

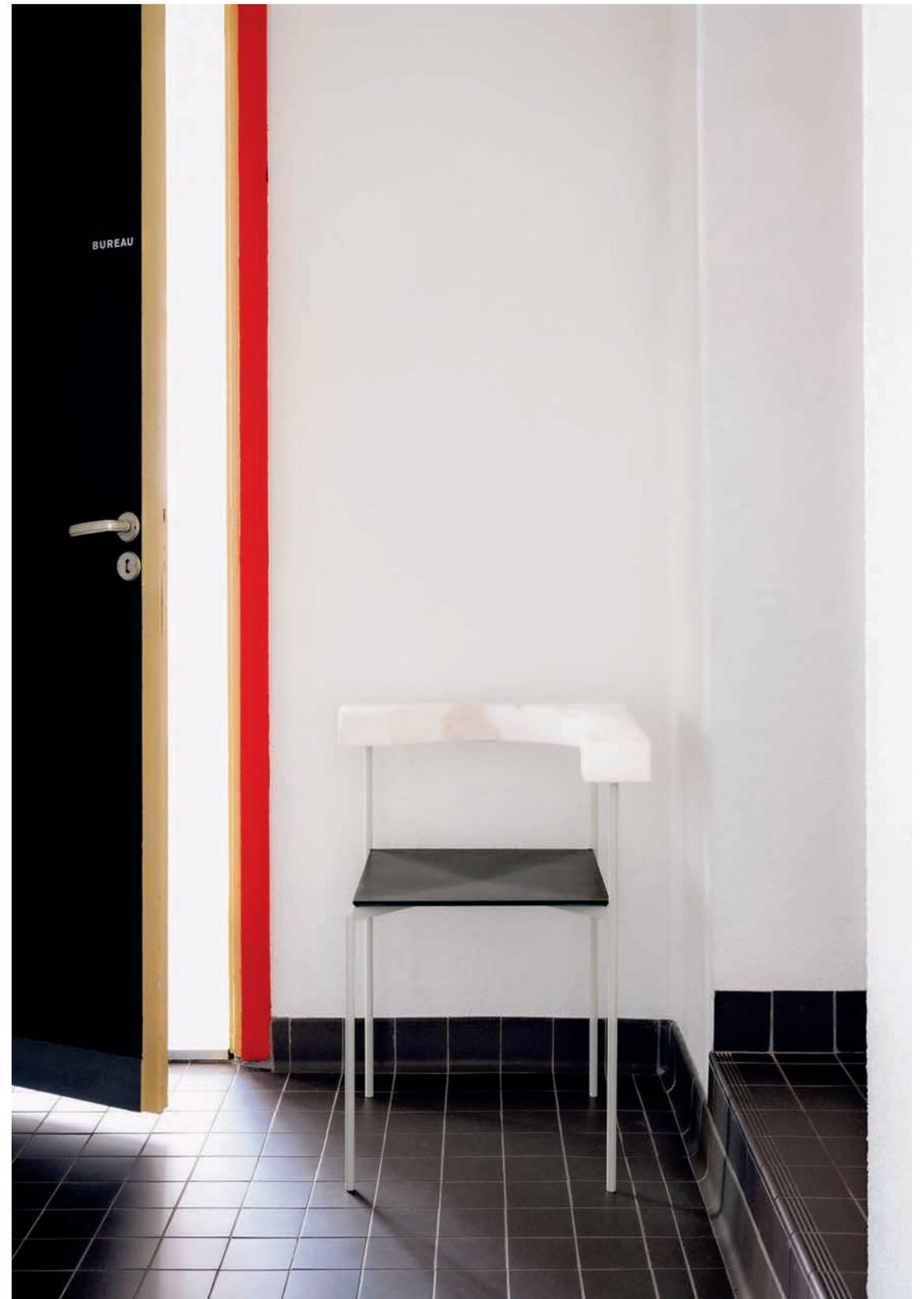


Crafting the Functional
and the Conceptual:

