

Trend Report
24 - 25

Augmented Creativity

Woodcrafts And Textile Futures

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24 - 25**

Augmented Creativity

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Intro by Fedustria CEO Karla Basselier

This is a story of WE

We live in undeniably complex times.

Competitive pressure is rising. We understand the seriousness of these challenges, but we hope that every crisis also brings opportunity.

Change is inevitable

In a fast-changing world, industries must constantly adapt to stay relevant, both now and in the future. Innovation and a forward-thinking mindset are crucial to staying resilient.

This is why trends matter. They provide valuable insights and a roadmap for innovation, guiding businesses to maintain relevance. It's not just about following trends but understanding their impact and applying them effectively.

Resilience is a choice

As a federation, we have a shared responsibility to build a bright future. We must lead by helping companies focus on innovation and sustainability, ensuring resilience in their commitment to people, profit, and the planet. By staying attuned to trends, fostering partnerships, and listening to all generations, we need to drive progress rather than fall behind.

Embrace trends to thrive in uncertainty

WATF — Woodcrafts and Textile Futures — highlights innovation and craftsmanship.

This trends report shares inspiring stories from the textile, wood, and furniture industries. Stories of resilience, creativity, and reinvention. It showcases the strengths of companies that will drive the next wave of progress and set the foundation for long-term success.

WATF — Woodcrafts and Textile Futures — aims to unite heritage and the future, bringing together industry and young talent. It's not just a tool for today but a resource to inspire the next generation of consumers and employees who will shape the future of our industries.

We are proud to present our newest trend report, *Augmented Creativity*, created together, across industries and generations, blending heritage and innovation.

What are the questions we worry about the most in 2024?

— **Worrier-Warrior**

**CHATGPT
(ANNO SEP. 2024)**

1. **Climate Change And Environmental Sustainability**
2. **Economic Instability And Inflation**
3. **Geopolitical Tensions And Global Security**
4. **Artificial Intelligence And Technology**
5. **Health And Pandemics**

Don't we need to prepare our society for a world that will be different tomorrow than it is today?

— **Jan Merckx
Co-Founder CiLAB Collective**

“We live in unprecedented times”, it's often said, but now more than ever, the times we live in are unprecedented. As realities shift and old systems crumble, what once felt familiar now seems unrecognisable. We radically realise that the time of 'business as usual' is over and—with a joke, a frown and a healthy dose of defiance, we're trying to do things differently to get things done differently.

This is the punk-rock-on-steroids era of brats and robotics, TikTok justice, and AI generation, where the lines between the virtual and the real grow blurrier and blurrier. There's a need to return to the handmade of the past to compensate for the loss of tactility in today's digital world. Material matters, and we understand the urgency of doing more with less. We re-source, reuse, repair, and reinvent, blending technological efficiency with human expertise to shape new business models and sustainable realities. Social awareness is growing, alongside the realisation that real change requires collaboration. The force can only be with us when we work together.

The time has come to write radically different stories. It's time for a little disruption—some playfulness, scribbling, and coloring outside the lines. A touch of chaos to bring order to the chaos. Now is the perfect moment to reintroduce colour, humour, experimentation, and imagination, pushing the boundaries of what seems impossible!

We must turn responsibility into opportunity and re-think the legacy we build and leave behind, because every day we choose what tomorrow will look like. Let's seize the day to come together across generations, to celebrate and Augment our Creativity!

Don't we need to prepare our society for a world that will be different tomorrow than it is today?

— **Jan Merckx
Co-Founder CiLAB Collective**

Augmented Creativity: Questions, Answers & Creativity

In times that provoke countless questions, we're driven to find answers. Answers are always at our fingertips, but sometimes hidden in the most obscure, unexpected corners – or only revealed when we view things through a humorous and playful lens. The hunt for answers can be challenging, but it's also exciting and full of surprises!

We've built our 2024 trend report for our Woodcrafts and Textile industries, 'Augmented Creativity', around four key questions:

- How do we create in and for a changing world?
- How do we honour our past?
- How do we augment our creativity?
- How do we unite human impact with industrial innovation?

The answers?! Well, believe it or not, our ever-innovative industries and courageous young generations already hold many of the answers!

There's an alternative to adopting a wait-and-see attitude and that's innovation.

— **Klaas Holsters
Wood.be**

How do we create in and for a changing world?

360° VISION

The complexity of our rapidly changing societies challenges us to think differently and adopt a 360° vision. We need to think long-term while remaining agile and adaptable. We think holistically: considering ourselves, but without disregarding the needs of those around us and our planet.

As the Belgian Foundation for Future Generations, dedicated to the transition towards a sustainable development mode, states: “We need to think 360°-wise, taking into account four dimensions, simultaneously: people, planet, prosperity and participation”.

What we try to show at Bakermat is that, with the whole sustainability question comes a lot of responsibility.

— **Cedric Jacquemyn**
Co-Founder Bakermat

We can't afford to wait for solutions; we must create them. It's time to stop shying away from the much-feared word responsibility, because the future brings plenty of it, and with it, opportunities. We need to dare to ask ourselves the difficult question: “Is the way we've always done things still working today, and does it offer the solutions we need for tomorrow?”.

Sustainability equals analysing every single part of our business and processes, R&D, assessing and re-assessing. It's time to lighten up: shedding what we need to lose in order to embrace new ways of thinking, producing, consuming, collaborating and discarding.

The devil is in the details, everything needs to be questioned. Detail, dedication, niche, specialisation, expertise, are key words of the future.

We must connect all the dots from beginning to end, so that endings can become new beginnings, and beginnings new endings that start again. (Are you still following?!) This playful mind game reflects the closed loop and necessary cycle of circularity

We should think about designing furniture that can completely disappear and disintegrate into nature without leaving a trace.

— **Marieke De Backer**
Young Furniture Designer

BEST PRACTICES

SONIAN BRUSSELS

Sonian is a highly specialised atelier working exclusively with unique hardwood from the Belgian Sonian Forest. They're dedicated to sustainability and quality. From locally harvested wood to contemporary design, Sonian sustains a harmonious ecosystem which closes the gap between wood source and final design through meaningful collaborations with designers and trusted partners. Sonian's approach guarantees full traceability from the tree to the delivered object. They also have a specialised workshop, their own collection and a shop. Sonian Brussels exhibits with other galleries and fairs internationally.
www.sonian.brussels



SEAT SHELL BY MARIEKE DE BACKER (VOMO GRADUATE)
Youth section at the back of the publication

No one explains 360° vision design better than the talented, young furniture designer, Marieke De Backer: “Seat Shell is the design and personal story I'm most proud of. I reflected on how I could create a design that addresses waste reduction, repurposes materials, and results in a furniture piece with minimal environmental impact. Seat Shell is made from Belgium's most iconic restaurant waste: mussel and oyster shells. I collected the shells from seafood restaurants and crafted a deck chair from them. The shells are bound together with natural glue. The bench is alive and, through erosion, it eventually reintegrates into its natural environment—the sea. Everything that comes from the ocean returns to the ocean, leaving no harmful trace.”
www.mariekedebacker.be

SUSTAINABLE YARNS BY BEAULIEU INTERNATIONAL GROUP

Can yarns change the world? B.I.G. Group thinks they can! With Sustainable Yarns B.I.G. Group applies a 360° future-forward vision on different levels. In design and production: their different sustainable yarns are produced with renewable sources, low impact PA6 (a polymer, high-performance engineering plastic) and/or recycled or reclaimed content. In knowledge and partnerships: Sustainable Yarns aims to carry the message for a greener future far and wide! It's an inspiring information platform about everything sustainability that strives to present non-fluff information based on solid research and shows inspiring stories and case studies from companies who have already implemented sustainable solutions.
www.sustainableyarns.com
www.watf.news/article/a-greener-future



HNST JEANS

HNST is a young, Antwerp based, jeans company dedicated to the great responsibility and continuous research the green revolution needs. HNST dissects all production processes, from using post-consumer waste yarns to finding the cleanest alternatives for different finishing processes and using natural dyeing methods. HNST insists on ethical, safe and healthy working conditions and only partners with European suppliers. Conventional jeans can travel up to 60.000km from farm to closet, HNST jeans travels one tenth of that. Moreover, HNST wants to empower their customers to love and use their HNST jeans for as long as possible. To infuse more love into denim, they offer a repair service and jeans can be sent back for recycling when they expire.
www.letsbehonest.eu

ZILLION CYCLES BY JOB DRÖGE

Zillion Cycles, a textile start-up founded by third-generation textile expert Job Dröge, offers companies a solution to make their textile use fully circular. Combining years of expertise with innovative technology, Zillion Cycles develops 100% mono-material products that can be endlessly recycled without quality loss. The company provides a complete closed-loop solution for businesses across sectors, helping them comply with increasingly strict EU regulations. By focusing on mono-materials like polyester (PET), which can easily be recycled into new textiles, Zillion Cycles ensures sustainable textile production while conserving natural resources and reducing CO2 emissions. Additionally, their innovative RFID tag technology allows for full traceability of each product throughout its lifecycle, promoting responsible recycling.
www.zillioncycles.com

ERGOSLEEP® BY LS BEDDING

The LS Bedding group designs, fabricates and markets differentiating, high-quality and ergonomically safe sleep concepts and systems. They offer a relevant solution for specific target groups within the sleep market. The company works tirelessly on excelling in relevant innovation, meaningful differentiation, and superior customer intimacy and service. With their main brand Ergosleep®, they do just that! Ergosleep® provides unique personalised support, offering the ultimate sleep comfort. It literally "fits your sleep": after a personal measurement in the Ergosleep® Cocoon, the customer's basic profile – the common aspects when laying on your side and on your back – is built into the slatted base or box spring based on the client's SLEEP DNA®. This individual profile evolves with the customer and can be adapted over time. Adaptation to various sleeping positions is carried out individually by the flexible support elements and slats of the Ergosleep® slatted base or the zoned spring packet of the Ergosleep® box spring. The according mattress suited to the client's SLEEP DNA® effects the fine-tuning. Its special design includes comfort zones to optimally transfer the support of the base to the sleeping body. Ergosleep® is a perfect combination of ergonomics and aesthetics with a 360° vision.
www.lsbedding.com/en/ergosleep

SHINNOKI BY DECOSPAN

The latest innovation by Decospan, a European market leader in wood veneer processing, Shinnoki is a beautiful example of a 360° vision when it comes to design and user experience. Shinnoki is transforming the wood industry by making complex products accessible and user-friendly. Traditional wood often requires extensive finishing, making it challenging for customers to visualize the final result. With Shinnoki's pre-finished wood panels, what you see is truly what you get—simplifying the selling process and ensuring effortless application. Our new enhanced collection features an advanced, durable finish that not only enhances their aesthetic appeal but also provides superior scratch resistance and protection against spills, making them also ideal for horizontal surfaces. Experience the perfect blend of innovation and practicality with Shinnoki, where stunning design meets everyday usability.
www.decospan.com



Our mission is to inform people that the makers' industry in Europe has a future in innovation and sustainability.

— Gerlinde Verherbrugghen
Responsible Market Development
B.i.g. Yarns

THE ACQUIRED

“Let’s break the trend of fashion guilt!” is the motto of The Acquired by stylish Lynn Mikołajczak. With The Acquired, Lynn wants to tackle the root of the fashion problem: our wardrobes. Lynn: “Our wardrobes are often a source of frustration and insecurity, fueling a cycle of over-consumption and over-production. It is time to break this cycle.” The Acquired puts you back in control of your wardrobe with the power and convenience of technology and the human art of styling. The Acquired app helps you to save time, shop smart, get the most out of the clothes you already have, and be the best version of yourself every day. The process is simple: Download The Acquired App and create a free account, inventorise your clothes or enlist the help of a The Acquired stylist, start putting outfits together, receive recommendations and let The Acquired manage your items from styling to resale and from purchase to rental. Better style, better shopping and better for the planet, what more can a fashionista want?

www.the-acquired.com/en

TURNING LESS INTO MORE

II

Waste Underestimated – A defining characteristic of any waste stream is its continuous production. Companies continue to produce, resulting in an ongoing generation of waste & resources.

— Tom De Koninck
Furniture Designer

To embrace a 360° vision, we must reverse design processes, prioritise circular thinking, and re-evaluate resources. Since 80% of a product’s environmental impact is decided at the design stage, we can’t underestimate the role design plays. Our process begins with raw materials, valuing what we have rather than creating new ones.

What used to be waste now serves as building blocks—materials we can disassemble, reassemble, or recycle. Residual streams are even converted into energy that powers our production.

Wood cannot be recycled indefinitely. What happens with the waste wood? It’s incinerated in green energy plants where we generate our own green energy!

— Lasse Six
Unilin

We not only draw circles, but also butterflies!
Butterfly Circularity, introduced by the Ellen

MacArthur Foundation is a model that highlights how biological and technical materials can circulate in a sustainable system. On the biological side, renewable and biodegradable resources are designed to safely return to nature. On the technical side, durable materials like metals and plastics are kept in circulation through reuse, repair, recycling, and remanufacturing, minimising waste and resource extraction. Together, these cycles promote a regenerative economy that reduces environmental impact by prioritising longevity, resource efficiency, and ecological balance.

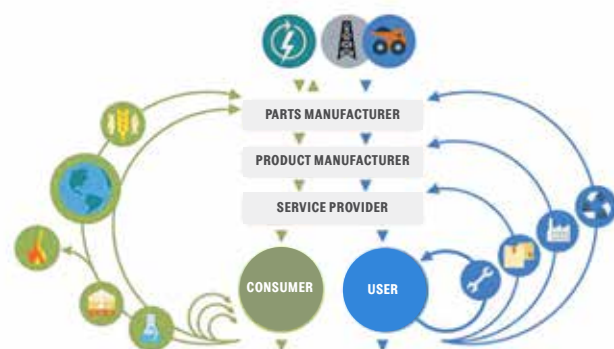
Through a thoughtful process, I create a piece of furniture from a single beam of laminated wood. As the design takes shape, the beam’s character re-emerges. A beam that originally had only one function now has the potential to interact with both space and its users, redefining its potential.

— Miguel Vanwetter
Young Furniture Designer

Designers challenge their creativity by using a single material or even creating entire collections from one source. This approach drives innovation, simplifies processes, and reduces resource use. Doing more with less promotes a deeper connection between the creator and the material, accumulating in designs that are both minimalistic and meaningful.

Repurposed industrial elements, shaped by life and nature, now redefine aesthetics—blending craftsmanship with industrial brutalism and natural touches.

— Butterfly Circular Model
Ellen MacArthur Foundation



Butterfly Circularity Model – Ellen MacArthur Foundation

ROVER BY TOM DE KONINCK (VOMO GRADUATE)

Youth section at the back of the publication

ROVER. ro-ver (noun; m/f/x; plural: rovers) 1. someone who ‘plunders’ waste materials from large industries and gives them a new life Young furniture designer Tom De Koninck is as passionate as they come when it comes to sustainable design. His VOMO graduation project ROVER inventories and reuses waste streams from local industries in furniture production, starting with industrial waste in his hometown Aalst. The method developed in the project reverses the traditional design process. ROVER begins with what already exists. Tom aims to change the perception of waste streams and add a new step to the lifecycle of materials.

www.r-o-v-e-r.com



PURFI BY CONCORDIA TEXTILES

“There’s no such thing as textile waste. Not if you can rejuvenate it”. Purfi, revolutionary brainchild of Concordia Textiles, dedicates itself to rejuvenating quality fibres from one of the most undervalued raw materials on earth: textile waste. Purfi collects a variety of materials from partners, including pre-consumer, post-consumer and post-industrial materials. With more than 20 patents and 35 trade secrets related to textile rejuvenation, Purfi is a unique method to collect and repurpose textile waste from all over the world. By maintaining the length and strength of each fibre, it delivers high-quality products labelled ‘Powered by Purfi’. Every fiber batch is equipped with a tracker for its entire life cycle, so consumers can be assured to have 100% Purfi fibers.

www.purfi.com



MARGOT VAN DEN BERGHE

Youth section at the back of the publication

Young textile designer Margot van den Berghe is passionate about restoring what are often considered ‘worthless’ materials, turning them into valuable creations to combat overproduction.

