

PASTOE

PASTOE
100 years of design innovation
Gert Staal
Anne van der Zwaag

nai010 publishers

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When Frits Loeb started his factory to manufacture chairs for his shop on the Ganzenmarkt in Utrecht on 13 April 1913, he probably never imagined that the Utrechtsche Machinale Stoel- en Meubelfabriek would be celebrating its centenary a hundred years later. We are celebrating this centenary thanks to Frits Loeb and his successors, including Frits Uhlmann, Hans Eiser and Harm Scheltens. Their vision, creativity, commitment to quality, eye for talent, responsiveness to the furniture market, not forgetting their determination, have taken Pastoe to where it is today. In the hundred years of its history, Pastoe has gone through some turbulent times, but has always managed to survive and even improve. The historic fact that Frits Loeb and the company manager Dirk Braakman succeeded in starting production on 23 May 1945, less than three weeks after the liberation of the Netherlands, when the business had been totally looted and Loeb had been in hiding for some time, clearly reflects this mentality.

The company is still proudly producing furniture in the same factory in Utrecht with great craftsmanship and industrial methods. In close collaboration with internationally celebrated designers, architects, graphic designers, artists and photographers, Pastoe has succeeded for decades in combining a high standard of quality and craftsmanship with its own clear vision. This vision is also the basis of the centenary exhibition which is taking place in the Kunsthall in Rotterdam in 2013 and of this book which is being published on the occasion of this celebration. We look back at a hundred years of innovation and design, and also present new visions for Pastoe's future.

As a relatively small Dutch company, Pastoe has been an important player on the international furniture market for many years. The company, its employees and its partners, as well as the city of Utrecht and the Dutch design world, can be proud of this. A sense of pride that is expressed in the inspiring texts and the wonderful images that are included in the book.

This publication was made possible with the support and encouragement of a large number of foundations, partners, sponsors and the contributions of all those directly involved in the book and the exhibition, in particular the author Gert Staal and the curator and editor Anne van der Zwaag. On behalf of Pastoe I would like to thank them for their exceptional efforts and their faith in the success of this special centenary celebration.

Remco van der Voort, managing director of UMS Pastoe bv

A hundred years old, Pastoe is proud of a tradition of minimalist furniture design with a functional character. After the cautious innovations of the 1930s, Pastoe developed in the post-war period as a valued identifiable brand, with Cees Braakman pioneering innovation in design. The formal austerity of the Pastoe iconography, the sustainable character of the furniture and the social innovations in the company were appropriate for a country during a stage of reconstruction. In the following years of growing prosperity, the formal austerity continued to be a characteristic quality of Pastoe, and as a result of its cooperation with a select group of leading designers, architects, photographers and artists, the company developed to become an internationally recognized design label. Pastoe is rooted in a long and authoritative tradition which focuses on quality, craftsmanship and simplicity: values which are still current and important in the contemporary design philosophy of the company, as well as in the contemporary design world, although in recent years the company has become more of a design label than a label for designers. Pastoe still looks for understatement in its designs. The attention devoted to construction and the choice of colour and materials continues to be very important, as does the functional and sustainable character of the furniture. The furniture does not dictate its environment or user; it provides a perfect transition between the architectural scale and the human dimension, between the interior and the inhabitant. For decades, Pastoe furniture has met the functional requirements and aesthetic needs of the user as a matter of course.

This publication, like the centenary exhibition in the Kunsthal in Rotterdam, focuses not only on Pastoe's history, but also on the present and the future of the company. The starting point for the book and the exhibition are three themes which are important both for Pastoe and for (Dutch) ideas on how people live: history, context and innovation, or in other words: "Archives", "Environments" and "Propositions".

Pastoe's archives served as an important source of information and inspiration for the design critic and author of this publication, Gert Staal. With reference to some of the key moments in Pastoe's history, he brings the archives and therefore the history of the company to life in the first part of the book, a series of exploratory investigations.

Part two of the book analyses the Pastoe heritage and places it in a contemporary twenty-first century context. The current situation forms the starting point. What are the present ambitions of the

company and how do they relate to the social, economic and cultural environment in which Pastoe operates? What influences do changes in the debate about design have on the way in which the brand is presented, and to what extent does the hundred years of history play a role in the choices which the company has made in the past ten years? The analysis focuses both on the ineradicable genetic code of the company and on its unchanging nature, which is part of its prominent position in the design world. An extensive index of pieces of furniture, drawings, photographs, posters, advertising material, etc., illustrates and describes the chronology of the (product) development at Pastoe between 1913 and 2013.

Finally, the history of the company provides a number of starting points for new ways of looking at living and interior design which are dealt with in the last part of this book, the "Propositions". The connection with a generation of designers who are examining new working areas together with the company are essential for Pastoe's future. A number of different workshops were organized for this purpose in 2012, both with the Pastoe team and with external designers and artists. The book and the exhibition present the process of ideas and work during the meetings, and the most important conclusions drawn from the workshops by those involved. These conclusions are extremely important for Pastoe and the company's key values.

The visual artist Krijn de Koning examines how objects relate to the past and the present, to their form and function. He reflects on the archives and makes connections, resulting in a new order and context. The architect Anne Holtrop thinks in terms of spatial principles and concentrates on the relationship between the brand and the architectural environment. In many cases designers were literally motivated by architecture in the choices they made. In this respect, furniture is in a constant dialogue with the environment in which it is used. De Koning and Holtrop jointly create a number of environments which take the user into another world where living, working and creating are defined in a new way.

The company invited four creative minds to formulate propositions for a new product, a different use of materials or distinctive iconography. In line with the design tradition of the company, they represent different design disciplines, visions and regions. The unique qualities of Pastoe products serve as the basis for the development of these new ideas. A person or studio is linked to every Pastoe quality, revealing a relationship with the company in terms of mentality or the iconography that is used.

In his proposition the German product designer Konstantin Grcic focuses on the craftsmanship invested in the finish of furniture, the industrial designer Naoto Fukasawa, from Japan, creates a minimalist utensil, the Italian architect Claudio Silvestrin designs maximum variations of the furniture as objects, and the Dutch photographic duo Scheltens & Abbenes express flexibility in the composition and application of furniture. The graphic designer and typographer Dirk Laucke is responsible for the design of this publication and the accompanying graphic identity. For this purpose, he has consciously looked at the history and work of his predecessors. As a starting point, Dirk Laucke chose a poster that was designed for Pastoe by Dick Bruna in 1961. At that time, Bruna drew a clown on a cupboard with two square boxes clumsily balanced on his head. In a similar way, Laucke plays with the timeless minimalist cube and gives it a contemporary form.

The publication, *Pastoe. 100 years of design innovation*, provides source materials, reflections and backgrounds on the brand and the context of living in the past and the present. The book accompanies the centenary exhibition *Like Pastoe* in the Kunsthal in Rotterdam (2013). The exhibition and the book show the rich history of Pastoe and its current position in the national and international design field and present new propositions for the future of an exceptional Dutch furniture factory.

Anne van der Zwaag

12–21 Publicity photographs by Jan Versnel, art direction Benno Premsele, 1965

12 / 13 “Pastoe Made to Measure”

14 / 15 “Pastoe fits in every(one’s) scenery”

16 / 17 Pastoe transport

18 / 19 Pastoe chairs (collaboration with Nederlands Danstheater)

20 / 21 Pastoe armchairs and side tables













meubelen
meubles
PASTOE

PASTOE
furniture









**Frits Loeb (1889 – 1959),
founder of the
Utrechtsche Machinale Stoel- en
Meubelfabriek**

In 1917, four years after the start of the Utrechtsche Machinale Stoel- en Meubelfabriek (UMS), the staff gathered on the pavement of Oosterkade 30 in Utrecht. The photographer just managed to squeeze the group of 38 into the frame in front of the factory building they will soon be leaving. The site where Frits Loeb had started his company with a modest crew of cabinetmakers and machine woodworkers in 1913 had become too small. In recent years the company had frequently placed advertisements in the *Utrechtsch Nieuwsblad*, looking for “semi-skilled cabinetmakers”, “skilled cabinetmakers” and “sculptors.” Anyone with manual skills and ready to roll up their sleeves was offered “a permanent position and a good salary.” Frits Loeb was in a hurry: apprentices and experienced workers could start immediately.

The same applied to the company’s location. When the extensive buildings of the former Tegel- en Faiencefabriek Holland (Tile and Ceramics Factory) became available in 1918, just a few hundred metres from the Oosterkade, Loeb decided to risk the move. “I will never forget how, walking in that large empty space, he looked at me and mumbled: ‘Oh dear, oh dear, Braakman, what have I done? How will we ever fill up all this space!’ This was typical of Mr. Loeb. Big ideas, big moves, followed by the shock of his own entrepreneurial boldness.”⁻¹⁻

This was how Dirk Lubertus Braakman described the founder of the Utrechtsche Machinale Stoel- en Meubelfabriek in 1959. They had been working together since the spring of 1915. Braakman had been appointed by Loeb as business manager on the recommendation of the first travelling salesman of the UMS, Mr. Kuhlman.⁻²⁻ Frits Loeb was clearly an ambitious young man rapidly developing his business skills. The company grew so rapidly in barely two years that it could afford to employ Kuhlman as its representative and appoint Braakman, an experienced manager from the furniture sector. He replaced the foreman who had been managing the production process, but who had in all likelihood been a craftsman and cabinetmaker first.

Frits Loeb, born Frits Leib in 1889, came from a family of German-Jewish merchants. His father, Leopold Leib, settled in Utrecht in 1885, after his brother Nathan had established himself in The Hague with a hire purchase clothes shop. Leopold opened up a small department shop on the centrally located Ganzenmarkt in Utrecht using the same hire purchase system, a system relatively new to the city. By then the business and family name Leib had changed to Loeb. They’d already been using Löb, or Loeb, in Germany and Loeb certainly sounded better in Dutch.⁻³⁻

The fact that the Loeb name soon became eponymous with the brand was in part due to the slogan the businessman himself came up with,

- A** UMS employees in front of the factory, Oosterkade 30, c. 1917.
On the right is Dirk L. Braakman, designer and business manager
- B** Aquarelle of the UMS factory building at Rotsoord, Dirk L. Braakman, 1925



A



B

“Speak to Loeb and he will fix it.”⁻⁴⁻ The slogan worked because it struck a bond of trust between dealer and consumer, exactly what was needed for someone new to purchasing goods on credit.

Eventually all nine Loeb brothers and sisters settled in the Netherlands, with clothes shops spread throughout the country. In addition to German imports, the dynasty also started producing their own garments and gradually the range of the shops expanded to include furnishing fabrics and furniture.

– 1 – Braakman Sr., D., 1959, p. [8] *De Houtworm*, July 1959, Commemorative issue in connection with the death of our director, Mr. F. Loeb. The exact date of the move to Rotsoord is unknown, but is somewhere between 1917 en 1919.

– 2 – In the same article Braakman refers to “the old Mr. Kuhlman.” Kuhlman became the representative of the UMS after the downfall of his own furniture business.
“This first salesman was admittedly no longer young, but he was a first class professional... He produced good models and drawings, and certainly served as a stimulus in those years. He had always done high quality work himself, and it was certainly as a result of his influence that the UMS entered the market with better quality work than most factories at the time, and therefore soon gained a good reputation.” Braakman Sr., D., 1959, p. [8].

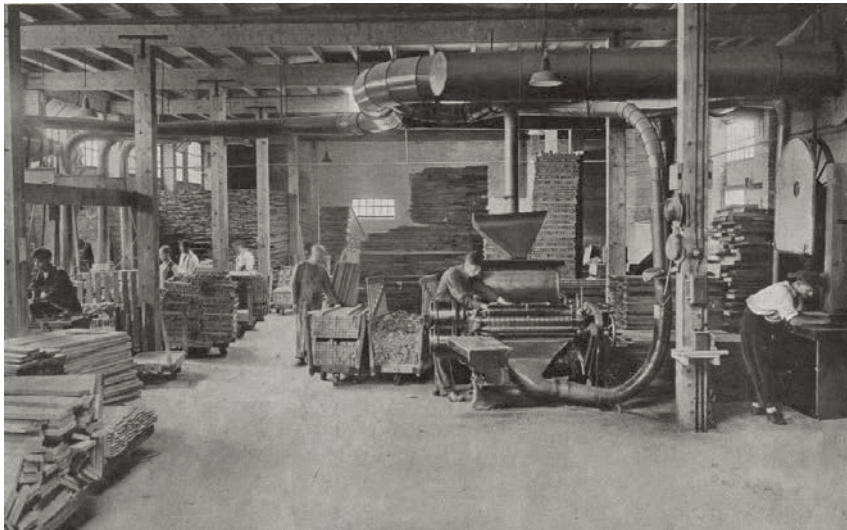
– 3 – Family history taken from Lex Heerma van Voss, “Frits Loeb 1889-1959”, in: Joop Visser et al., *Nederlandse Ondernemers (Dutch Entrepreneurs) 1850–1950, Gelderland en Utrecht*, Zutphen 2010, pp. 326–333.

– 4 – The historian Heerma van Voss also referred to a popular version of this slogan, which developed on the basis of the experiences of people who were not able to make their repayments on time. “Speak to Loeb and he’ll be on your doorstep,” referring to the practice of repossessing the delivered goods if people defaulted. Lex Heerma van Voss, 2010, p. 328.

The German period

When Leopold Loeb died in 1905 his wife Sibilla Loeb-Jumpertz took over the everyday running of the shop. Her son Frits was on the point of leaving for Germany for commercial training. In 1906 he entered the employment of the Cohn & Epstein department store in Duisburg, whose trade and production in every respect was far more developed than that in the Netherlands.

Timber supply and storage, the UMS vehicle fleet and the furniture factory, 1920's



In Germany, from 1860 onwards, both middle and working class were potential markets for industrially manufactured products, including furniture. The Netherlands had not yet developed such a significant market by the end of the 19th century. Furthermore, Germany had a fairly advanced system for the division of industrial labour, a practice not yet common in the Dutch furniture industry.

As an apprentice Loeb probably had little to no direct contact with the activities of the German Werkbund, an organization of architects and designers who strove to achieve closer cooperation between art and industry. But 1907, the year in which the Werkbund was founded, was representative of the spirit of the age in which Loeb completed his apprenticeship. Rational production methods and a differentiated approach to the markets for industrial art and products were common in Germany. This possibly explains why Loeb wanted to include the words “machine made” in the name of his company when he founded his furniture business a few years later.⁻⁵⁻ According to the critic Just Havelaar this developed industrial culture had barely taken off in the Netherlands. Havelaar had been commissioned by the daily *De Amsterdammer* to visit the large Werkbund exhibition held in Cologne in 1914 and on his return reported, “The propelling force of this exhibition is the power of modern German society, the international nationalism, the social capitalism, the religious rationalism.” He identified a spirit the Dutch, “boring, well-behaved, tasteless bourgeois people”, clearly lacked.⁻⁶⁻

– 5 – Several sources, including Braakman Snr. in 1963, referred to Loeb’s membership of the *Utrechtsche Motoren Sociëteit* (Utrecht Motorcycle Society) and assumed that his enthusiasm for the motorcycle prompted him to use the same initials (UMS) for his company.

Arien Heering concludes: “For Loeb, a passionate motorist, engines and motorcycle clubs represented everything that was modern, technical and progressive, criteria with which his furniture also had to comply.” p. 90. Heering, Arien, “Modern, technisch en vooruitstrevend. De bedrijfsfilosofie van de Utrechtse meubelfabrikant UMS/Pastoe” (Modern, technical and progressive, the company philosophy of the UMS/Pastoe furniture manufacturer in Utrecht), *Oud-Utrecht, Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis van stad en provincie Utrecht* (Magazine for the history of the city and province of Utrecht), annual edition 77, nr. 4, August 2004, pp. 90-95.

– 6 – Just Havelaar, “De Tentoonstelling van den Duitschen ‘Werkbund’ te Keulen II” (The exhibition of the German Werkbund in Cologne), *De Amsterdammer*, 5 July 1914.

Important for engaged couples

In September 1910, a twenty-year-old Frits Loeb returned to Utrecht as the manager of his mother’s shop. A little over two years later, on 16 January 1913, the *Utrechtsch Nieuwsblad* carried the announcement that, “the widow L. Loeb-Jumperts in Utrecht, acting for the FIRM L. LOEB,” had authorised her son F. Loeb to act on her behalf. His management would benefit from the shop’s solid reputation.

