

LOVE FOR SUSTAINABILITY



The return to sustainable, natural materials and organic design has been manifesting itself for a while and still continues. It is an evolution that designer Inge Lagae looks at with great enthusiasm. Under the slogan 'Timeless beauty to pass on', she creates timeless furniture pieces that converge in her young collection Kāna Objects.

With her designs, Inge Lagae wants to get away from the idea of a consumer society, where trends follow each other quickly and the environment is often the last aspect that is considered. For years, she has been creating bespoke furniture for residential projects, because existing brands did not always offer what she needed. There was always an issue with the size, colour, or finish, and the best solution appeared to create her own designs. A selection of those was recently moulded into a small, exclusive collection, and Kāna Objects was born. The brand focuses on architects and interior designers and offers a wide range of sizes and designs and even customisation.

FOCUS ON AESTHETICS

This collection did not just come about, but was preceded by many years of experience and a great love of design. As a child, Lagae was already very interested in design. Creativity was not only stimulated at home, but also at her primary school. The designer has fond memories of one of her teachers, a very artistic man who taught her how to make ceramics, paint, and write plays. It was through him that she joined studio Greta Bruggeman as a ten-year-old, where they made artful puppets and designed the set for a puppet theatre. Lagae immediately understood that this was what she wanted to do. After that, she studied set design, lived in Brussels for a while, and left shortly after to live in Indonesia. There, she worked for herself and a number of Brussels antique dealers. Upon her return in Belgium, she combined interior design with freelance jobs in the architecture and furniture industry. Her path crossed that of architect-artist Ola-dele Kuku, which meant the start of a beautiful collaboration. For eight years, they worked together on the realisation of his Opera Domestica project, and they were also given private commissions. In 2005, she went her own way again and started designing customised furniture. Her designs were already being displayed at diverse international fairs, such as the Belgian Collectible Design Fair, Design September, and The Salonny in New York. This interesting trajectory eventually led to Kāna Objects, which offers timeless, high-quality furniture pieces that can be passed on for generations. One thing that immediately strikes you, is that Lagae loves to work with organic materials. 'Wood is my favourite material,' she tells us. 'I am a nature lover and have a soft spot for trees.' The designer therefore selects the wood at the tree sawmill herself. She also checks its processing before the material leaves for the furniture maker. The latter makes



Hika Coffee Table



Flea Table



Labyrinth Bookcase

all pieces by hand. The wood is heavily and often manually brushed or sandblasted, because the rougher it is, the better it combines with the clean lines of the designs. The designer is also a fan of elegant types of natural stone such as marble and travertine. In general, she has a penchant for colours that are difficult to define. Natural shades are of-

ten her preference thanks to their many interesting gradations. Think, for example, of bog oak, silver oak, and smoked oak. Lagae explains that while designing, she does not think like a product developer, but puts her creative ideas on paper and leaves the difficulty of construction to the furniture maker. Unsurprisingly, every piece therefore

becomes a new challenge, because designs are not made in function of their economical or technical feasibility, but mostly with an eye for aesthetic aspects. It is that difficulty that makes this collection stand out. Because they are adorned by a certain simplicity, the designs will fit into many interiors. Each piece stands on its own and does

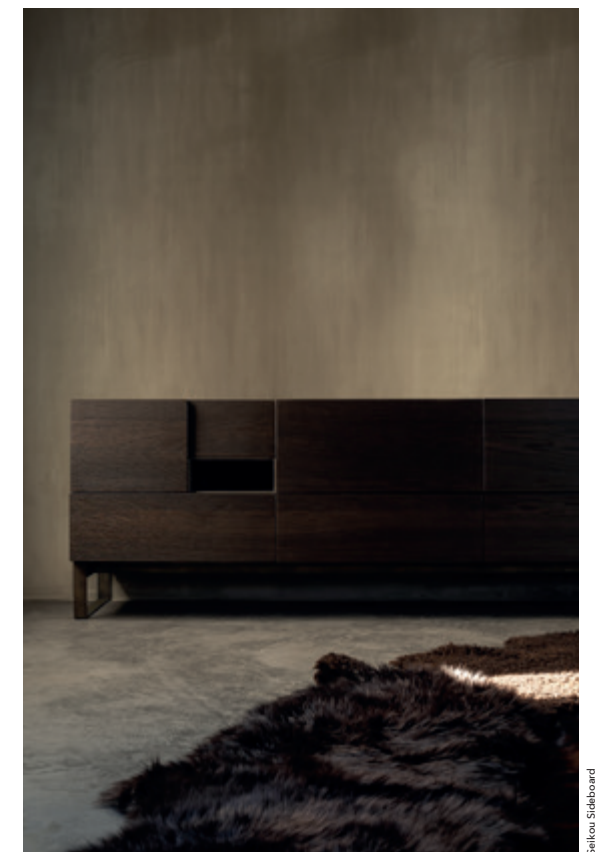
not need a certain context or style. Both in classic mansions as well as in sleek interiors and rustic, eclectic homes, her designs have already been used, and they always find their place. This diversity contributes to the sustainability of the objects, because it means that they can be easily passed on and integrated into another interior.

