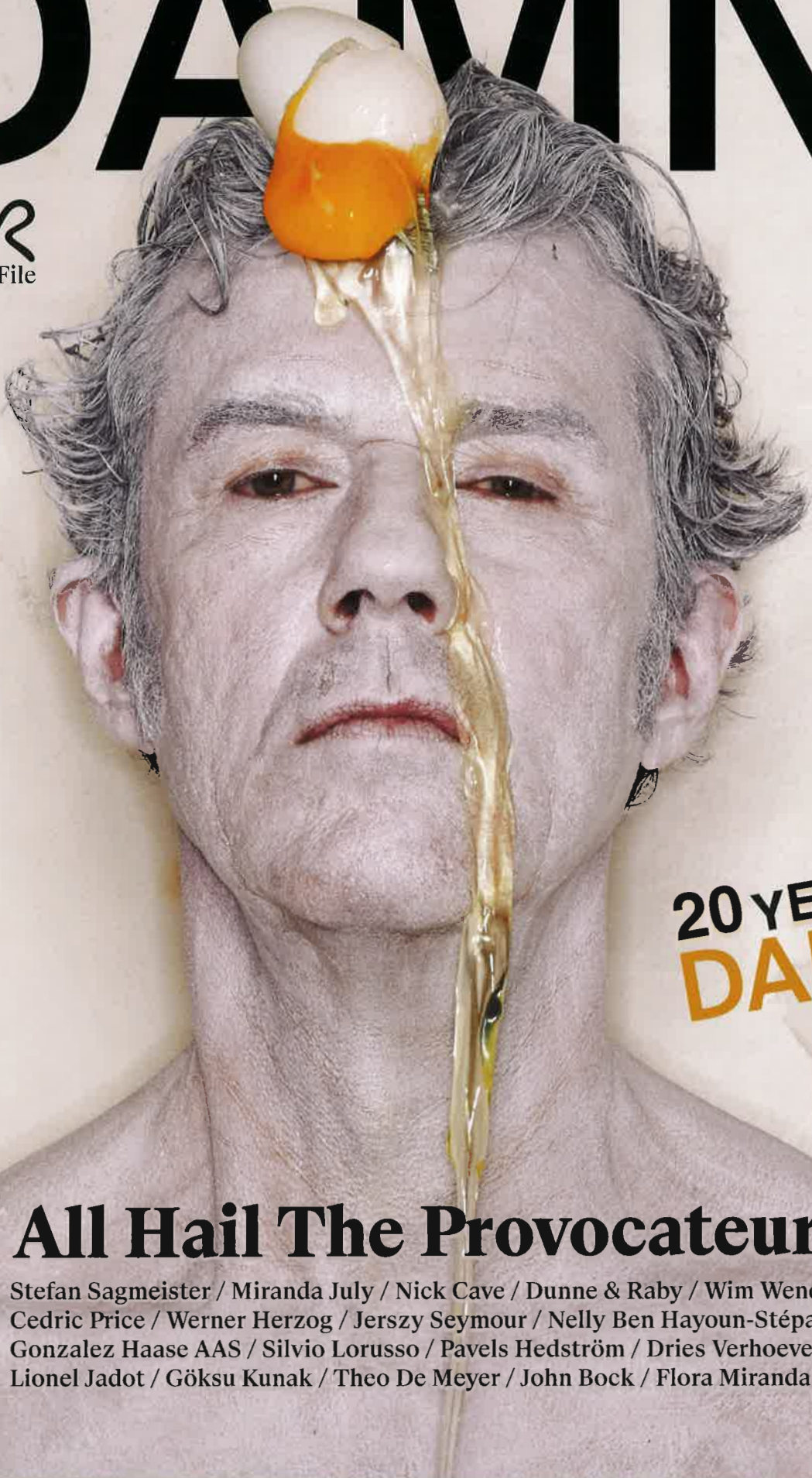


DAMN°

87

Spring 2024

R&V
The *Water* File



20 YEARS
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All Hail The Provocateurs

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SPRING 2024 / OFFICE OF DISPOSAL 9000 GENT X - P509314