After the turn of the century Dutch prosperity increased. Citizens who could previously afford no more than a bed, a blanket box and a simple table and chairs to last them a lifetime now had money to spend on new furniture. Under the heading “Important for Engaged couples,”⁻⁷⁻ L. Loeb placed an advertisement for the furnishings of three whole rooms: the living room, the

drawing room and the bedroom. Chairs, cupboards, tables, a sofa, a mirror, a sideboard, a cot, a night table, mattress, sheets, bedspread, etc.; all for a total sum of 500 guilders, to be repaid at 20 guilders a month. Most of the furniture on display in the Ganzenmarkt shop had been procured from local cabinetmakers. It is not clear whether Loeb also sold imported furniture, although the variety of products listed in the advertisement does appear to suggest this. What is clear is that affordable, mass produced furniture was imported from abroad until the outbreak of the First World War.

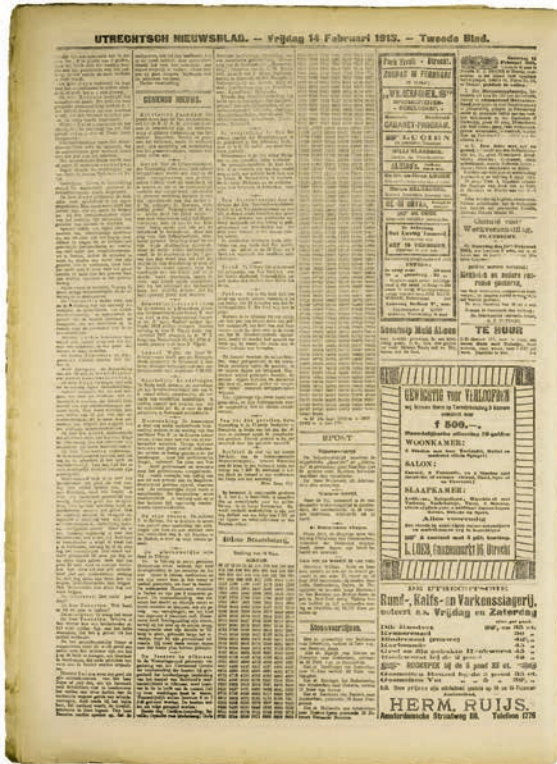
The war signalled a complete change. The import markets from traditionally strong production countries such as Germany, France and Belgium stagnated, forcing a rapid development of national production. In this respect the timing of UMS's start in April 1913 was auspicious: because of its policy of neutrality the war didn't cross the Dutch border, creating an almost immediate demand for locally produced furniture. However, neutrality didn't mean the war didn't leave its mark on Dutch society. In 1963 Braakman remembered all too well the grim reality of those days: "War was raging, there was a lack of food and black market traders became rich."⁸

Loeb's decision to start producing furniture himself is understandable in view of the mercantile tradition of the Loeb dynasty. Furthermore, the years of training in Germany no doubt had sharpened his entrepreneurial spirit. Why sell furniture and only take the dealer's profits if you can also make a profit as a producer? "Ignoring repeated warnings of family and friends,"⁹

Frits Loeb rented a workplace and commissioned a cabinetmaker to produce furniture especially for the shop. It was a small step to recruiting more staff and transforming the workplace into a firm that could take on commissions from third parties. In April 1913 the UMS manufactured twelve chairs for the Van Staveren firm in Rotterdam, its first known commission.¹⁰ In the early years, table and chair frames were the company's most important products. The company's growth took off immediately and continued after the move to the new site.

It is not entirely certain when exactly the UMS moved into the new factory, but according to a notarial deed drawn up in June 1942, Loeb concluded the purchase on 25 May 1918. Loeb's initial concerns about filling up the vast and empty earthenware factory were unfounded. The factory complex on the Rotsoord underwent its first expansion as early as 1926.

The UMS used its machinery, driven at that time by 15 electric engines with a joint capacity of 66hp, for the manufacture of a broad range of furniture, mainly designed by the company manager Dirk Braakman. While industrial manufacturing still seemed a distant dream in 1913, by 1929 this had become a reality. Despite an extremely difficult period during the preceding years, that year the annual accounts showed there were 200 employees and 100 machines. There was no longer any doubt about the company's status in the sector. As early as 1919, Loeb was appointed to the board of the General Union of Furniture Manufacturers, a position he held again between 1936 and 1940. After the Second World War he also

A Advertisement of L. Loeb for the furnishing of three complete rooms.*Utrechtsch Nieuwsblad, 1913***B Sideboard K6, designer unknown, c. 1928****C Invitation UMS "Visit us at the special furniture section of the Utrecht Annual Fair", typography Daan de Vries, 1913****A****B**

served as the director of the annual trade fair (in Utrecht) in which his company was a regular participant from 1917.

The first serious crisis to hit the UMS came in the mid 1920s. The ignominious end of the First World War with its political and social turbulence resulted in great economic problems, especially in post-war Germany. The monetary devaluation of the Reichsmark in the early 1920s reached hallucinatory proportions. Braakman describes the effect on the company in Utrecht as follows: "We tried to fight the catastrophe, but it was a hopeless struggle. The German mark kept falling, first to a hundred then to a thousand, then to a string of zeros following the decimal point. The Dutch flocked to Germany to buy clothes, fur coats and furniture for next to nothing. The effects on industry were drastic. Admittedly, materials were cheap, for example, the best oak we had bought for 1,000 marks now cost 10 guilders per cubic metre. Problem was, we couldn't sell the furniture we had made with it."¹¹

In Utrecht one machine after another ground to a halt. Staff was let go. The hardship caused the director to sigh, "I am back where I started". He was to repeat this sentiment once more later on in life and would again refuse to capitulate.



C

– 7 – *Utrechtsch Nieuwsblad*, 14 February 1913.

– 8 – D.L. Braakman Snr., “Herinneringen bij een jubileum” (Memories for an anniversary), *De Houtworm*, April 1963, p. 6.

– 9 – D.L. Braakman Snr. 1959, p. 6.

– 10 – Exhibition catalogue. *UMS Pastoe. Een Nederlandse meubelfabriek* (A Dutch furniture factory) 1913-1983, H. Martens and G. Vreeburg (ed.), Centraal Museum Utrecht 1983, p. 15.

– 11 – D.L. Braakman Snr. 1959, p. 8.

Not ready for change

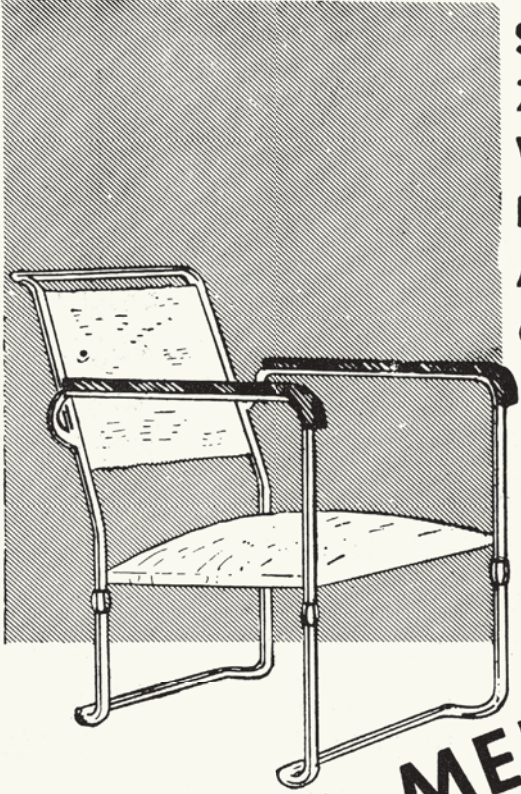
The various memoirs published about the life and work of Frits Loeb reveal a picture of a dapper, future-oriented businessman, an entrepreneur with a great deal of energy, little patience and enormous attention to detail. An excerpt from the minutes of a management meeting of 20 April 1953 is typical. The factory – now known as UMS Pastoe – was facing the challenge of its ever-expanding product range. A challenge that appeared on the agenda more than once. The designer C. Braakman Jr. – son of Dirk Braakman – had suggested either introducing far-reaching standardization or removing part of the collection from production. By way of example, he mentioned the “Lux” and “Eric” models, cabinets which were still generating an annual turnover of approximately 35,000 guilders. By then, Loeb had heard enough. According to the minutes “Mr. Loeb considers that we cannot permit ourselves the luxury of letting these models go, and says that we will have

A The UMS factory after the extension of 1929

B Advertisement for UMS's knockdown steel furniture, 1939



A



Scholen
Ziekenhuizen
Wachtkamers
Kantoren
Autobussen
etc. etc. etc.

vragen om

STALEN MEUBELN
UITNEEMBARE
MEUBELN VAN
STAAL



IN EEN LAGERE PRIJSKLASSE

Utrechtsche Machinale Stoel- en Meubelfabriek
Rotsoord 1-13, Utrecht, Tel. 12675-14954 - Toonkamers: Catharijnesingel 34 (hoek Stationsstraat), Utrecht - Amsterdam, Frederikplein 12 (Opening Januari a.s.)

B

to continue the sales of ‘moderately modern’ furniture as well, because this goes to customers who are not yet ready for furniture that is completely different.”

This consideration would be a constant factor in the history of his company. Conservative lines of furniture dominated the pre-war collections, sometimes alternated with more contemporary designs: “style” versus “modern”.⁻¹²⁻ It was only after 1945 that the emphasis slowly but surely shifted towards the modern. The fact that the factory was also manufacturing period furniture after the war – in contrast with its modern image – is reflected in the company’s archives. Among the images of modern cupboards and chairs, photographed by photographer Hans Spies at the end of the 1940s, there are also models which could easily have been lifted from the pre-war catalogues: traditional Dutch furniture, complete with carved decorations and heavy ironwork.

The decision to produce “safe” modern furniture was probably in part informed by Loeb’s impressions during a working visit to England at the beginning of 1953. The director told his staff that England was witnessing a shift away from the *modern* to a *familiar modern* style of furniture, because “the market for the out-and-out modern article was too small.”⁻¹³⁻ Although Frits Loeb believed absolutely in the need for modern products and particularly in the added value of the modern serial product, he was no iconoclast. This mentality was reflected in the plans for the second expansion of the factory in 1929, designed by the architect Albert Kool. The design refers to the expressive architecture of the Amsterdam School, a style that had just past its heyday. The architectural historian Arien Heering explains the company’s preference for this architectural style as following: “The Amsterdam school, which had really forged ahead in the 1920s, was suitable for a factory of modern high quality furniture. But it was no longer the newest of the new. In 1929 an ultra modern manufacturer would have opted for glass, concrete and steel as used by the architects of the Nieuwe Bouwen (New Build) movement. Loeb probably did not want a radical break from convention because he wanted to retain his more conservative customers.”⁻¹⁴⁻ Frits Loeb was both a pragmatist and a perfectionist. When the UMS moved in a new direction in the 1930s, for example by including a series of steel tubular furniture in the collection, this marked a deliberate break from the “old finish” of the previous period. It was also the result of a fortunate coincidence. Loeb’s neighbour was the director of a factory for bicycle parts and it was his firm that supplied the tubular frames for chairs designed by the architect H.F. Mertens and which could be dismantled. UMS temporarily became the abbreviated term for knock down steel furniture in an advertising campaign. When it transpired that the tubular furniture did not create much market demand, he quickly rejected this line and the more traditional chairs, armchairs and tables made their way back into the catalogues.

– 12 – At his fortieth anniversary as manager, D. Braakman Snr. gave an interview to the *Trouw* newspaper in which he talked about this early period, “What we called modern is sometimes merely ridiculous now.” *Trouw*, 19 March 1955.

– 13 – Minutes of the staff meeting of UMS Pastoe, 2 March 1953.

– 14 – Arien Heering, 2004, p. 91.

1,000 days of hiding

The crisis of the 1930s influenced Loeb's decisions. The early years had brought rapid expansion. Between 1931 and 1936 the firm opened show-rooms in Utrecht, Amsterdam and The Hague. However, despite bright slogans such as "the secret of comfort" (1938) and "the atmosphere that tempts you home" (1939), a grey haze gradually began to spread across the product catalogues in the latter half of the decade. The modern furniture with which the UMS had been so successful in professional circles in the early 1930s – for example, the cabinet designed by W. Barnasconi dating from circa 1930 and to an even greater extent, the chest of drawers by the architect A.K. Grimmon (of which the prototype was manufactured in 1932) – gradually lost ground. The catalogues looked more tired than in the early 1930s. The outbreak of WW2 heralded bleak times ahead.

In May 1940 the Netherlands were overrun by the German army. As a Jewish proprietor it was only a matter of time before Frits Loeb would be pushed out of his company. The factory was placed under German control and sold to Andreas Brand, an entrepreneur from Berlin, on 1 January 1942. A few months after the sale Brand appointed A. Engelmann as his "Verwalter" but Loeb refused to cooperate with him and was immediately dismissed. All other Jewish employees were removed from the firm as well. The factory continued production up to 1943. After the war Loeb declared that during the Brand "ownership" the factory had only received commissions for goods "exported" to Germany.⁻¹⁵⁻

To avoid the razzias, Loeb went into hiding with his wife and daughter in August 1942. They remained at the same address in Utrecht for 1,000 days. Several testimonies indicate that even during the period he was in hiding, he continued to have some contact with the factory. It might well have been Braakman, who had been kept on as the company's manager, who secretly passed on the balance sheet to Loeb and gave the former owner-director insight into its stocks and cash flow. Even though by September 1944 all furniture production had ceased, the company's financial situation around that time was, "very satisfactory, there was sufficient material and all the machines were still present."⁻¹⁶⁻ This relative prosperity did not last long. A few months later, machines, materials and furniture stocks were removed from the factory and transported to Germany.

– 15 – F. Loeb in a letter to the Adviescommissie voor Rechtsherstel en Beheer (Advisory Commission of the Council for the Restitution of Rights), Utrecht, 21 May 1945.

– 16 – Idem.

One step ahead

After German capitulation in 1945 Frits Loeb returned to a factory that was in the same state as when he had first set foot in the abandoned earthenware factory in 1918: empty. The journalist Jac. van der Ster described the effect of the plundering a decade later in *De Groene Amsterdammer*: "Toynbee

Chest of drawers, design A.K. Grimmon, c. 1932



and Romein have shown us that in history being ahead can be part of falling behind. At a certain point, falling behind can often create unexpected opportunities for innovation.” He concluded that this is what happened to the UMS.⁻¹⁷⁻ But a new start also forced a new direction. “This meant the company no longer simply accepted existing demand but was going to try to stay one step ahead of the market, connecting with a growing dislike for what was old, ugly and useless.”⁻¹⁸⁻

When the commemorative issue of the staff magazine *De Houtworm* was being compiled shortly after Loeb’s death in 1959, the memory of that new start was still etched in the collective memory of the company. Numerous contributions referred to the director’s strength in the immediate aftermath of the war, and how he had stepped onto the deserted work floor, fought to regain ownership, tried to trace the lost machinery and went door to door to bring back his employees.

Loeb realized he needed managerial assistance and found a suitable candidate in his nephew Frits Ullmann. His son-in-law Hans Eiser joined the management team soon after. Together they steered the company through periods of explosive growth and a few economic setbacks. Frits Loeb continued to play a pivotal role in the company; both on a business and human level. He explored new markets at home and abroad, and encouraged his

- A Catalogue UMS furniture 1938, "The secret of cosiness"
 B Catalogue UMS furniture 1939, "...the atmosphere that draws you home!"



A



B

MODERNE BERKIN EETKAMER. 1945
STOCKHOLM.
Dressoir 180 cm breed. Stiel en Fauteuil 300
berken. Houtje en lederen: schuifdeur 8
110-80 in berken.

2 De heer die buitenwaarts leidt

MODERNE KAMER D. 12.
Dressoir 160 cm breed. Schuifdeur 8 110-80.
Stiel en Fauteuil 100. Ook in versierde
uitvoering leverbaar (No. 102).

3 De heer die buitenwaarts leidt

BANKSTEL PANAMA, leverbaar in
eiken of mahoni. 5-6 pers bank met
3 kastjes, lichte kussens.

FAUTEUIL met gedrukte, on-
gelijken (ook leverbaar met ge-
maakte ruiten). Houtje passend
te leveren: kast en tafel.

FAUTEUIL EDMOND,
eiken of berken, geruit
rug. Voorzijde zitting.

TAFELTJE MODERN 2.
80 cm diam., 36 cm hoog.
Leverbaar in eiken of
mahoni.

STOEL 107.

