

FRAME

THE NEXT SPACE

ISSUE 167

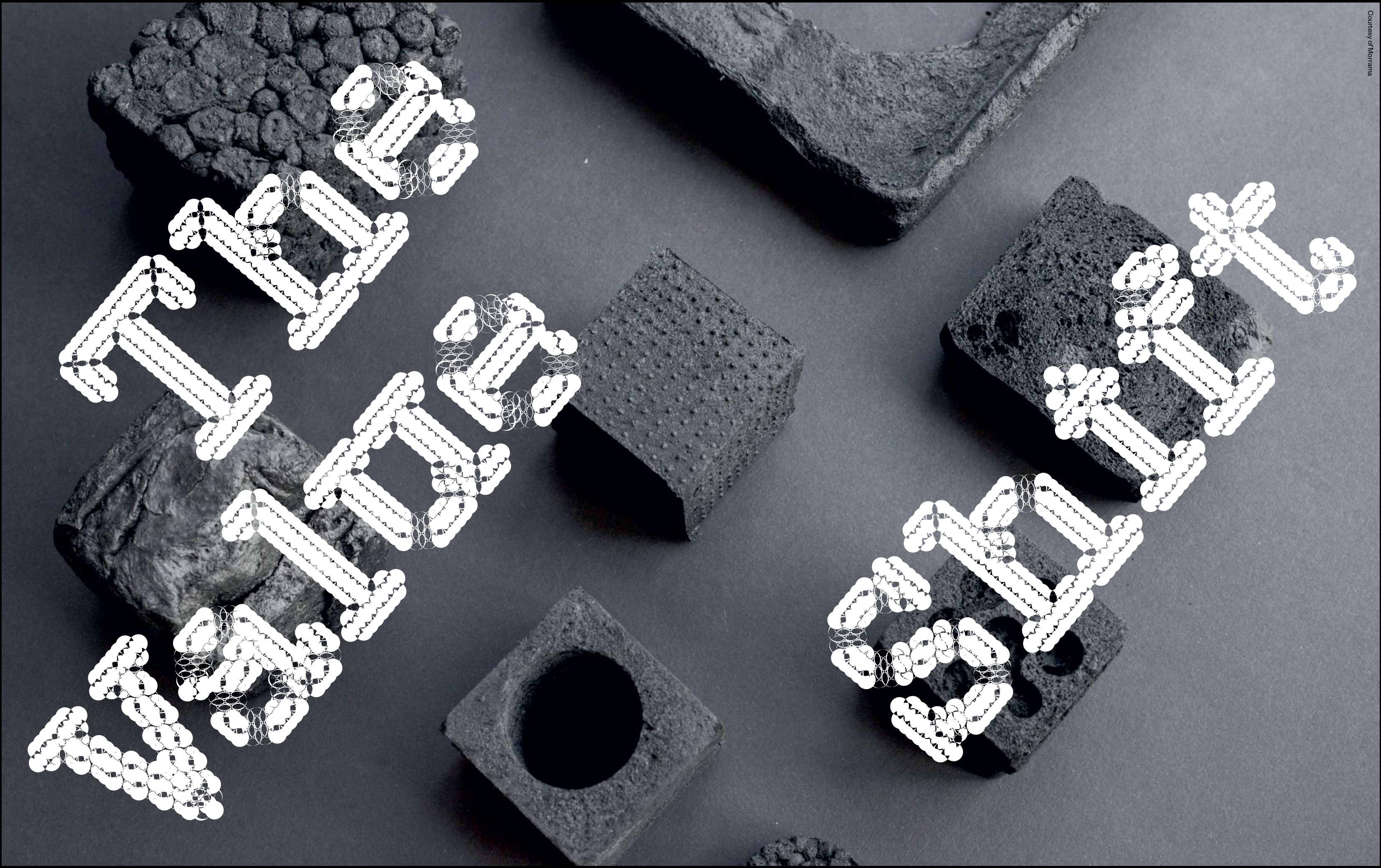
SUMMER 2026

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Why design's value system is shifting



From bio-mined metals and fungal pigments to bronze-cast plastic chairs and algae-coated walls, the projects in this Look Book collapse the distance between the ordinary and the exalted. What do we mean when we call something precious? Was value always there, waiting to be noticed? Some elevate overlooked or surplus materials into objects of desire; others strip luxury back to its essentials and find necessity underneath. Together, they suggest that the boundary between the two could be more permeable than we think.

Curation ANOUK HAEGENS
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PREVIOUS SPREAD

What does an unapologetic biomaterial look like? That's the question Carbon Cell and Morrama are exploring. Three prototypes made from Carbon Cell's proprietary compostable, carbon-locking foam celebrate the biochar-derived material's distinctive colour and texture rather than mimicking its petrochemical counterparts.

OPPOSITE

Jacques Monneraud makes ceramics that look like cardboard that look like paintings. *Life, Still* - a body of work dedicated to Giorgio Morandi - is a little confusing, but, really, that's kind of the point. By mimicking a throwaway material, Monneraud unravels the hierarchy between the treasured and the trash, crafting something that may read as refuse yet reveals itself as anything but.





