

Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec
New monography : *works*

Texts by Anniina Koivu
Graphic design by Sonia Dyakova

Edited by Phaidon Press

Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec



Works

PHAIDON

Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec

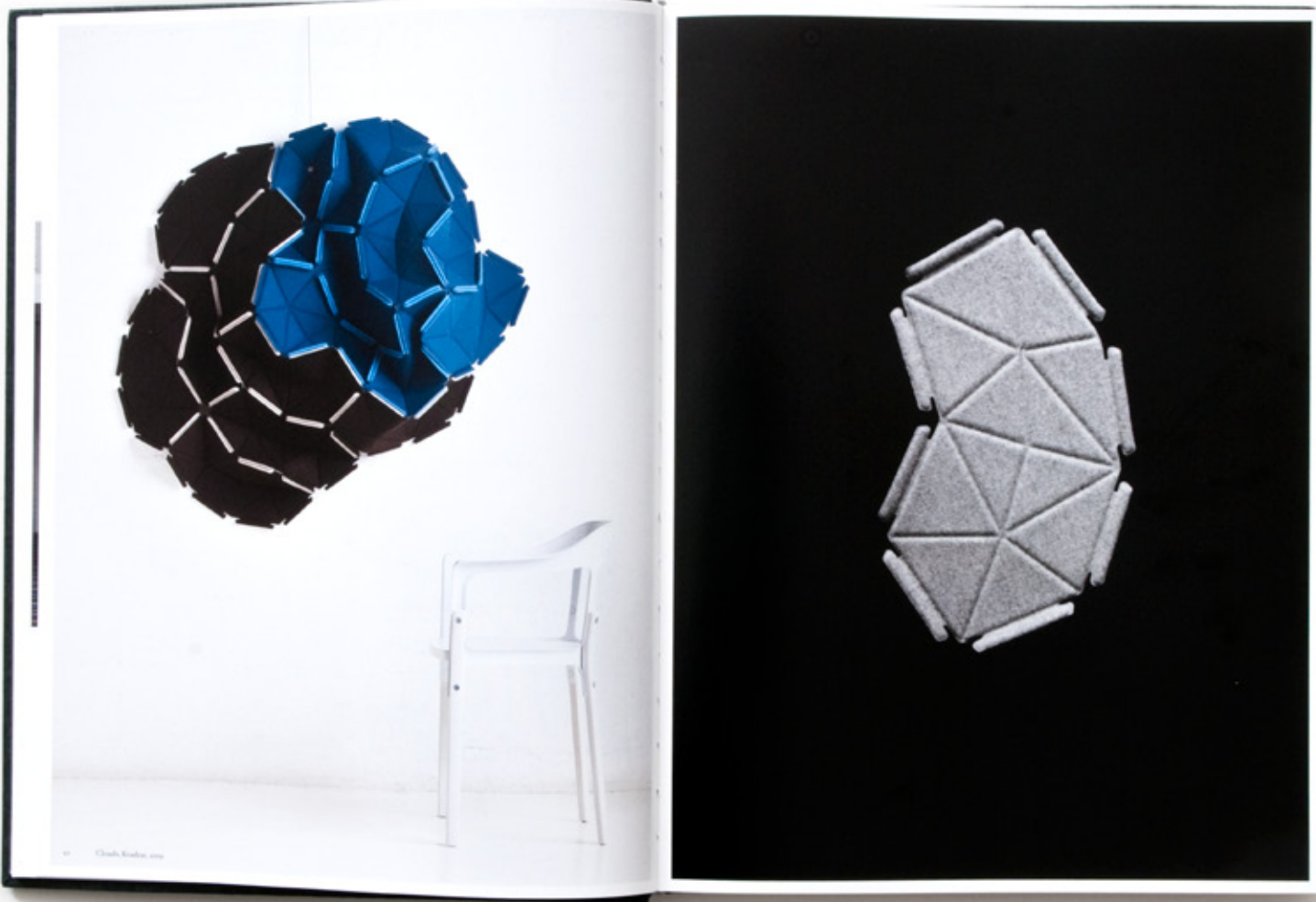


Works

PHAIDON























www.fabrics.com



www.fabrics.com





Edge Drawing.com



Edge Drawing.com



Edge Drawing.com



Edge Drawing.com



Edge Drawing.com



Edge Drawing.com



Edge Drawing.com



Edge Drawing.com



Edge Drawing.com



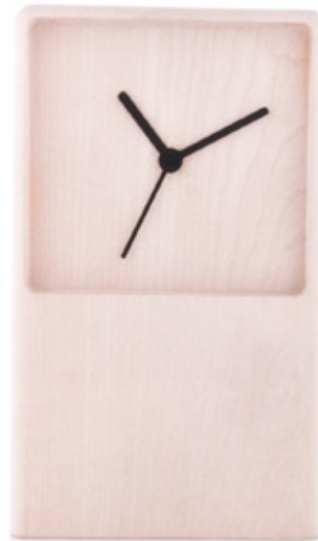
Edge Drawing.com



Edge Drawing.com



Edge Drawing.com





Wood, staining, 100%



Edges, staining, 100%



Wood, staining, 100%



Wood, leather, PVC, metal, string, 100%





Manual not included

Many of the innovative aspects of the success-oriented design understanding of Roman and Ewan at Boswell's owe a debt to Christopher Alexander's book, *A Pattern Language*. The book has had a significant impact on both of them, though in very different ways. In the case of Ewan, and indirectly for Roman, While Ewan devoured the cover page manual and still refers to it occasionally, Roman says he never really looked at the book. Ewan says the principles of flexibility, and of giving the user the possibility to make his or her own decisions on how to use an object, have formed the basis of ongoing discussions between the brothers.

When Alexander wrote *A Pattern Language* in 1977, his objective was to create a manual for a new kind of practical architectural system. Breaking free of overly rigid modernist ideas about how our spaces should and should not be, he proposed a new method of planning. Rather than simply applying a prescribed universal set of solutions, the author calls on users to solve the "problem" at hand themselves. The book provides a set of guidelines, without taking away the