10 De heer die buitenwaarts leidt

EETKAMER TOLEDO.
Een zeer geliefde eiken type.
Dressoir met twee gewichten, 180 cm breed.
Schuifdeur 120-80.

11 De heer die buitenwaarts leidt

ENGELSCHE EETKAMER E 37.

STOEL, FAUTEUIL ENG. 37,
halla rug, zwart bespannen.

SCHUIFTAFEL ENG. 37,
110-80 cm, zwaar Roede-
poe, bladje geheel van
moederhout.

RETRAGERE,
eiken, uit Frank.

DRESSOIR ENG. 37,
145 cm breed, met 2 laden.

14 De heer die buitenwaarts leidt

EETKAMER ENG. 32.

STOEL ENG. 32,
FAUTEUIL ENG. 32
Stiel en rug
voorzijde.

TAFEL ENG. 32,
max. 110-80 cm.

DRESSOIR ENG. 32,
180 cm breed, glas in
hout-deur voor zijden,
paars geprofileerde
kastjes.

15 De heer die buitenwaarts leidt

FAUTEUIL ALGIERS.

FAUTEUIL AMSTERDAM,
met Hout, zitting met
Palmkussens. Zware
armleuners. Bepaalde
bark leverbaar.

KELIM-FAUTEUILS, eiken, antiek:
Kelim-stoffen in diverse patronen en
kleuren leverbaar.

FAUTEUIL TOAS EN
FAUTEUIL ORAN.

32 De heer die buitenwaarts leidt

MODERNE SLEAPKAMER OSLO.
Alleen in eiken uitvoering.
3-deurskast 170 cm breed, 178 cm hoog met afgeronde hoeken,
geheel licht, lichte 120-120 met lange, rechthoekige (geen
medel), ronde tafel 45 cm diameter en zwaar.
Ook leverbaar met Houtkussen met zwaar, rechthoekig, en
met lichte of Houtkussen met lichte rechthoekig. Voor ka-
stels zie pag. 34.

33 De heer die buitenwaarts leidt

employees to seek out suitable new materials and to test foreign designs and production processes. He considered his social role as an entrepreneur to be important. He was active in the liberal Jewish community and supported the international Zionist movement. At his initiative a pension scheme was introduced for employees, many of who had been employed by the UMS for several decades, in 1953. In 1957 he established an employees council. The company embraced the new age in every respect, a feeling reflected by one of his employees who noted after Loeb's death that: "He always pursued that one goal: a large, modern business. We were modernizing yet again and I asked him, "won't you miss the old nooks and crannies? Loeb simply answered, "I never look back". Following his death, Eiser and Ullmann continued to constitute the board of directors of UMS Pastoe.

— 17 — Jac. van der Ster, "Pastoe. Een stoel dient om op te zitten"
(A chair is meant for sitting on), *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 19 November 1955.

— 18 — Idem.



A



B

- A UMS offices. Proprietor Frits Loeb is seated at the head of the table**
B Portrait of Frits Loeb (1889-1959) by Sierk Schröder, 1959

– A sorry picture of 37
destruction –
The company in May 1945

On 30 July 1945, the Utrechtsche Machinale Stoel- en Meubelfabriek received a handwritten card signed by K. Scholte, the captain of the *Risico*. In response to inquiries by the company Captain Scholte reported that his ship had been requisitioned in Utrecht on 13 December 1944, in his words, “to freight UMS.” He then unloaded his cargo on the quayside of the Amsterdam harbour. Some of the goods, including machine parts, were transferred *in situ* to a “WM” ship (he probably meant the Wehrmacht). Other goods, he reported, “were all jumbled up and strewn all over the place.” To the best of his recollection Scholte tried to remember the content of his cargo. His list included side panels of beds, sanding cloth, chair frames, tubs of glue, nails, upholstery tape, bottles of liquids, canteen tables and 30 workbenches. He did not know what had happened to the cargo after he unloaded it.

This handwritten statement is just a small piece of evidence from an endless series of letters, petitions, deeds, objections, and legal correspondence related to the war years, stored in the Pastoe archives. The large-scale plundering of the factory during the last months of 1944 and the first months of 1945 means little remains of the pre-war company archives. Even more serious than the loss of documentation and administration was undoubtedly the sorry state of the business complex in May 1945. The furniture factory had been crippled and was beyond recognition.

Frits Loeb returned to the Rotsoord complex immediately after the liberation. Since 1942 he had left his hiding place only once, the day his mother was buried under a false name. Now that he could move about freely once again, his nephew Frits Ullmann accompanied him. In a memoir written in 1963, Ullmann describes the ruins of the factory when they entered: “Empty buildings without machinery, no electric wiring, no wood or raw materials. Everything had been plundered, sold or been taken away. It was a sorry picture of destruction.”⁻¹⁻ Loeb, who was now almost 56, was aware of the enormity of the task ahead and asked Ullmann to help him rebuild the company. One thing was certain, the UMS would rise from these ashes, whatever the cost.

– 1 – F. Ullmann, “1945-1963. Een periode van wederopbouw, groei en bloei”
(A period of reconstruction, growth and success), *De Houtworm*, Bij 50 jaar UMS (On 50 years of
UMS), April 1963. p. 3.

Restitution

True to form, a determined Loeb wasted no time. In May 1945 he visited the Advisory Commission of the Council for the Restitution of Rights, established at that time on the Maliebaan in Utrecht. He reclaimed ownership and control of his company and was seeking compensation for the damages he

had suffered in the war. Looking back on it all in 1963 Ullmann seemed remarkably mild in his views. He praised the efforts of all parties involved, including those of the Dutch authorities, in trying to get things going again. Yet anyone who reads Loeb's correspondence to the authorities, both as a private citizen and as director of the UMS, will understand that reconstruction was by no means an easy matter in the chaos of 1945 and the years thereafter. Certainly not for a Jewish entrepreneur who wanted back the property he had been forced to leave.

The Dutch government had already discussed this situation during its London exile. In September 1944 a law had been drawn up to arrange for post-war restitution. The Council for the Restitution of Rights was to be responsible for deciding on cases of property law. W.Chr. Posthumus Meyes, the deputy director of the staff bureau of Military Authority, formulated the general principle as follows in January 1945: "Restitution is aimed at establishing a just basis for the reconstruction of society, which has suffered in many ways as a result of injustice."² These are solemn words for a wayward practice, as the following years were to show.

On its return to the Netherlands, the Military Authority placed all former Jewish companies under the provisional supervision of the state, whether or not German or Dutch owners had run these businesses during the war. After all, in the short term it was impossible to establish which companies had changed ownership in good or bad faith. The UMS was placed under state management. As for all the other companies involved, there were significant financial obligations attached to this form of state supervision: a thorn in the side of many Jewish entrepreneurs who felt they had to wait far too long for a definitive decision and were forced to pay for supervisors they would have preferred to have seen leave sooner rather than later.

Strange though this may sound in light of the damages that Loeb recorded on his return, it looks as though the UMS was actually quite lucky in its dealings with the Advisory Commission for Restitution. In November 1944, 500 bedrooms, 2,000 chairs, 1,000 tables "and a large quantity of plywood and oak" had been removed by ship."³ At the beginning of 1945 all the machinery, as well as the archives and the office inventory were removed. It was suspected some things had remained in Utrecht, for example, parts of the archives, machines parts and equipment that had ended up with "different workers," according to Loeb. A crosscut saw ended up at the Post Office and a few carriages filled with woodworking machinery, which may have belonged to the UMS, were apparently stored at a yard in Utrecht. In order to at least get these things back as quickly as possible Loeb asked the Military Authority to appoint him as manager, if necessary with temporary authorization. On 24 May 1945 he received the sought after permission. Six months later, on 27 November, he was reinstated as director of the UMS. He was not yet completely free through: as the supplementary provision reveals he had to act entirely in accordance with the instructions of the Nederlandsch Beheersinstituut (NBI, Administrative Department of the Council for the Restoration of Rights).

Reinstated, Loeb expressed his gratitude for the trust placed in him in rather ironic terms in a letter addressed to the Advisory Commission. He immediately drew attention to the impossible material and financial situation of the company. On 30 May 1945 he stated that the company had access to 288 guilders in cash. The bank account had been empty since September 1944. Workers were needed to start production, as well as funds to pay for the freight and mooring fees for a ship that had been moored in Groningen since 19 March 1945. Loeb asked the authorities to open a credit account for the UMS to pay these bills.

Two days later the secretary of the Advisory Commission formulated a response that read: "Following your letter dated 30 May, we advise you to try and see what you can do. We understand that you cannot act as a guarantor yourself, but would like to point out that you must manage the business as your own business. If you are not able to achieve a result, there is a possibility of liquidation."

– 2 – Annelies van der Zouwen, *Menko. De geschiedenis van een Twentse textielfamilie* (Menko. The history of a textile family in Twente), Zutphen 2010, p. 140.

– 3 – Statement of looting in a letter by F. Loeb to the Advisory Commission of the Council for Restitution of Rights, Utrecht, 21 May 1945. Loeb still thought at the time that the intended destination was Joachimsthal near Berlin. Later he found that the cargo had been transported to Düsseldorf.

Bad blood

This attitude resulted in a great deal of bad blood with many of those involved. Loeb and Ullmann joined the recently formed Circle of Jewish Entrepreneurs for Restitution, an eminent group of businessmen and lawyers, which regularly met in Amsterdam, to decide on a joint strategy. Guest speakers, preferably from government organizations who were directly involved in the restitution were questioned thoroughly. These included Mr. A.J. van Soest, the then director of the Commissariat for War Damages who came to give an introduction in hotel Die Port van Cleve in January 1946. Towards the end of the meeting, the chairman once again urgently insisted that "the Jewish entrepreneurs do not ask the Dutch state for anything less than complete restitution, not only in the legal but also in the economic and financial sense, which would not give undue preference to nor put them at the disadvantage of those Dutch companies that have not been affected by the measures of the occupiers."⁴

For the UMS it was a game of multiple chess. On the one hand, they had to set up a new furniture business with the machinery that had been recovered and the scarce materials available. On the other hand, there was a constant battle to resolve the financial consequences of the appropriation and looting of their assets. It was difficult for the company to compete with furniture factories that had suffered less during the war. In most cases these still had a fully operational production system and some stock, personnel

and money. Some even had a “contaminated” past. Loeb immediately singled out a few of these companies and turned to the proper authorities proposing that one or more of these should be placed under his management. This never came about.

The acquisition of a handful of orders enabled the company to resume production to some degree. During the first years of peace there were commissions from the Vroom & Dreesmann department store for a series of 24 sideboards and others as well. Apparently it was possible to find sufficient materials with some ingenuity.⁻⁵⁻ Storage furniture designed by A. Patijn was manufactured for De Bijenkorf during the period 1948–49. Stichting Goed Wonen (Good Living Foundation), active since 1946, commissioned furniture designed by Mart Stam. He was forced to work with oak and rush mats for the design of an armchair, not materials typical to the Modernist architect-designer. His series of modular storage units, designed in light oak, corresponded more to the feel of his pre-war designs and gave the UMS the chance to present these pieces in an advertisement in 1948 with the caption: “Good furniture for the modern home since 1913.”

It is not inconceivable that it was this series – which was actually not marketed under the name of the producer, but as “Good Living furniture” – that became an important benchmark for the design approach of the company. Working within a modular system of widths and heights characterized the production of UMS Pastoe cupboards from the 1950s onwards and became almost synonymous with the name of the designer Cees Braakman.

While the directors focused on new orders and managed to find sufficient materials and employees, the new reality became increasingly evident. During the 50th anniversary of the company, a member of the employees council summed up the situation at the time as follows: “It was necessary to make every conceivable effort to catch up, which meant it was necessary for all the workers to be fully employed and this resulted in a fight over those workers. Furthermore, the pattern of life had changed enormously. It seemed as though the old existing conditions and relationships had been swept aside in one fell swoop. Things which had only developed very slowly in the past suddenly reached full maturity.”⁻⁶⁻

– 4 – Circle of Jewish Entrepreneurs for Restitution, minutes of the meeting of
17 January 1946.

– 5 – A rough assessment of the materials available in May 1945 can be found in an undated document which draws up the “Verwaltungsschade” by comparing the financial situation of 23 March 1943 with that of 25 May 1945. While stocks were valued at more than 210,000 guilders in 1942, come May 1945 their value had dropped to just over 8,000 guilders.

– 6 – J. Lansink in *De Houtworm*, April 1963, p. 7.

Andreas Brand

Frits Loeb had a clear goal. To encourage growth it was necessary to bury the past. This didn't come about immediately. Traditional pieces of furniture were reintroduced and it was impossible to develop the collections while the company was virtually wholly dependant on external orders. However, as far as compensation for the business and private damages that had been suffered was concerned, as well as the prosecution of those responsible for the downfall of his company, history was still very much alive.

Loeb corresponded with the American and British occupying forces in Germany and with the Dutch representation in that country in order to trace the former UMS owner Andreas Brand and have him put behind bars. Much of what had happened becomes clear in a transcript of the interrogation of Andreas Brand, who had been arrested in Austria by the American army.

In 1941 Brand had acquired a wood processing company and furniture factory in Joachimsthal, near Berlin: the Berger & Co. Company. In 1942 he had managed to take control of the UMS through that company. The German authorities set the purchase sum of the factory and the premises of the UMS showroom in Utrecht at 165,000 guilders, and Brand acquired 90% of the ownership. From then on Berger & Co. was to supply the raw materials, and UMS delivered furniture to the German company. The remaining 10% came in the hands to Alexander Engelmann, NSDAP Ortsgruppenleiter in Haarlem. He also became the manager of the factory.

Brand and Engelmann soon fell into conflict and the latter left. By 1943 production had come to a virtual standstill as a result of restrictions that had been imposed. At the end of 1944 Brand decided to transfer his property to the board of directors of the Reichspost in Düsseldorf, which had also been responsible for the German Dienstpost in the Netherlands during the war. It was the postal company that then used its Dutch branch to completely dismantle the UMS.

During the final months of 1946 Loeb managed to persuade the authorities in the British Zone of occupied Germany to grant him the status of Civil Officer. Under this title he travelled to Düsseldorf and carried out investigations in situ into the goods and machines looted from his factory.

Unfortunately, the relevant document in the archives is not dated, but it seems likely that it was not until June 1947 that the UMS received a list of the railway carriages and their contents stored in a factory for mirror glass in Ratingen near Düsseldorf. The list compiled by the Reichspost-Oberdirektion for the British Zone concerned part of the looted machinery. Altogether the UMS managed to recover approximately two thirds of the stolen factory equipment in various states of repair.

It should be remembered that besides captain Scholtes *Risico*, other ships had also transported goods from Utrecht. For example, the cargo of the *Roelfien* ended up in the German city of Emden. Its cargo consisted of bedroom furniture that had been sold on by the city council to citizens who

had lost their household contents as a result of Allied bombing. It was only in November 1951, after endless negotiations, that Frits Ullmann managed to arrive at a financial settlement between the city and the factory. The company received 68,000 Reichsmark in compensation for damages.

Conflicting intentions

The Brand case illustrates the enormous complexity of the practice of restitution after the war. Even during the war there had been arguments about the ownership of the UMS under German supervision. Goods changed hands; purchase deeds disappeared. When the inventory was removed the items were dispersed and often lost. After the war matters fell into the hands of all sorts of authorities, both military and civilian, from different countries which all had their own interests and legal systems. The correspondence that has been collected shows how Loeb tried to put on the pressure in all sorts of ways to speed up the process, and how he often came up against conflicting intentions on the part of the authorities and the discrepancies between their words and actions. On the basis of the overwhelming number of letters and deeds in the Pastoe archives it would be no exaggeration to say that up to the early 1950s, Frits Loeb must have spent at least half of every working week on legal matters related to compensation for war damages. And these efforts did not always produce a just or reasonable outcome, not by a long shot.

Factory entrance at the Rotsoord, Cas Oorthuys, c. 1955



UMS Pastoe factory, Cas Oorthuys, c. 1955



A Spread form catalogue "Pastoe 1956"
B Spreads from catalogue "Pastoe '54"



PASTOE TOONKAMER TE ROTTERDAM : SALLE D'EXPOSITION PASTOE À ROTTERDAM
 PASTOE SHOWROOM IN ROTTERDAM : PASTOE-AUSSTELLUNG IN ROTTERDAM



A



B

Spreads from catalogue "Pastoe 1956"



**Production and transport at UMS Pastoe,
Cas Oorthuys, c. 1955**



During the initial post-war years there wasn't really a UMS collection to speak of. The factory was producing furniture on the basis of third party orders and made do with the available materials and machinery. The market wasn't in a position to be particularly fussy either; Dutch furniture companies produced whatever was needed for reconstruction. The production of furniture for export was important as a way of procuring foreign currency for economic recovery. Up to 1946 state supervisors determined what the sector could and what could not be produced. Only furniture using domestic wood very economically was permitted. The resulting austerity of design was less a matter of taste or aesthetics than the need to economise. For some materials, such as tubular steel, restrictions continued to apply for a long time.

