.

Instead the field
is characterised by a
rich heterogeneity of ideas.
Limited-edition work is only
one of these manifestations,
but is one of the most exciting
because it includes some of the
most beautiful, poetic and
progressive objects being
created at this time.

Wava Carpenter



Kiki van Eijk • Patchwork Cabinet
© Frank Tielemans

Pablo Reinoso • TH 14 05 Chaise
© Carlos Yebra





Yael Mer & Shay Alkalay – Raw-Edges Design Studio • Stack
Clients: Gradual, Johnson Trading Gallery and a production
version for Established & Sons
© Shay Alkalay

Yael Mer & Shay Alkalay – Raw-Edges Design Studio • Stack
Client: Established & Sons
© Mike Golderwater





Tokujin Yoshioka • Water block
Edition of 8+2+8
Gallery: Design Miami/Basel, December 2007
© Nacása & Partners Inc.

Tokujin Yoshioka • Rainbow chair
Edition of 8
Gallery: Design Miami/Basel, December 2007
© Nacása & Partners Inc.





Joris Laarman • Bone armchair

A computer-generated 'natural' form; edition of 12
© Jacob Krupnick

Markus Benesch Creates • Architect's Hatch

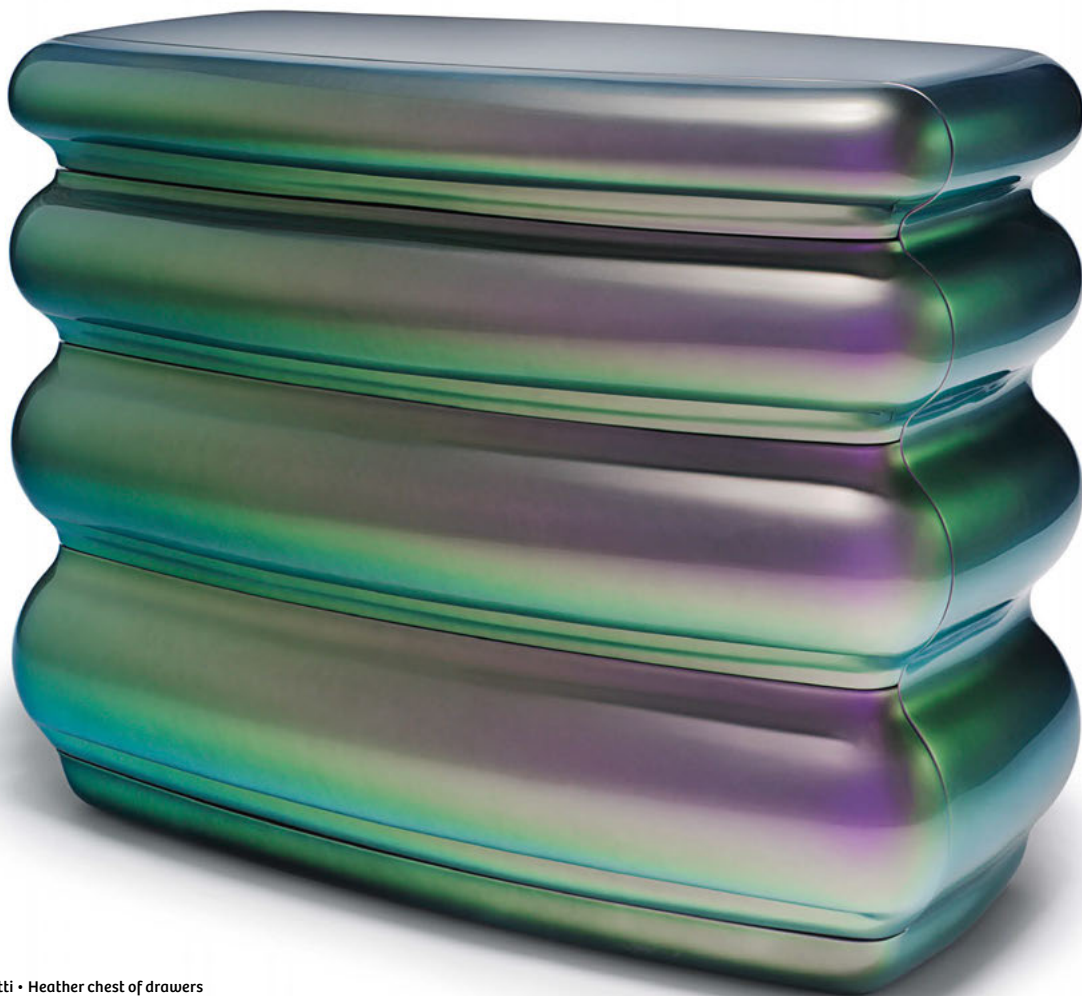
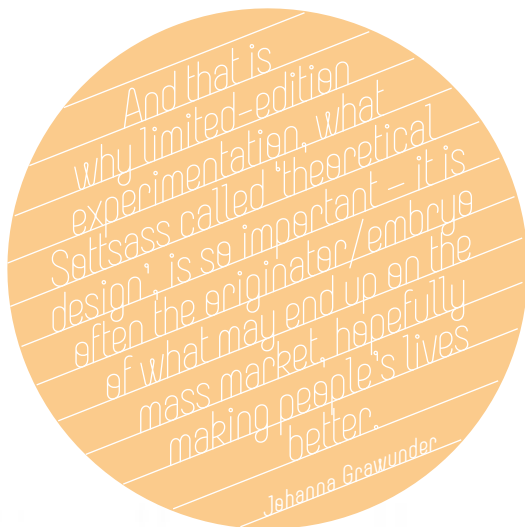
Series of 13, each limited to an edition of 6 pieces
Gallery: Galerie Maurer
© Patrick Spaeth, Benni Konte





Some people
can't have the
luxury of being 'sick
of mass production',
for most people, that
is all they can
afford.