In Mallorca, Minimal Studio has reduced the supermarket to raw, cool concrete – brutalist and austere, almost cinematic. Products aren’t spotlighted for abundance; instead, they are displayed sparsely, their presence elevated by absence. Overhead, more than a thousand recycled plastic crates line a ceiling with integrated LED lighting, ventilation and rainwater collection. The could-be banal act of grocery shopping becomes something altogether surprising.



Courtesy of Alsar Atelier

OPPOSITE
For its installation at the Chicago Architecture Biennale, Alsar Atelier showcased the atmospheric potential of run-of-the-mill materials. With gravel underfoot, visitors wound their way between walls made from stacked standard plastic pallets, supported by dimensional lumber and clad in silver insulation. Built from off-the-shelf components and dry joints – there are no adhesives and no custom tooling – the structure is fully disassemblable and reusable.



Courtesy of Baccarat

Crosby Studio's Harry Nuriev inserts pens, bottle caps, CDs and keychains into the crystal arms of Baccarat's iconic Zénith chandelier. Everyday objects float in the middle of a rarefied material. The master of 'transformism' believes that 'the time has come not to make more, but to see more clearly', and this piece 'begins with the world as it already is' to create something beautiful.

The paper that protects fabric during Issey Miyake’s signature garment-pleating process was once compressed into rolls and destined for disposal – until Satoshi Kondo of Miyake Design Studio saw otherwise. Cross-sectioned into stools for the brand’s SS25 Paris show, the Paper Logs project has since grown into a collaboration with Spanish practice Ensamble Studio. The Paper Log: Shell and Core pushes the material further through carving, peeling, finishes and more, testing what the byproduct can become.

Courtesy of Issey Miyake

Lydia Whitmore, styling by Anna Sheridan

Natural Basics, H₂ERG’s debut collection, speculates on a future in which biotechnology allows us to grow metals into everyday jewellery. Think: a chain with links inspired by roots and hoop earrings drawn from the filamentous structures of mycelium. It is the first output of Future Metals, a multidisciplinary project exploring bio-mining and the possibilities it presents as a source of precious metals. Working with UK-based Phyona and French start-up Econik, H₂ERG recovers metals from contaminated land through phytomining and, in doing so, reframes what is prized.



Second-hand bowls, ashtrays and cat figurines - which Simon Skinner scavenged from charity shops and flea markets around Sweden - are given a new lease on life, stacked on top of each other and fused into 20 sculptural lamps. What does this Lego-like process remind the designer of? Arranging flowers. A florist's bouquet reimagined as Skinner's Buké.

OPPOSITE
For his takeover
of Le Bon Marché,
Chinese artist
Song Dong parks
monumental
chandeliers,
an immersive
installation and
interactive works
inside the storied
Parisian department
store. *Objets divers
et variés* explores
the collective
memory of common
objects and the
way we consume
them. In a space
made explicitly to
sell luxury, Song
Dong makes us
ponder what - and
why - we're really
accumulating.

Guisev Almestål



Courtesy of Le Bon Marché

For Jam Hotel Ghent, Studio Lionel Jadot has revamped a former military barracks in the Belgian city's Arts Quarter, turning it into a 108-room hospitality project that doesn't feel quite like other hotels. Its walls? A little raw, with peeling plaster left intact. And the furniture? That's made from reclaimed materials. The gatehouse of the early 20th-century Leopold Barracks is a destination that wears its history openly, without concealment.



Shan Huau



New Order of Fashion's exhibition Wool: (Re)discovered at Dutch Design Week rethought wool, a material with a long history that's often overlooked. Featured designer Sybrand Jansen challenges this perception by felting short-staple wool, typically dismissed as waste, around a jute grid by Cloudwool, a British manufacturer that repurposes European sheep wool. The jute lends tensile strength, transforming a fragile fibre into something both delicate and resilient.

Shahin Helter



A biodegradable alternative to single-use plastic, Silvio Rebholz's Paper Glasses are produced using three-dimensional moulds. Then, they are coated in beeswax to bind the material, seal it and render it translucent. Holding one of the German designer's Paper Glasses feels *almost* akin to holding an actual glass; they're delicate and see-through, meant to be handled with care. After use, they decompose completely.



OPPOSITE
Alongside the restoration of Oberamteistraße in Reutlingen, Wulf Architekten chose to raise a wholly contemporary structure above the cellar of the old 'stone house', demolished in 1972. Cradle-to-cradle principles guided the materials: a timber frame wrapped in cast-glass tiles. The tiles were pressed into the same humble shape as the roof tiles of neighbouring buildings. Here, though, they naturally illuminate the interior by day and transform the building into a glowing beacon by night.



As part of her Design Academy Eindhoven graduation project, Gijs Bakker Award nominee Valdís Steinarsdóttir uses gold – now listed as an endangered element – to reexamine how we assign value. Despite vast quantities of precious materials embedded in discarded electronics, formal recycling systems recover only a fraction. A ring cast from gold reclaimed from e-waste, stamped with a custom hallmark, is designed to be treasured rather than discarded.