No matter how dire its starting position, the UMS seemed to leave the paralysis of the war behind fairly quickly. It was making furniture once again, and even more importantly, it resumed contacts with the outside world. In the Netherlands, a large section of the population could not yet afford to buy complete sets of new furniture. It is difficult to pinpoint when exactly Ullmann and Loeb went on their international expeditions, but they certainly travelled to various European countries in 1946–47, sometimes accompanied by the young Braakman, who was to be the future designer in the company.

The most important of their travels aim was to find suppliers of wood and veneer. Trips and visits were also made to trade fairs and fellow manufacturers, where, according to Braakman, "they always managed to pick up new ideas."¹ Loeb's visit to the United States in 1947 was particularly significant for the strategic choices the UMS made at that time.

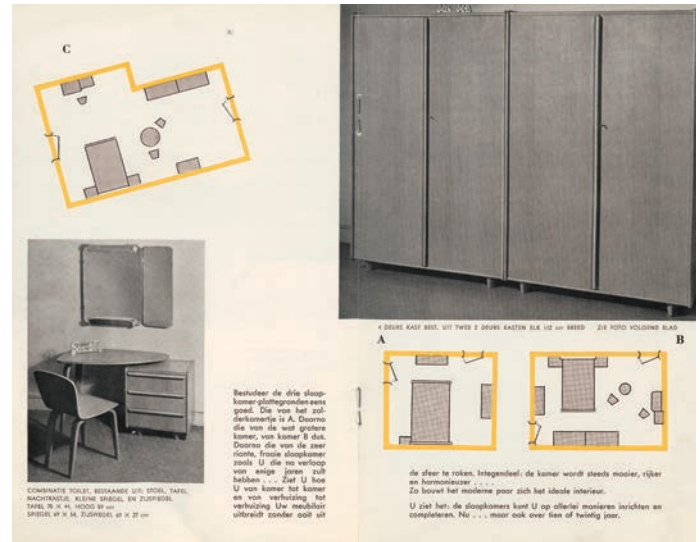
America profited greatly from the war. The development of industrial production techniques and new material applications had sped up, and marketing knowledge and sales expertise increased. The aid from the Marshall Plan stimulated European industrialists to travel to America (on so-called "productivity missions") to learn about the latest rational production methods. European businesses were thus exposed to American principles of labour organization. The financial aid program also opened up European markets to American goods. These were often of a higher quality than comparable products from their European competitors. Last but not least American imports emanated the kind of optimism and sense of invulnerability that had first set foot on European soil in the shape of the Yanks in 1944.

– 1 – C. Braakman Jnr., "In Memoriam", *De Houtworm*, Commemorative issue upon the death of our director, Mr. F. Loeb, July 1959, pp. [14–15].

Complete blindness to living conditions

The UMS director was so impressed by what he found in America that on his return in 1948 he immediately dispatched Cees Braakman – 30 years old at the time – to go see for himself. Braakman Jnr. spent three months in the United States, for a large part visiting furniture businesses. One such was the

Catalogue "Pas Toe furniture. Ideal for small homes", 1949



factory of Herman Miller in Zeeland, Michigan, which included Charles and Ray Eames' furniture in its production portfolio. His American tour inspired Braakmans' artistic development.⁻²⁻ He observed the new techniques of processing curved wood, of new sandwich material applications, and the use of high quality adhesives. For the first time he witnessed Taylorian production lines. American furniture design was wholly focused on industrial manufacture: streamlined and efficient, exactly what was required from furniture manufacturers in post-war Europe. The greatest contrast with the situation in the Netherlands was still the difference in prosperity and the available living space of consumers. Another marked difference was that back home conservative tastes still dominated. A journalist concluded his review of a 1956 furniture exhibition in the Galeries Modernes in Utrecht with the observation that, "large sections of our population are still dominated by a complete blindness to where they live. This means that they miss out on a great deal of the joy of lives."⁻³⁻

It was clear to Braakman the UMS had to change course. Several attempts had been made to introduce a more modern style in the pre-war period, but never with any real conviction. As far as he was concerned, the time for radical change had come: modern production required modern product design. Loeb and Ullmann clearly agreed with him, as is shown in an article by the novelist Max Dendermonde. According to Dendermonde, the management decided that in order to ensure the new machines were

used as efficiently as possible, “they had to be used to produce furniture which had been conceived in an entirely industrial way and would thus be based on industrial contemporary designs. This meant they arrived at the design of functional furniture not from an aesthetic point of view but from a strictly commercial perspective: the new way of doing things.”⁻⁴⁻ If history had decreed that the UMS had to be revamped from the bottom up, now was the time.

– 2 – At the time of Braakman’s visit to the US, the Museum of Modern Art in New York organised the International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture. The results of the competition were widely publicised in 1950. The competition signalled the changing priorities in furniture production. See also chapter “Design in an age of austerity” on Cees Braakman’s designs.

– 3 – “Présentation van moderne meubelen” (Presentation of modern furniture), *Intérieur*, July 1951.

– 4 – Max Dendermonde, “Is uw buurman een dictator? Over wonen en levensstijl voor de oorlog en na de oorlog” (Is your neighbour a dictator? On living and lifestyles before and after the war), *Het Parool*, 31 August 1957.

Pas-Toe

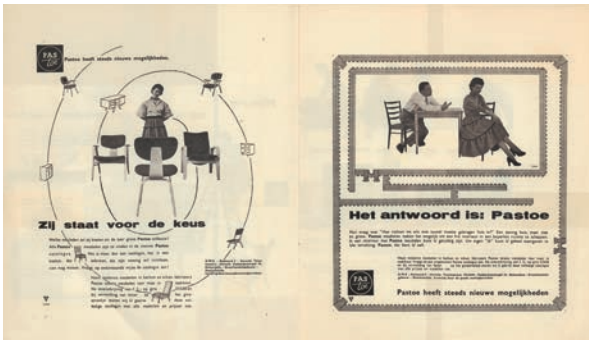
The company unveiled its new image at the 1948 annual trade fair in Utrecht with a “Pas-Toe” bedroom. And so it was that the Pastoe name was used for the very first time, although it would have to wait until 1954 for it to be added to the company name, after which it eventually became its sole trade name. The furniture set displayed at the fair was an ensemble consisting of a cupboard, a bed, bedside tables, a table and a chair, all made from plywood finished with an oak veneer. The result was sober and economical, without any reference to past furniture styles, and above all, without any visible reference to the craftsmanship so dominant in traditional furniture.

Within a year this modern furniture line had been developed to such an extent that the company decided to produce a small catalogue. In retrospect, this printed booklet says nearly everything there is to say about the ambitions of the factory in an age of social transformation. The cover shows a conversation between a young couple and their mother (in-law), in the jolly style of an American advertisement. Her “Yes, you’re right...” signals mother’s approval of the couple’s furniture choice, a Pas-Toe set consisting of chair, mirror and chest of drawers, described as a wonderful “solution” by the young man and as “attractive” by the woman.

Let’s consider the context. The cover shows a closeness between the generations rebuilding the nation. The purchase of new furniture is clearly a worthy subject of conversation between parents and their offspring: mother’s approval still counted. The man makes a rational choice; Past-toe is a “solution”, while the woman expresses her sense of taste.

The scene instantly communicates a recognizable social reality. The shortage of housing meant that many young couples started their “independent lives” under their parents’ roof or with other family members. It was only in the 1950s and with a great deal of government support that new housing became available, slowly improving living conditions.⁻⁵⁻ In 1949,

“Campaign book Pastoe”, photography Ed van der Elsken, c. 1955



the younger generation was lucky if it had a few dozen square metres of their own, in a house shared with others. Furniture had to look attractive but moreover had to fit cleverly into a tiny space. This is exactly what the Pas-Toe collection offered, as is testified by the slogan on the back cover: “Pas-Toe furniture, ideal for small homes.”

Gone were the days of thinking in terms of complete furniture sets with its endless, “measuring and gauging and wall-to-wall rearranging.” These were individual furniture pieces that still managed to form a “harmonious whole.” Modern consumers understood that what starts with a few pieces in a garret could well end up in a larger room one day, with space for a linen cupboard and a side table. In other words, “This is the modern, practical, aesthetic, ideal solution: buy Pas-Toe furniture!”

It was no coincidence the catalogue opened with bedroom furniture before going on to show other pieces of furniture. No matter how small a room, having one’s own bedroom tends to be most people’s priority. Three floor plans showed how the ensemble could be extended as and when more space became available. The customer could add pieces of furniture as desired “from one move to another,” without losing the sense of a comely atmosphere. The catalogue promised a formula that could be built on for the next twenty years. The collection would only grow. “New models have probably already been added to the collection since this catalogue went to print.”

The 1949 catalogue embodied the revival of the company in a nutshell. It explicitly focused more on younger consumers than during the pre-war years. And its furniture had the formal characteristics that best suited their living conditions: modest, modern, light and adaptable. The furniture literally fitted *partout*. Hence the name of the collection: Pas-Toe.

— 5 — The 1954 Queen’s speech referred to a greatly improved economic climate. Her Majesty stated that the shortage of housing “is the most pressing challenge facing the country.” Housing figured high on the political agenda well into the 1960s, despite the up to 100,000 homes that were built annually under the prime-ministers Marijnen and Cals.

Transparent furniture

The development of new models kept pace with growing prosperity. Accordingly, the product catalogues quickly became bigger and more varied. New types of wood and veneer were introduced. Designs were constantly adapted in terms of production and use, and the new, industrial style, carefully tested out in the Pas-Toe series of 1948 and 1949, began to characterize the identity of the new collections. This development was by no means typical of the furniture sector as a whole. The majority of Dutch furniture manufacturers continued to cling onto traditional craftsmanship and to supply the growing market with furniture not much different from what had been produced decades earlier. The increase in housing created sufficient demand not to have to invest in innovation. The UMS was an exception to the rule, where new methods were sought both in the product development and marketing.⁻⁶⁻ It must be added that all of this transpired without much support from the retail trade, which largely continued to resist the winds of change.

The company decided to target the public directly, “over the heads of furniture barons, with striking and truly modern advertising methods.”⁻⁷⁻ Their showrooms formed the heart of the operation. Housewife clubs and other groups were invited in, school canteens were furnished and together with like-minded people from the Stichting Goed Woning (Good Living Foundation) plenty of attention was paid to exalting the benefits of contemporary furniture. The message was clear to anyone willing to listen. UMS advertisements could sometimes sound like a sermon.

While there were signs of stagnation in the domestic market for traditional furniture come 1951, growth continued for “those businesses that had switched to light modern furniture as a result of significant investment in production.”⁻⁸⁻ Attention in the media helped to advertise this development, such as the monthly *De Vrouw en haar Huis* (The Woman and her House). The magazine ran an illustrated article about modern furniture, exclusively showcasing models from the recent collections of the UMS. The article referred to “transparent furniture” as a way of increasing surface space, and made special mention of the “high frequency currents” and “moulds to press drawers from one sheet of material” used in the production process in Utrecht. “The blockboard is machine glued and forms a stronger and better bond than in the former solid pieces.”⁻⁹⁻ The results of all these efforts soon paid off. The company produced the highly praised birch furniture collection with its characteristic U-shaped leg by 1950, and in 1952 introduced the Combex seats and modular walls with striking sawn side panels that allowed for different combinations: cupboards could be linked together, side-tables combined and armchairs could be extended into a sofa. The SB09 chair was launched around 1952, a slender wooden chair reminiscent of the work of the Italian architect/designer Giò Ponti.

It seems that the success of the UMS inspired other producers. A leaflet dating from approximately 1954 explicitly warned consumers about counterfeit pieces. The consumer was told that every piece of furniture was marked

A Instruction for assembling “Pastoe Made to Measure” cabinets, photography Jan Versnel, 1956

B Pas-Toe keys, design Cees Braakman, early 1950's

C Scheme of sizes and dimensions of “Pastoe Made to Measure” cabinets, catalogue “Pastoe 1957|1958”

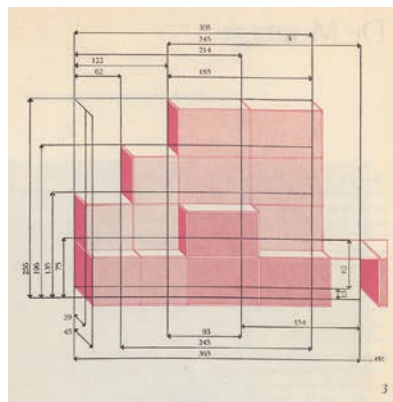
D “Combex” cabinet, design Cees Braakman, c. 1954. Photography Hans Spies

E Chair SB09, design Cees Braakman, c. 1952. Photography Jan Versnel



B

A



C

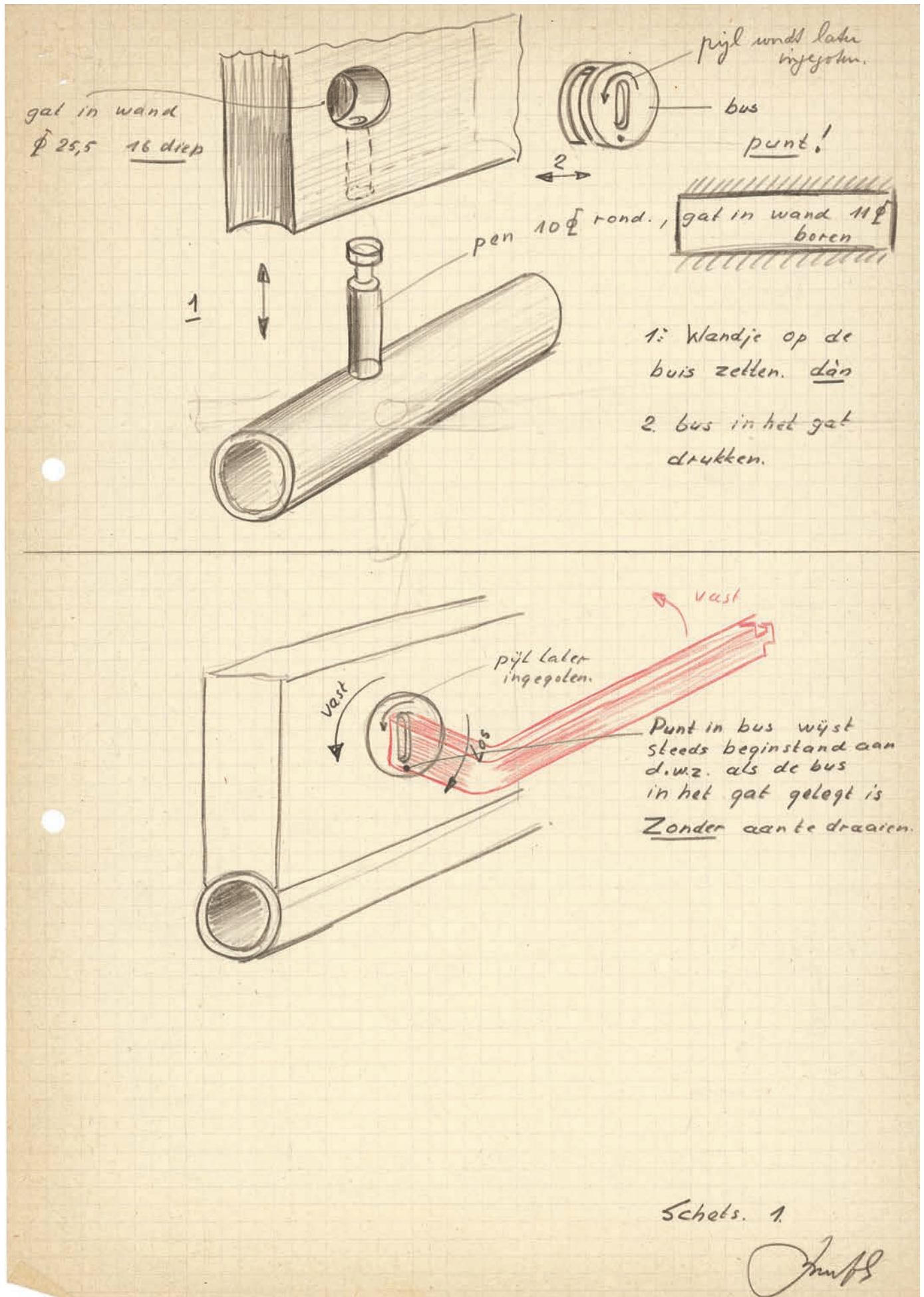


D



E

Drawing of the corner joint by Johannes A. Bus, 1954



with the Pas-Toe trademark and all locks were fitted with exclusive Pas-Toe keys. According to the leaflet, there were a hundred different models on show in the showrooms in Utrecht at that moment in time.