The Free Zone of MANIERĂ



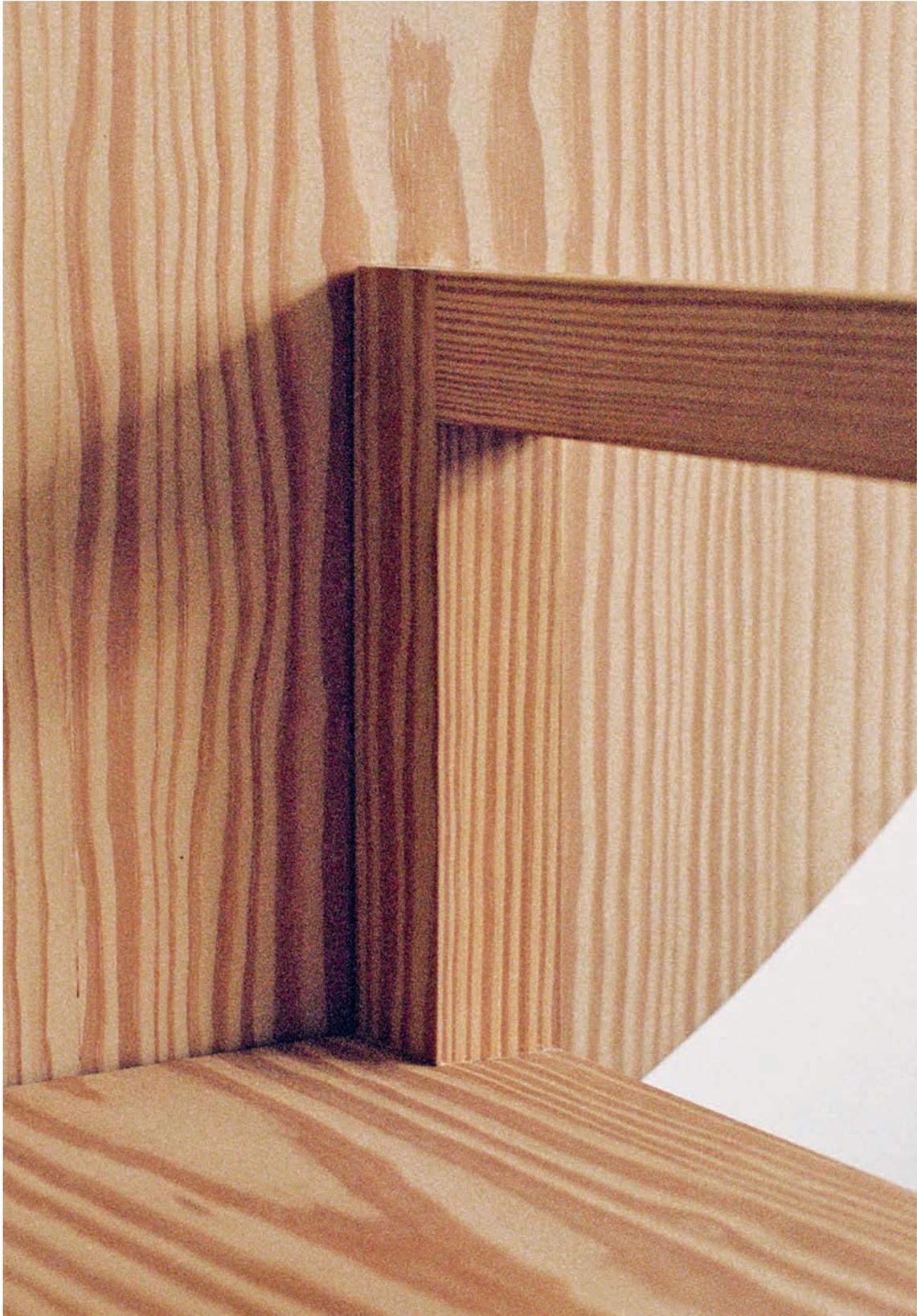




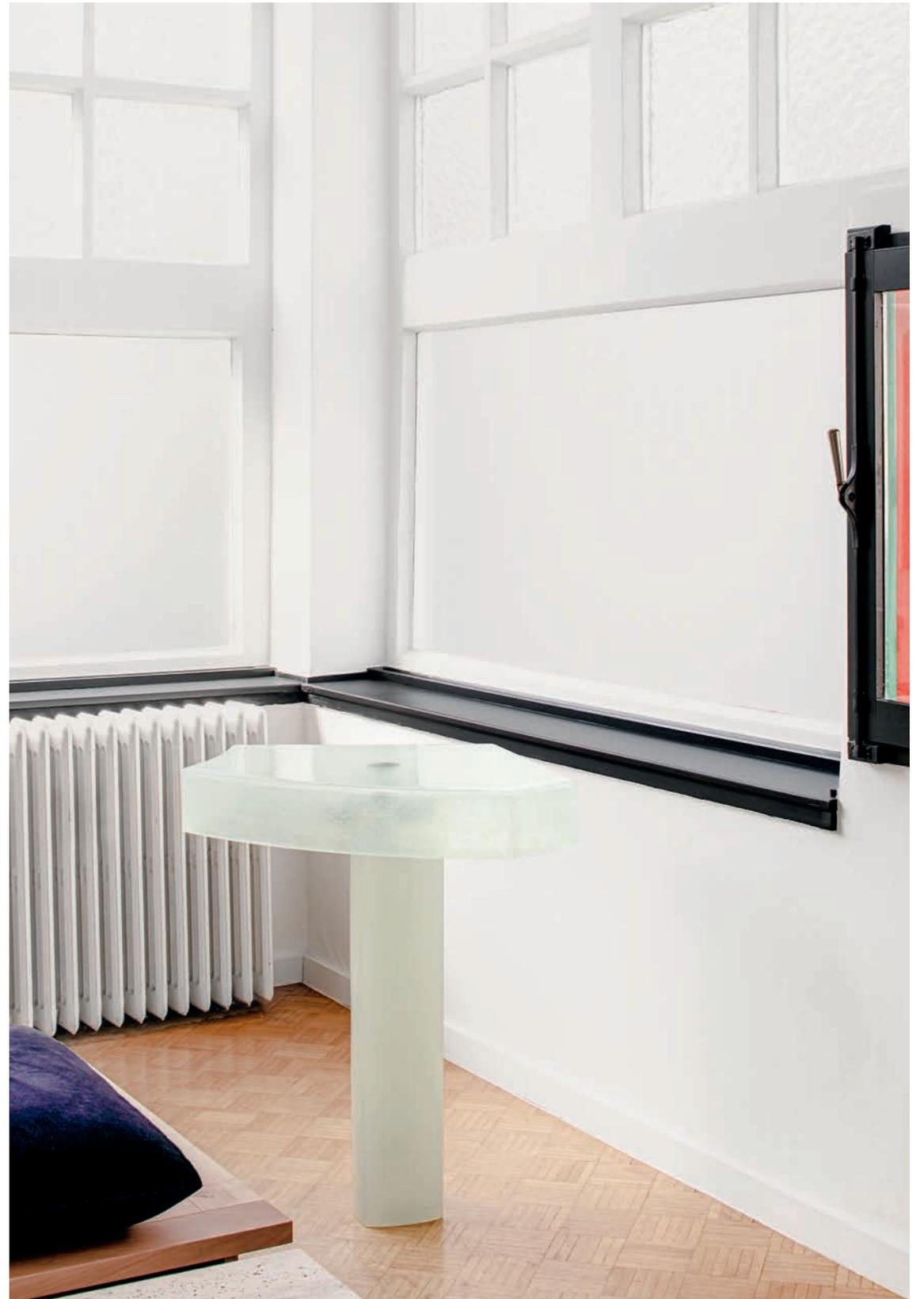








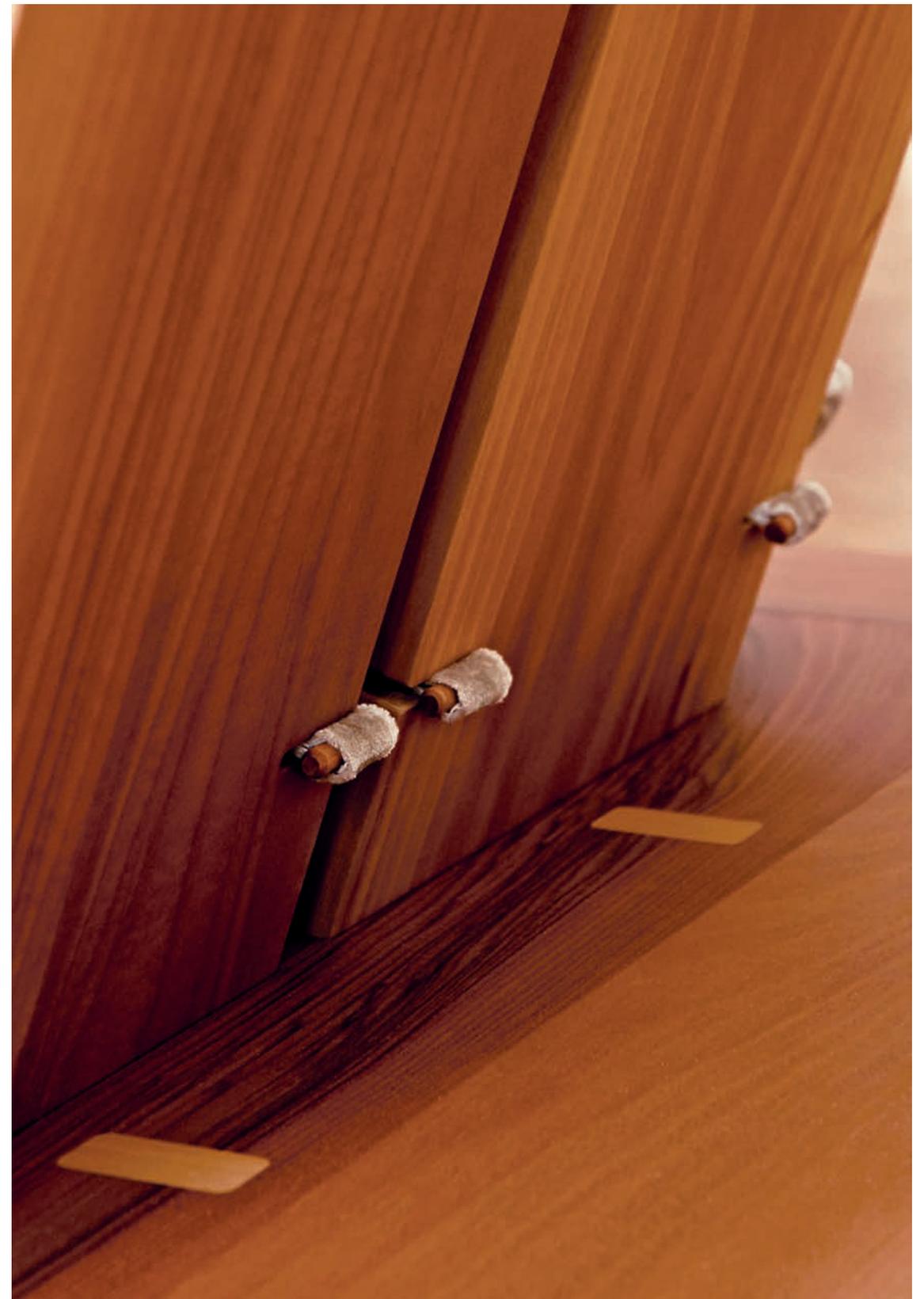


























Crafting the Functional and the Conceptual:
The Free Zone of MANIERA

Aslı Çiçek

When asked at the end of an interview whether he would like his work to be seen as sculpture or as functional objects, the Italian architect and designer Ettore Sottsass replied: "Surely not as sculpture, but as a different approach to the destiny of the object." This was not a direct answer to the question, yet it indicated the intriguing ambiguous zone where the boundaries between furniture, object, artwork and architecture blur beautifully. It is precisely this space, where a different approach to the destiny of the object can be developed, that stimulated Amaryllis Jacobs and Kwinten Lavigne to establish MANIERA in 2014.

The architectural history of the twentieth century counts many architects who moved between every level of the profession, including the realm of everyday objects. Although some of these