She works with leftover materials, minimises waste, and produces carefully crafted textiles full of love. She describes her design process: “I love being challenged in my creative process. Finding resourceful ways to use the materials at my disposal fascinates me. I nurture the various waste streams I hunt and gather until something new and valuable emerges”.

www.instagram.com/margotvandenbergh



GREEN ENERGY PLANTS – UNILIN

“It is our ambition to recycle wood as long as possible. Unfortunately, wood cannot be recycled indefinitely because the fibres have become too degraded. What happens to the waste wood that can no longer be used to manufacture high-grade products? Smart incineration in our green power plants to generate our own green energy!” Today Unilin has two green energy plants in a joint venture with green energy specialists Aspiravi. These two Belgian plants account for a considerable portion of the energy needs of two production sites. The plant in Wielsbeke covers over 90% of the energy needs of Unilin’s chipboard plant, and what’s more, it even generates additional energy. The remaining green energy is exported to the grid to benefit local families. The green energy plants constitute the final piece of the puzzle in Unilin’s circular wood narrative.

www.unilin.com



MODEL – REMODEL – MODULAR

III

We’re designing for a world with new profiles and needs. Gen Zalpha, urban and mobile, thrives on speed and fluidly navigates both online and offline spaces. They’re generations of extremes: virtual natives and digital detoxers, TikTokers and monochrome luddites, minimalists and uber-materialists, fast fashion over-consumers

but also slow fashion advocates... To meet the evolving demands of these instant gratification generations, we need flexible, modular, and sustainable designs that adapt quickly, are cost-effective, socially responsible, sustainable and travel with ease. Modular concepts create new connections with what we own. They allow us to reshape our belongings frequently, fostering a deeper, co-creative relationship with the objects we use, blending function with beauty in our daily lives.

NUMBERS

56%

2024: ca. 56% – 58% of global population lives in urban environments = ca. 4.5 billion people reside in cities or urban areas

70%

By 2050: nearly 70% of the world's population will live in urban areas

60%

With a global population of around 8 billion people, TikTok's 1.7 billion monthly active users represent roughly 21.25% of the global population. Gen Z (ages 10-25) constitutes the largest segment of TikTok users, around 60%

6.8%

The global modular construction market size was valued at USD 84.63 billion in 2023. The market is projected to grow from USD 89.64 billion to USD 151.48 billion by 2032, exhibiting a CAGR of 6.8% during the forecast period

BEST PRACTICES

BUZZIBRACKS BY BUZZISPACE

Since 2007, BuzziSpace's main driving force has been to produce effective and high-quality acoustic solutions, lighting, and furniture for ever-changing workspaces that are both functional and inspiring. BuzziBracks is a modular workspace that allows you to design your own (home)office by modelling and remodelling the modular unit system. Its dynamic, metal framework can be created and recreated according to everyday needs, either for a meeting, taking calls, focusing or collaborating. The curtains add an extra layer of functionality, acting as an acoustic and visual shield to the outside world.

www.buzzi.space

EUREKA BY NONAH WOUTERS (VOMO GRADUATE)

Youth section at the back of the publication

Nonah's VOMO graduation project, 'Eureka', is best described as: the stool that connects. The Eureka Stool is designed with a distinctive dovetail joint that enables several stools to seamlessly connect, transforming them into a bench. By adding a corner piece various configurations can be created, including angled corners by stacking two stools together. Made from durable and affordable pine, the stool is crafted with efficiency in mind. The legs are cut from a single plank at an angle to reduce material waste. The continuous wood grain forms an elegant pattern that accentuates the wood's natural beauty. The stools are produced in sets, ensuring the wood grain flows consistently across each piece.

www.instagram.com/studio_now

QUICK CLIP BY CARPENTIER

Family business since 1958, Carpentier imports and processes sustainable and stable wood for both indoor and outdoor use and strives to move with the times. Carpentier's QuickClip® products are modular and circular, made from high-quality wood, together with the unique Grad® fastening system they offer a seamless finish and quick installation for facades, ceilings, wall coverings and gates. The clips are pre-mounted on the substructure at the correct spacing. This results in an exceptional experience for the end customer and significant time savings for the professional. QuickClip® products are circular. You can easily click off and remove the wooden profiles using a set of dismantling keys. They can be completely disassembled and reassembled.

www.carpentier.be



Skilpod was founded in 2012 and is on a mission to revolutionize the construction world. Uncommon designs, unusually fast, unexpectedly durable and an uncomplicated process, that's Skilpod's motto! Skilpod strives for a world where owning a home isn't reserved for the lucky few, but where everyone has access to a stylish and solid home, without compromising on price, quality or sustainability. Skilpod builds homes and apartments that are meticulously finished in advance. Not tiny houses or temporary care homes, but real, full-fledged homes. Their large team of in-house specialists designs Skilpods of the highest quality. www.skilpod.com

UNVEILING IDENTITIES

BY JESSICA VAN WINCKEL (KASK GHENT GRADUATE)

Youth section at the back of the publication

Talented young fashion designer Jessica Van Winckel presents her «Unveiling Identities» collection as both an artistic and activist expression from a feminist perspective. The collection draws inspiration from her personal experiences with harassment based on her clothing choices. Through interviews and street interactions, she explored how perceptions of clothing and people are shaped. Notable in her designs are adjustable silhouettes, which offer wearers great freedom of expression, allowing them to reflect their identities by wearing each piece in multiple ways. A shirt becomes a dress, offering versatility. Jessica's aim is to raise awareness and promote individuality, free from judgment. Be who you want to be.

www.instagram.com/jessfranvanwinckel

ECONIC BY DRISAG

A Belgian family business since 1970, Drisag is proof of our industries' resilience and flexibility. An interior design specialist, Drisag creates, designs and manufactures interior solutions that put a smile on everyone's face. From offices to student homes and even care environments, Drisag offers Belgian production and specialisation. One of their newest office chair designs, Econic, is ergonomic, ecological and iconic. In a world where adaptability is becoming an ever-increasing asset, Econic is made to fit any user or working environment. Drisag focuses on disassembly, replaceability and reusability. The Econic design is so versatile that new designs can emerge for many years to come. Each Econic comes with a QR code, in this way the user has all the information about their favourite ergonomic office chair within reach.

www.drisag.be



I want to show people how things work, where connections lie, in the most honest way possible, hiding nothing.

— Nona Van Laethem
Young Furniture Designer

Purity and transparency have become a love language, a marker of authenticity, and a commitment to trustworthiness and sustainability for a consumer who is increasingly well-informed, critical, and demanding. But it's not only the consumer driving the push for different approaches. New legislation for a greener future is rapidly approaching, making transparency – and sustainability – an absolute must, especially for our industries! The European Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR), which came into force on 18 July 2024, is the cornerstone of the Commission's approach to more environmentally sustainable and circular products. It's part of the European Union's broader Circular Economy Action Plan and enables the setting of performance and information conditions – known as 'ecodesign requirements' – for almost all categories of physical goods. The ESPR identifies a Digital Product Passport (DPP) as key, enhancing the traceability of products and their components.

The industry will need a mindset shift as we move into a world where transparency becomes the standard. Consumers will increasingly reject products that fail to meet these expectations.

— Mathias Slabbinck
Quifactum

BEST PRACTICES

SUKI BY NONA VAN LAETHEM (VOMO GRADUATE)

Youth section at the back of the publication

The Suki lighting collection by Nona Van Laethem is literally transparent, both in design as in the young designer's philosophy. Suki embodies the seamless integration of traditional craftsmanship and cutting-edge technology. Traditional techniques like welding are combined with 3D printing to create a design that explores the boundaries of movement, transformation, and interaction. Honesty and transparency are very

important to Nona. In a literal way, her designs are transparent and show the mechanism of lighting and what the design is made of to the naked. Nona: "Suki's design enables the user to see and understand the mechanism of the object. At the same time, it reveals the honesty of my creative process".

www.instagram.com/nona.vanlaethem

QUIFACTUM

Transparency is the DNA of Quifactum! Quifactum is dedicated to pioneering digital product passport technology that enables brands to seamlessly integrate sustainability into their operations, promote circularity and foster trust with consumers. Founder Mathias Slabbinck: "We're here to help companies in the required transition towards the Digital Product Passport, and we want to show them how to make a virtue out of a necessity. We help to ease this transition and create added value".

www.quifactum.com

THEUNS

In 1934 Frans Theuns started producing oak furniture using handmade machines, 90 years later Theuns is still standing and committed to full transparency in its processes. The family business is known for its solid oak furniture. Theuns only works with suppliers who follow certified sustainable forestry practices. They promote transparency by clearly indicating their sources of oak and by ensuring all suppliers are certified for ecological reclamation of forests. Their business model is centered on sustainability and responsible sourcing.

www.theuns.be



RESOURCING RESOURCES

V

In order to keep a large group of people alive and thriving on our small yet big planet, we need to increase our R&D efforts on new biomaterials like mycelium. Funghi and their mycelia have the incredible power to transform waste streams into something new and useful. That makes me hopeful for the future.

— **Sylvia Gilis**
MycaNova®

Unlocking the innovation skills of the human mind, chapter one: when we're faced with an impending

shortage of resources is when we become most resourceful. Read that again. The importance of continuous education and re-education has never been this clear. We need to continuously re-skill ourselves, re-evaluate what we teach, and merge industry knowledge, practical experience and academics. In a global and connected world, expertise and excellence are found all over the world, we can all learn from each other.

It's about taking the best from different worlds, knowing that we can all learn from each other. When it comes to new and bio-based materials, for example, Europeans, are late compared to some other parts of the world. We've got to re-skill ourselves.

— **Luna Aslan**
Noosa™ Fiber

We must continue to invest in R&D, adoption and creation of new technologies are pivotal. Science will become even more important; chemists and engineers are highly sought-after profiles. Materials will need to become smarter (e.g. smart textiles) and perform even higher in a more demanding society. And nature? Nature remains our endless source of inspiration.

The emergence of new, advanced materials is both serious and playful! MycaNova® vegan leather bags made from mycelium, high-performance sportswear made with Noosa™ Fiber yarn spun from sugar transformed into lactic acid, Komrads sneakers with soles made from discarded sneakers... Resourcefulness with a twist, and high performing!

I got very intrigued by celloderm, a material that, unfortunately, had faded into forgottenness. I discovered its incredible properties and decided to conduct extensive research to shed new light on this wonderful material.

— **Inès Vaughan**
Young Industrial Designer

While exploring new resources for innovative materials, there's also a renewed appreciation for traditional, forgotten ones. These age-old materials, rich in history and craftsmanship, are revived with modern technologies and information access. This revival underscores nature's timeless value and demonstrates how innovation and heritage can shape a sustainable, creative future.

NOOSA™ FIBER

Noosa™ Fiber, a bio-renewable and endlessly recyclable fiber, was created by a Brussels-based start-up founded in 2019. Specializing in sustainable R&D, the company has developed a process allowing 100% recycling of both the fabric and the fiber at the end of its lifecycle. Made from sugars converted into lactic acid, Noosa™ Fiber offers a sustainable, high-performance alternative to materials like polyester and cotton. Once products reach the end of their life, Noosa™ can fully recycle them into new, virgin-quality fiber, with no degradation or loss of properties. www.noosafiber.com

MYCANOVA® BY CITRIBEL

The world of advanced materials is certainly an intriguing one! An example that speaks to the imagination is MycaNova® by Citribel. Citribel is the only genuinely circular producer of citric acid, citrates and other high-value co-products through natural surface fermentation of sugar molasses. MycaNova® is a next-generation biomaterial made with sustainably grown mycelium, a root-like structure of a fungus no less! In search of a variety of functions of mycelium powder, Citribel questioned if it couldn't be used in the creation of synthetic leather. Fast forward a few years later and MycaNova® was born. Sylvia Gilis, Citribel Director: "We develop a material with high bio-based content that really works. We aim to create something that has a true positive impact". www.mycanova.com



GALBA BY INÈS VAUGHAN (LA CAMBRE GRADUATE)

Youth section at the back of the publication

Talented young industrial designer, Inès Vaughan, fell in love with a long forgotten raw material: celloderm. Celloderm is a biodegradable and recyclable material made entirely from wood cellulose. By combining celloderm with clay, Inès Vaughan developed a new material with unique properties, enabling the production of strong and durable seats. This process resulted in a rigid bio-leather-like material, achieved through the combination of multiple design disciplines, from craftsmanship and leatherwork to industrial design methods such as laser cutting and 3D printing technologies. With GALBA, she demonstrates how it is possible to industrially manufacture unique furniture exclusively from natural materials. www.instagram.com/ines.vaughan.design

BIO'N'D

"Waste is simply a lack of creativity"—this bold slogan belongs to Bio'n'd, a start-up on a mission to transform how we perceive

waste. Bio'n'd specialises in designing and creating innovative products by upcycling food waste into biomaterials, blending functionality with aesthetic appeal. Beyond product development, they offer consultancy services, collaborating with clients to deliver tailor-made solutions that prioritise sustainability and environmental awareness. Always pushing the limits of what's possible, Bio'n'd is dedicated to turning waste into valuable resources, taking responsibility for the planet and future generations. From biowaste to beautiful objects, they are truly closing the loop! [@bionddesign](https://twitter.com/bionddesign)



QUESTION II

How do we honour our past?

REVALUING OUR HERITAGE

VI

I focus on the 'matter' of culture. Objects that are made & used by a group of people are a reflection of their culture.

**— Cas Reynders
Furniture Designer**

Full disclosure: heritage and craftsmanship get us a little teary-eyed and emotional. Craftsmanship is the closest thing to an authentic human signature – getting your hands dirty, shaping, sculpting, turning imagination into reality. In this fast-paced, digital society, we're being led back to revalue the slow, the handmade, the essential – the dusty workplace of the craftsman, the meditative state of the creator, the cultural essence of heritage.

Revaluing our heritage and craftsmanship connects us to our roots, acknowledging the skill and artistry of past generations while helping to (re)build our identities today. The celebration

of traditional techniques preserves cultural identities and promotes sustainable practices. But in this era of information, we can do more, go further, and augment our creativity! We can mix different techniques from different times, places, or even disciplines. We can blend crafts and technology, combining our own hands with those of robotics. We can enrich our contemporary stories with those that came before us, and live all around us, near and far. The generations of tomorrow value craftsmanship, often in ways that reflect their unique perspectives and values. Gen Z, for instance, appreciates items that tell a story, authentic, high-quality, sustainable products and ethical practices. These practices are encouraged by local, slow-paced production with sustainable materials, which revaluing heritage supports.

I love revisiting forgotten techniques, as they hold endless knowledge and potential. Constantly gathering insights from various perspectives, I blend them into my designs to create something entirely new. Experimentation and an open mind to new possibilities are what drive me.