designer's freedom to make individual decisions based on context. Acknowledging that such decisions must be made on many different levels, Alexander broke down design operations — ranging from issues relating to towns and public spaces to detailed decisions of where a window should go in a room — into simple steps. The latter category of decisions might affect fewer people than the former, but they are in no way less significant, particularly when seen from the perspective of the decision maker. Roman and Ewan at Boswell's adopted these principles, and have applied them to the design of office and shelving systems, tableware, cases and even bathroom fixtures.

Roman and Ewan at Boswell's give people choices. Historically, bathroom fixtures had little flexibility when it came to meeting the personal needs of the user. You could choose between separate or combined, picking from a narrow offering of materials, colors and profiled topologies. With the launch of their "Boswell's" bathroom collection (see by Harnagel) in 2003, the brothers introduced a new kind of DIY bathroom concept, allowing the user to choose from countless possible combinations. The systematic assembly of each single element for a final personalized bathroom only represents a departure from the old model. But this sort of wide-ranging opportunity was limited to bathrooms; the brothers accomplished a similar feat with *Art Habitat*, 2006, a stackable, multifunctional porcelain server for everyday use, followed ten years later by *Ocale*, 2016. Original, rustic and traditional at the same time, *Ocale* is a collection of tableware in ceramic, glass and stainless steel that achieves a balancing act between whimsy and refinement. The twenty-two differently shaped bowls, plates, saucers, cups and glasses are neither navigational nor are they round. Free of the classical understanding of a table service, *Ocale* can be used and assembled in any number of ways.