Mattia Bonetti • Heather chest of drawers
Edition of 8, 2 artist's proofs and 2 prototypes
Gallery: David Gill Galleries
© David Gill Galleries
Photo: Thomas Brown

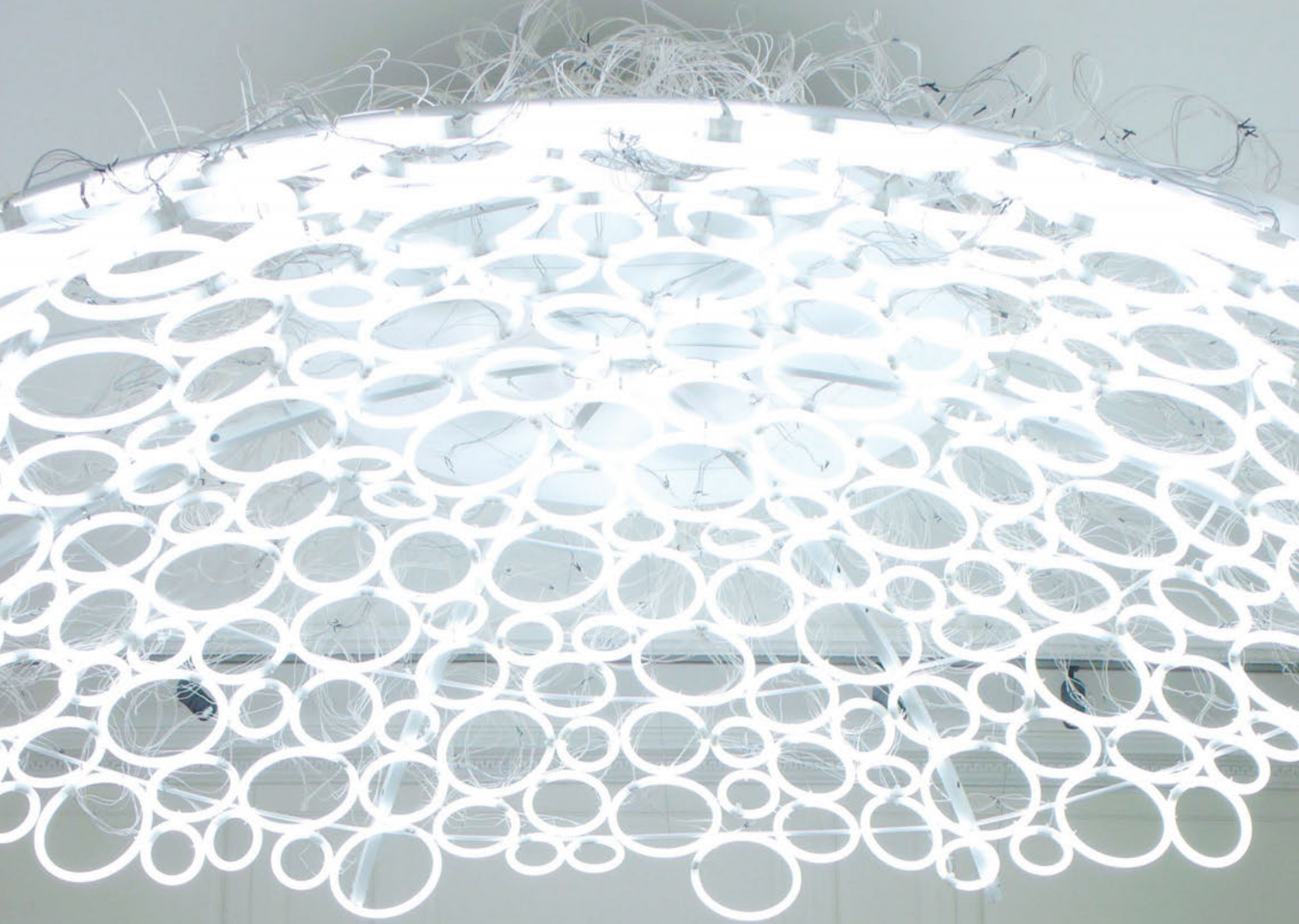
Mattia Bonetti • Toast chest of drawers
Edition of 8, 2 artist's proofs and 2 prototypes
Gallery: David Gill Galleries
© David Gill Galleries
Photo: Thomas Brown

I am
certainly both an
artist and designer,
but I more often feel
like an explorer.
Dylan Kehde Raelafrs



Olivier Peyricot • 16 Hg programmable lamp
One-off
Gallery: ToolsGalerie
© Marc Damage

Mathieu Lehanneur • Irrésistibles Reflets
Client: Christofle, Paris
© Cyril Afssa











Joost van Bleiswijk • Big-heavy-cabinet
Edition of 8 and 2 artist's proofs
© Frank Tieleman

Joost van Bleiswijk • Little Clock
© Frank Tieleman

Joost van Bleiswijk • No Screw No Glue
Edition of 8 and 2 artist's proofs
© Frank Tieleman





The job
of designers is
to improve things. If
awareness of good design
is more widespread, that
can only lead to overall
better quality of consumer
products – for us all.

Marc Newson