— **Tim Vranken**
Collectible Furniture Designer

N U M B E R S

72%

A 2024 survey by PwC found that 72% of Gen Z consumers are willing to pay a premium for products that are sustainably sourced and ethically produced

68%

A 2024 report by Euromonitor International found that 68% of Gen Z shoppers prefer products with artisanal or handmade elements over mass-produced goods

64%

A 2024 study by Mintel revealed that 64% of Gen Z respondents are interested in products that highlight cultural heritage and traditional craftsmanship

B E S T P R A C T I C E S

OBJECTS WITH NARRATIVES BY TIM VRANKEN

Tim Vranken is a Belgian collectible furniture designer, craftsman and artist whose designs are displayed in high-end art galleries all over the world. He's well known to re-think and re-value traditional craftsmanship in a continuous play of experimentation and mixing different techniques from the most surprising places. Tim says he moves towards challenges: "I'm always looking for new and different methods of working, designing and creating. I never choose the easiest way. I love turning to old and forgotten things and techniques, reusing them, it offers endless knowledge and potential. I'm constantly looking to gather more knowledge from many different angles to use in my designs and create entirely new things. I love experimenting and keeping my mind open to entirely new worlds". www.objectswithnarratives.com/



FLANDERS' TRIMMINGS BY DELTRACON

Deltracon is a Belgian family-owned weaving mill specialising in high-end linen fabrics, founded in 1990. In 2009, they acquired a Belgian trimming company, which they renamed Flanders' Trimmings. Flanders' Trimmings is one of only three remaining companies of its kind in Belgium and among the few in Europe. It prides itself on working with natural materials like no other. Flanders' Trimmings produces high-quality trimmings, tiebacks, and tassels, representing a niche industry that requires a specialised level of craftsmanship and labor-intensive creation and assembly. Flanders' Trimmings is a little treasure to be cherished, ensuring that its savoir-faire is preserved and not lost in the folds of time. www.deltracon.be

FLEMISH MATTER BY CAS REYNDERS (LUCA GRADUATE)

Youth section at the back of the publication

Flemish Matter is the beautiful translation of an extensive study of the Flemish cultural identity with a focus on material aspects and how these can reflect a culture. As a designer, Cas Reynders aims to contribute to the continuation of Flemish cultural identity by creating pieces that fit within a modern Flemish context. The result is a collection comprising a mix of locally relevant materials, techniques, and formal elements with a touch of nostalgia. www.casreynders.com

GÉRA(A)RD BY SEBASTIENNE VERMIJLEN DE FRÉ (VOMO GRADUATE)

Youth section at the back of the publication

GÉRA(A)RD is a rammed earth stool and a tactile sculpture. Emerging from nothing but dust and earth, this mystical being

resolutely steps into the home and finds a permanent place to stay. GÉRA(A)RD is made from rammed earth, an ancient technique that combines the right mixture of loam, clay, sand, and gravel. By simply compressing the earth—without heating or adding any binding agents—the earth transforms into a solid element. Rammed earth elements are typically made by compressing soil into geometric molds, forming block-shaped objects. However, GÉRA(A)RD deviates from this norm. While the inside of the mold is solid, the outside presses the earth against sturdy fabric, giving GÉRA(A)RD's surface its unique shape. The polished top reveals a mosaic of natural stone. GÉRA(A)RD aims to ground the user.

ZAVENTEM ATELIERS

Zaventem Ateliers founder, designer Lionel Jadot, imagined a place where makers could come together to share techniques and inspiration as was done in the guilds of old. In 2019 he materialised this dream and Zaventem Ateliers was born. The former industrial wasteland of 6000sqm has become a place of creation, production, exchange and experimentation dedicated to design. The atypical hub brings together an eclectic community of 21 emerging and established creators, designers, artists and scenographers, united by their passion for producing and processing materials. Although each workshop has its own spirit, Zaventem Ateliers is an incubator of ideas, based on the sharing of know-how. The bridges created between the different workshops result in original and uninhibited productions laying the foundations of a new contemporary art of living.

www.zaventemateliers.com



MATERIAL MATTERS

VII

It's the material that leads the creation process. Creating by hand, feeling, visualising. Constructing with the materials, not against them, highlights the importance of detail.

— Emma Prospère
Young Industrial Designer

We've mentioned it before: in an increasingly digital world, we feel the need to reconnect with the tactile experience of working with real materials – ones we can touch, feel, smell, and get to know, almost as if they were little people

with their own little characters. By working with, rather than against, these materials, we unlock new possibilities and achieve more meaningful, authentic results. Material matters! Touching and working with different materials fosters a deeper understanding of their identities, properties and potential, allowing creators to shape their own identity through them. Research into materials is also research into oneself, making the creative process intimate, challenging, and rewarding—it's addictive!

Producers, designers, and users are rediscovering an appreciation for texture, form, and responsiveness, especially in natural and advanced materials. This deepens our connection to the objects we craft.

We fall in love with biophilic design, embracing the healing power of nature, creating environments that improve our mental and physical health and overall well-being. We co-create with nature, acknowledge the importance of outdoor environments and make them more accessible, year-round. In our interior designs we incorporate natural forms such as wood, stone, and woven textiles.

Ultimately, working with materials reveals the essence of sustainability. It teaches us that nothing should go to waste, as each resource holds its own potential. Through this mindset, we foster respect and careful stewardship.

We see more and more highly educated people knock on our door because their tired of the overly theoretical approach to learning and long to work with their hands, engage with materials.

— Hans Le Compte
Training Coordinator Furniture Design
VOMO

BEST PRACTICES

BIO-BASED COATING/PRINTING INKS BY CENTEXBEL

Centexbel, the Belgian knowledge centre for the textiles and plastics industries, has developed innovative bio-based and compostable dispersions for textile coatings and printing inks. This breakthrough, which won the New Approaches on Sustainability and Circular Economy Innovation Award at the

Techtextil show in Frankfurt, exists out of polylactic acid (PLA) and polyhydroxyalkanoate (PHA), both bio-based polymers. The production of these dispersions requires no specialised equipment, leading to a lower environmental impact and reasonable costs. Bio-based plasticizers enhance flexibility, making the coatings suitable for various substrates, including textiles, and effective in both coating and screen-printing applications, while providing strong resistance to abrasion. Notably, these biodegradable inks and coatings prevent microplastic release. The dispersions have been adapted for diverse uses, including wallpaper with Masureel International and flax-based thermoplastic composites with Flaxco. Additionally, Centexbel has demonstrated their application in carpet backings, artificial leather, and barrier coatings.

IN LIMBO BY EMMA PROSPÈRE (LA CAMBRE GRADUATE)

Youth section at the back of the publication

'In Limbo' is Emma Prospère's heartfelt graduation project, demonstrating that material truly matters. In response to the lack of conscious design in funeral objects—which often complicates the mourning process—Emma created 'In Limbo', a family of portable lamps designed to accompany the vigil of the deceased. She delved into revaluing traditional craftsmanship and her love for wood as a raw material, allowing the material to guide her creative process. Emma explains: "The feeling and character of the wood itself led me to construct with the material, not against it, highlighting the importance of detail." This intimate creative journey resulted in a delicate balance of shadow and light, offering a poetic and aesthetic approach to woodworking. The object invites interaction, accompanying the user with gestures, becoming a true source of emotional support.

www.instagram.com/emma.pros

SKIN SERIES™ BY ROSIE BROADHEAD

SKIN SERIES™ is a textile research and development company, rethinking the material-skin interaction, empowering a future where body and clothing are considered simultaneously. The skin is the largest organ of the human body, serving as a primary defence, a sensory and an excretory medium, what we put on our skin can have a direct impact. SKIN SERIES™ explores the interaction between our clothing and the skin looking towards a future where the body and materials are considered simultaneously. Rosie Broadhead, the brand's founder, focuses on developing materials that provide health benefits to the skin. SERIES™ textiles are embedded with bioactive ingredients with known therapeutic benefits to the skin and body. Such properties have the potential to improve the immune system of your skin, encourage cell renewal, and hold antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. The focus is on looking at what is natural on our bodies to explore how we can create responsible yet functional clothing. Highlighting the body's intimate relationship with the skin as this permeable membrane between the self and the world.

www.skinseries.org



SEA ME & ZEEFIER BY NIENKE HOOGVLIET

Describing herself as an 'artist' – a portmanteau of 'artist' and 'activist' – Dutch designer Nienke Hoogvliet uses design to inspire harmony between humans, society and the natural environment. Working collaboratively with scientists, industry experts and other creatives, she starts with a problem that captures her imagination, conducts extensive research, and then creates hand-crafted objects, installations and books that pose solutions. With the SEA ME Collection Nienke developed lightfast natural dyes from seaweed and used them to dye seaweed yarn. She handcrafted a chair seat from the dyed yarn and made tabletop paint and bio-plastic bowls from the by-products, making the whole process zero-waste. Nienke has since co-founded Zeefier to scale these dyes for the textile industry.

www.nienkehoogvliet.nl

OUTDOOR HEALING SPACES BY MOMENTS FURNITURE, STUDIO M & RENSON

Focusing on biophilic design is creating healing environments, and let this be the driving force behind Moments Furniture, Studio M and Renson. Their partnership was a natural fit, combining years of expertise and innovation to bring something meaningful to the service industry. The recent pandemic underscored the importance of outdoor environments, with studies showing that contact with nature promotes mental and physical well-being. A garden or contact with nature brings peace and enhances mental and physical health. However, the Belgian weather doesn't always allow for that. Moments Furniture and Studio M, as experts in creating healing environments, have formed a partnership with Renson, a specialist in creating healthy spaces, to shape the outdoor environments of care facilities together. Renson's elegant terrace canopies offer comfort and year-round enjoyment of nature, while Moments Furniture provides ergonomic solutions and Studio M delivers a complete design concept. Benoit Thevelin, Chairman and Founding Shareholder Moments Furniture Group: "Spending time outdoors is more important than people think. It makes us calmer and healthier. Being able to enjoy time outdoors, year-round, significantly enhances our wellbeing".

www.momentsfurniture.be

www.renson.net

www.stu-m.be



JEWEL CHANGI AIRPORT SINGAPORE

In 2019 the long-awaited Jewel Terminal was unveiled at Singapore Changi airport, complete with the world's tallest indoor waterfall, 100,000 plants, aerial canopy parks, hedge mazes and vertical gardens. Designed by world-renowned architect Moshe Safdie, the 135,700sqm Jewel Terminal is covered by a glass biodome that lets natural light flood in. At the heart of this biophilic aviation hub is the 40-metre-tall Rain Vortex, the world's tallest indoor waterfall, which will greet visitors on arrival. The Jewel Terminal demonstrates that airports of the future will no longer simply be places of transit but destinations in themselves.

We recognise the significance of marketing & social media. Establishing a strong & enduring brand requires robust branding strategies.

— **Arthur Nevejan**
Founder Wunder

Our world revolves around stories – they’re the threads that weave together cultures, communities, and identities. Every idea, innovation, or movement starts with a story. Stories humanise an increasingly digitised world in which our lives are continuously, virtually shared: we’re obsessed with sharing ‘stories’. They are how we make sense of complex emotions and events, turning facts into meaning. We need stories to bridge the gap between technology and human emotions, making our digital interactions feel more authentic.

As we continue to get overwhelmed with information, storytelling cuts through the noise, brings us back to simplicity and drives action. A well-crafted narrative is more engaging, memorable, and personal than raw data or facts, helping ideas stick. Consumers, especially Gen Z and Millennials, demand transparency and ethical practices. Through storytelling we communicate values and efforts towards sustainability or social causes. It’s not enough to have a good product —customers want to know the story behind it. With virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and the metaverse as our parallel realities, storytelling becomes increasingly immersive. They aren’t just told; they’re experienced. In augmented realities, we actively participate in product stories through interactive elements, blurring the lines between creators and consumers and diving into the minds of the makers.

As a generational company, the biggest shift we’ve had to make over time is in our marketing strategy. As the world evolves, so does the role of our product, requiring a new, timely story. In good times, we share encouragement and highlight the positives. In harder times, we offer stability, guarantees, and a hopeful story rooted in heritage & resilience.

— **Flip Oeyen**
Manager VJA-Oeyen Mol

WÜNDER

“Fresh, inspiring and Belgian” is how Arthur Nevejan, co-founder and commercial catalyst of Belgian outdoor furniture design company Wunder, would describe Wunder in three words. Wunder is a young company, established in 2018 when four young minds came together to realise their desire to freshen up outdoor design and bring people together around colourful outdoor furniture. A proud Belgian label, production takes place locally and in collaboration with dedicated local craftsmen and partners. Alongside a love for design, Wunder also harbours a deep passion for marketing. Arthur: “We recognise the significance of marketing and social media, viewing them as integral components alongside our designs. Establishing a strong and enduring brand requires robust branding strategies. We enjoy collaborating with influencers and being active and creative on digital platforms”.

www.wunder.be



FJA-OEYEN MOL

Established as a high-quality tailor shop way back in 1932, FJA-Oeyen Mol has many stories to its name. Through the innovative skills and visions of a strong man, and strong family ties, it grew into the fourth-generation duvet company it is today. The company withstood World War II and the personal challenges its founding father had to face. Its core product changed from tailor made clothing to Belgium’s first duvet company, but one value remained the same and became part of FJA-Oeyen’s core identity: high-quality. FJA-Oeyen Mol believes in quality, respect and relationships as they create a generation product, a duvet that grows with the family. Flip Oeyen, manager: “We’re told that a product has to evolve with its time, but I don’t believe it necessarily has to, quality remains quality, what needs to change with changing times is the tone of our stories”.

www.fja-oeyen.be

FELTING CONVERSATIONS

BY **ASTRID SCHOUTEDEN** (KASK GHENT GRADUATE)

Youth section at the back of the publication

Astrid Schouteden is a sensitive and inspiring young artist and designer who weaves storytelling into her work—quite literally. Her KASK graduation project, Felting Conversations, was brought to life through extensive research and self-learning. Astrid: “By trying, doing, and experimenting, I’ve learned a lot, in my own way”. The project fosters conversation through the act of felting, creating a

performative process of co-creation through open sharing. Felting Conversations touches on themes of vulnerability and care, both for ourselves and the environment. The creative process flows naturally, without preparation or prior discussion, allowing for an organic and spontaneous exchange. The project features several felt pieces, each born from different interactions and created in collaboration with people close to the artist. It grew out of a desire to explore connection and the collective need to embrace care. Through her work, Astrid asks and answers: How can felting activate vulnerability and connection? How can we approach care as a collective responsibility?

www.instagram.com/bokkarch__ive



LIBECO EXPERIENCE CENTRE

Founded in 1858, family business Libeco has a long-standing legacy of excellence and has become a symbol of Belgium's proud linen heritage. The Libeco Experience Centre, opened in 2023, provides an immersive journey into the timeless world of Belgian linen. The centre masterfully showcases Libeco's rich heritage and craftsmanship. Located in the heart of the linen industry, the centre provides visitors with a deep understanding of the entire linen production process, from flax cultivation to the weaving and finishing stages. With a strong focus on sustainability, it highlights Libeco's commitment to environmentally friendly practices. It also offers a glimpse into the company's innovative approaches to design and fabric production, blending traditional craftsmanship with modern technology. Visitors can learn about the history of linen in Belgium, and witness first-hand how Libeco's high-quality linen products are crafted. This experience not only celebrates the art of linen making but also highlights the versatility and timeless appeal of linen in contemporary textiles.

www.libeco.com



QUESTION III

How do we augment our creativity?

GEN AI: INTELLIGENCE GENERATES INTELLIGENCE IX

You have to understand the brain of AI to get something good out of it.

— Elmo Mistiaen

Fear or fan of AI? Our relationship with Artificial Intelligence often feels split between fear of disruption and admiration for its potential. But does it need to be so extreme? We're part of a collective of generations of transitions, at the verge of change, one foot in the new world, one still in the past. What if AI could help us to safely bridge the gap and step into the future?

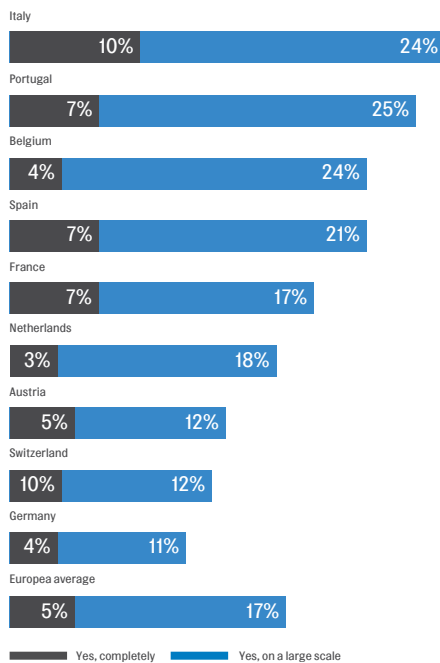
Instead of viewing AI as all-or-nothing, we should see it as a tool to boost creativity and innovation. While fears are valid, AI's ability to analyse data and recognise patterns can inspire new ideas and solutions and push the limits of the possible. AI can complement and expand our own capabilities. By embracing its potential, we can tackle complex challenges and create a future in which AI and human intelligence work in harmony.