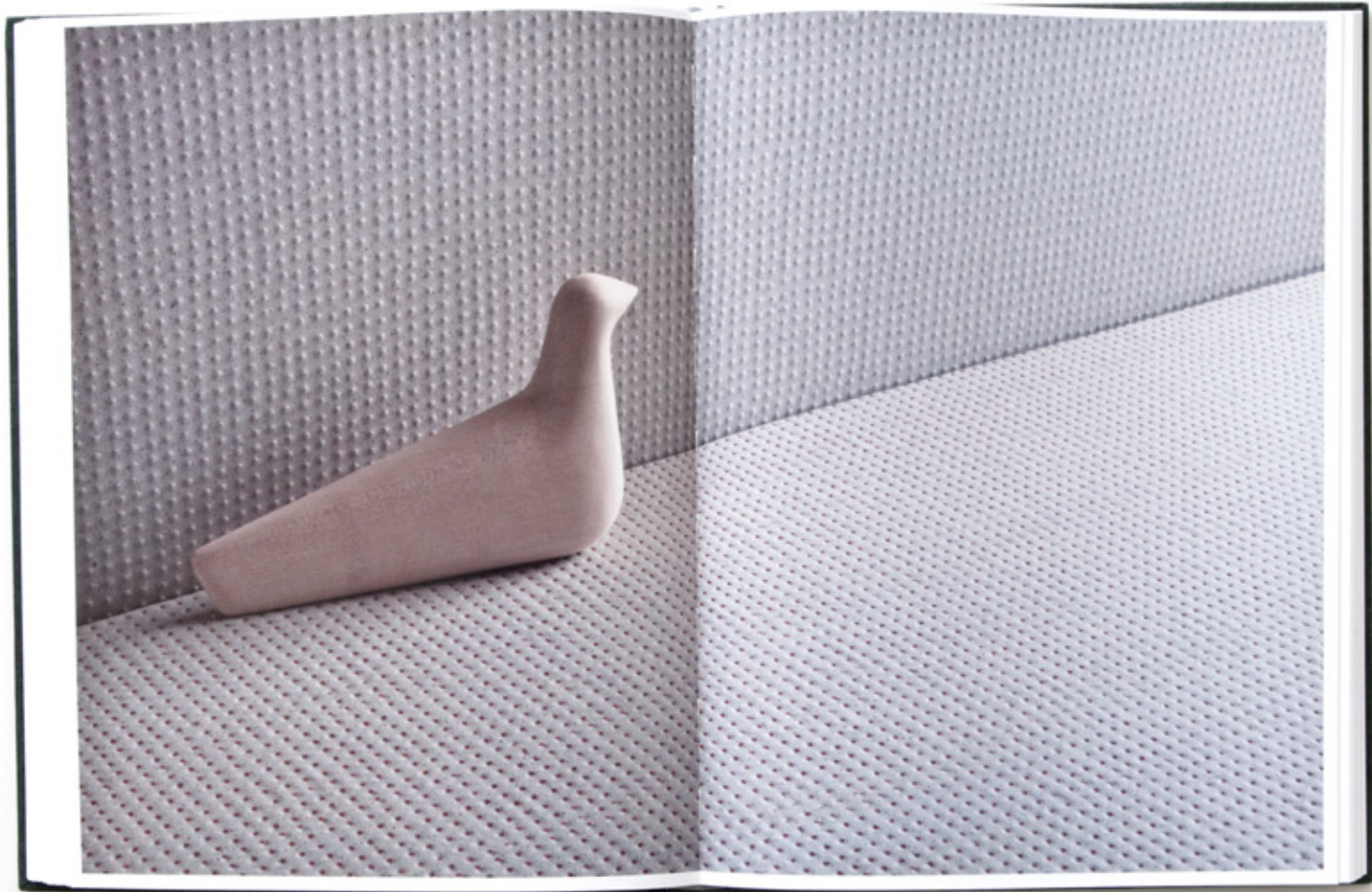
This desire to escape predefined rules is one of the basic motivating impulses behind the brothers' work, and harks back to the very beginning of their careers. In 1998, they designed the *Vases Condemners* project — a system based on eight different shapes that fit together to create abstract

System









A chair is like a pop song

Chairs are commonly composed of an elevated seat with a backrest (preferably) and armrests (optional). Outstanding chairs have further attributes, including being comfortable to sit on, pleasing to the eye and durable. An outstanding chair makes innovative use of materials and takes advantage of intelligent means of production. And while some of the most exceptional examples, such as the birchwood Thonet chair from 1859, have become design icons, chairs should not be overloaded with significance. Design is not perfect and does not strive for perfection, as high art and architecture tend to. One reason the Bouroullec's like to work in the field of industrial design is because it is not too heavily charged with underlying meanings; rather, furniture is direct, simple and easy to understand. And while it is an important vehicle for making social, ecological and health-related impacts, industrial design does not have to be aggressive in order to do its work. Design takes effect in a more subtle, almost homoeopathic, way. As tools for the everyday, pieces of furniture are part of popular culture.