objects and pieces of furniture were conceived as part of a bigger project, many others were designed as everyday objects in their own right, independent of any architectural work. Sottsass was a trained architect who until his fifties primarily designed everyday objects and furniture and only in his final years returned to 'buildings'. The relationship between his objects, furniture designs and later buildings is very direct, like Aldo Rossi's objects designed for daily use, which could be seen as models of buildings. On the other hand, many architects designed everyday objects that mirrored their approach rather than being a scaled-down version of a building: Adolf Loos' set of elegant glasses and carafe are not miniature versions of his architecture, but represent it by their elegance and precision; cocktail shakers designed by Kay Fisker and Arne Jacobsen fit into their oeuvre without being directly associated with the buildings they designed. The shift between scales and ideas also yielded such works as Eileen Gray's E.1027 house, which bears traces of her legendary furniture without being a blown-up version of it, and Gerrit Rietveld's Red and Blue Chair, which can be seen as a demonstration of the principles of De Stijl rather than a reflection of a singular architectural object. These few famous examples testify to architects'

MANIERA 01
**OFFICE Kersten Geers
David Van Severen**

Corner Chair
2016. Coated steel, leather,
Carrara marble
P. 07

MANIERA 01 & 19
**OFFICE Kersten Geers
David Van Severen
& Pieter Vermeersch**

Divan
2019. Coated stainless steel
P. 39, 40

Light Post
2019. Reflective and opaque
glass, aluminium
P. 57

MANIERA 02
Anne Holtrop

Barbar High Table
2018. Silver travertine
cover, **P. 21, 29, 31, 32**

Barbar Low Table
2018. Silver travertine
P. 18, 21, 22

Barbar Table Lamp
2018. Cast glass
P. 31, 32

Barbar Floor Lamp
2020. Cast glass
P. 18, 19

Shelve 03
2014. Based on the stone
collection of Roger Caillois,
Hand-painted wood
P. 28

Shelve 04
2014. Based on the stone
collection of Roger Caillois,
Hand-painted wood
P. 80, 86

Hanging Desk
2014. Based on the stone
collection of Roger Caillois,
Hand-painted wood
P. 74