For this harmony to be composed, it's essential to understand the underlying mechanisms of AI—we need to learn the "brain" of this technology. In short: we need to understand the brainchild of our own brain. Does that still make sense?

It does! AI operates through complex algorithms and vast datasets, enabling it to analyse patterns, make predictions, execute with precision, and provide insights with remarkable accuracy. By comprehending how AI processes information and learns from data, we can better design and implement solutions that address specific challenges, optimise workflows, ensure more sustainable processes, and enhance efficiency overall. Once we understand it, we can be confident that we'll get something good out of it—something slightly disruptive, imaginative,

efficient, augmented creativity! What's more: AI-infused designs can significantly improve our personal lives. AI will start playing a crucial role in designing user-centred environments and objects that enhance health, wellbeing, and performance. In workplaces, for example, AI can suggest ergonomic designs and environmental adjustments that boost productivity and mental well-being. By integrating real-time feedback, AI also enables continuous improvement of spaces to adapt to users' evolving needs, making environments more responsive, comfortable, and conducive to overall wellbeing.

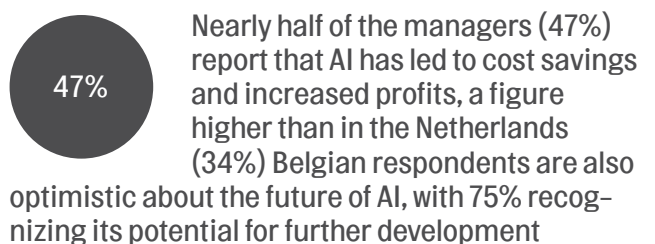
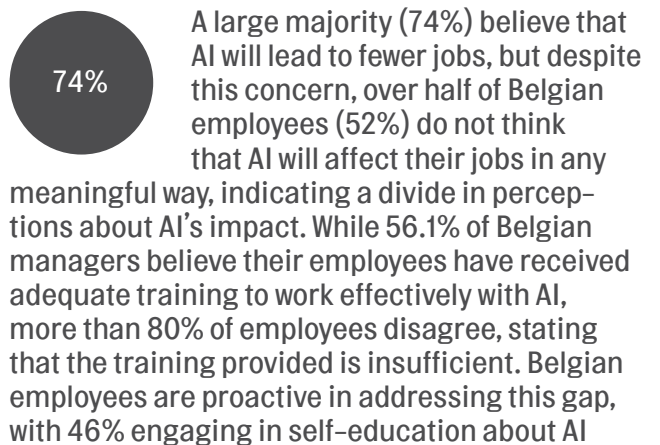
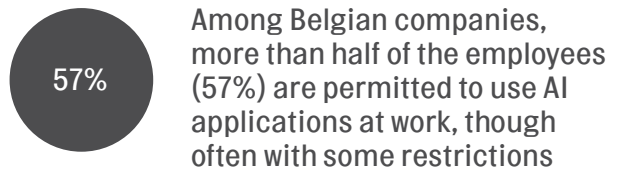
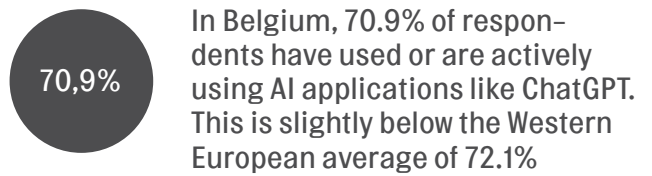
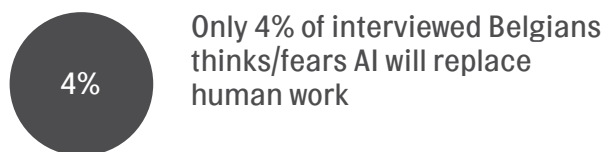
Do you think AI will replace human work?



Source: EY Switzerland

NUMBERS

The AI Barometer by EY (2024), which surveyed 4.741 employees across nine European countries, provides some revealing insights into the state of AI in Belgium



BEST PRACTICES

RAMIN REZVANI – MIDJOURNEY

"Can AI revolutionise how we design and build with wood?", a question on a lot of people's minds, including architect Ramin Rezvani's. From Rezvani's view, a compelling place to start with AI is using it for rapid prototyping and idea generation, and he sees it particularly well-suited to mass timber. He's explored a growing number of generative AI tools—Midjourney being one—that can help design teams envision the possibilities of materials such as mass timber during the early design and precursory phases of a project. Rezvani: "When prototyping with AI, what emerged was a series of unexpected iterations—happy accidents if you will—revealing novel ways to conceptualize mass timber as a structural element. This process is driven by AI's capability to combine vast amounts of data into new visual forms. And while it's just idea generation at this point, it was effective in engaging clients, opening up discussions on innovative applications of mass timber in the project". www.ankrommoisan.com

NAGAMI DESIGN

“Exploring the future of sustainable design in the new eco-innovation era since 2016”, that’s Nagami—according to Nagami—in one phrase. The Spanish design company follows a zero plastic approach, combining creativity, technology and sustainability to develop medium and large scale customised 3D printing projects with recycled plastics. Boldness and innovation are the core of every creation. Their team of architects, engineers, designers and researchers specialises in technology, robotics and sustainability. Together with other professionals from different areas, they work hard to push the limits of imagination to unseen territories. Nagami Design is a multidisciplinary team of brilliant minds with a common goal: to create a new reality through 3D printing. Imagine the impossible, bring the future!

www.nagami.design



AI TIMBER BY MAESTRO TECHNOLOGIES

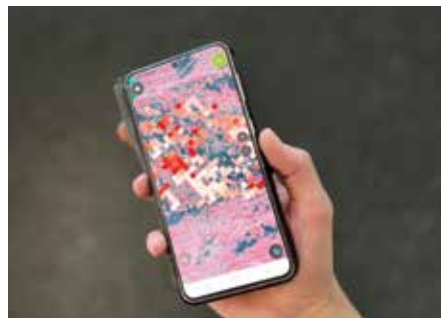
“A.I. Timber” is a new method for sustainable cross-laminated timber (CLT) production that uses artificial intelligence to preserve the original contour of each tree. It is developed by Maestro Technologies (Italy), a new construction-technology start-up born out of the design and innovation office CRA-Carlo Ratti Associati. As the construction industry works to reduce its emissions – cement production alone is responsible for 8% of global CO₂ – mass timber has emerged as an alternative for sustainable construction. However, the industrial sawing process of cutting unique trees into standardised panels generates a large amount of wood waste. A.I. Timber offers an alternative, using AI and digital machining tools to scan a set of raw logs, flat saw them into boards, and identify the optimal sequence to fit them together. The process results in timber panels with tessellating boards that match one another like puzzle pieces while shaving off as little of the tree as possible. The innovation could reduce wood waste in cross-laminated timber (CLT) production by up to 30%. On top of that, it’s also beautiful: the irregular geometry celebrates the original shape of the tree, using the artificial to bring out the brilliance of the natural.

www.maestro-tech.com

METSÄ GROUP & COLLECTIVE CRUNCH

Digitalisation is transforming the forest industry, providing unprecedented solutions that make forests more intelligent. Metsä Group & Collective Crunch have developed a substantial selection of digital services for forest owners, who will soon be able to visit their forests in virtual reality – and learn something new in a new way. As a raw material, northern wood, which binds carbon, is more topical than ever before. It is finding its way into more and more innovative products that are building a fossil-free future for the world. Northern forests are managed and used sustainably. Wood is processed using expertise, technologies and solutions that are unique in the world. When data from intelligent forests is combined with expertise, forest use and management will be optimised, and wood supply will be accurately allocated according to need and application. It’s the era of the bioeconomy and intelligent forests!

www.collectivecrunch.com
www.metsagroup.com



TECHNOLOGY TOOLS

X

We have a highly automated production, but everyone who starts working for us is surprised about how much manual labour production still requires.

— **Niek Renders**
Drisag

One very interesting observation during our many interviews for this trend report was your views on AI! Most of our interviewees admitted to harbouring some fears; few revealed great admiration, but almost everyone mentioned the following: “AI is a valuable tool to enhance our existing processes and world, but it will never completely take over our human capacities and creativity”.

Humans will not become obsolete, and there are plenty of examples to show for it! Even in highly automated environments, a considerable amount of manual labour is still necessary. Though machines can be very precise, many

aspects of production require human intervention. This includes tasks involving intricate adjustments, quality checks, and hands-on problem-solving that current automation technology cannot fully address. Sometimes, the human hand is exactly the type of touch needed to drive excellence.

AI is a marvellous tool for enabling sustainability, streamlining repetitive tasks, providing real-time insights, and increasing efficiency. However, according to our industry experts and young designers, it cannot replace the creativity and savoir-faire of the human brain and hand. The nuanced and adaptable nature of human labour remains essential. This balance between automation and manual effort highlights the ongoing need for skilled workers who can complement and enhance the capabilities of advanced systems.

A combination of manual labour, expertise, and the adoption of AI and technology is a winning formula! The integration of AI not only boosts overall productivity and efficiency but also intelligently solves problems and creates solutions.

Where time once seemed scarce, AI frees up space to focus on more strategic and creative aspects of our work. By automating mundane tasks, it creates space for deeper reflection and reinvention, helping us redefine our capabilities and reshape our identities.

By listening to and tracking the evolving needs of each product & production process, we can continuously improve. To achieve this, we've developed our own unique integrated system.

— Jean-Luc Derycke
Utexbel

AI enhances customer service by enabling businesses to efficiently use data for better client engagement and satisfaction. It personalises systems to meet specific needs, streamlines processes, and reduces errors, especially in niche markets. With AI-driven insights, companies can adapt strategies in real time, fostering continuous improvement and agility—much like our Red Devils on the soccer field!

ROBOVISION & VERANNEMAN

Robovision is an innovative Belgian AI platform that manages vision intelligence inside smart machines, and successfully introduces AI in dynamic environments without the need for AI experts. Veranneman Technical Textiles, part of Sioen Industries, is taking the lead in the human-machine revolution by automating its quality control with AI. Operators are training AI to automatically detect flaws in the fabric, in real time. By aligning man and machine through this future-forward collaboration these Belgian companies are taking the lead in the radical change in textile innovation.

www.robovision.ai

BEAULIEU INTERNATIONAL GROUP

Since 1959, Beaulieu International Group has been a market leader putting innovation and sustainability at the heart of their activities. An international and future-forward thinking company, Beaulieu International Group never fails to move with – or ahead – of its time. Nowadays B.I.G. is making significant investments in AI integration in their innovation processes. Sam Verbrugghe, Innovation Director Polymers & Engineered Solutions: “Integrating generative AI into our market-driven innovation process allows us to efficiently process large amounts of information, helping us identify emerging trends early on and translating them into real case opportunities. This enables our team to spend 10 times less hours on data analysis and instead spend more on creating the next big innovation for our customers”.

www.bintg.com



BIVOLINO SERVICES

Bivolinoservices' AI platform allows customers to easily design and order personalised, made-to-measure clothing online. With just a few simple inputs, their machine learning biometric algorithms precisely calculate body measurements, translating them into custom pattern sizes. The cutting-edge biometric AI technology provides online shoppers with advanced sizing and configuration options that go beyond what is typically available. This ensures a superior, tailored fit, while also offering real-time updates on stock availability and seamless customization options for made-to-measure garments, creating a streamlined and personalized shopping experience.

www.bivolinoservices.com

VANDECASTEELE HOUTIMPORT

Houtimport Vandecasteele, a leading timber importer, enhances its business efficiency, sustainability, and operational practices through advanced technologies and the use of AI. As a pioneer in responsible timber, the company uses sophisticated systems to monitor and optimise logistics. Their commitment to environmental responsibility is evident in their tracking of timber sourcing, aligning with certifications from global bodies like the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). These systems enable real-time stock monitoring and efficient order processing, minimising waste and improving resource allocation. Vandecasteele's dedication to innovation and environmental stewardship has earned them recognition as a leader in sustainable practices within the timber industry.
www.vandecasteele.be



The contrast between something handcrafted and its transformation into a digital texture, for example, tells a powerful story of the intersection between tradition and technology – the story of our times. When something is woven by hand, it carries the weight of time-honoured techniques, the human touch, and imperfections – each thread telling its own story of craftsmanship. As it becomes digitised, the tactile qualities and organic imperfections are translated into pixels and algorithms, creating a new kind of beauty.

The blending of different worlds that make up our one world – the mixing of analogue and digital, handmade and automated – preserves the essence of the original while opening up new possibilities for replication and customisation. It celebrates the artistry of the past, while embracing the potential of the future, where the handmade evolves without losing its soul, and artificial intelligence invites us to explore new horizons.

My practice revolves around textiles & technology, researching the artisanal production of electronics components through textile crafts. I create soft works that invite you to touch and explore alternative ways to interact with electronic systems.

— Michelle Vossen
Interdisciplinary Designer & Educator

BEST PRACTICES

ATORIX DESIGN

Atorix Design is a company dedicated to social innovation, utilising Virtual Reality (VR) to create accessible, inclusive, and sustainable furniture with a sleek, minimal aesthetic. Their designs focus on enhancing daily mobility while offering hidden multifunctionality as ergonomic sex furniture, specifically designed for couples where one partner has a (motor) disability or is a senior citizen. Their flagship piece, 'Chaise Longue', is a customisable sofa that adapts to individual needs through adjustable features. Atorix Design follows the cradle-to-cradle design principle, ensuring that different elements of the furniture can be easily replaced and separated into mono-materials for recycling. The company's takeback system allows raw materials to be recovered and reused, promoting sustainability. 3D modelling in VR plays an essential role in their design process, enhancing empathy for the potential users, enabling digital prototyping and in-depth testing of (sexual) ergonomics. The ability to design more complex forms in an accessible way is not only applied for the aesthetics/functionality of the design, but also for the cradle-to-cradle upholstery. This technique makes the iterative prototyping process cost- and time-efficient.

www.atorix.design

ARTIFICIALLY MANMADE

XI

If you stay stuck in pure craftsmanship & turn against new techniques, you lag behind. I'm 100% convinced that you can unite crafts and technology.

— Tom De Koninck
Young Furniture Designer

Don't we all love the best of both worlds? We might fear opposites, but we struggle to choose one option. We trick ourselves into thinking it's one or the other: real time or digital, real life or virtual, manmade or automated, handmade or robotic, human or humanoid. But why not artificially manmade or handmade artificiality?

The contrast of something that is woven by hand & then becomes a digital texture – this is a beautiful story.