Goed Wonen could sometimes be critical of the UMS. The magazine complimented the company's pioneering role yet stated it was "precisely the management's enthusiasm and the possibilities of its perfect production which make us wish that even more attention is paid to what we think of as a design with content."¹⁰ That being said, rapid growth continued. Halfway through 1956 the newspaper *Het Centrum* announced the 4,000 m² planned expansion of the factory and called it a "reward" for its groundbreaking post-war work. In the summer issue of the staff magazine *De Houtworm*, the director Hans Eiser summarized the situation as follows: "We are very busy and have plenty of orders coming in. It is not difficult to get orders; our greatest concern is how to meet them on time."¹¹ Much later this problem of delivery would become even more pressing.

– 6 – Mienke Simon Thomas, *Goed in vorm. Honderd jaar ontwerpen in Nederland* (English edition: *Dutch Design. A History*, London 2008), Rotterdam 2008, p. 152.

– 7 – Dendermonde, Max, 1957, see footnote 4.

– 8 – "Hausse in woninginrichting is verleden tijd" (The boom in interior design is a thing of the past), *Het Parool*, 13 September 1951.

– 9 – M.G.S. (Dra. M.G. Schenk), "Meubelen voor moderne mensen" (Furniture for modern people), *De Vrouw en haar Huis*, October 1951, pp. 446-48.

– 10 – *Goed Wonen*, nr. 7, 1954, pp. 175-76.

– 11 – S.H. Eiser, "Uit de directiekamer", *De Houtworm*, year 2, nr. 3, August/September 1956, p. 3.

The Bus system

During the course of the 1950s the name Pastoe became synonymous with light and flexible furniture. Insofar as the Pastoe archive is complete, the first contact between inventor Johan Bus and the furniture factory dates from the summer of 1954. The parties corresponded about the possible applications of a technical invention which Bus had announced with his business partner Gabler in 1951 and which was to be patented in Switzerland, his country of residence. Bus and Gabler had developed a corner joint that linked panels together. In December 1954 Bus also filed his design with the Dutch Patent Office, describing it as: "Furniture components fitted with corner joints that allow dismantling, assembling and the addition of extra units."¹²

It was essentially the corner joint, referred to as the "hoeklijst" on the factory floor that was key to its design potential. Bus's invention, initially intended for the aircraft industry, proved to have a decisive impact on the definitive design of storage units that could be adapted to their environment and use. Pastoe really came into its own mid-1954, when it started implementing the Bus system.¹³ It allowed for a sturdy connection between flat panels that could be placed at a 90° angle or perpendicular to each other. The principle can be described in great detail but for contemporary consumers it suffices to say IKEA. The system that clamps nearly all the knock down cupboards of the

Swedish home furnishings store is virtually identical to the corner joint Bus and UMS Pastoe had developed together.

The first version of the corner joint led to a modular storage system in 1955. It was produced in teak veneer and marketed as “Pastoe naar Maat” (“Pastoe Made to Measure”). Cees Braakman designed modules on the basis of a series of standard measurements, which the consumer could construct and combine at home. The furniture’s arrangement could be changed or expanded at any time. “Pastoe naar Maat” was the ultimate fulfilment of the distinctive, industrial and flexible type of furniture the factory had been aiming to produce since 1947. Delivering the product to the customer as a flat pack meant the factory could skip an entire production stage. However, “Pastoe naar Maat” wasn’t cheap, partly as a result of the high development costs. But it was certainly popular, both with the consumer and with critics.

Subsequent collections continued to improve on the system’s finishings. Braakman introduced new types of wood (Oregon pine, rosewood) and specific parts with white varnish, but the basic design remained as it was. When “Pastoe naar Maat” was taken off the market in 1966, its successor, the 125M cupboard series, followed the same construction principles.

– 12 – Description and patent application of Johannes Antonius Bus, 10 December 1954, copy in the Pastoe Archive.

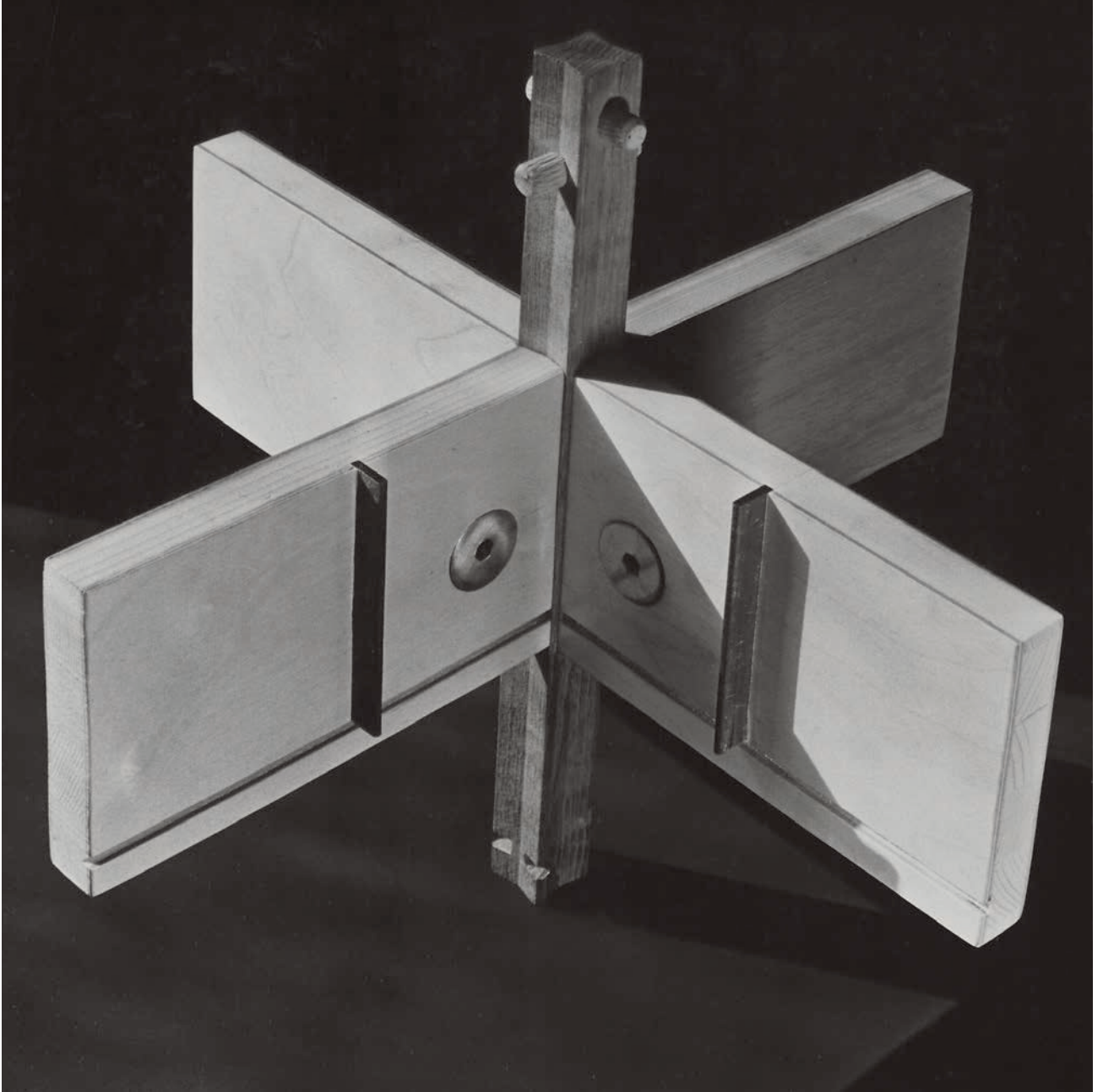
– 13 – In a letter dated 20 July 1954, Frits Loeb wrote to Johan Bus: “On coming home [I found] a few pieces of furniture which Mr. Braakman had put together using your new construction method. We are very satisfied and will go on to refine it or adapt our furniture to this construction respectively.

Hans Gugelot

The collaboration between the company and inventor Bus got off to such a good start that from 1 January 1956 he was employed as “company engineer.”¹⁴ However, only a few months into his job Bus was admitted to a sanatorium in Davos for pulmonary disease and shortly afterwards UMS Pastoe stopped paying his salary. A dispute between the two parties soon escalated. From Switzerland, Bus started negotiating the use of his system with other industrial companies, including furniture companies, even though he was contractually prohibited to do so. The system could only be sold on to a third party for architectural use, for example to connect movable partition walls. The Pastoe archive contains cartloads of legal correspondence about the inventor’s alleged and actual breaches of contract. Anyone acquainted with Pastoe’s more recent history will immediately draw a comparison with the dispute that broke out over the “A’dammer” cabinets in the 1990s.

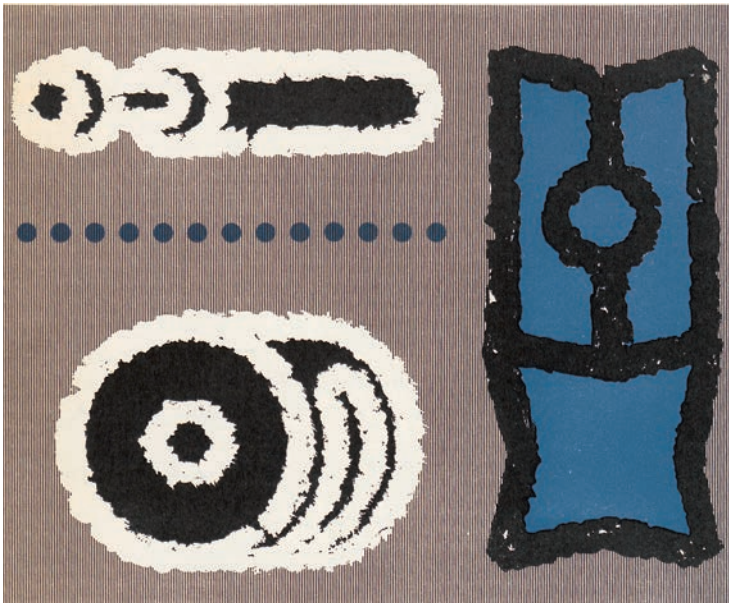
The set of documents on the Bus conflict also includes an undated clipping from an anonymous German-language magazine. It is a salient piece of evidence on the problem of intellectual property, shedding light on both sides of the medal. The article discusses the “Schränkewände” M125, designed by the Dutch-Swiss designer Hans Gugelot in 1950 and presented

Detail of the “sterlijst” (star shaped frame) used in “Pastoe Made to Measure”.
Photography Jan Versnel, late 1950's



A Graphic representation of the Bus system, 1959

B Magazine article about "Schränkewände M125" (cupboard walls) designed by Hans Gugelot in 1950



A



B

for the first time at the Mustermesse in Basle in 1953.⁻¹⁵⁻ It is full of underlinings and scribbles in the margin. The reader had clearly noticed the parallels between Gugelot's "wall cupboard" and "Pastoe naar Maat" that was introduced at least two years later. It is impossible to say whether and how the two pieces of furniture influenced each other or exactly when UMS Pastoe (or Bus for that matter) first became aware of Gugelot's design. The visiting card attached to the back of the article complicates matters further. It belonged to a German furniture manufacturer and it was probably Frits Ullmann who had scrawled across the top: "Watch out. Dangerous." And underneath, just to be absolutely clear: "Wants to copy Bus system."

– 14 – The letter of appointment dated 29 December 1955 is in the Pastoe Archive. UMS Pastoe was later to insist that the company had employed Bus from 1 April 1955.

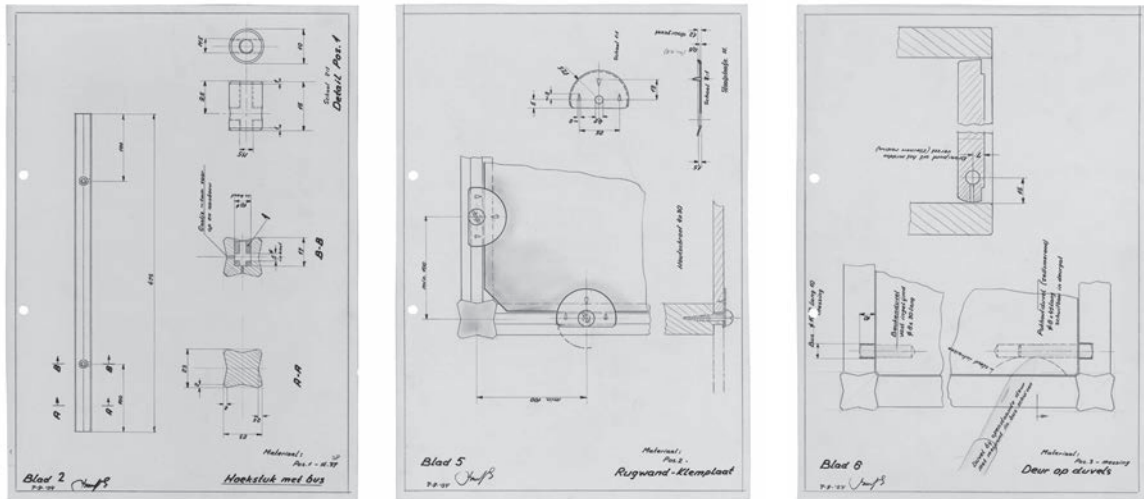
This is logical in view of the presentation of *Pastoe naar Maat* in the autumn of 1955, but no evidence of an employment agreement for that period has been found. The matter is important from a legal perspective, because UMS Pastoe adopted the position that the Bus System was developed while the inventor was employed by the company. The rights were therefore with the manufacturer.

– 15 – From 1954 Hans Gugelot lectured at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm.

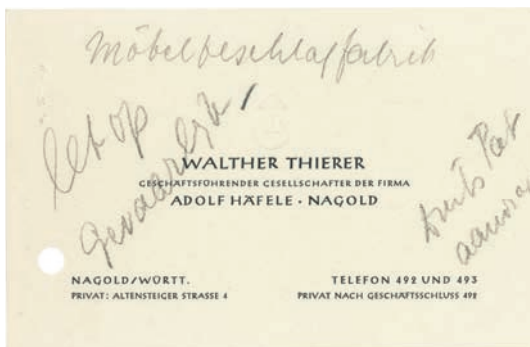
At the time of the development of the M125 he was working in the studio of Max Bill. The furniture was originally made for Wohnbedarf AG in Zurich, and went into serial production with Wilhelm Bofinger in Germany after the necessary modifications in 1957. Like Braakman with his 125M series, Gugelot used a modular size of 125mm.