INFORMATIVE JOURNEYS

Travelling is one of the designer's hobbies, and that already took her to interesting places. Whether it is a trip to another continent or a weekend in France where she can admire the beauty of French ebanistry in old castles: Lagae finds inspiration everywhere. She is particularly struck by the way in which used materials are treated with respect and how materials are manually turned into objects. A woven basket, a crude teapot, or a sophisticated Louis XIV secretaire all provide equal inspiration. The craftsmanship she encountered in different cultures and the people she met on her travels now culminate in the designs of Kāna Objects, which was founded only recently. All models in the collection are handmade from noble oak materials of your choice. The wooden Labyrinth bookcase may be the collection's most striking piece. This graphic bookshelf is functional enough to store your favourite books and other objects, but, above all, carries an extraordinary aesthetic, making it an absolute eyecatcher. The design consists of symmetrical volumes that are balanced out around a diagonal axis and play with texture and depth. Labyrinth is a piece full of contrast. On the one hand, the design is daring and dominates a space; on the other hand, it is particularly light and embraces the space in which it finds itself. In 2016, Lagae won the Interior Award for Object at the international Biennial Interior in Kortrijk for this design. The model is available as a wall version, room divider, or as four different modules to build your own wall. A second design in the collection is the Seikou sideboard, which uses subtle geometric shapes with drawers and doors to accentuate the different depths. A second design in the same style is the Seikou cabinet, which, like the sideboard, consists of multiple structural elements but has a slightly more complex design. At the moment, the collection also contains three different tables. The Kurosu Table is the lightest model

Pieces are mainly designed with an eye for aesthetics

of all three. The thin tabletop can be produced out of different types of natural stone, amongst which marble and travertine, that are placed on a steel base with a brass look. The crossed table legs do not only look beautiful, they are functional as well, because they ensure that you can sit comfortably anywhere at the table, without being hindered by the table legs. The design of the third model, the Float Table, differs very much from the Kurosu Table and with its many contrasts reminds of the Labyrinth bookcase. The diagonal positioning of the table legs creates the illusion of a floating tabletop, but at the same time, it is also a very massive, robust table. The elegant, minimalist design can accommodate up to twelve guests. The same



Seikou Sideboard



Yoishu Daybed

characteristics can be attributed to the Hiku Table, but the story behind this design goes even further. The low, circular table clearly finds its origins in the Japanese tea ritual of connecting and sharing. For the perfect finish, Lagae collaborated with designer Isabelle Yamamoto, who created the zabutons for the table. These Japanese floor cushions were produced in naturally coloured vintage hemp and, together with the Hiku Table, form a peaceful wabi sabi decor. The successful collaboration was immediately continued in Yoishu, a Japanese daybed that reunites tradition and contemporary design. The sleek, simple design receives a certain softness through the combination with Yamamoto's pillow and mattress design, again made from vintage hemp. A collaboration between both designers was only natural, because the two share a passion for Japanese culture, which is fully reflected in these designs. 'We are not only colleagues, but have also become close friends,' Lagae says. As a result, the duo is already brainstorming about their next collaboration.

In the next years, Lagae wants to expand the collection and continue to create innovating pieces, although it is precisely this drive for continuous innovation that sometimes poses a challenge. The collaboration with Isabelle Yamamoto is only the start, because several collaborations with other designers are already scheduled. Next to that, she wants to add lighting and decorative pieces to the collection. Lagae is aware that you cannot control the future. Originally, her plan was to focus mainly on the Belgian market in this first year, but remarkably, Kāna is particularly successful abroad. 'It is important to be very flexible and not cling too much to original intentions,' she says. We wish her good luck in the future and hope that she may dress up many more interiors with her beautiful designs. (Text: Eva Janssens)