— Cedric Jacquemyn
Bakermat

BAKERMAT

BAKERMAT, in Belgium's fashion capital, Antwerp, approaches the concept of a textile store in a consciously radical way. It's the symbiosis between a textile shop, virtual fabric library and material agency; a place where the client's artistic vision meets the industry's newest innovations. BAKERMAT was founded as an answer to the challenge of finding fabric stores that provide comprehensive information about the textile they have in store. The innovative textile store prides itself on offering in-depth knowledge about textiles and gives supplier information, building links between manufacturer and designer. BAKERMAT helps optimise the fashion designer's sourcing process and elevate their 3D designs, granting access to an ever-growing library of 3D textures – the fabrics of virtual fashion. Their dedicated team of specialists brings textile dreams to life. They help source fabrics and trims from their vetted network of suppliers and production houses. www.bakermat.net



INTIMACY BY STUDIO ROOSEGAARDE

By integrating technology with design, INTIMACY transforms clothing into a medium for personal expression and emotional interaction. It's a fashion project that explores the interplay between people and technology through high-tech garments made of smart e-foils and liquid crystals. These materials enable the garments to change in transparency based on interactions, such as an increasing heartbeat, revealing more as the wearer becomes excited about someone. The garments shift from white to transparent or black to transparent, creating a dynamic and sensual play of disclosure. INTIMACY 1.0 and 2.0 are standout pieces crafted from leather and smart e-foils, designed with female fashion designers. These wearable dresses have garnered international acclaim, solidifying INTIMACY's position as a groundbreaking project in the fashion world. www.studioroosegaarde.net/project/intimacy



MICHELLE VOSSSEN

Michelle Vossen is a dynamic interdisciplinary designer and educator working between Utrecht and Amsterdam. Her innovative and contemporary approach blends textiles with technology. Her work delves into the artisanal crafting of electronic components through traditional textile techniques, creating soft sensors through knitting, spinning, weaving, and sewing. These sensors are then combined with electronic elements, microcontrollers, and coding to produce interactive works that invite hands-on exploration. Rejecting the sterile nature of plastic buttons, smooth touchscreens, and touchless interfaces, Michelle's tactile designs encourage full-body movement and haptic engagement. Her creations become a multisensory experience, where sound, visuals, and physical interaction come together, offering new ways of making music and performing—often with the audience involved. Central to her philosophy are the values of learning-by-making and a commitment to open-source documentation, making her work as educational as it is inventive. www.michellevossen.com

INNOVATION HUBS

XII

If you've made it to this part of the book, here's some reassurance: being alive and being a business owner and/or designer in this era of transition is no small feat – we're with you!

Today's world requires a lot, and tomorrow seems to demand even more: doing more with less, closing loops, meeting new legislations, adopting innovative technologies, wrapping your brain around AI's brain, navigating through increasingly complex realities... it's a lot, but fear not! You're not alone!

In the midst of all these changes, experts rise up to save the day, united under the banners of institutions, associations, foundations and knowledge centres. They're here to filter the abundance of information, educate, assist and drive innovation – together with you.

We need more than a one-size-fits-all solution. Each situation is unique, requiring specialised expertise and approaches. The value of meaningful conversation and active listening has never been greater. Through one-on-one interactions and research, we develop personalised solutions that lead to the most effective outcomes. Innovation hubs are places where people and ideas meet and empower each other; where innovation is born through trial and error, with a brighter future in mind.

We're here to help companies in the required transition towards the Digital Product Passport & we want to show them how to make a virtue out of a necessity. We help to ease this transition & create added value.

— **Mathias Slabbinck**
Quifactum

BEST PRACTICES

CENTEXBEL

Centexbel is Belgium's leading research and expertise centre for the textile and plastics industries. It supports innovation and development in these sectors by offering testing, certification, consultancy, and research services. As a prominent technology partner, Centexbel helps businesses stay competitive by improving the sustainability, quality, and performance of their products. The organization is involved in a wide range of areas, including textile processing, bioplastics, recycling, and smart textiles, making it a key player in driving technological advancements and sustainability efforts across the textile and plastics industries. Centexbel also participates in European research projects, enhancing international collaboration and knowledge sharing.

www.centexbel.be

FLANDERS MAKE

Flanders Make believes that together we innovate better and faster. It's the strategic research centre for the Flemish manufacturing industry, supporting its efforts to become more internationally competitive—now, in the future, and for the long term. With a team of more than 900 full-time researchers, Flanders Make forms a unique community with a shared industrial research agenda. They support SMEs and large manufacturing companies with industry-driven and pre-competitive research into the vehicles, machines and factories of tomorrow. From different locations across Flanders, they promote innovation through high-quality research and collaborations on tailor-made innovations. Flanders Make offers a wide range of testing and validation infrastructure for testing and validating products and production processes. There's a strong focus on international innovation collaboration and participation in European research projects to motivate large-scale impact. The knowledge gained is shared to strengthen everyone's competencies within a dynamic, collaborative ecosystem.

www.flandersmake.be



TEXTILE ETP

The European Technology Platform for the Future of Textiles and Clothing (Textile ETP), established in 2004, aims to align the research and innovation needs of Europe's textile industry with the technological expertise of universities, research organisations, and developers. By fostering collaboration between industry stakeholders such as companies, associations, and clusters, and the scientific community, Textile ETP enhances the competitiveness of the textile sector. It supports the entire manufacturing chain, from fibres to finished products, including related industries. In 2013, Textile ETP was formalized as an international non-profit association under Belgian law, with its headquarters in Brussels.

IMEC

IMEC (Interuniversity Microelectronics Centre) is a leading global research and innovation hub in nanoelectronics and digital technologies. Based in Leuven, Belgium, IMEC collaborates with top universities, research institutes, and companies worldwide to develop cutting-edge solutions in fields such as semiconductor technology, AI, healthcare, sustainable energy, and smart cities. In their 12,000sqm cleanrooms and state-of-the-art labs they take nano- and digital technology to the next level. IMEC's facilities and multidisciplinary research approach enable breakthroughs in areas like chip manufacturing, biotechnology, and renewable energy systems. By fostering strong partnerships between academia and industry, IMEC plays a pivotal role in accelerating technological advancements and bridging the gap between research and commercialisation.

www.imec-int.com



WOOD.BE

WOOD.BE is the Belgian knowledge centre for the woodworking and furniture industry, providing support in innovation, technological advancements, and sustainability. It helps companies in the wood industry improve their production processes, product quality, and compliance with environmental regulations. WOOD.BE offers a wide range of services, including material testing, certification, research and development, and consultancy on issues such as fire safety, acoustics, and circular economy. By fostering innovation and offering technological solutions, WOOD.BE enhances the competitiveness of the Belgian wood and furniture sector both locally and internationally.

www.wood.be

How do we unite human impact with industrial innovation?

CLOSING LOOPS BY LOCKING HANDS

XIII

Without partnerships, the circle will not be complete & the wheel won't turn.

— **Gerlinde Verherbrugghen**
Responsible Market Development
B.I.G. Yarns

It may sound a little like 'It's a small world after all', but those crazy kids were onto something! Closing loops and drawing circles can only happen by joining forces and locking hands.

The circular economy and eco-design are built on long-term principles that require extensive collaboration across industries, sectors, and disciplines. The sustainable approaches our future needs, focus on reducing waste, reusing materials, and designing products with their entire lifecycle in mind. No action can be taken in isolation, and no one can escape responsibility. Fully embracing that responsibility may be one of the most rebellious acts in today's chaotic world.

Manufacturers, designers, policymakers, and consumers must work together to create products, services and systems that promote longevity, recyclability, and resource efficiency. By fostering partnerships, companies can share best practices, pool resources, and co-create solutions that scale sustainability, making it more feasible to transition toward necessary circular models of production and consumption.

We must collaborate to ensure information flows freely & we stay up to date. Building connections is essential. Unlike 15 years ago, when information was tightly guarded, today we communicate more openly. In a circular economy, progress relies on collaboration –no one can advance alone.

— **Evelyn Lafond**
Policy Advisor Ecodesign,
Fashion & Textiles OVAM

BEST PRACTICES

SIOEN FABRICS

The power of partnerships is put into practice in this innovative collaboration between industry powerhouses Sioen Fabrics and one of their customers. The two partnered to address the environmental challenges posed by traditional coating materials used in medical mattresses. Polyurethane coatings, known for their water vapour permeability and high elasticity, are essential for protecting both patients and mattresses. However, these coatings are made using DMF, a solvent increasingly restricted by European environmental policies. In response, the project was launched to develop more sustainable coatings for mattresses, aligned with the new ISO 20342 standard. The project aimed to scientifically evaluate the properties of these new coatings and to analyse their life cycle in comparison to older technologies. The Belgian research centre Centexbel (another partnership) played a key role by conducting a series of standardised tests to assess the new coatings and developing a pilot machine to simulate hospital disinfecting conditions. As a result of this project, several DMF-free products have been developed and are now available on the market, including bio-based rainwear, imitation leather, and DMF-free medical mattress covers. These innovations not only meet stricter environmental standards but also enhance patient care by reducing the risk of bedsores and infections.

www.sioen.com

FLAXCO® & UANTWERP SOLAR BOAT TEAM

Partnership can be found in surprising angles, creating exciting initiatives when we apply ourselves to searching for innovative solutions! This is exactly what happened when the youthful team of the UAntwerp Solar Boat partnered with Flaxco®, a division of Flipts & Dobbels NV, which has over a century of expertise in producing traditional flax fabrics. By tapping into Flaxco's wealth of experience, the students from the Faculty of Applied Engineering at the University of Antwerp were able to enhance the design of their solar-powered boat. Flaxco® became their exclusive supplier of flax fibre, a natural alternative to carbon fibres, significantly reducing the boat's carbon footprint. This partnership marks a crucial step toward sustainable engineering, making the UAntwerp Solar Boat greener and more eco-friendly as it competes in international races against other universities and professionals.

www.flaxco.be

www.uantwerpen.be/nl/projecten/solarboat

SQUEEZE BY DEKNUDT MIRRORS & PAUL COCKSEGE

When industrial knowhow and designers' minds partner up, innovation and beauty can come to life! SQUEEZE by Deknudt Mirrors and British designer Paul Cocksege is a wonderful example of that! SQUEEZE delves into light and reflectivity. Paul started with soft, compressible materials, which he moulded, by hand, into beautiful compositions. These were then pressed – squeezed – into a 2D mirror, transforming the essence of the soft shapes into a flat, reflective surface. The visual frame around the mirror holds everything together and documents the transformation. Paul describes SQUEEZE as alchemy – a combination of fluids forming a complex mirror layer. "SQUEEZE – Where alchemy meets design"
www.deknudtmirrors.com/products/squeeze



SOELAAS BY REINE PINXTEN (LUCA GENK GRADUATE)

Youth section at the back of the publication

Closing loops by locking hands also means uniting different types of expertise, dedicating oneself to extensive research, looking at things from different point of views to create the best outcome for all. Soelaas by young designer Reine Pinxten shows us how sensitive, in-depth research and partnerships can lead to answers for some long-term problems some of us face on a day-to-day basis. For people suffering from migraines, finding relief can often feel like a desperate search. Reine Pinxten's collection, Soelaas, offers comfort and support. By combining insights from both patients and medical experts, Reine developed a range of products that use the benefits of heat and cold therapy to help manage pain. The Soelaas undergarments emit gentle vibrations and warmth, soothing muscle tension in targeted areas, while the Soelaas ear pieces, equipped with a cooling core, offer a practical and discreet alternative to traditional ice packs, providing relief directly to the affected nerves. Functional, comfortable, and subtle, the collection is designed to bring relief where it's needed most.
www.instagram.com/literallyreine

VLAANDEREN CIRCULAIR

Vlaanderen Circulair is a driving force behind the circular economy in Flanders, focusing on sustainable development and eco-design. As a partnership that brings together government, businesses, and knowledge institutions, its mission is to accelerate the transition from a linear to a circular economy. Vlaanderen Circulair helps companies implement eco-design by promoting product longevity, reuse, recycling, and reducing waste. It provides tools, funding opportunities, and guidance on circular business models, encouraging innovative practices that

minimise environmental impact and promote material reuse. Through collaborative projects, public awareness campaigns, and policy advocacy, Vlaanderen Circulair is helping to create a more resource-efficient economy, reducing Flanders' environmental footprint while boosting competitiveness and sustainability in various industries. With their project, 'Close the Loop', Vlaanderen Circulair aims to create circular textile chains, for example.
www.vlaanderen-circulair.be

WALLONIE CIRCULAIRE

Wallonie Circulaire is a key initiative promoting the circular economy in Wallonia. It brings together public authorities, businesses, research institutions, and citizens to foster the transition from a linear to a circular economy. Wallonie Circulaire supports eco-design by encouraging companies to rethink their production processes, aiming to reduce waste, improve resource efficiency, and extend product lifecycles. It offers tools, best practices, and financial incentives for businesses to adopt circular practices such as reuse, repair, and recycling. By supporting innovation and collaboration, Wallonie Circulaire helps create a more sustainable economy, aligning with Wallonia's broader environmental and economic goals. Through awareness campaigns and educational programs, it also aims to raise public consciousness about the benefits of a circular economy for both society and the environment.

www.economiecirculaire.wallonie.be

GREEN BUILDINGS BRUSSELS

A partnership between Brussels Environment and local architectural firms has resulted in green building projects like Leefmilieu Brussel (Brussels Environment). The Greenbizz business incubator in the city focuses on eco-innovative start-ups. Located in the Tour & Taxis area, it provides a dedicated space for companies working in sectors like renewable energy, circular economy, and sustainable materials. The building itself is a prime example of eco-design, featuring energy-efficient systems, green roofs, and the use of recycled materials in its construction. Greenbizz offers office spaces, production facilities, and business development services to foster growth in the green economy. Its goal is to create a dynamic community of eco-innovators, contributing to Brussels' larger sustainability and environmental goals.

www.greenbizz.brussels

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

XIX

With people you can bring change—people who work with the goal of creating a better, ever-improving company.

— Jan Merckx
Co-founder CiLAB Collective

A more socially conscious future is unfolding. For Gen Z, the growing importance of impact, ethics, and social responsibility in business models is crucial. This generation is particularly driven by values, seeking out companies that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability, social

justice, and ethical practices. Companies that are perceived as exploitative or indifferent to social issues are often rejected by these socially-conscious Zoomers. The rise of ethical consumption is transforming industries, and businesses must integrate social impact into their core strategies to stay relevant.

Moreover, Gen Z is not just demanding ethical practices from companies – they’re also pushing for these values in the workplace. Young professionals entering the workforce today are looking for employers who align with their personal beliefs, seeking purpose-driven careers that contribute positively to society. For Gen Z, impact and ethics are not afterthoughts but essential components of a fulfilling job.

At Groep Maatwerk we put people first. A typical company looks for people to fit their business, but we look for business activities that fit our people. In this way, we try to provide our employees with adapted, guided work.

— Pieter Valkeneers
Advisor Groep Maatwerk

The growing importance of social impact reflects a fundamental shift in how companies are expected to operate. New business models focus on creating positive social and environmental impact alongside financial success, ensuring that growth does not come at the expense of people or the planet. The integration of values such as fairness, environmental stewardship, and inclusivity has become a key differentiator in today’s competitive landscape. Conclusion: a strong ethical foundation fosters long-term success.

In the business world, we often forget that we have to be social. A company is not a person, but it is a personality. There are people behind a business, people are creating & producing a product & people are buying & consuming the product. It’s all about relationships.