EUR € 25
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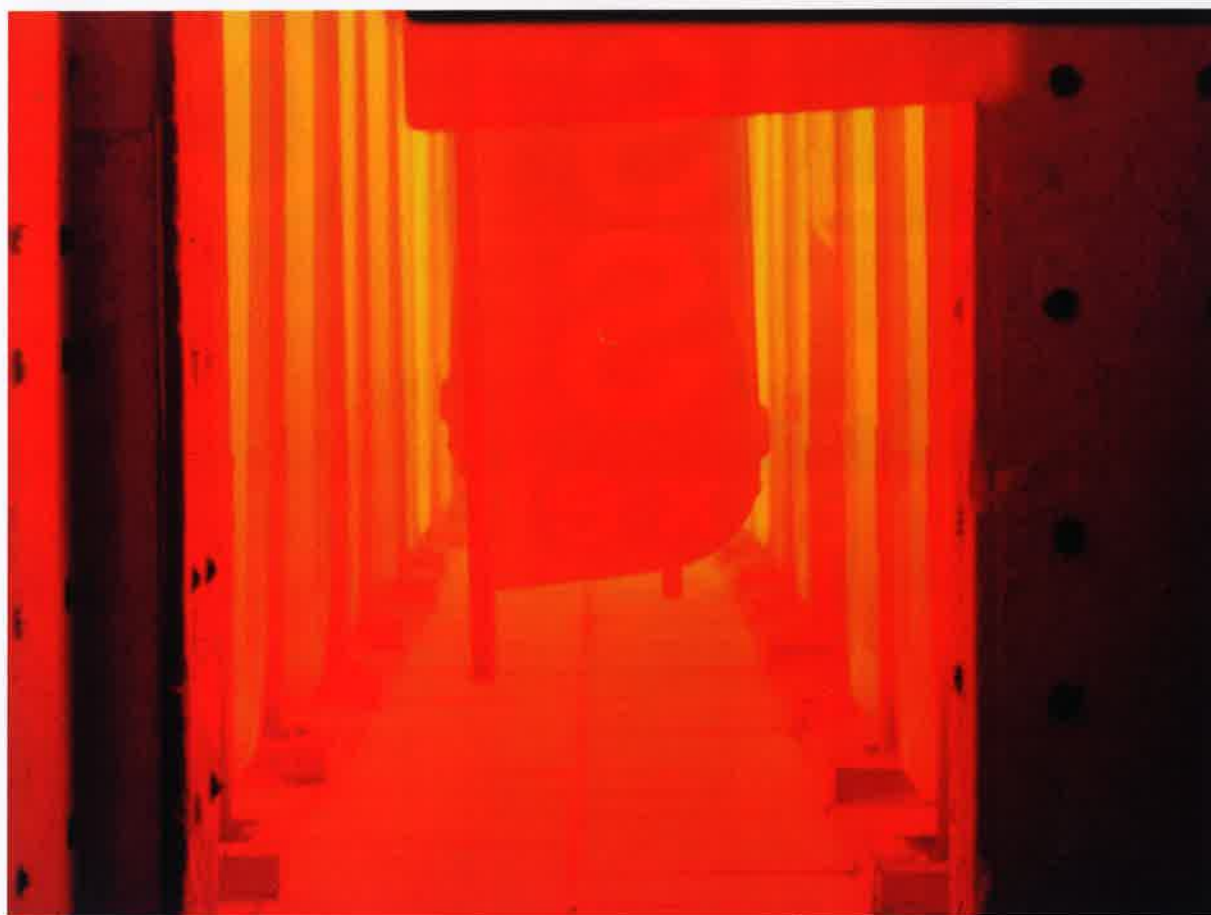


HOLISTIC VIEWS

Kaldewei x e15



The e15 Kaldewei collection extends the 'Oyo Duo' bathtub with furniture and accessories made of oiled oak.
Photo: © Philipp Mainzer / e15 Kaldewei



Production of the 'Oyo Duo' bathtub at the Kaldewei factory in Ahlen, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. © Kaldewei.



The enamelled steel bathtub 'Oyo Duo' is available in white and numerous tones from Kaldewei's Coordinated Colours Collection. © Kaldewei.

Kaldewei x e15

Research & Realities Water

Holistic Views

Kaldewei x e15

Research + Realities Water

Holistic Views

You have to think outside the box in order to evolve, which sometimes leads to unusual alliances. Kaldewei, a manufacturer of enamelled steel bathtubs, shower solutions and washbasins recently teamed up with furniture manufacturer e15. The result? A joint collection of seating and accessories that brings warmth and cosiness into the bathroom. DAMN° spoke to Christian Büttner, Director of Innovation & Portfolio at Kaldewei, Philipp Mainzer, CEO & Founder of e15 and Munich-based designer Stefan Diez, about this collaboration.

How did this collaboration come about?

Christian Büttner (CB): Stefan designed a wonderful bathtub for Kaldewei, the 'Oyo Duo', which came onto the market two years ago. It was not only well received in the design community but was also very successful commercially. Since then we have been asking ourselves what kind of setting is needed for this bathtub to create an ensemble. That was when Stefan brought us together with e15. He has a gift for identifying companies and personalities that fit together. It's a way of naturally shaping brands that goes beyond pure design. We are now very confident that we have found our own language for objects that may have been designed a thousand times before. And that we have created something unique that reflects what e15 is about, fits harmoniously into the world of Kaldewei and bears Stefan's signature.

What kind of items does the 'e15-Kaldewei Collection' include?

CB: We have a stool in two heights and a bench that can also be used as a storage unit. Then there is a pouch and a towel strap, which also serves as a headboard. Both can be attached directly to the enamelled steel bathtubs with magnets. There is also a footrest, which we call 'base', a towel rack and a bridge that stretches across the bathtub from one side to the other. You can place a candle on it, a glass of wine or your smartphone while listening to music. Everything you need for a relaxing time in the bath.

The materiality of wood naturally brings warmth into the bathroom.