MANIERA 03
Richard Venlet

Stool Solo
2016. Black rubber coated
beech, silicone cable
P. 36

Wolfers Daybed
2015. Aluminium, steel,
cork, sheepskin
P. 61, 62

Two of Hearts (Screen)
i.c.w. Ekaterina Kaplunova

2019. Wood, scarves
P. 58, 60, 61

For Fauna And Flora
i.c.w. Ekaterina Kaplunova
& Leander Venlet
2018. Brushed aluminium,
strips
P. 63, 64

MANIERA 05
**Architecten De Vylder
Vinck Taillieu**

**Kamer Renee
Floor Lamp**
2016. Oiled chipwood
P. 05

**Kamer Paolo
Side Table**
2017. Oiled chipwood
P. 05

Ensemble Side Table 1
2016. Polished, coated steel
P. 72

**Architecten Jan De Vylder
Inge Vinck**

**Carrousel Journey
Universum 2 –
Verveling (Boredom)
Verveeling (Bored-Om)
Vervelling (Molt)**
2019. Flag 12, Nylon
P. 2

MANIERA 06
**Bijoy Jain /
Studio Mumbai**

Dining Chair II
2019. Teak, bimal or silk
Cover + **P. 21, 29, 31, 32**

Gandhara Study II
2019. Sandstone
P. 20, 22, 26

Fresco Study V
2019. Bricks, black sand lime
P. 22

Folding Chair II
2016. Rosewood, brass
P. 31, 32, 33

Bamboo Study II
2019. Vermilion dyed
bamboo, bimal
P. 58, 59

Illumination Study I
2016. Brass, gold leaf, silk
P. 65, 66

Net Room
2016. Marigold dyed silk,
bamboo, bimal
P. 66, 68, 69

Bamboo Study III
2019. Bamboo, silk
P. 69

ability to deal with objects which have over time established a uniqueness and artistic quality combined with practical use.

It is not only architects who are able to switch over to art; movement in the opposite direction has also been implicit in artistic production since the last century. Salvador Dalí's coffee tables aimed to translate surrealism directly into the reality of an object, while Donald Judd's rather pragmatic furniture, which became an important and coherent part of his body of work, draws direct lines between the oeuvre of an artist and these everyday objects. But examples indicating an attitude rather than displaying clear formal connections can also be found in artistic practices that involve the design of everyday objects: Man Ray's graceful table lamp is not necessarily connected to surrealism through its design, but through its name: 'La Lune Sous Le Chapeau'. In a similar way, Isamu Noguchi's Cyclone dining table is not an immediate reminder of his sculptures, yet it reflects many aspects of them, such as the constant searching and experimentation with materials, and the interpretation of the Japanese culture in which the artist grew up and which he took with him to the USA, where he spent his later life.

The point of departure for both architects' and artists' occasional designs for furniture and everyday objects varies. As the architect Alvaro Siza pointed out in a reflection on designing objects as part of his oeuvre: "The difficulty lies in expressing the object's autonomy, which must not interfere with the autonomy of the space itself".¹ He related this difficulty to the existing space, as this is the starting point for his furniture designs, commissioned by clients for whom he conceived particular architectural projects. Much of the iconic furniture of the twentieth century was conceived in the same way, as part of an architectural project, and later acquired its autonomy from the space it was initially made for. Aware of this process and its limitations, MANIERA aims to provide architects and artists with a space, more mental than physical, in which to design objects and furniture. In this space, the designs can become

1 Alvaro Siza, On Design, p: 597, *Alvaro Siza Complete Works*, Kenneth Frampton, Phaidon Press, 2000

more autonomous, without being labelled as conceptual furniture or applied art. This interest led to a search for a suitable format which would open up the boundaries between art and architecture. Within the format of MANIERA, the team defined a generous home where artistic and architectural practices reside in equal rooms and can visit each other effortlessly. Instead of introducing a specific client or question, MANIERA invites professionals from both disciplines. The attention is not primarily focused on the aesthetics. It focuses on practitioners who develop their work using a set of principles. In close dialogue with the initiators, the invitee initiates a concept that is sometimes a reinterpretation of or a reflection on their own work, and also a reconsideration of what furniture can be. These works join the chronological list of editions. MANIERA's deliberate decision to call them editions not only liberates the designs from such expectations as compliance with mass production, but also avoids the conventional idea of a furniture 'line'. Each edition reflects a moment in the designer's work; some of the editions are presented in parallel, while others are a joint project by an artistic and an architectural practice. The notion of an 'edition' instead of a 'line' is definitely a reference to artistic production and adds to the uniqueness of the objects. By their very nature they become collector's items. Yet they are not only to be found in private settings, but also increasingly in publicly accessible museum collections such as Centre Pompidou and LACMA.