In fact, the brothers sometimes look to pop culture — music, for example — as a model for their creations. Ewan Bouroullec describes his love for a wide range of styles and moods: 'Memphis is like punk rock. It is like Kurt Cobain. Punking. The world is changing. On the other side there are Eames and Nelson, whose design is the total opposite. They are the creators of pieces that remind us of the calming serene notes of the Beatles or Philip Glass. So full of hope.' While Ewan has not decided which style he prefers, harmony or discord, Roman draws a comparison between chairs — and the impact they have on people — and pop songs. A good chair can soothe our day, remain in the background or intrude on our subconscious, only to fade away or, on the contrary, become a classic that long soothes the weary for paradise.

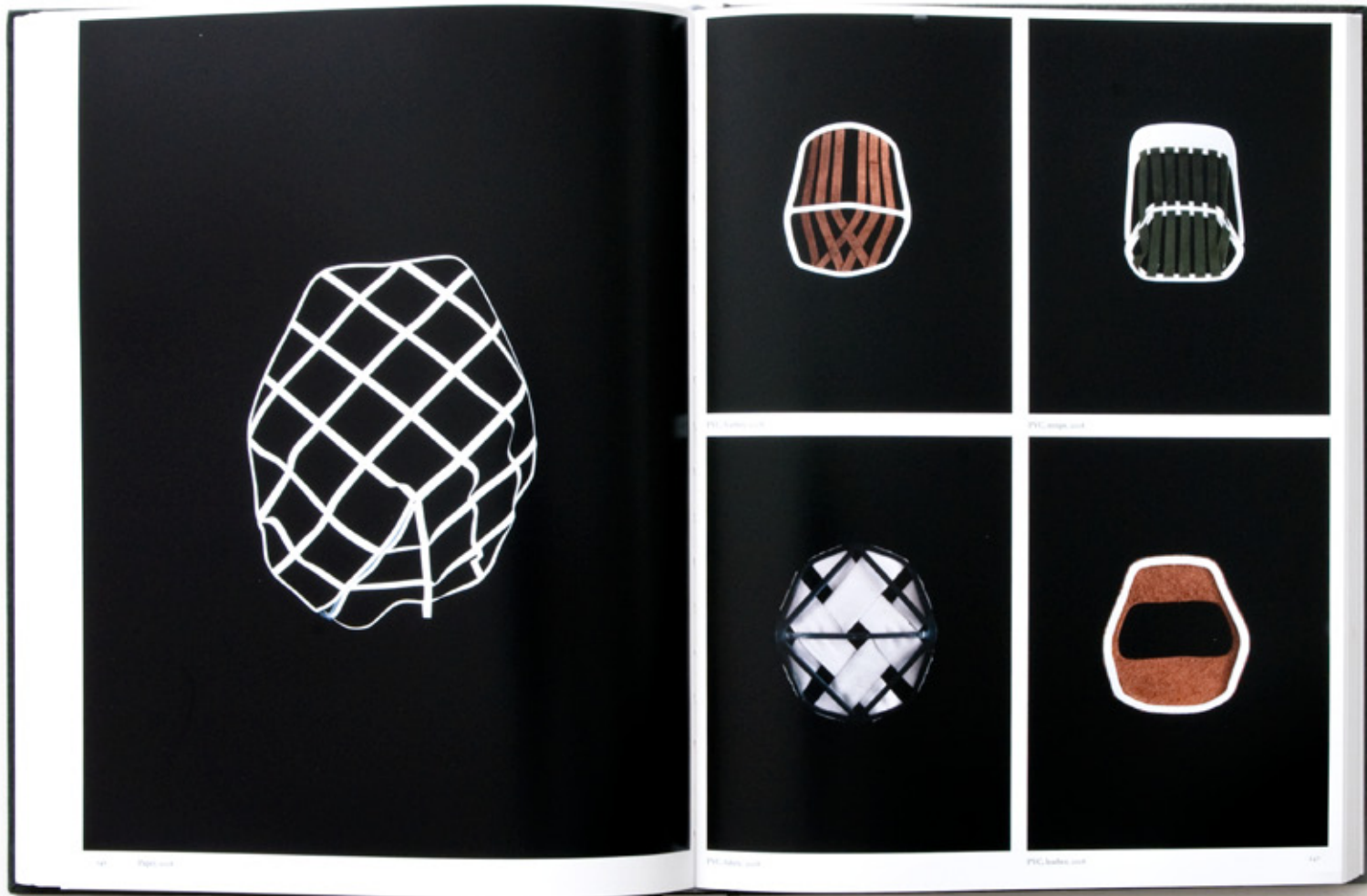
So far, the Bouroullec's have produced a dozen chairs. In 2000, Roman and Ewan Bouroullec designed not one but two wooden chairs: Baguette for Magis and Osoo for Mattiazzi. They couldn't be more different. Baguette, which is made from ash ply wood, with solid wooden legs and aluminium joints, represents a classic of industrial production. Using as little material as possible, the chair stands out for its surprising, slighter looks, which change from every angle. Osoo, by contrast, brings to mind fibres of raw fish, carefully assembled by hand so that the veins of the separate elements align in order to form a sculpted whole. The chair focuses on the materiality and sensuality of well-crafted massive woods such as oak, maple or ash, and asks to be touched. The Strachwood Chair (Magis, 2007) was based on the brothers' in-depth research into the ways in which materials are processed. In this case, the end product was the rational marriage between beech wood and birch wood, a chair that brings to mind the spirit of great chairs of the past, like Jean Prouvé's designs, which give patina and personality through wear over time.