— Flip Oeyen
Manager FJA-Oeyen Mol

BEST PRACTICES

CILAB COLLECTIVE

CiLAB Collective is a circular textile collective from Mechelen that develops processes and solutions to upcycle clothing while raising awareness for the circular transition in the textile sector. CiLAB Collective, founded by Shawkat, Jan, and Sibille, creates circular textiles while sharing their knowledge and promoting awareness of the circular shift in their industry. It’s all about collaboration with like-minded people, and focus is entirely on circular thinking. Cilab Collective operates on a hybrid business model. On the one hand, Cilab Collective focuses on the commercial sector, mainly clothing companies. The for-profit principles are applied here. The objective is to ensure a profitable activity within the circular economy. Examples are the upcycling of collections for Xandres, Essentiel or the repairs for Decathlon. On the other hand, Cilab Collective is committed to projects with a high social purpose and operates as a not-for-profit organisation. Examples are Ziellab, the clothing for Fabotastix and the collaboration with fashion students from Mechelen and Ghent. www.sites.google.com/view/cilab-collective



RE ANTWERP

RE Antwerp is an initiative by designer Tim Van Steenberghe, journalist Ruth Goossens, and GATAM vzw. Passionate about fashion, yet deeply aware of the industry’s harmful impact on the planet and people, they aim to do things differently—more sustainably, timelessly, locally anchored, and with greater focus on the makers, without sacrificing style or quality. RE Antwerp believes in fashion’s power to connect and work with refugees, whose craftsmanship and stories inspire their limited collections, giving them recognition and a place in our society. To promote sustainability, they use leftover fabrics from Belgian designers and labels, as well as recycled denim in their collections. RE Antwerp also seeks to restore craftsmanship in the city, finding employment within the industry for their team members to reintegrate these skills into society, allowing workshops to thrive and new initiatives to grow. Designs are future-oriented, considering reuse from the very first sketch to final creation. By selling their collection directly from the atelier, they start a dialogue between refugees, creative partners, and consumers, where fashion lovers meet the makers. www.reantwerp.com

AKOESTIEKFABRIEK

Akoestiefabriek offers high-performing, stylish, affordable acoustic solutions with sustainability and social impact in their DNA. All acoustic panels are locally produced, made from recycled materials and have stylish designs. Akoestiefabriek has a 360° vision, offering a full-service approach, from acoustic measurement to final installation. Custom solutions are tailored to the customer’s

needs. Their panels belong to the highest absorption class, which means greater acoustic effects are achieved with fewer panels making them cost efficient. What's more: Akoestiekfabriek's mission is centred on their impact on people and the planet. The company dedicates itself to creating sustainable jobs for people who consistently have difficulty finding work. All profits are reinvested into creating new jobs. Sustainability and reuse are core values: Akoestiefabriek prevents old system ceiling panels from ending up in incinerators by giving them a second life. High quality, stylish design, sustainability and unveiling talent and unlocking potential in people and product, solutions for today and tomorrow.

www.akoestiekfabriek.be

GROEP MAATWERK

Groep Maatwerk is a Belgian umbrella organisation that supports and represents over 60 social enterprises in Flanders, and 20,000 pairs of hands at work, specifically focused on creating employment opportunities for people with disabilities or facing barriers to the traditional job market. These social enterprises, also known as sheltered workshops, offer jobs in a wide range of sectors, including packaging, assembly, woodworking, and recycling. Groep Maatwerk promotes inclusion by providing tailored employment in industries that are increasingly incorporating sustainability and circular economy principles, such as eco-design and waste management. The organisation plays a crucial role in advocating for policies that enhance the social and economic integration of vulnerable groups, while also contributing to the green transition by supporting enterprises that focus on sustainable production processes.

www.groepmaatwerk.be



HERW!N

HERW!N is testimony of a future of partnerships and (social) impact! It's the collective of social circular entrepreneurs in Flanders. HERW!N advocates for the interests of their members and acts as a dialogue partner for governments and social partners. They connect 92 social circular entrepreneurs, creating employment for more than 11.000 workers. HERW!N's policy team lobbies, participates, and advocates for the interests of its members. With job creation as the goal, HERW!N strives for projects that drive change by emphasising business models with impact, inclusive work, making, repairing, using, reusing, sharing and processing goods. These are the themes that drive the change we need and will help us shift society towards greater social justice—a society where everyone benefits, with respect for our resources and materials.

www.herwin.be

GENERATION INSPIRATION

XIXI

'Young' & 'old' are complementary to one another. It's essential to come together & connect to avoid losing sight of context. We can enrich each other's perspectives & adjust our outlooks.

— Alan Dergent
Wood.be

Family businesses used to be the cornerstone of our societies. In our regions that's no longer the case, but that doesn't mean that family businesses have lost their value, strength and importance! Let's take a moment to highlight the resilience, flexibility, and reinvention skills of companies that have been around for generations and continue to successfully endure change – round of applause!

“In times of great transition, it's often easier for an innovative start-up, born in changed frameworks, to hit the ground running than it is for companies with more years to their name. Things look different for these old-timers; they're required to adapt to new realities and reinvent themselves time and again, while staying close to who they are.

The intergenerational collaboration at Luxilon is invaluable, blending my father's experience with my Gen Z perspective. This mix strengthens our strategies & as we grow, it's vital to respect the advice of those who came before us.

— Justin Vanmalderen
Luxilon

Family businesses have unique strengths that set them apart. They're driven by a deep sense of legacy, continuity, and long-term vision, focusing not only on short-term profits but also on preserving values, traditions, and reputation. Their multi-generational nature fosters resilience, as each generation builds on the experience of the last.

These businesses thrive when the wisdom of experience combines with the bold, fresh thinking of younger generations. This dynamic creates a powerful balance, sparking constructive dialogue and innovative ideas at the decision-making table, which highlights the power of bringing generations together.

At TexTerra, we believe in the power of young creative minds to turn the (linear) world upside down. TexTerra empowers young innovators & unleashes their creativity. We focus on circularity, sustainability, innovation, entrepreneurship & mindset change. The highlight is a hackathon in which teams work on an industrial challenge.

— Evelyn Vancauwenberghe
TexTerra

At any given moment in time, young generations carry the solutions for a brighter tomorrow inside of them. They have a highly intuitive approach to changes and a sensitivity for what is necessary to face the future. Young talent brings fresh perspectives, bold ideas, and a willingness to challenge the status quo. Through creative challenges and hackathons our young creators are encouraged to reveal their vision on innovation. These intense, collaborative and solution-oriented events foster technical skills, teamwork, critical thinking, and entrepreneurship, empowering the next generation to lead transformative change in society and industries alike.

BEST PRACTICES

LUXILON

Luxilon, a Belgian family-owned company, is a shining example of a multi-generational business with roots dating back to its founding in 1959. Like many family businesses, Luxilon started small—in a garage in Berchem—but has grown into a global leader in high-performance monofilament yarns, particularly tennis strings. Although not widely known, this Belgian innovator supplies strings to over 50% of the world's top 100 tennis players. Luxilon also manufactures monofilaments for industrial and medical products. The former includes offshore cables and technical textiles. The latter includes applications such as sutures, hernia meshes, and heart valves. Justin Van Malderen, the passionate third-generation leader of Luxilon, shares: "As the third generation, my role is to seek new innovations and niches where Luxilon can excel, leveraging my father's knowledge and that of our researchers, while focusing on sustainability. I'm committed to learning every aspect of the business. Because of this, I am active in our three different departments, so one day I might be on a tennis court and the next in a textile factory. Working alongside different generations in the company is a truly unique experience."

www.luxilon.be

TRIPLACO

"Nothing is permanent except change", is the motto of Triplaco's youngest generation! Triplaco is a powerful testimony of industry resilience, adaptability and tireless investment in continuous improvement. Since 1830, across six generations, Triplaco has

been active in trading, bonding and processing panels, as well as creating state-of-the-art interior doors and acoustic solutions with sheet material. Triplaco serves furniture makers, interior designers, and kitchen fitters through continuous innovation and close client relationships. Over almost 100 years, they have evolved from a traditional Belgian family-owned business into an ambitious, high-end player that can hardly be overlooked. With a permanent family character, Triplaco is committed to delivering top-quality service and being a trusted partner, supplying clients with the right components and guaranteed craftsmanship. Whatever the question, they continually reinvent the panel.

www.triplaco.be



TEXTERRA

We have much to learn from our youngster, the generations that will take charge of tomorrow's world and change the game for all of us! TexTerra invites creative young minds to embark on an unconventional journey into textiles, design, circularity, the makers industry and entrepreneurship. In masterclasses, workshops and hackathons TexTerra offers teenagers between 14 and 18 years old knowledge and tools to tackle real-life textile industry challenges. Participants work in teams to develop innovative solutions for textile-related problems, with the opportunity to present their ideas to industry professionals. Tex Terra's masterclasses encourage youngsters to experiment and discover their creativity, empowering themselves. Through engaging talks, workshops, and events, TexTerra fosters a vibrant community where young people can explore the potential of textile innovation. By merging fresh perspectives with deep knowledge of textile processes, TexTerra aims to create sustainable, scalable solutions that drive positive change. Evelyn Vancauwenberghe: "TexTerra is a passion project aimed at empowering young people. Our goal is for participants to leave our workshops thinking, "I never knew I could do this, and I'm thrilled to have discovered that I can!"

www.texterra.be

WOOD SKILLS

Challenges often unveil our hidden powers and our young generations burst with undiscovered talent! Wood Skills Belgium is an industry, education and government partnership dedicated to young talent and the future of the industry. Students from secondary woodworking schools are invited to participate in four challenging assignments, designed by experts and aligned with the new education curricula. What once began with seven schools and one challenge has now expanded to four different challenges, offering young wood technicians the opportunity to showcase and develop their skills. Bart De Waele: "With core values of innovation, ecology, sustainability, teamwork, and craftsmanship, students will work together to showcase their skills and aim for excellent craftsmanship". An innovative future for the industry is guaranteed!

www.woodskills.vlaanderen

It's never been a more glorious time to be rebellious! A hint of disruption is the key ingredient to the innovations our future needs. By challenging established norms and traditional ways of thinking, we pave the way for creative breakthroughs that address global challenges in new ways.

Radical change sometimes requires more radical approaches and solutions. Disruptive methods force us to rethink outdated models and adapt to emerging technologies, societal shifts, and environmental concerns. This is the rebirth of the rebellious punk rock kids powered by technology.

Sometimes the best way to successfully disrupt and push for change is from the inside-out, applying what we know and adapting it to an evolving world. Disruption doesn't mean wiping the slate clean, it's making things better, letting go of what no longer serves us, perfecting the game. It's daring to think big, taking risks, and challenging the entire industry by creating concrete solutions that are industrially viable.

We give ourselves great creative freedom, blurring the lines between different (art) disciplines.

— **Nanook Cools**
Collectief WhatComesNext

Disruption is about starting conversations and challenging the boundaries of what we've always seen as 'the norm.' It's finding inspiration in unexpected places and boldly creating something new. At its core, art is the most beautiful form of disruption, pushing us into new territories. What if we brought different forms of creation closer together?

There's a growing interest in inter-disciplinary work as an inspiring form of juxtaposition, inspiration and cross-fertilisation. Not just in the artistic realm, but also in design and industry. Art and design have never been as close and intertwined as they are now. Collaborations and blurry lines shape the figures of our future.

We want learning to look & be a bit disruptive.

— **Nick Leenaert**
The Dive/Unilin

How can we expect our world to change if we're not willing to question and change our education systems? This might be one of the shakiest grounds, because we all understand: education is foundation, so we must be careful how we treat it.

I think one of our biggest challenges is the fear to transform & innovate our education system, to handle things differently.

— **Nele Vanluyten**
GO De Prins Diest

Education systems should embrace disruption to better prepare students for a changing world and foster self-agency. Traditional models, focused on rote learning and rigid structures, often stifle creativity and adaptability. Disruptive approaches like project-based learning, interdisciplinary studies, and tech integration make education more dynamic and relevant. These methods boost critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration, equipping students for an uncertain future. Disruption also promotes a mindset of continuous learning, recognising that we're lifelong learners, whether in schools, workplaces, or in the comfort of our own homes.

BEST PRACTICES

PUPPET CHAIR BY AXELLE DELBOO (HOWEST GRADUATE)
Youth section at the back of the publication

In challenging times, the most disruptive thing one can do is tell a story of joy, Axelle Delboo is a courageous young talent who spreads happiness with her designs. Out-of-the-box, colourful, slightly different, that's Axelle's creative world. Under the guidance of Bram Kerkhofs, Axelle created the 'Puppet Chair', a playful stool inspired by wooden push puppets. This piece of furniture combines nostalgia with functionality and adds a touch of playfulness to any space. The stool is made of strung wooden beads and cords, allowing users to adjust its shape by stacking the discs in different orders. When the cords are loosened, the stool dramatically collapses, like a puppet with loose strings, offering a fun, interactive experience during use.
www.instagram.com/axrdo

AURA BY MAUD BRUNSTEIN (LA CAMBRE GRADUATE)
Youth section at the back of the publication

Maud: "I love working with colours in my design to bring (back) joy to life". Maud's graduation project, 'Aura', presents a collection of textiles that play with perceptions and create visual interference. Using reclaimed wool yarn from production surplus, along with a range of both artisanal and industrial techniques, Maud creates open-knit materials that can be applied across various fields of design, whether to dress bodies, objects, or spaces. Maud uses the rhythm of stripes and the regular alternation of two contrasting

colours to produce vibrant visual effects. These effects can be perceived as pleasant but may also cause blinking and seem disorienting or even immaterial. Maud's designs are playful, she enjoys creating an interaction between the material and an ambivalent reaction of that audience that varies depending on individual perception.

www.maudbrunstein.com

COLLECTIEF WHATCOMESNEXT

What The Future? What Comes Next? A question we base our work and conversations on and the same question keeps Collectief WhatComesNext motivated! Fashion designers Nanook Cools, Sarah De Geyter and Sophie Van Gucht embody 'Collectief WhatComesNext', a multidisciplinary (fashion) collective that disrupts, merges and challenges the lines between fashion, art and performance. Together, the collective creates and tells stories that, in a fun and creative way, pose questions to society. WhatComesNext mixes fashion design with other art forms like dance, performance and street art, for example. The collective always collaborates with different artist and puts no limits on the subjects and potential of their next projects. Nanook: "No matter the direction we flow into, what we always want to do is question the status quo and blur the lines between different art disciplines, rediscovering the freedom within our art and work, unrestricted by a commercial framework".



THE DIVE BY UNILIN

The Dive is one of the most inspiring examples of innovative learning of our industries today. The in-house education and training hub of Unilin launched at the beginning of 2023 with an ambitious vision and mission, carefully constructed one student at a time. Disruption is necessary to break what no longer serves us and rebuild a new vision for a bright future. Unilin noticed a qualitative and quantitative mismatch in the job market and decided to take matters in own hands! Nick Leenaert: "There is a certain disconnect between education and the business world. Many graduates lack practical skills and experience and haven't always come into contact with the latest new technologies that companies have available. That worries us as an employer". Unilin strives to give answers and handles things differently, The Dive was born and evolved into a brand – a brand that embodies life-long learning in a more inclusive and universal manner than a traditional university or academy. The Dive symbolises diving in, exploring, and discovering, which encapsulates the essence of learning, diving in the unknown.

www.unilin.com/nl/unilin-stories



INDUSTRY INSPIRATION

XIXIII

Over the past two years, we've had the privilege of interviewing numerous industry experts and emerging talent. We've discussed their insights on the industry, their visions for the future, and their innovative projects. We've also explored the dynamic between generations.

What can seasoned professionals learn from the younger generation? And what can the risk-takers of tomorrow gain from years of experience, trial and error, and eventual success?

WATF informs, showcases industry innovations, bridges generational gaps, and inspires through storytelling—telling an empowering story of "we."

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“The industry unites companies that have been around for a long time & became established values. You don’t become an established value overnight! It takes time, work, resilience, overcoming setbacks”

BENT FIERENS – YOUNG FURNITURE DESIGNER

“Our industries continuously investigate possible innovations & techniques. I think this research can be approached from different angles: on the one hand, through young people with fresh outlooks; on the other, by companies that have a more realistic view, shaped by years of work & experience”

TOM DE KONINCK – YOUNG FURNITURE DESIGNER

Youth Expo Participants



Axelle Delboo, guided by Bram Kerkhofs, created the Puppet Chair—a playful stool inspired by wooden peg dolls. This piece blends nostalgia with functionality, adding a touch of whimsy to any space. The stool, made from strung wooden beads and cords, allows users to adjust its shape by stacking the discs in various orders. When the cords are loosened, the stool dramatically collapses like a marionette with loose strings, providing playful interaction during use.

Axelle Delboo is a multidisciplinary designer with a diverse range of skills, driven by the urge to explore new aesthetics. Not afraid of a challenge, her designs always augment into a playful, functional system, that seamlessly blends with refined colour palettes. Axelle's objects are her way of telling a story. Each creation is a narrative that surprises, invites the user into its world and changes the traditional perception of today's objects.

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“Forgotten Flowers” is a project that explores the impact of human activities on endangered flowers, reflecting on their beauty and significance. The artist created five large cotton textiles featuring nearly extinct flowers. She used screen printing with vanishing inks to produce the prints. The interactive textiles cause the flowers to disappear upon contact, symbolising the fragility of these species. This concept can be expanded into clothing, furniture, and other items to raise awareness about the issue.