However, rather than the collector's home or the public collection, with occasional participation in design fairs, Jacobs and Lavigne value domestic surroundings that are historically relevant due to their strong architectural characteristics. This, apart from their personal interest in architecture, is also connected to the time when they held the first MANIERA exhibitions in their own home. That choice was made primarily for the financial feasibility of their project: they prioritised the production of the editions. Using their own house for exhibitions left them with resources to invest in their projects, but it also had the charm of informal home exhibitions. Holding the first shows

Bamboo Study VI
2019. Indigo dyed bamboo, silk
P. 73

Bamboo Study II
2019. bamboo, silk
P. 74

Lounge Chair III
2019. Teak, bimal
Back + P. 82

Onomichi Console
2019. Washi paper on wood, indigo
P. 82

MANIERA 07
Jonathan Muecke

WL (Wooden Light)
2019. Wood
cover + P. 21, 29, 30

CTC1 (Carbon Tube Chair 1)
2019. Carbon, leather
P. 03

CTC2 (Carbon Tube Chair 2)
2019. Carbon, leather
P. 51

CTO (Carbon Tube Ottoman)
2019. Carbon, leather
P. 51

SHELF
2016. Waxed aluminium
P. 83, 84

Arc Single
2016. Anodized aluminium, LED
P. 31, 33

Arc Double
2016. Anodized aluminium, LED
P. 56, 80

FT (Fiberglass Table)
2018. Fiberglass
P. 52, 53, 54, 55

LWC (Low Wooden Chair)
2016. Crown Oregon
P. 80

MANIERA 08
Juliaan Lampens

Eke Daybed
1960 (Ed. 2017). Foam, wool
P. 80, 86

MANIERA 09
Sophie Nys

Bank (Wolo)
2016. Painted yellow pine, leather
P. 11

Hoekkastje (Wolo)
2016. Painted yellow pine
P. 11

Kniebank (Wolo)
2016. Oak, leather
P. 11

Tafel / Stoel (Wolo)
2016. Yellow pine
P. 12, 13, 15

MANIERA 10
Valérie Mannaerts

Arbalette – Kimono, A Drawing To Wear
2016. Printed silk & cotton
P. 76, 79

Arbalette – Garment Rack, A Sculpture To Use
2016. Coated steel, Iroko wood, chrome plated wheels
P. 77, 79

MANIERA 12
Christ & Gantenbein

Athens Series Table
2017. Plastered wood
P. 37

Athens Series Side Table / Stool
2017. Olive Ash
P. 80, 86

MANIERA 13
Bojan Šarčević

Slampadato
2017. Stainless steel, mohair wool
P. 06, 08, 14

MANIERA 14
PRODUCTORA

Columbus Table
2018. Coated aluminium
P. 39, 53 unfolded on wall

MANIERA 15
Christoph Hefti

Geometric Coloured
2017. Wool, nettle, silk
P. 18, 20, 22

Three Foxes
2020. Wool, silk
P. 20, 23, 28

New Friend IV
2018. Ceramic, glaze
P. 37

Fox
2019. Wool, silk
P. 39

in their home also meant that they were surrounded by the designs that were building up to form MANIERA in small but dedicated steps.

Two years after it was launched, MANIERA moved into a proper, small gallery space and since then passers-by have been able to see its exhibitions just as much as interested visitors. But the passion inherent to its concept continues: the love of architectural spaces designed with great care from roof to door handle. The choice of the house as a typology indicates the importance of intimate, private spaces where the furniture forms part of life more personally than in public places. Moreover, houses that are conceived with architectural sensitivity as a means of organising everyday life attract MANIERA because of their well-arranged interiors and specific stories. Between 2015 and 2020 three such houses in Belgium provided the setting for some MANIERA editions. In response, the editions entered into dialogue with the architecture. The Wolfers House, a bourgeois house built by Henry Van de Velde in 1930, was the first such building used for an exhibition by the Belgian artist Richard Venlet on the occasion of MANIERA 03, and by 6a architects from the UK for MANIERA 04. For Venlet, the building and its current state had already been a source of inspiration for ten years prior to MANIERA's invitation. The occasion enabled the artist to take up the work again by re-installing the silver-plated doors that were part of Van de Velde's design and also to add a piece of furniture, a daybed in the shape of the building's floorplan. The Wolfers House dates from the time when Van de Velde adopted Modernism and it is organised with great clarity. Even though Van de Velde's career was rooted in the ornamental Art Deco movement, he later devoted his oeuvre to 'liberating the world from its ugliness' through functionalist design. When its current owner, the art collector Herman Daled, bought the house in 1977, he deliberately did not renovate it or adapt it to a contemporary way of living. This not only creates an unusual space but

also triggers reflections on the question: 'how can one live with monuments'², as Bart Verschaffel noted in a publication on the occasion of MANIERA's exhibition. With this question in mind, and being far removed from any glossy architectural tourism, the Wolfers House provided the exhibition with a private, strangely intimate atmosphere, empty and undomesticated.