C Technical drawings by Johannes A. Bus, 1954

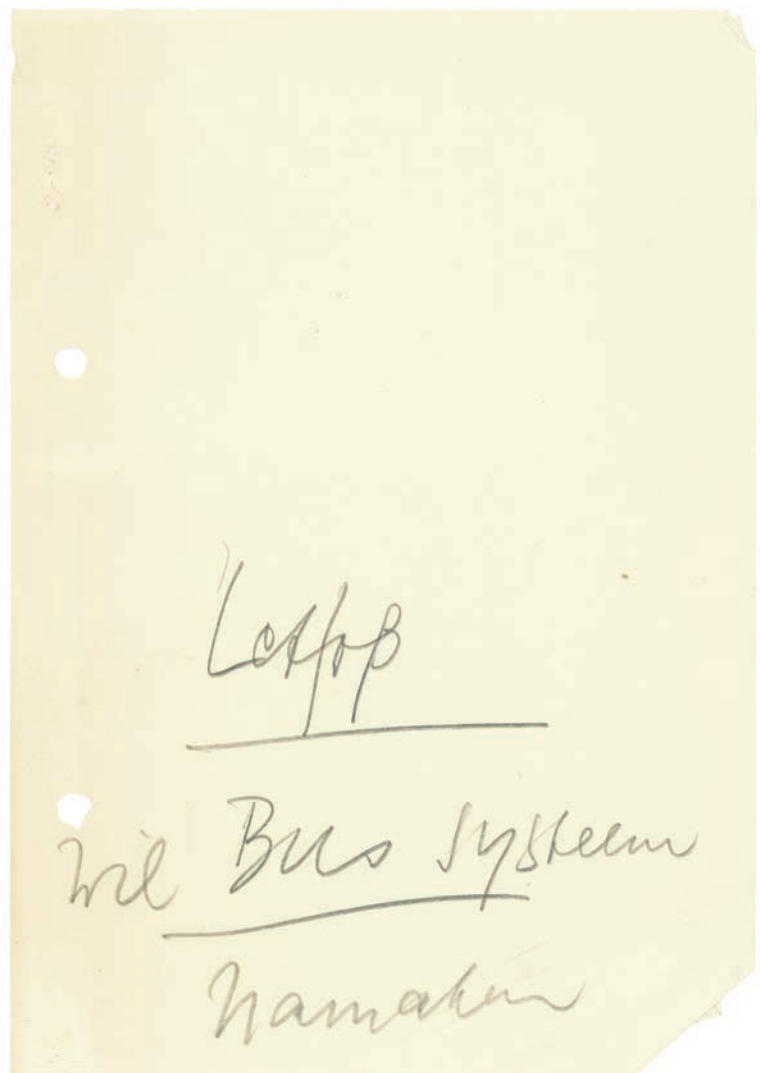
D Business card of a German manufacturer on which Fits Ullmann wrote: "Beware. Dangerous." And: "Wants to copy Bus system", undated

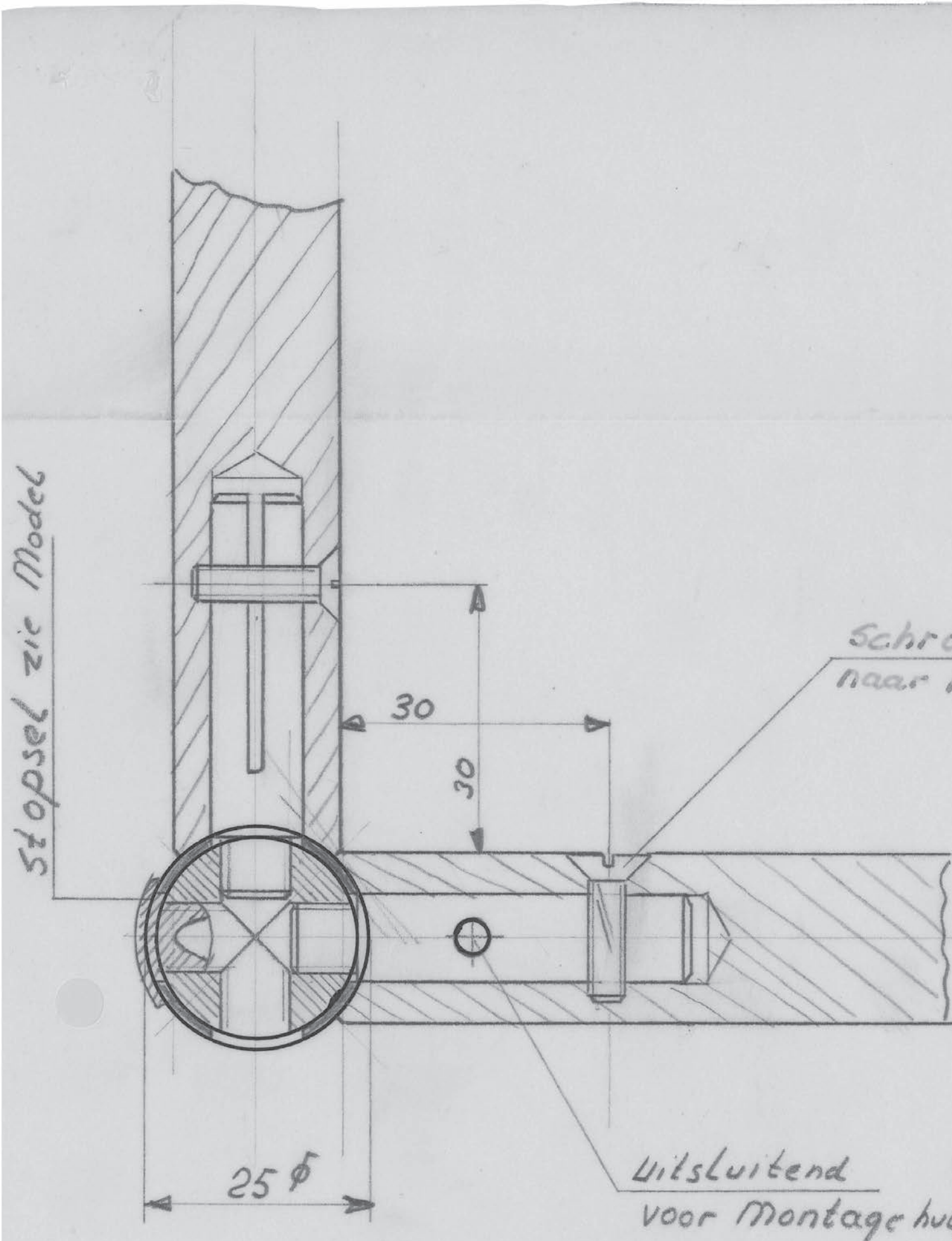


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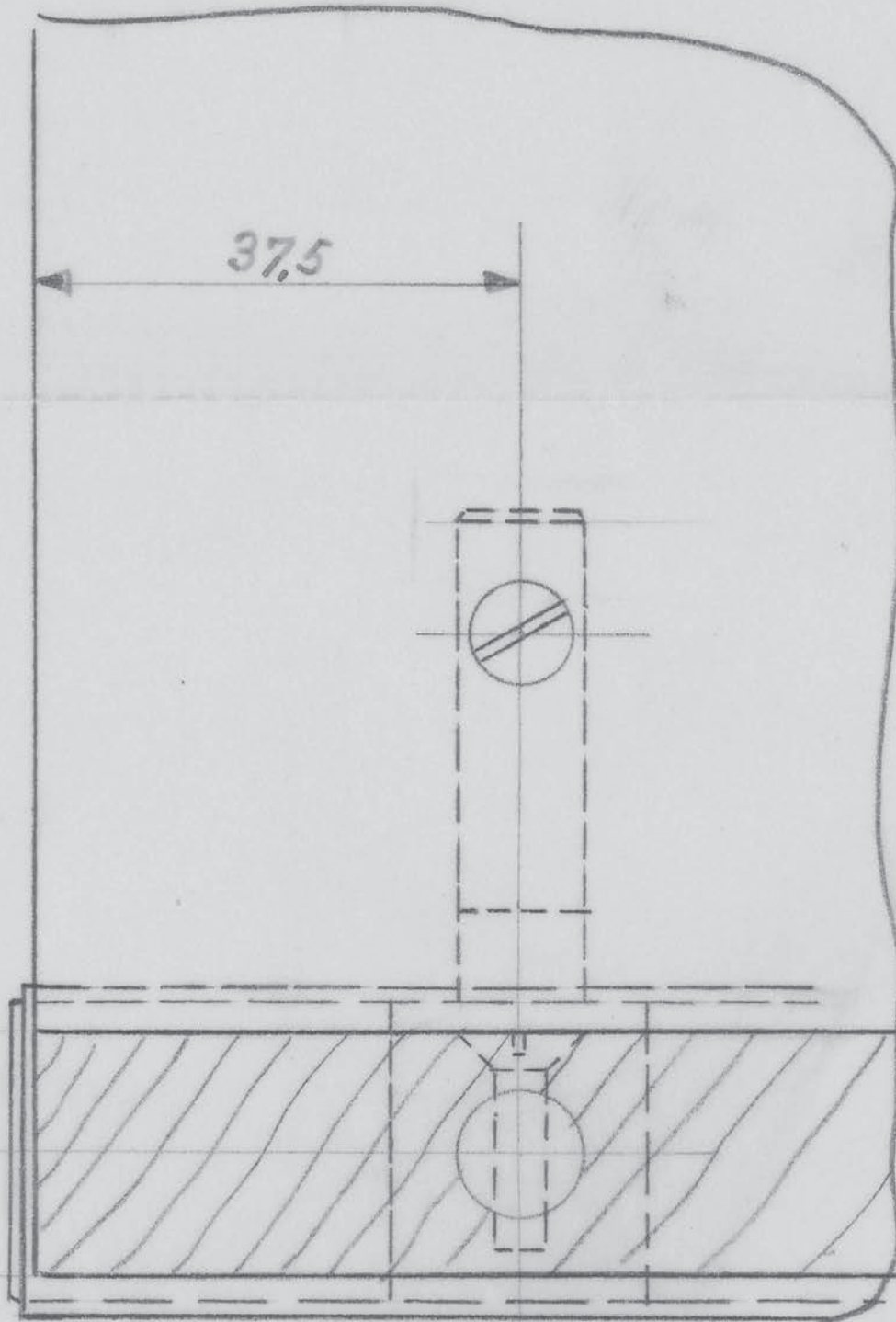
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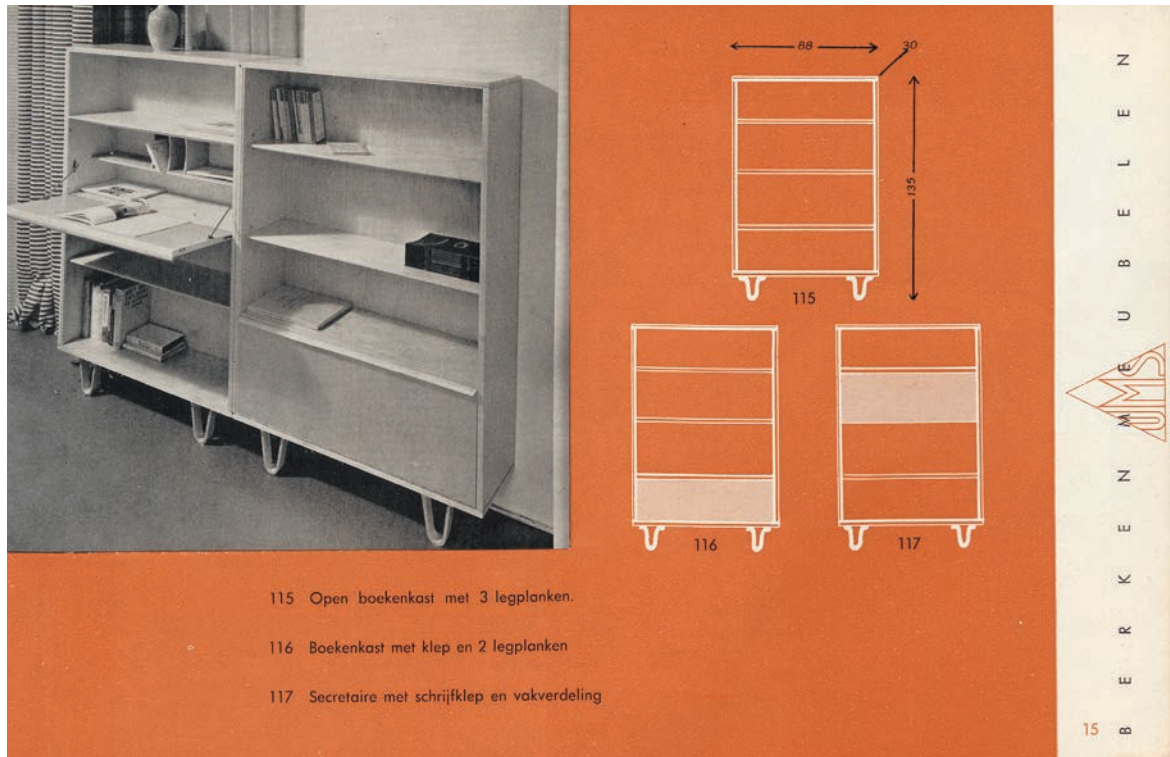
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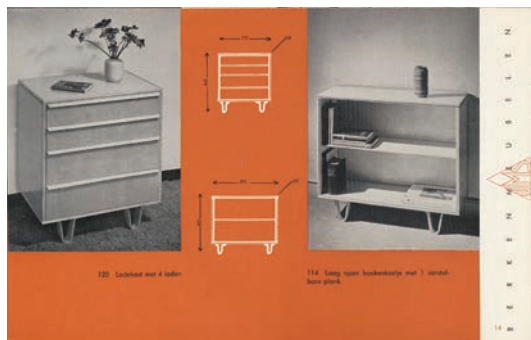


Detail Hoek Nr. 1
Ompf

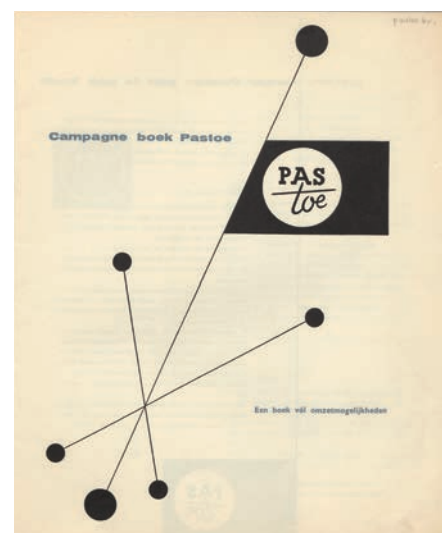
- A Catalogue "PasToe birch furniture", 1952
 B "Campaign book Pastoe", c. 1955
 C Catalogue "Pastoe '53"
 D Catalogue "PasToe 1957|1958"
 E Catalogue "Pastoe 1956"
 F Catalogue "Pastoe furniture 1956"



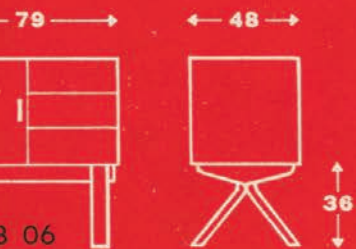
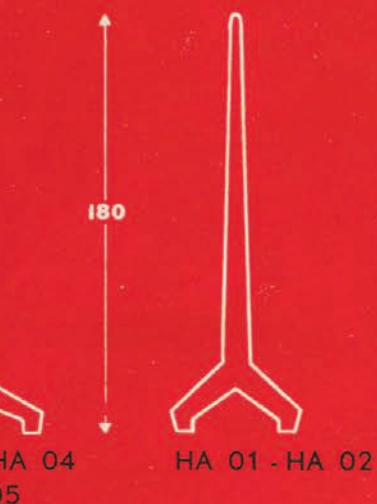
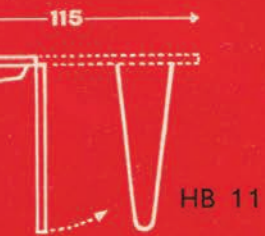
A



B



[illegible]**F**



combex meubelen

of van het kastje naar

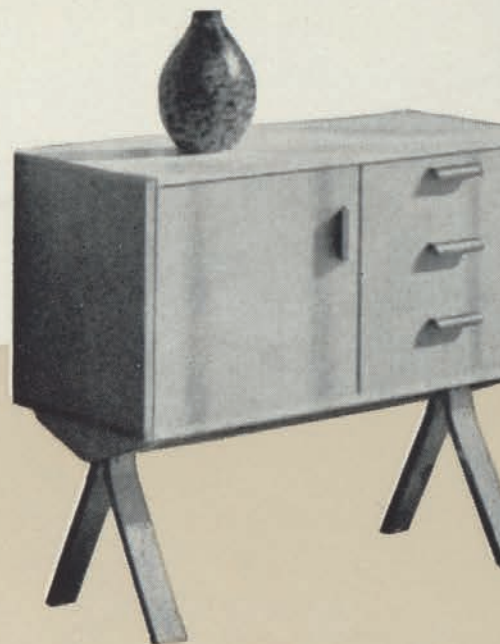


de muur

1



1. Zie hier een blank berkenkastje van de U.M.S.
Het is niet zo maar een Pastoe-meubel, maar het is een begin van vele praktische en decoratieve mogelijkheden.
2. Hier ziet U de 2e phase van ontwikkeling. Ons kastje is nu een „kastje op poten” geworden. Deze poten worden volgens het speciale combex-systeem (en naar de wensen van de koper) eronder geschroefd.
3. De kamers van onze kleine woningen moeten tot het uiterste benut worden. Wij gaan nu „hogerop” en hangen het kastje in een wandstaander. Tot beter begrip diene, dat er 2 soorten staanders zijn, nl. de zgn. wandstaander voor gebruik tegen een muur en de vrije staander voor gebruik in de ruimte. Hier ziet U dus de wandstaander met kastje, servieskastje en boekenplanken, accessoires bestemd voor 3 verschillende doeleinden; verenigd in één meubel. De kastjes zijn van blank berken, de staanders van gestoomd slavonisch beukenhout.
4. Hier ziet U een vrije staander met een soortgelijke combinatie, met 3 laadjes aan één kant en een deur aan de andere kant.