Elisa Nieze (° 2001) is a versatile artist with a passion for fashion and nature. She holds a Bachelor's in Illustration from Sint-Lucas Antwerp and a Master's in Applied Arts, focusing on textiles. Her recent work, including an internship at Lottozero, blends analogue and digital techniques, with a focus on screen printing and bold colours. Elisa is dedicated to capturing the viewer's attention and telling important stories through her art. She's always seeking growth and new ways to express herself.

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Born in 2023, Felting Conversations explores how felting can foster vulnerability and community care. It features felt works, created through collaboration and close connections, aiming to promote a sense of collective care and openness. By embracing vulnerability, the project seeks to inspire shared healing and celebration of life's imperfections.

Astrid Schouteden (° 1999) is a multidisciplinary artist who explores the connection between performance and textile art. Her practice focuses on the social aspect of art. She uses workshops as a method of forming new connections. The process of making and materiality are the main aspects used to search for this connection. Her work combines stories of different people, animals and herself, as she tries to bind them together in an action of kinship.

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Flemish Matter is a study of the Flemish cultural identity with a focus on material aspects and how these can reflect a culture. As a designer, Cas Reynders aims to contribute to the continuation of Flemish cultural identity by creating pieces that fit within a modern Flemish context. The result is a collection comprising a mix of locally relevant materials, techniques, and formal elements with a touch of nostalgia.

Cas Reynders (°2000) is a designer focused on materiality, artifacts, and traditional craftsmanship. Inspired by lost archetypes, he explores their historical uses to understand their unique traits, translating these insights into pure, authentic, and simple objects. He prioritises locally sourced materials like wood, ceramics, and metal, connecting his designs to cultural heritage and a sense of belonging. Bridging past and present, Cas' work reflects a passion for tradition and contemporary design, each piece telling a story of its form, function, and cultural roots.

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Emma's research is driven by a desire to engage in constant play, a freedom she strives to preserve amid the pressures of daily life. It began with discarded objects the designer encountered while cycling, with colourful tubes inspiring her exploration. Emma is drawn to damaged or discarded materials, seeing their hidden potential for play. Using these materials, like fishing ropes, she explores colour, matter, and texture to create monumental works through knotting techniques. By unlocking the potential of these materials, she aims to evoke curiosity and wonder through the objects she creates.

Comer Desirée Emma (° 2001) is a young designer known for her bold perspective and passion for design, textiles, and aesthetics. Her master's work in Textile Design focuses on spatial design, blending colours, textures, and techniques. Comer creates spatial, diverse, and playful projects, repurposing materials from their original functions to explore design. Her work bridges textiles and applied art, emphasising space, structure, and tangibility, using everyday materials like rope, construction, and synthetic materials to connect craft and design.

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The PACO table by Fauve Boone exemplifies sustainable design using residual materials. Crafted from leftover parquet and scrap wood, the demountable table features joints that are both structural and decorative. The tabletop, legs, and frame are made from renovation leftovers, while the connecting pieces derive from furniture makers' scrap wood, together they form a unique, screw-free puzzle. Paco's block, wedge, and pin system allows for repeated assembly and disassembly without damage. The table's flat-pack design and reusable packaging promote flexibility, easy part replacement, and recycling, supporting circular design.

Fauve Boone is a hands-on designer with degrees in Civil Engineering and Architecture and Furniture Design. Her work focuses on the aesthetics within construction, drawing from her multidisciplinary background. Committed to circularity, Fauve's work skilfully transforms residual and undervalued materials into refined, sophisticated furniture—far from DIY. Her designs are both functional and elegant, merging sustainability with high-quality craftsmanship.

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Our funerary objects are neglected, contradicting the meaningful work of funeral directors. The staging and support provided to grieving families are undermined by funeral spaces whose design complicates the mourning process. Light is abandoned, devoid of its symbolism and significance. In response, Emma Prospère created In Limbo, a family of portable lamps designed to accompany the vigil of the deceased. A delicate balance of shadow and light. A poetic and aesthetic approach to woodworking. The object accompanies, invites gestures, and becomes a true emotional support.

Emma Prospère is a designer committed to an innovative approach to industrial design. A graduate of the Fine Arts and holding a master's degree in industrial design, her dual education provides her with a unique mastery that harmoniously blends craftsmanship and industrial processes. Her work is distinguished by a particular attention to materiality, reflecting her deep commitment to creating sustainable design that fuses tradition with modernity.

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WIN WIN offers furniture made from residual or recovered building materials. In this way, waste becomes a new, raw material and a piece of furniture can be made, even from your own construction surpluses. Through this design process, the amount of unused building materials is reduced, with accessible design furniture as its alternative. LUX and BASE are results of this same search. LUX is a characterful, modern table lamp made from a glass brick. BASE is a floor tile transformed into a contemporary side table.

Frances Van Wesemael is a young architect and designer who tries to combine the two fields she's most passionate about. During her studies as an architect, she wrote her thesis on the disassembly and reuse of building materials. This later translated in her furniture design by using residual or recovered building materials as a base. Her projects show the possibilities of reuse within design, while being contemporary and colourful.

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Hanne's graduation project is inspired by the human body. She was always fascinated by illustrating the human body. It felt like a continuous challenge, but that made up the inspiring aspect of the work. The designer chose the colours red, gold/yellow and black, which form the common thread throughout her work. She opted to repeat certain materials like hangers, red leather and yellow and red died yarns.

This young designer is only 18 years old and graduated in Design and Prototyping at PTI Kortrijk. Hanne is passionate about a variety of design forms and is currently continuing her studies at the Digital Art and Entertainment department of Howest, Kortrijk. A lifelong past in visual arts at the academy in Kortrijk were a great help in the young designer's search and graduation project.

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Celloderm is a biodegradable, recyclable material made from wood cellulose. Stronger than cardboard but less durable than some synthetics, it can lose shape over time. Inès Vaughan has enhanced it by combining celloderm with clay to create a rigid, bio-leather-like material. This new material, used in her GALBA project, showcases how unique, durable furniture can be made industrially from natural materials, using techniques such as laser cutting and 3D printing.

As an industrial designer, Inès Vaughan combines craftsmanship with contemporary technologies, with a focus on creating sustainable and social designs. Her work emphasises the bond between users and her projects while striving to simplify her concepts into optimised, yet honest and bold designs. With her scientific background, she is motivated by a desire to contribute to the development of industrial production. Inès explores new materials and interdisciplinary methods to offer innovative solutions in industrial design.

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Imagine this: a table that is not only functional but also tells a story. A story of innovation, craftsmanship, and freedom. It all started with an idea to create a table that could adapt to the needs of the moment, without sacrificing style or quality. The +4 Table is a functional piece that tells a story of innovation and craftsmanship. Made from solid oak beams, each 4x8 cm beam can rotate a quarter turn, allowing the table to expand by 4 cm with each movement. This flexibility lets the table adapt effortlessly, from a cozy dinner to a lively gathering, while maintaining its stylish design. The extensions are seamlessly integrated, ensuring both functionality and aesthetics are preserved.

Jasper is a young Belgian Interior architect and designer with a passion for problem-solving and system-based design. He focuses on creating solutions that are functional yet minimalist, aiming for simplicity and elegance in every project. By combining creativity with a thoughtful approach, he designs spaces and products that adapt to the needs of the user, offering both beauty and practicality.

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Jef De Coster began his project with the shape of the capital letter T, creating a series of about 25 small to medium sculptures ranging from 10 cm to 130 cm. Made from steel, wood, and PVC, these simple, geometric forms are lacquered in bright colours and resemble industrial objects and connections. The sculptures emphasise spatial presence, engaging in a dialogue with the viewer when displayed as a group.

Jef De Coster graduated in 2024 with a master's degree in Fine Arts from KASK in Ghent, having previously completed a bachelor's degree in sculpture. He is currently living and working in Antwerp. With a background in sculpture and a keen interest in architecture and design, his work intersects sculpture and functionality. He enjoys working with various materials and bright colours.

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“To what extent can we, as humans, defy the laws of nature and still maintain balance?” With this question as a guide, Jef Van Weyenberg explores the balance between control and letting go in his design, playing with gravity. The ICA lampshade embodies this tension in an almost poetic way. He crafted the design using a 3D clay printer, then manually dropped the shade. The result is a unique, organic form that brings peace and harmony to the chaos of everyday life. The work reflects the search for balance between tradition and innovation, where technology and human creativity meet and enhance each other.

Jef Van Weyenberg (*1995) began his creative journey in fine arts and craftsmanship. Building on traditional techniques, he developed a unique design vision that blends craftsmanship with modern technologies. His work explores how to preserve traditional values in a tech-dominated world, aiming to bridge the gap between old and new while enhancing the dialogue between craftsmanship and technology.

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This collection is an artistic and activist expression from a feminist perspective, inspired by Jessica’s experiences of harassment based on her own clothing. Through interviews and street interactions, the designer explores how perceptions of clothing are shaped. By using specific textures like lace and integrating second-hand garments, she challenges biases and breathes new life into these pieces. The adjustable silhouettes offer freedom of expression, allowing wearers to reflect their own identity. Jessica’s goal is to raise awareness and encourage embracing individuality, free from judgment. Be who you want to be.

Jessica Francesca Van Winckel is a fashion designer with a Master’s degree from the Royal Academy KASK in Ghent, where she graduated with great distinction. Her Belgian and Portuguese heritage influences her vibrant, creative approach, which encompasses drawing, sewing, and photography. For Jessica, fashion is a form of storytelling that expresses her colourful personality while exploring universal themes and memories. Her work is characterised by a playful yet thoughtful style, continuously evolving with each new experience.

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Jietse Vanlandschoot explores his immediate surroundings, drawing inspiration from art, biology, and craftsmanship. He explores both the physical and cultural characteristics of local landscapes. Jietse uses an analogue approach to investigate the forms, materials, and stories that shape the contemporary identity of these environments. His intuitive design process, based on experimentation and a deep respect for materials, results in refined objects that reflect the intricate narratives and textures of the world he studies.

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Return is a fully sustainable, modular sofa made from 100% natural materials. It is a redesign and a rethink of how a sofa can be made and used, whilst taking extra care to create a sustainable and circular design. Based on a square 93 x 93cm module the sofa is endlessly customisable and extendable. The combinations of modules allow the sofa to become many different sofas, from a single cosy corner armchair to a loveseat, to a daybed or right up to luxurious sectional sofa.

Joe Platt is a furniture designer & maker based in Brussels under the name of studio PLATT who works to create sustainable and circular design. A hands-on and experimental designer, Joe is happiest working and developing designs in the workshop. Having studied architecture and worked in the 3D printing industry Joe decided to return to study last year and is now a proud graduate of VOMO furniture design ready to enter the design industry.

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Totem finds its origin in the Parentesi lamp by Castiglioni. The combination of tension and resistance creates an equilibrium that keeps the lighting element at the correct height. Through its vertical interaction with the object, Totem provides various spatial experiences. Like the original totem pole, this Totem reflects an event. Totem is a collection of lighting fixtures featuring a consistent design for both standing and hanging lamps.

Joppe Deneyer (°2000) started his journey as a designer at the university of Antwerp studying architecture followed by a postgraduate in furniture design VOMO-Mechelen. His work starts from a dialogue between tension and balance, resulting in objects that interact with its users and environment. Geometry is a fixed value in his design language. Craftsmanship and hands-on skill are central to his creative process. His designs seamlessly blend form and function, reflecting his commitment to both innovation and traditional techniques.

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Since the rise of computers, book design has undergone significant changes, with digital tools making the process faster and more efficient. However, this rapid technological advancement risks overshadowing the essence of book design and losing the tactile qualities essential to it. By revisiting analogue design processes, we can reconnect with the core of book design, fostering creativity through limitations. This project aims to create a design approach that combines the efficiency of digital tools with the tactile richness of analogue methods, encouraging designers to reflect on their creative process.

Kika Lathouwers (°2002) is a graphic designer with a deep passion for books. Throughout her master's degree, she explored the intersection of analogue and digital design processes. Her work reflects a keen interest in the impact of design methods and a commitment to embracing new technologies while preserving the essence of the craft.

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For Retrospective, Soetkin drew inspiration from childhood memories of her grandparents' Eastern-influenced home, full of colors and patterns. A trip to South Korea introduced her to the 'real' East, leading her to combine these memories with her experiences to create new textile designs using techniques like transfer printing, embroidery, digital printing, and the traditional Korean Bojagi sewing method.

Soetkin Claeys is a textile designer with a passion for patterns and prints. Her creative process revolves around discovering the many ways in which structures and motifs can emerge in textile design. Through experimentation and a hands-on approach, she achieves surprising and innovative results. Colour plays a central role in her work, she strives to create a playful and inviting atmosphere with vibrant tones. Her designs are both direct and intuitive, as she instinctively works with materials and techniques.

No Instagram Tag
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This low sideboard was not designed, its parts were. Every piece of furniture consists of only the sum of its parts. A system of separate parts that are configured among themselves. No connection is permanent, an infinite reconfiguration is possible. Furniture adapts to the architecture to be furnished. A cabinet makes a niche usable, but can also function on its own. A piece of furniture made within the restrictions of the system. A system with which every piece of furniture can be made in its essence.

Lukas Miel Furniture – A unique perspective on furnishing. A piece of furniture is nothing more than the sum of its parts. Parts are assembled to enable furnishing. The furniture is crafted from a unified system, with compatibility as a key feature. Structures consist of thoughtful, non-permanent connections. The furniture is part of a larger whole, its architectural context. This context is made liveable through furnishing.

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Forte is a carpet that folds like origami into a cosy cocoon, inspired by childhood forts made of pillows and blankets. It offers relaxation at home and creates an inviting space in public areas. For children, it serves as a playhouse and safe haven, while providing comfort for anyone needing rest. Made from three materials, Forte is easy to disassemble and recycle, with a removable core that can be taken out through a zipper.

As a designer with a passion for textiles, her work blends technical precision with a pragmatic approach. Her designs are characterised by natural colour palettes, often paired with bold accents for contrast. She has a fascination for creating dynamic, adaptable furniture pieces that seamlessly adjust to different environments.

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Chou Chou (Rouge) is a series of textile pieces inspired by and made with vegetables. The collection features six tufted works that have been dyed naturally. Van Guijze crafted these dyes by extracting pigments from red cabbage, beets, red wine, and black beans. She used these natural dyes to colour her yarn, with the shapes of the pieces subtly nodding to growth forms found in nature.

Manu Van Guijze (°2000) Manu Van Guijze earned a bachelor's degree in interior design, specialising in furniture design. She then pursued a master's degree in visual arts, where she worked in an autonomous context. Her work is interested in themes of softness, nature, and well-being, often using textiles as her primary medium.

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In Palimpsest I, Palimpsest II and Checked colour schemes the designer explores the layered nature of their work, inspired by the historical concept of the palimpsest, where old stories subtly shimmer through new layers. This work balances between transience and lasting value, revealing the beauty of imperfection and incompleteness. Through a dynamic process of building up and scraping away layers, a tension between visibility and invisibility emerges. The artist seeks harmony between the old and the new, with each new element symbolising the transformation and continuation of what came before.

Margot Van den Berghe, born in Brussels in 1999, graduated cum laude in Textile Design from Luca School of Arts in Ghent in 2021. As a textile artist, she blends art and design, creating both functional and autonomous pieces. Her work emphasises material exploration, repurposing textile remnants and industrial finds into textured, sustainable creations. Margot's art highlights the tactile and conceptual qualities of textiles through slow, thoughtful processes.

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Aura is a textile collection by Maud Brunstein that explores visual perceptions and interferences. Using recovered wool threads from a Belgian luxury brand, she creates open-knit materials for various design applications. By employing rhythmic stripes and contrasting colours, she generates vibrant visual effects. The stripes, actually raised grooves with varying densities, shift in appearance depending on the viewing angle, creating a dynamic, lenticular knit effect.