Four editions later, MANIERA invited the American architect Jonathan Muecke to take up residence in Belgium for a week. The location was the Van Wassenhoeve House, built by the Belgian architect Juliaan Lampens in the seventies. Completely different from the Wolfers House, which is located in a Brussels suburb, the Van Wassenhoeve House is in the Flemish countryside. Van de Velde organised his floor plans with rooms assigned to specific functions whereas, by contrast, in his projects Lampens demonstrated his belief in the open living concept. Lampens' architecture, more domesticated and well maintained than the Wolfers House, was the accompaniment to the five pieces Muecke designed for MANIERA 07. These directly or indirectly refer to the Van Wassenhoeve House and the architect. When the show was on in the house the pieces formed a natural part of the interior and exterior.

These exhibitions in 'other surroundings' were important to the early development of MANIERA, and not only because the houses were special. Their forceful presence alluded to the issue of the difficult balance between the autonomy of the object and of the space, to which Alvaro Siza referred. The autonomy of a piece of furniture can result in a very selfish presence that does not easily tolerate the existence of others. Interiors filled with self-aware, iconic pieces from design history, due to the combination of their appeal and their functionality, would usually be utterly boring spaces, both imposing and uninspiring. When MANIERA organised a larger exhibition of pieces chosen from all the editions made between 2016 and 2020, the rooms of the De Beir House became the absolute opposite of uninspiring. They called it their summer residence and it harked

² Bart Verschaffel, *The Wolfers House by Henry van de Velde, as occupied by Herman Daled*, published on the occasion of Hotel Wolfers, Richard Venlet, FOREST 2015

Leaves
2018. Wool, silk
P. 52, 53, 54

Geometric Natural
2017. Wool, nettle, silk
P. 82

MANIERA 16
Marie-José Van Hee
i.c.w. **Maison Marie Mees**
Cathérine Biasino

Bed-Bank
2017. Painted oak, cedar,
wool, leather
P. 70, 72

Kussen
2017. Wool
P. 72

MANIERA 17
Piovenefabi

Metrò Cabinet
2017. Coated steel, leather
P. 04

Metrò Lamp
2017. Coated steel
P. 17

Light Conversation Pieces
2017. Gneiss
P. 34, 35, 75

Metrò Coffee Table
2017. Silipol
P. 39, 40

MANIERA 18
Brandlhuber+

Brutiful Stool 0213
2018. Concrete
P. 38, 49

MANIERA 20
Stéphane Barbier Bouvet

Kaiser Kraft Bench
2018. Galvanized steel
P. 33

Contract Chair
2012. Stainless steel
P. 37

Untitled – Floor Lamp
2019. Galvanized steel, plexi
P. 39

Post War Masters – Luminator
2018. Chromed steel
P. 50

Post War Masters – Potence
2010. Chromed steel
P. 53, 55

Untitled – Steel Mirror
2020. Stainless steel
P. 77, 79

MANIERA 21
Bernard Dubois & Isaac Reina

Petite Chaise
2020. Oak, varnish
P. 20, 23, 24, 25

Grande Table Pliable
2020. Leather on wood
P. 20, 23

Petite Table Pliable
2020. Leather on wood
P. 83, 85

Lampe
2020. Leather on wood
P. 74

MANIERA 22
Francesca Torzo

Ottomano
2020. Walnut, foam, goose
feathers, silk velvet
P. 18

Ottomano Sample
2020. Walnut, foam, goose
feathers, silk velvet
P. 21, 27, 57

SO - IL

Small Frame
2018. Stainless steel
P. 39

Michaël Van Den Abeele

Ottoman
2018. Denim
P. 72

Marta Armengol

The First Fold (Spatial Randomness & Mystery of Chance)
2020. Blown and unblown
Borosilicate glass
P. 77, 78, 79

Spazio Cura

Extension
2018. Marble
P. 80

back to the time when they started in their own house: they lived, worked and cooked in this house, built by the Belgian modernist architect Huib Hoste in 1925, throughout the summer. The building is a townhouse on a street corner in Knokke, a Belgian coastal resort. It is a celebration of the ideas of De Stijl, easily detectable since it is the only interesting piece of architecture amidst the generic fabric of the town centre. The interiors of the house also have strong features resulting from the varying proportions of the rooms and beautiful natural light, in its materials not decorative but tactile. MANIERA created a domestic setting for the De Beir House, grouping several works from the editions in dialogue with each other. From a rug to a large comfortable seat, from a kimono as a room divider to inelegant concrete stools, from a simple corner cupboard to a mirror, and many others. The pieces selected from all the editions demonstrated several approaches to the design of everyday objects and furniture. Like dancers with different but well-trained bodies, all the pieces contributed to a balanced, elegant choreography with the De Beir House as the stage.