The ubiquitous plastic garden chair, the thing no one remembers buying but everyone seems to have, became the subject of Not a Plastic Chair, a project by Pierre Castignola. With reassembled sections from seven different patented remakes of the original in a single chair, copyrights naturally overlapped. Cast in bronze, a democratic object is rendered collectable.

Ronald Smits

Commissioned for the Diriyah Contemporary Art Biennale 2026, House of Eternity filled a gallery with four sculpted monoliths surrounded by walkways made from sand, water and LED panels. Ambling through, visitors felt as if they'd stepped into an important archaeological site. Théo Mercier's premise centres on sand as the cellular memory of the world, elevating one of the most common materials imaginable into something monumental.





Guided by the Gandhian principle in which materials are sourced from within a five-mile radius, Wallmakers built the Bridge House farmstead in Karjat almost entirely from wild grass thatch and mud. A craft that had largely disappeared locally, thatching is here revived for contemporary construction. Its advantages – exceptional natural insulation and minimal energy use – make a historical necessity undeniably relevant.

Studio KSHA

During a residency in Seoul, Emma Witter collected shells from a fish restaurant in the historical *hanok* village – the starting point for her five-piece Mermaid dining set. Assembled from found objects, Korean clam shells, opal-effect glass, cultivated pearls and electroformed copper, cutlery is refigured as jewellery. With Witter's pieces on the table, dinner is suddenly ceremonial.

Courtesy of Emma Witter



For Aēsop Hainan, Other Matter suspended over 2,000 hand-coated aluminium panels beneath two ceiling oculi, each coated in an algae-derived biopolymer developed by Australian artist Jessie French. The film adheres without adhesive, so it can be repositioned across multiple lifecycles, and it replaces less sustainable materials like vinyl, acrylic and quarried stone. The entire store is built around the sensation the biopolymer enables: light refracted like the sun through water.



Designer Daniel Heilig spent five years searching for fibreglass panels with the right translucency, integrity and depth; eventually, he found them on an abandoned hillside hut above Königswinter, where 50 years of sun, heat, frost and rain had turned the corrugated roof panels amber. Set into custom wooden frames with LEDs behind, each piece emits a warm glow. The resulting light sculptures turn a construction material into a collectable.

Courtesy of Heilig Objects

At Vallehermoso market in Madrid, Lucas Muñoz dismantled a former fishmonger's stall. Then, he reconfigured its materials – granite, steel sheets, iron beams – and reassembled them into El Puesto, Guía Repsol's rotating venue for award-winning chefs. The bar front is clad in a CO₂-captured terrazzo, developed with Repsol's R&D team. Here, nothing was wasted and little imported, with one trade's leftovers becoming another's coveted details.

Manu Toro



Courtesy of Maximum

Maximum's Billex stools are made from shredded decommissioned banknotes – cotton substrate with two layers of plastic coating – compressed with heat into hard, functional forms. But the lifecycle doesn't end with the stools; the pieces are fully recyclable, as they can be shredded and recast. The Paris-based design studio has stripped currency of its value – and given it a new one.

OPPOSITE

For the inaugural AlMusalla Prize, the Diriyah Biennale Foundation challenged designers to reimagine the *musalla* – a space for prayer, dialogue and community – as modular, transient and sustainable. On Weaving – East Architecture Studio's winning proposal, created in collaboration with artist Rayyane Tabet and engineers Akt II – draws inspiration from regional weaving traditions and features an open courtyard and prayer spaces constructed from waste materials derived from local date palm trees.



Marco Cappelletti, courtesy of the Diriyah Biennale Foundation



When we think about tools, we hardly ever imagine anything fun. But for Milan Design Week 2026, Seletti and building materials distributor Eternoo made brooms, shovels, plungers, wheelbarrows, trowels and hammers design objects, with metallic gold finishes and neon-dipped handles. Seletti's flagship on Corso Garibaldi was dressed as a mock London hardware store, ennobling objects usually hidden under the sink.

Central Saint Martins graduate Peerasin Punxh Hutapheat has developed Growink: a bio-ink using fungal pigments in place of petroleum-based dyes. Its four hues emerge at different stages of fungal growth, shaped by biological rhythms and environmental conditions. Colour is coaxed out of the natural world, grown from living systems.

Pascal Schonlau



Pim Top



Arranging standard bricks into methodical, intuitive compositions on the studio floor, Bram Vanderbeke uses the negative spaces between them as moulds for Casted Objects: concrete benches, stools and tables. Looking to the building site as design inspiration, Vanderbeke's pieces echo the aesthetic of the originals: raw, grainy surfaces and prominent seams.

Crafted from dead-stock wool, with three undyed yarns of varying pile heights and calibrated thicknesses, this reversible rug translates the structural language of olive wood into textile. Developed with CC-Tapis' advanced robotufting platform, the collaboration with Jorge Penadés turns surplus material into something striking.



Piercarlo Quecochia / DSL Studio



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