Maud Brunstein, a recent textile design graduate from La Cambre in Brussels, began her journey at the Fine Arts Academy in Marseille, using photography to explore vibrant colours. Her fascination with urban shapes led to a passion for material creation, particularly knit fabrics. During her studies, she combined traditional and advanced textile methods to create tactile and dynamic work featuring bold colours and textures. With experience from several fashion industry internships, she excels at translating visual inspiration into material form and values collaborative processes while pushing project boundaries.

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Residual laminated wooden beams are transformed into functional design furniture through a thoughtful process, turning rectangular beams into a play of triangles. Craftsmanship emphasises the newly shaped surfaces, bringing out the beam's original character. Once used solely for construction, the beam now interacts with space and users, redefining its potential for sitting, stacking, or displaying in both private and public spaces.

With a multidisciplinary background in civil engineering and furniture design, Miguel Vanwetter combines technical expertise with creative vision to craft furniture that stands the test of time. Always in pursuit of innovation, he experiments with new techniques, materials, and methods to push the boundaries of design. Miguel's passion for sustainability drives him to rethink conventional design practices, focusing on creating high-quality, durable furniture using sustainable materials and processes. He believes that the synergy between his engineering knowledge and design skills results in pieces that are not only functional but also deeply connected to the spaces they inhabit.

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My Sweet Revolution is a personal journey of accepting life with diabetes, which the designer has had since age 13. After years of denial, the collection creatively incorporates medical materials to reflect the emotional aspects of living with an invisible illness. Inspired by a comic book, it uses characters, and patiently sourced materials, to challenge a system that reduces people to numbers, exploring the tension between patient and person, and the struggle for identity.

Nanook (*1994) is known for her bold designs, vibrant colours, and striking prints. After studying in Hasselt and Sint-Niklaas, her work evolved to feature caricature-like drawings, boldness, and humour. She interned with Tom Van der Borgh and assisted at the Hyères fashion festival. In 2022, she won the LolaLiza Fashion School contest, and her designs appeared in Belgian stores. Her collection MY SWEET REVOLUTION, a finalist in the Bilbao International Art and Fashion Contest, explores life with type 1 diabetes using medical waste materials. Nanook is currently launching her own brand.

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The Suki lighting collection by Nona Van Laethem embodies the seamless integration of traditional craftsmanship and cutting-edge technology. In Suki, techniques like welding are combined with 3D printing to create a design that explores the boundaries of movement, transformation, and interaction. The collection features a rod lamp encased in a diffusing tube, providing warm and atmospheric light. When focused reading light is needed, the lamp can be tilted, effortlessly transitioning from ambient to task lighting.

Nona Van Laethem is an Antwerp-based product and furniture designer. She holds degrees in Product Design from the University of Antwerp and Furniture Design from VOMO in Mechelen. Nona's work is defined by a focus on material optimisation and the creation of refined, honest designs, often infused with a touch of poetry. She combines traditional techniques with modern innovations such as 3D printing, bridging the gap between craftsmanship and contemporary technology.

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The Eureka Stool is designed with a distinctive dovetail joint that enables several stools to connect seamlessly, transforming them into a bench. By adding a corner piece, you can create various configurations, including angled corners, by stacking two stools together. Made from durable and affordable pine, the stool is crafted with efficiency in mind. The legs are cut from a single plank at an angle to reduce material waste. The continuous wood grain forms an elegant pattern that accentuates the wood's natural beauty. The stools are produced in sets, ensuring the wood grain flows consistently across each piece.

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Fumaci currently has two indoor collections and one outdoor collection: Donna, Arco, and Sole. The Donna collection is inspired by the flowing shapes of the female body and exudes pure elegance. The Arco collection, with its striking curved form and subtle ‘dent,’ adds a touch of contemporary sophistication to any space. For outdoors, we have the Sole collection, a completely different approach. This candle, available with a lid, features a round shape and natural tones, creating a warm, cozy atmosphere on balmy summer evenings. And there’s much more to come!

Pauline is the founder of Fumaci, born out of her love and passion for ceramics. Inspired by the whimsical beauty of nature, she designs candle holders with organic shapes, natural tones and soft textures. She invested in strong designs that stand up even without a candle. Her handmade creations combine functionality and artistic expression, perfect for lovers of craft and aesthetics.

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Come home to a table crafted from materials that once supported homes. Each unique, handcrafted table starts with a massive oak beam, paired with reclaimed steel and a distinctive leg system. Blending old oak beams, reclaimed steel, and laminated wood, the design preserves the raw character of these materials. pouBelle rescues these beams from obscurity, honoring their enduring beauty.

Raymond (*2000) is a young designer focused on heritage, woodcraft, and sustainable design. His work centers on furniture made from raw and reclaimed materials, transforming discarded items into meaningful pieces. Blending history and functionality, Raymond preserves the essence of the materials with minimalist interventions. His designs, including the pouBelle prototype, feature 300-year-old oak beams and reclaimed steel, merging craftsmanship with sustainability to create modern, beautiful objects.

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Reine Pinxten's collection, Soelaas, offers comfort for migraine sufferers through products that combine patient and medical insights. The collection uses heat and cold therapy to manage pain, with undergarments providing soothing vibrations and warmth for muscle tension, and discreet ear pieces offering a cooling alternative to ice packs, targeting affected nerves. Functional and comfortable, Soelaas is designed for effective relief.

Reine Pinxten (°2000) is a product designer who channels her passion for the human body into creating innovative products, digital solutions, and services. Her work is fueled by a deep commitment to both mental and physical health, crafting designs that go beyond mere aesthetics and functionality. Reine's creations are purpose-driven, always focused on enhancing the lives of individuals in meaningful ways. With each project, she aims to improve well-being, ensuring that her designs leave a positive, lasting impact. Her mission is to design with intention, shaping a healthier and more connected world.

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GÉRA(A)RD is a rammed earth stool and a tactile sculpture. Rising from dust and soil, this mystical being enters the home with determination and settles in a chosen spot to stay. GÉRA(A)RD is made from rammed earth, an ancient technique using the right blend of loam, clay, sand, and gravel. By simply compressing the soil—without heating or added binders—it transforms into a solid element. In contrast to GÉRA(A)RD's robustness is its gradual decay when exposed to rain. Rammed earth elements are typically made by compacting soil into geometric moulds, creating block-shaped objects. GÉRA(A)RD seeks to break away from this convention.

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From Belgium Garden is a research project exploring the value of local garden wood, typically used for firewood or chips. By tracing its origin, ownership, and processing, the project highlights the unique story of each piece. The wood's properties, cracks, and imperfections inspired the design of a chest of drawers, Statie 3200, named after its place of origin, which showcases the material's distinct character.

Stijn Jean Vos (2001, BE) is fascinated by objects that are unique and stand out in a crowd. He always works with natural and hard materials of local origin. His own creations always seek new insights into traditional materials by challenging the standard. To realise eccentric pieces, he employs a new language of form that is situated on the border between art and design. With these unusual designs, he expresses his passion for forming and aims to encourage the observer to think critically.

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ROVER is a project in which residual flows from local industries are inventoried and reused in a furniture production. The method developed in the project reverses the design process. Instead of starting with an idea and then designing and materialising, this project starts from what there is. In this way, it aims to change the perception of waste streams and add a new function to the life cycle of materials.

Tom De Koninck is a circular designer with a background in furniture and architectural design, based in Aalst and Antwerp. He recently obtained a degree in furniture design (VOMO) in Mechelen, after studying to become a Civil Engineer Architect at Ghent University. He currently works part-time at Architectenbureau HOP in Antwerp, specialising in nature-inclusive building. He has also founded his own furniture business, ROVER, in which he integrates local industrial waste streams into interior designs. Tom works with very diverse materials: metal, textiles, plastic, wood,... he sees the added value of materials where others deposit it. his work is grounded in the industry, craft and art scene

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This screen, inspired by Eileen Gray's Briques and made from leftover wood steam-bending materials, features a fluid, wave-like wooden pattern that adds movement and elegance to any space. Its versatile design allows for various repositioning, creating different moods. The willow tree's pollard head, typically unused, captivates with its complex branch structure. It symbolises the transition from nature's calm to the chaotic beauty of human intervention, blending order and disorder in a poetic harmony.

For Dries Truyers, one of the most intriguing elements of design is mixing, blending, and experimenting creatively with ordinary and unique materials: experimenting with materials is the gateway to innovation.

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Memento is inspired by the ancient ritual of gathering around a campfire, a place where stories were told, experiences shared and communities born. Here, Memento serves as a metaphor for the campfire. It is an invitation to connect, to rediscover authentic, personal interactions.

Yanni Timmerman is a Belgian designer. Driven by a wide-ranging interest in the world around him, his design philosophy draws inspiration from narratives, ethnic cultures, and history. Influenced by his father's background in product and jewellery design, Yanni embraces the significance of craftsmanship and quality in his creations. Additionally, his grandmother's passion for African art exposed him to the aesthetics and diversity of various cultures and traditions. Often reflected in his designs, which he prefers to imbue with simplicity and purity, using natural materials and production techniques. Yanni strives to evoke serenity and contemplation, aiming to surprise and challenge conventional familiarity. Each creation carries a profound narrative and research behind it, revealing their inherent complexity.

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“We really need a game changer on multiple levels & young people will be the engine of this change.”

VALÉRIE BOUCKAERT – BEAULIEU INTERNATIONAL GROUP

“I see an incredibly inspiring generation. A generation that is super resourceful, that has found shortcuts in life & leaves the banality of how things have always been done behind.”

QUINTEN SCHAAP – BAKERMAT

Q: Klaas, if there is one present you could give the world today, what would it be?

K: Insight. Insight allows us to look beyond the things we often focus on, but that may be trivial & unimportant in the bigger picture.

KLAAS HOLSTERS – WOOD.BE

THANK YOU!

Credit where credit's due—this trend research and report wouldn't exist without you!

Looking to the future requires reflection on yesterday's creations and today's innovations. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who took time to speak to us and share their stories. Your brilliant ideas, experiences, hard work and rebellious mindsets continue to shape our world. We're truly inspired!

Innovation is woven into the fabric of our industries, and we're grateful for the opportunity to showcase it.

We look forward to sharing more stories about you, our industries, and emerging talent, as we build the future together.

Would you like to see your story on our website? Want to share more about your future-focused business? Or join us for upcoming events and workshops? We're just a message away!

Feel free to reach out!
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Stay inspired, stay tuned about our industries' innovations and young talent:
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Over the past two years, we've had the privilege of interviewing numerous industry experts and emerging talent. We've discussed their insights on the industry, their visions for the future, and their innovative projects. We've also explored the dynamic between generations.

What can seasoned professionals learn from the younger generation? And what can the risk-takers of tomorrow gain from years of experience, trial and error, and eventual success?

WATF informs, showcases industry innovations, bridges generational gaps, and inspires through storytelling—telling an empowering story of “we.”

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“In a world facing a polycrisis, where climate, employment, and social issues are marked by uncertainty and challenge, youth culture emerges as a powerful force for transformation. I always believed that younger generations, not only carry the solutions to reshape our world, but that it’s crucial that their voices are heard at decision-making levels. Their ideas are essential for shaping both their future and ours.”

MAARTEN LEYTS – FOUNDER & CEO TRENDWOLVES

“This is a story of we. Change is inevitable. Resilience is a choice. Embrace trends to thrive in uncertainty.”

KARLA BASSELIER – CEO FEDUSTRIA

ABOUT FEDUSTRIA



Fedustria (non-profit) represents companies in the Belgian textile, wood, and furniture industries, as well as the wood import trade. Together, these sectors generate a turnover of 12 billion euros and support 36,237 jobs across 1,666 companies in Belgium, making them some of the key sectors of the Belgian industry. Fedustria's mission is to assist companies in the textile, wood, and furniture industries in their successful development by protecting and enhancing their competitiveness.

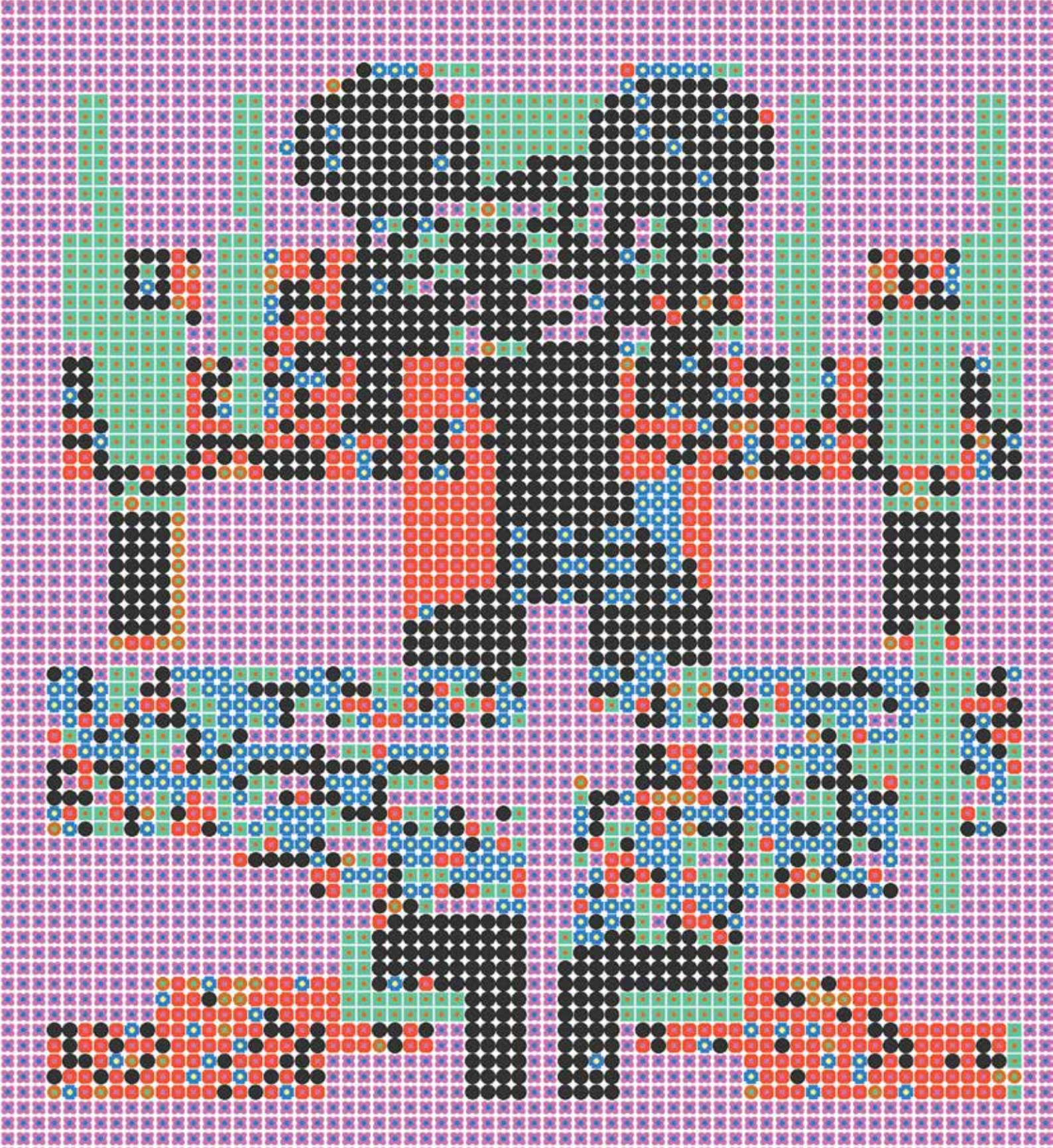
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ABOUT TRENDWOLVES



Trendwolves is a youth trend agency based in Ghent, specializing in youth trends and future research for 15 years. They help companies, brands, and governments engage and connect with young people, developing communication campaigns tailored to this audience.

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Woodcrafts And Textile Futures