Publicity photograph U+N desk EU01, published in "PasToe Photo pocket", 1961.
Paul Huf



Publicity photographs

A Wardrobe KP50, Jan Versnel, 1961

B Armchairs FM08 and cabinet "Pastoe Made to Measure", Gerrit Schilp, 1962

C "Pastoe Made to Measure" (star shaped frame), Ed Suister, 1960

D Teak cabinet and tables TU04, Gerrit Schilp, 1962

E "Pastoe Made to Measure" (star shaped frame), Ed Suister, 1960



A



B



C



D



E

Nurses' lounge fitted with Pastoe furniture, photographer unknown, 1950's



Publicity photographs, 1950's

A Armchair FZ21, Nico Jesse

B Armchair FZ21, stool PB04, coffee table TB16 and armchair FB18, Nico Jesse

C Stool PZ01, coffee table TB16, Windsor chair SZ02 and Swedish chair SZ52, Ed van der Elsken



A



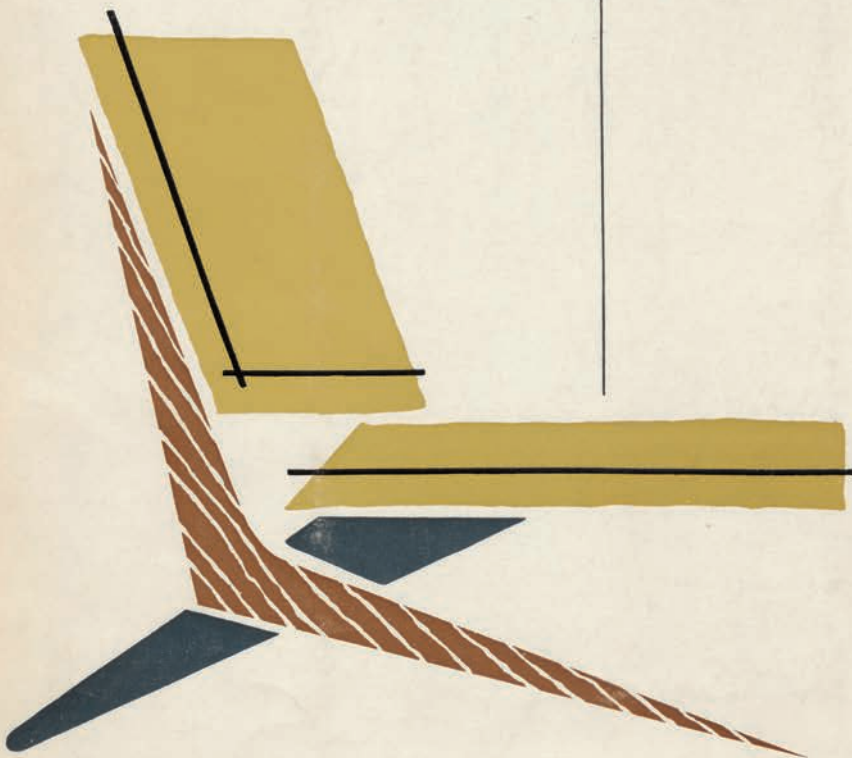
B



C

204

pastoe
campagne 1957





Mijnheer brengt een verrassing mee...



Wat is 't? Een jas van zobelteh? Een fles parfum of katjesdrup?



Welnee, want er staat Pastoe op. Het is, voor wie het merk dus kent: Een allerszins geslaagd present.



Niet zo maar een van alledag. Een prachtstoel, die er wezen mag



of zij die gave ook waardeert? Kijk hier eens, hoe zij reageert!

Op aanvraag onder letter en bij overschrijving van f 2,- op postgiro 51638 sturen wij U gaarne de volledige Pastoe catalogus met alle modellen en prijzen toe. U.M.S. Pastoe-Rotsoord 3, Utrecht. Toonkamers: Utrecht - Catharijnesingel 34, Rotterdam - Groot Handelsgebouw, Conradstraat 32. Levering door de goede wooninrichters.

Met Pastoe meubelen kunt U alle kanten uit!

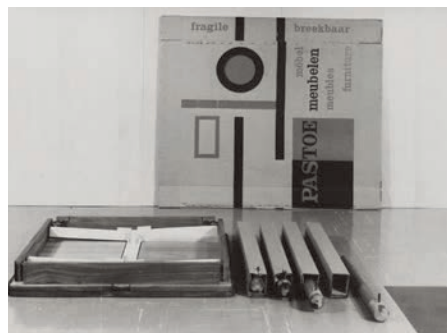
pastoe

A Publicity photograph for “Pastoe campaign 1957”,
Ed van der Elsken

B Spreads from “Pastoe campaign 1957”



A



Knock down table in Pastoe packaging

Haal meer uit
Uw ruimte . . .
het zit er in!

pastoe

Op een kleine plaats is het van het grootste belang om het zo veel mogelijk te benutten. Met Pastoe meubelen kunt U dat doen. Pastoe meubelen zijn niet meer alleen maar meubelen. Pastoe meubelen zijn ook een manier om uw ruimte te benutten. Pastoe meubelen zijn ook een manier om uw ruimte te benutten.

Op een kleine plaats is het van het grootste belang om het zo veel mogelijk te benutten. Met Pastoe meubelen kunt U dat doen. Pastoe meubelen zijn niet meer alleen maar meubelen. Pastoe meubelen zijn ook een manier om uw ruimte te benutten. Pastoe meubelen zijn ook een manier om uw ruimte te benutten.

Met Pastoe meubelen kunt U alle kanten uit!

PAS 100

Zij staat op

pastoe

Met Pastoe meubelen kunt U alle kanten uit!

PAS 100

Verdeel en heers over
de ruimte met ...

pastoe

Met Pastoe meubelen kunt U alle kanten uit!

PAS 100

Weet U van wanden?

pastoe

Met Pastoe meubelen kunt U alle kanten uit!

PAS 100

Goed verdeelde ruimte
is dubbele ruimte!

pastoe

Met Pastoe meubelen kunt U alle kanten uit!

PAS 100

Daar zit ik nu tussen twee stoelen

pastoe

Met Pastoe meubelen kunt U alle kanten uit!

PAS 100

Pastoe: meubelen waar iets
van uit gaat (en heel wat
in gaat).

pastoe

Met Pastoe meubelen kunt U alle kanten uit!

PAS 100

Zou vader dat wel goed vinden?

pastoe

Met Pastoe meubelen kunt U alle kanten uit!

PAS 100

A PasToe collection exhibited in the showrooms in The Hague, Rotterdam and Brussels, 1962

B Spread from bilingual (Dutch / French) catalogue for "Pastoe Made to Measure", 1962



Les meubles combinés *PasToe sur Mesure* donnent une large possibilité de rangement nécessaire pour vos besoins en préservant votre espace vital. Vous pouvez créer un meuble dans les dimensions voulues, où vous pourrez ranger livres, couverts, appareils et vaisselle. Il y a de nombreuses possibilités à votre choix.

A



With the *PasToe Furniture Made to Measure* you will be able to design a unit that is suitable for all your belongings and for your living space. You can create yourself just the one unit which you need to store books, silverware, crockery and galgins. There are hundreds of possibilities, the choice is up to you.



In dem *PasToe Möbel nach Mass* Programm finden Sie gerade die Kombination, die sich eignet für Ihre Sachen und Ihren Wohnraum. Sie können nämlich das Möbel entwerfen, das Sie brauchen um alle Ihre Bücher, Bestecke, Geräte und Geschirranzubringen. Es gibt Hunderte Möglichkeiten, Sie haben die Wahl.

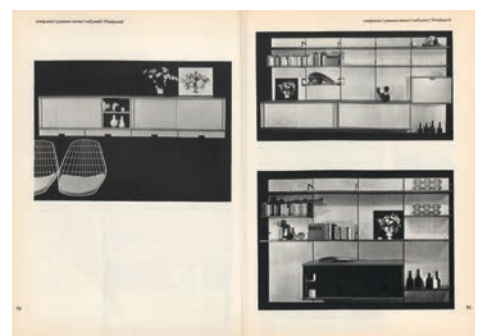
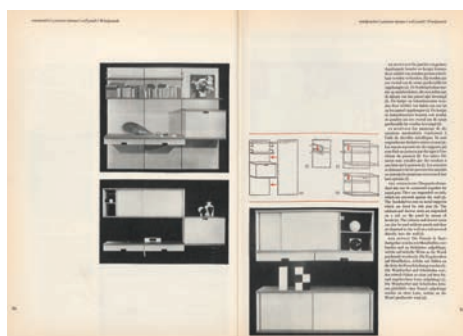
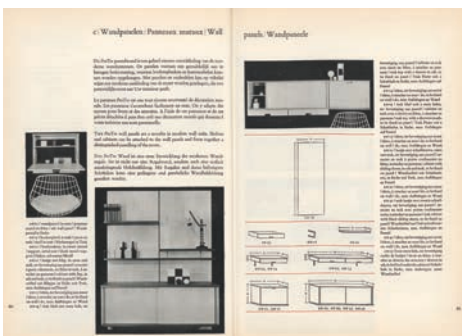
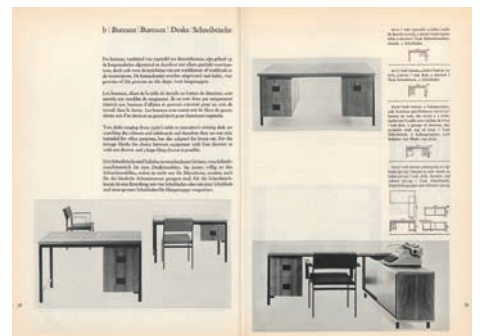
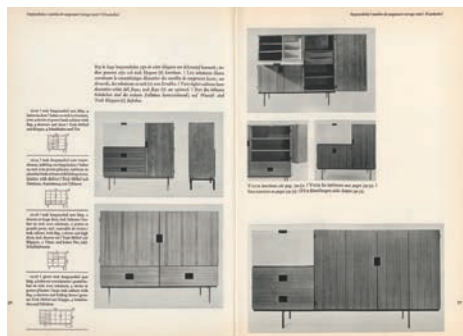
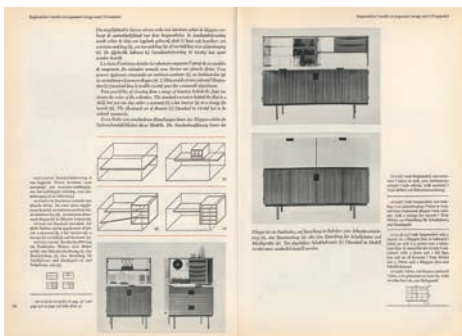
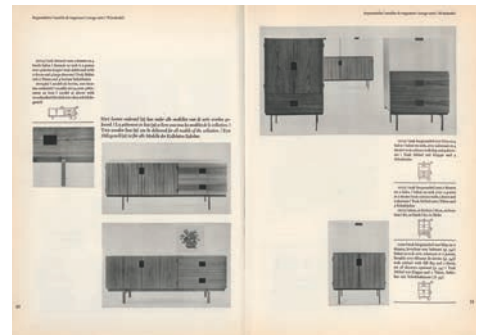
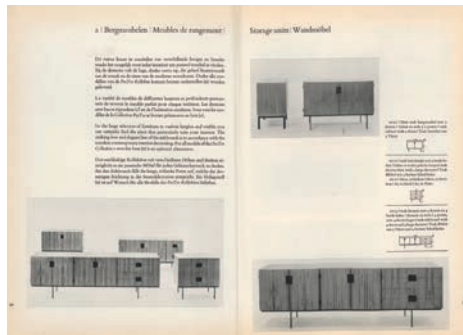
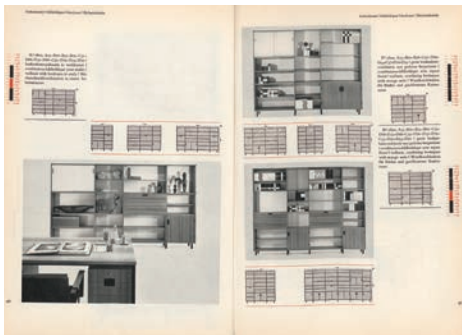
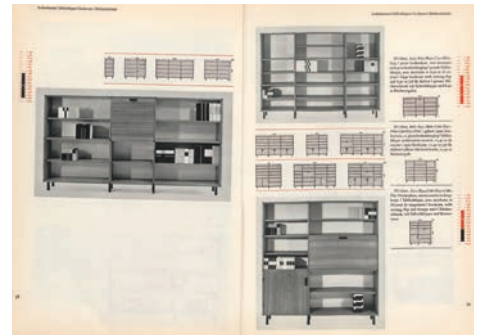
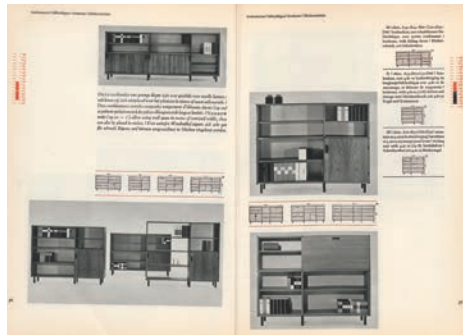
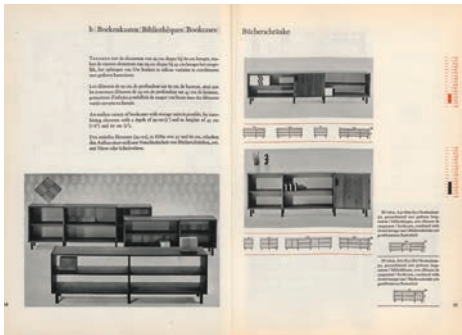
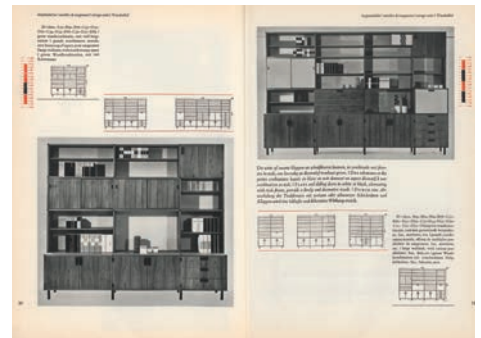
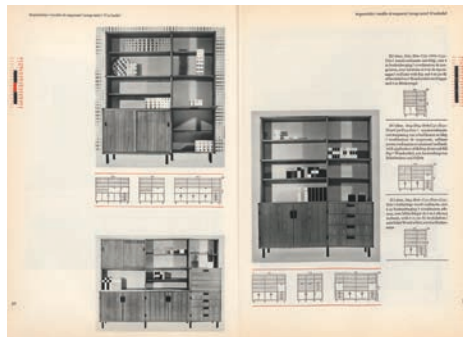
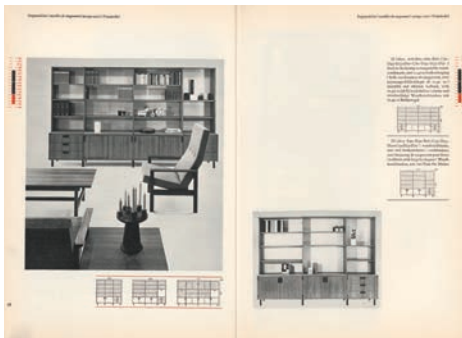
Uw verzameling kan groeien, uw meubel kan meëgroeien; hier zijn uw plannen al in papier verwezenlijkt



Votre collection peut croître, votre meuble croît aussi; voici vos plans déjà réalisés sur papier!