What the houses MANIERA has visited have in common is the concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk, which in our day and age has become a purely nostalgic notion because it is so financially unfeasible. Whether it was in the ornamental Art Deco or the counter-movements that led to the rationality of Modernism, the idea involved carefully conceived environments embracing every scale of design. As the name implies, a Gesamtkunstwerk involves the 'other' disciplines and skills. To some extent, the free zone MANIERA provides to architects and artists once again opens up the possibility of a Gesamtkunstwerk, though not in the normal sense of the word: a composition involving several disciplines in one overall production. The way MANIERA engages with it relates more to the totality of its designers' oeuvre and hence introduces a different interpretation of the term. Whether it is a bench or a piece of clothing, the editions allude to the entire scope of an architectural or artistic practice. By inviting someone to design a piece, their practices are

freed from the pressure of external or internal demands; in other words the question of design concentrates on the object, which is able to demonstrate interests, fascinations and methods. Parallel to this, however, the designs have very ordinary requirements: a chair has to be a stable object upon which the weight of a person can be distributed equally, a screen should not collapse at a mere touch, a bottle opener should simply help to open a bottle. To satisfy these requirements, the production of each edition is entrusted to meticulous craftsmen brought in by the designers or MANIERA. Craftsmanship is not reduced to simple execution, however; rather, it involves a common understanding of and care for the designs to be realised. Without this aspect, the uniqueness of the objects would suffer, as the designs would lack refinement and a translation to materiality and sophisticated detailing.

Seen from the perspective of the Gesamtkunstwerk, MANIERA editions achieve a totality of concept beyond the scale of the object. After more than twenty editions, the format MANIERA's founders aimed to establish seems to be confirming itself, since all the editions bear signs of the 'other' discipline, whether seen from architect's side or the artist's. The pieces, together or on their own, contain the stories of their authors and traces of their oeuvres. The joy both architects and artists seem to have in operating in the realm offered by MANIERA is reflected in the pieces. None of them are entirely functional or conceptual, some lean more to one side than the other, and perhaps not all the editions are everyone's cup of tea. The exclusivity of the pieces might be considered unfashionable, especially in contemporary societies connected through consumerism that favour quantity over quality. "As bad ideas should not be accepted because they are fashionable, good ideas should not be rejected because they are unfashionable",³ as Donald Judd wrote in his essay *It's Hard to Find a Good Lamp*. Both the quote and the title are true, but with what MANIERA has built up over the last six years there are already a few good lamps to be found in the design story of the 21st century.

Erwin De Muer

Lamp
2018. Ceramic, glaze
P. 82

Courtesy of
Pierre Marie Giraud
Yoshiro Kimura
Hekiyu Renmonko
2020. Porcelain, cobalt
enamel
P. 18, 22

Sterling Ruby
Quilt/SPCEBLUE
2015. Bleached and dyed
canvas, elastic
P. 29, 30

Sterling Ruby
Ashtray 466
2019, Ceramic, glazes
P. 29, 30

Sterling Ruby
Clubs (6723, 6837, 6842)
2018, Ceramic, glazes
P. 31

MANIERA
Summer Residency 2020

Location:
De Beir House
(aka Zwart Huis),
1925, Huib Hoste,
Knokke, Belgium

Text:
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Edited by Gregory Ball

Graphic Design:
Michaël Bussaer

Photography:
Jeroen Verrecht
Cover + P. 2, 3, 8, 11,
18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 28,
29, 31, 34, 35, 38, 39,
53, 54, 55, 57, 62, 66,
74, 75, 80, 83

Frederick Verduytsse
Back + P. 4, 5, 6, 7, 32,
33, 36, 37, 40, 68, 69,
70, 72, 73, 84

Martina Björn
P. 12, 13, 14, 15, 17,
24, 25, 26, 27, 49, 50,
51, 52, 56, 58, 59, 61,
61, 64, 65, 77, 78, 79,
86, 87

Thanks to: Herwig en
Eliane Van de Velde –
Stellamans, Pierre Marie
Giraud, Thierry Struvay



³ Donald Judd, *It is Hard to Find a Good Lamp*, published in the catalogue of the exhibition 'Donald Judd: Furniture' in Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, 1993