Another chair, Slow (Vitra, 2007), can similarly be linked to a design classic. Like Eero Saarinen's Womb chair (Knoll, 1946), the Bouroullec's take on the lounge chair is an extremely simple, low-slung piece of furniture, but it is made from a resilient knitted textile slipped over a metal structure. The material's elasticity provides great user comfort, while its transparency creates an intriguing, totalizing, almost cinematic surface, reminiscent of ladies' stockings.

Chairs





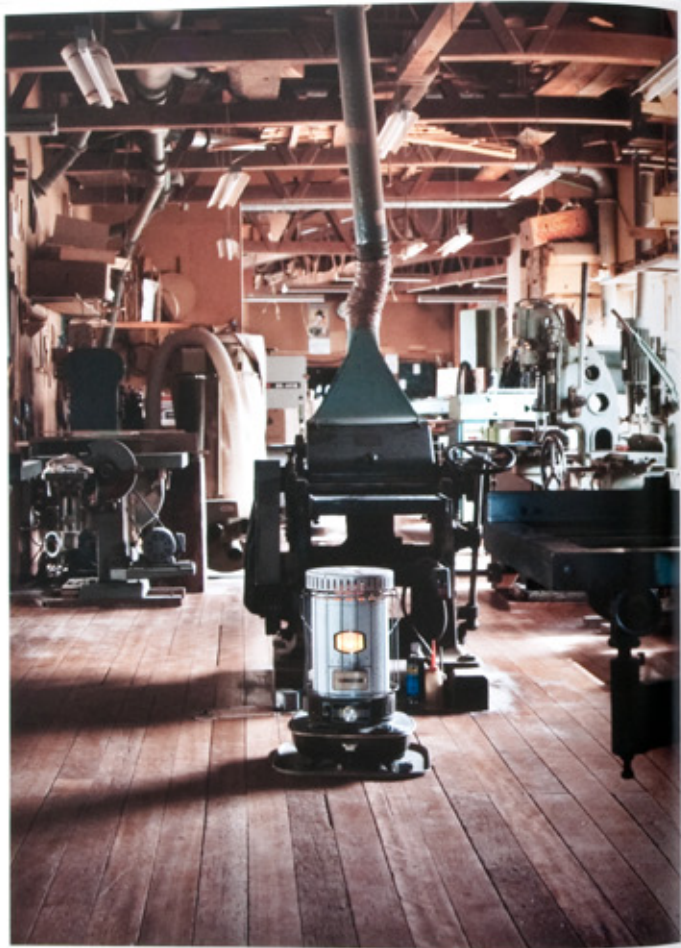


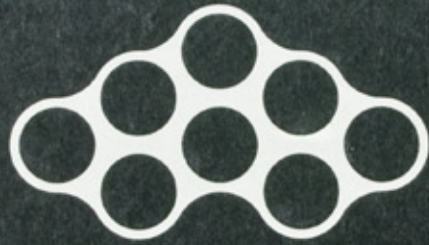
100 Paper, 2004

101 Paper, 2004

102 Paper, 2004

103





PHAIDON

© Studio Bouroullec