CB: Wood certainly creates a wonderful contrast to colder sanitary ware. The beauty of the material is that it develops a beautiful, unique patina over time, so your personal life is reflected in the character of the product. Depicting these traces of life is indeed the intention. That is why we use solid oak wood and oil it instead of varnishing it to death. The material gains from the traces of age.

Philipp Mainzer (PM): Solid wood is still a material that people need to get used to in the bathroom, although a lot of things have changed there too. It is no longer perceived as a purely functional, cool space. It's becoming more and more cosy and more



A pouch is attached to the steel bathtubs with magnets. Photo: © Philipp Mainzer / e15-Kaldewei.

significant in the domestic environment. We now believe that the time has come for solid wood to bring warmth into the bathroom and that customers are ready for it. The naturalness of solid wood often requires some interpretation. Some customers regard the surfaces as flawed, others see the beauty in them. Wood can bring a new sensuality to the bathroom.

What happens when water comes into contact with these wooden surfaces?

PM: There will be slight markings. The first ones are probably the worst. But over time, others are added. This creates a beautiful patina that gives the product character and emotion. The beauty of solid wood is that you can always return it to its normal state by lightly sanding and re-oiling it. This is the big advantage over veneer, which eventually peels off and the base material becomes visible and starts to swell. That will not happen with solid wood. It retains its value over time.

What about the much-anticipated fusion of bathroom and bedroom? To what extent has this development influenced the collection?

CB: In the hospitality sector, we see this quite clearly. There are increasingly larger bathrooms with interfaces to the bedroom through large windows or glass fronts. In a normal domestic environment, this is very, very rare. The spatial proximity between the bathroom and the bedroom is predestined for working with flowing transitions. In places that used to be tiled right up to the ceiling, there might now be paint

or other wall coverings instead that create more cosiness and avoid that 'abattoir' look.

Stefan Diez (SD): You don't have to go as far as merging the bathroom and bedroom with one another. There is already a dialogue between these spaces when the door is open. In this collection, the towel rack can be used as a valet stand in the dressing room. And the stool is not permanently limited to the bathtub, but can also be placed next to the bed or elsewhere in the flat or house.

What was the approach in expanding the bathtub beyond its own typology?

SD: When we started working on the 'Oyo Duo' bathtub, Kaldewei gave us a specific brief. We were asked to detach the bathtub, which is often seen as part of the architecture, from the architecture. It was about emancipating the unit from the wall and essentially transforming it into a piece of furniture. One reason is certainly the enhanced perception of significance. The moment the bathtub is part of the architecture, it is seen more as a convenience product. As soon as it is detached from the wall, it becomes a statement. So the 'Oyo Duo' is a completely new product in which we have joined two independent components and welded them together from the outside. When we had completed the project, the question came up: how do you photograph it? And then, of course, we fell into the usual stereotypical reflexes. First you go to the stylist and think about how you can set the scene. And then suddenly you have a very eclectic collection of accessories in the space. At that moment we had the idea that maybe we just need to get another company on board that produces furniture in order to create an intersection of both brands.

Why did you choose e15, a brand for which you designed the Houdini chair, Stefan, among other seating products.

SD: Because e15 has established itself on the market with a clear attitude. They have always remained true to their style with their focus on natural wood. You don't have to be concerned about low quality photography being sent out. The communication is always right. And so I had a gut feeling that they would be on the same level as a company like Kaldewei, which is actually in the process of somehow turning its bathtubs into pieces of furniture. The aim was to create associative products that speak of the bathroom and trigger associations with wellbeing, without being confined to this environment.

From a design point of view, what links are there between the new stools and benches and the egg shape of the bathtub?

SD: The 'Oyo Duo' has a very volume-optimised surface on the inside. This is partly due to seating comfort and partly to water consumption. The shape of the tub is in complete contrast to the design

language of e15. That's why it works so well, because it does not want to take up anything in any way. The 'Oyo Duo' has a shape that is completely under tension from bottom to top. At e15 we have tried to continue the tensional grounding of their products. The legs of the stool, for example, are triangular but still designed to provide sufficient static support. And then it is all about proportions. The result looks self-evident, but if you research it, it has not existed in this form before.

Is your intention to define some kind of archetype?

CB: Naturalness is what it is really all about. By believing that you have seen the object a hundred times before, and being able to remember it, a kind of approachability is created. I think that is very exciting.

PM: A product is basically only good when you cannot see that it has been designed. This will never happen with an over-decorated or non-functional product, because for these two reasons alone it will at some point no longer be used and therefore appear outdated. Aesthetics are sometimes labelled as superficial. However, they are ultimately a significant part of the whole discussion about sustainability. This is always our aspiration and Stefan's too. Because that is really the pinnacle of design: creating a well-made shape that is so memorable and familiar that you are convinced you have seen it before. And that is exactly what this collection has brilliantly achieved.

Text by Norman Kietzmann

(Opposite) The materiality of wood brings warmth into the bathroom. Photo: © Philipp Mainzer / e15-Kaldewei.



KALDEWEI

MEISTERSTÜCK OYO DUO
Manufactured in Germany from titanium steel

PHOTOGRAPHER
BRYAN ADAMS