B

**“Pastoe catalogue 1962” showing “Pastoe Made to Measure”
combination furniture, storage units, bookcases, desks and wall panels**



Spread from catalogue "Pastoe 125M" showing different layouts and finishes of the product



comb. 101 □ speciale uitmontering met houten grepen en doorlopende zijden □ exécution spéciale avec des griffes en bois et des plinthes latérales

comb. 102



de uitmontering

l'équipement

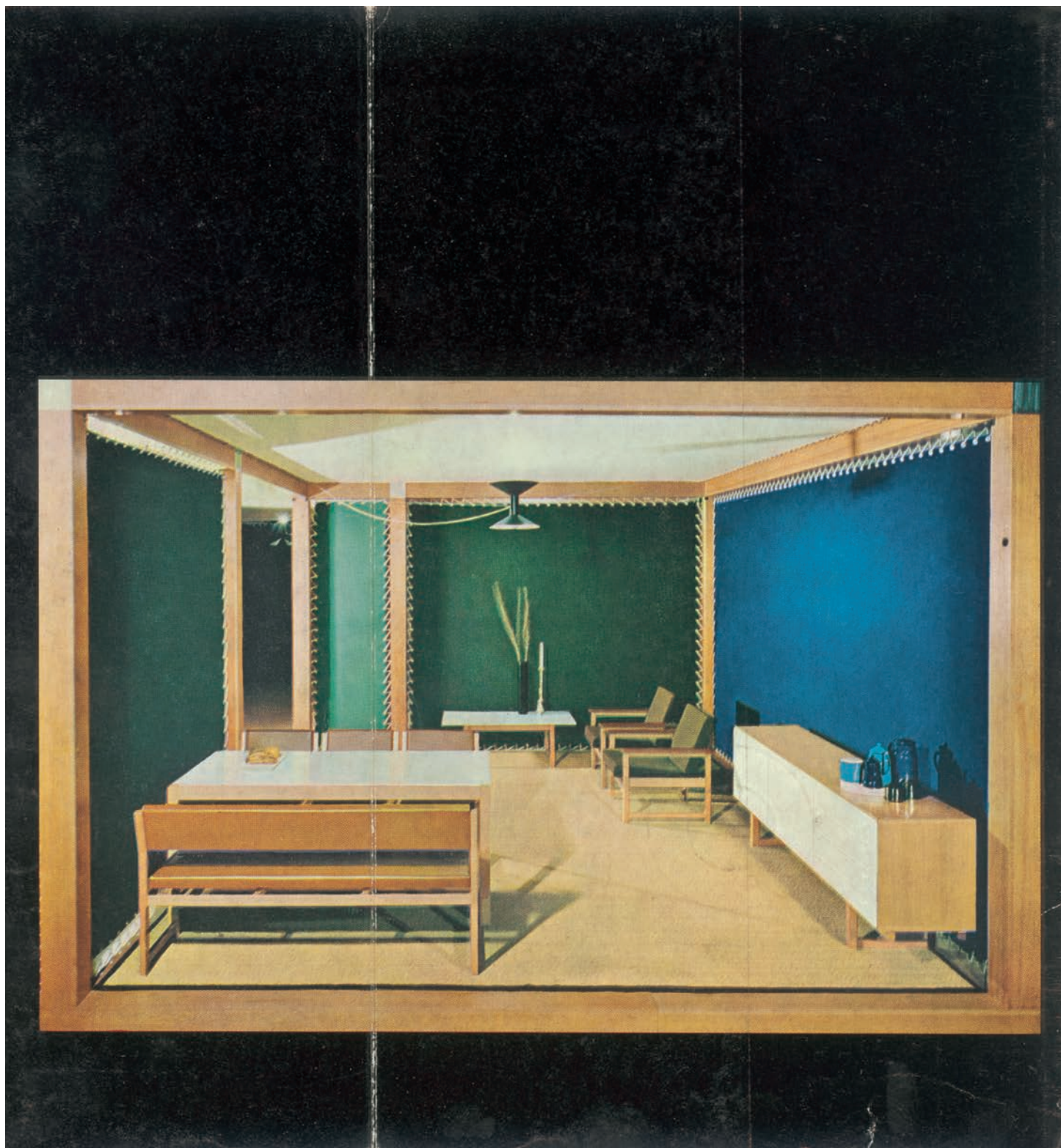


comb. 103

comb. 104



**"PasToe Photopocket", 1961. Photography Jan Versnel,
art direction Benno Premsele**





A Catalogue "Pastoe 1959 – 60"

B "PasToe catalogue 1962"

C Catalogue "Pastoe Collection" (in German / Dutch / French), 1960

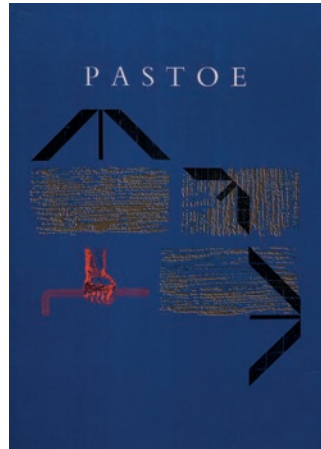
D Catalogue "Pastoe 125M", 1967

E Catalogue "Pastoe 1968" showing a collection of beds, wall cabinets and Kubus (Cube) cabinets

F Product brochures for the 125M cabinet range, LZ cabinets and CK storage units, 1960's



A



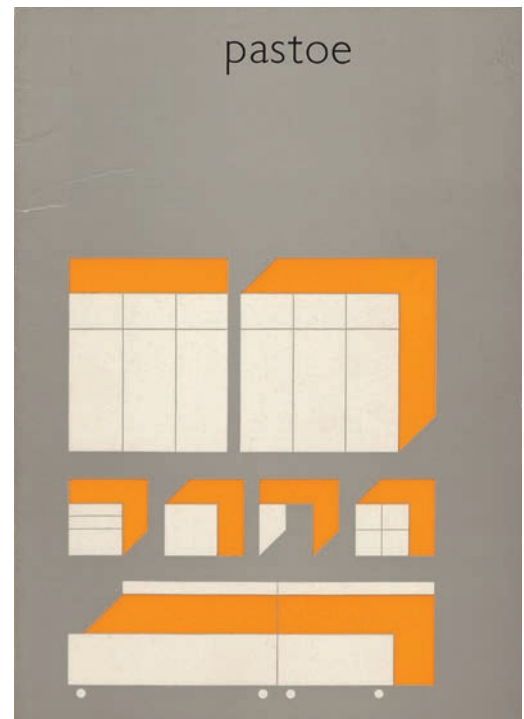
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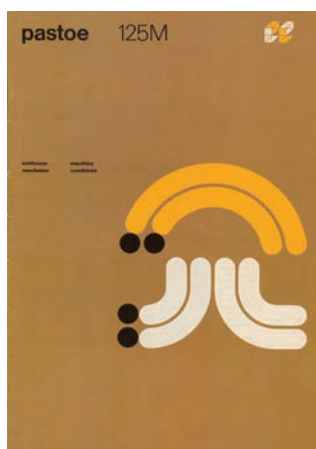
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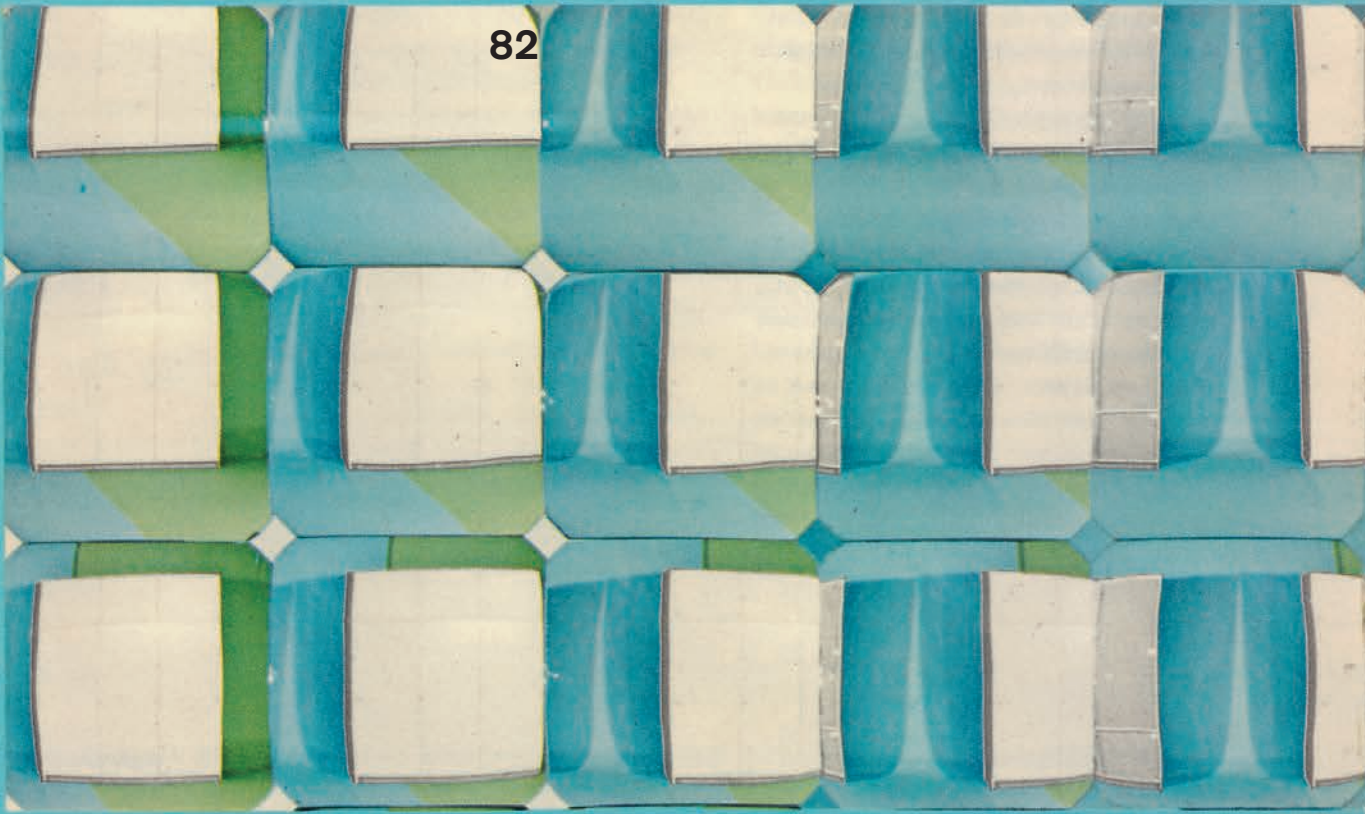


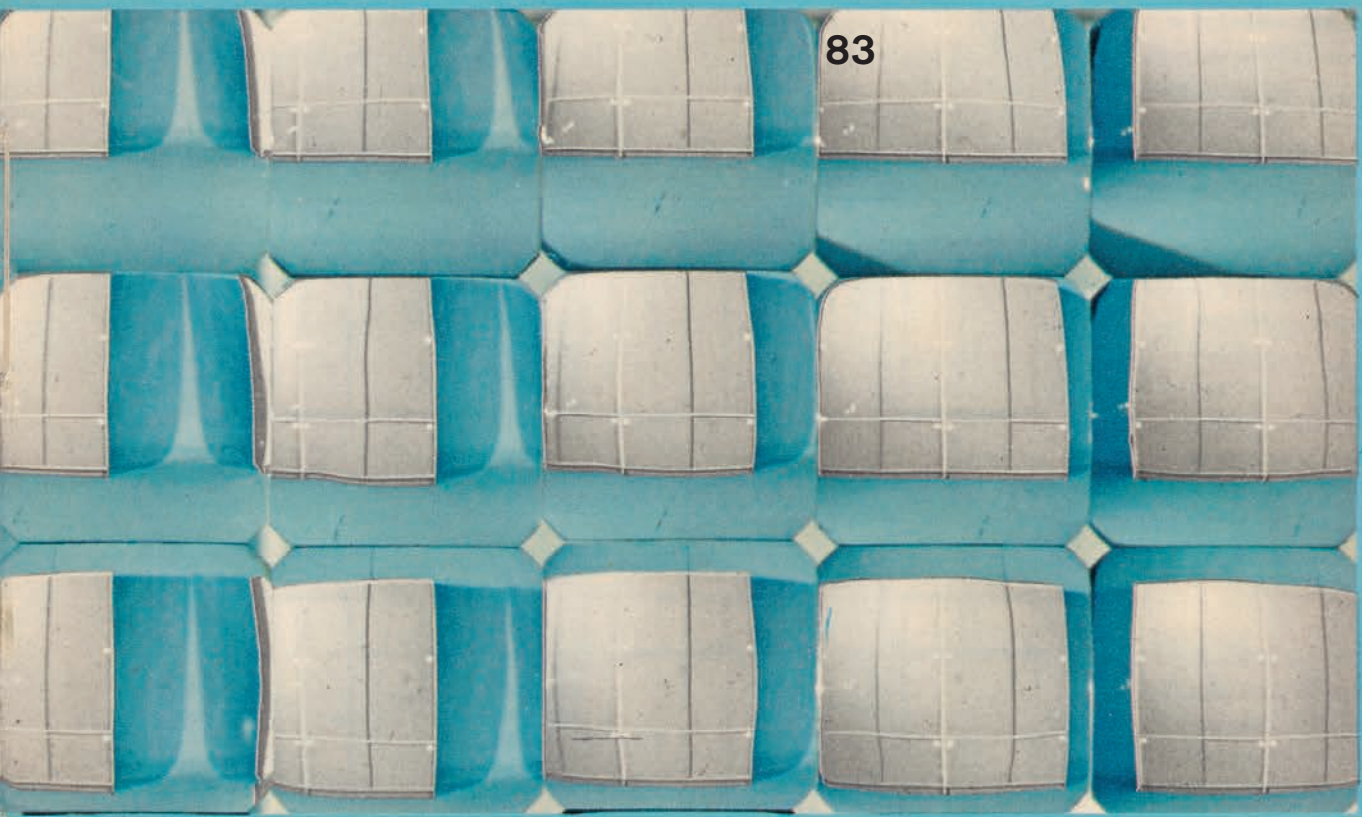
E



F







– Design in an age of austerity – 84

Pastoe discovers the designer

Pastoe's nomination for the European Community Design Prize in 1994 more or less coincided with the introduction of the "Perception" storage system. The company had been nominated because, according to the jury, the collection as a whole retained its strong identity, despite of the uniquely individual character of the different designs and the designers contributing their work. The report stated: "Pastoe is driven by a tendency towards pure, honest products, minimal solutions with maximum results."¹– The portrayal is nothing short of a victory, even if the prize ultimately eluded them. The association of the Pastoe brand with the image of a design-oriented company had been restored after years of decline, a lengthy battle for a new identity and a slow, arduous road to recovery.

The 1993 introduction of "Perception," designed by the Ninaber, Peters, Krouwel agency, symbolized the restoration of Pastoe's self-confidence. The firm had been tackling the ghosts of the past since the early 1980s when Harm Schletens joined the company's management. Under the pressure of the recession and market saturation a decade before, Pastoe had started to diversify. It still produced luxury furniture for the top end of the market, but it also developed cheaper lines for up-and-coming markets such as the young and the middle classes, more conservative in terms of taste and budget. By the end of the seventies, Pastoe had lost touch with the culture in which it had gained its reputation. Its production was untidy and lacked the urgency of the new that had made the brand so successful in the 1950s and 60s.

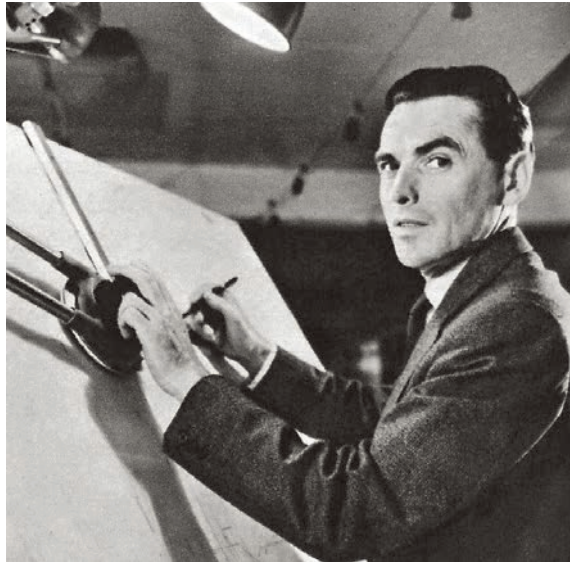
The new commercial collections were not designed or produced by Pastoe. They presented a nostalgic kind of furniture, like the Fristho collection for instance, cumbersome rest home chairs and tables that had lost all semblance of the modern world of ten years ago. These desperate measures were meant to relieve the pressures of the economic downfall.

– 1 – Jury report of the Dutch nominations for the 1994 European Community Design Prize.

Group of 45

Pastoe's freefall was accompanied by a series of rapid changes at the top. The directors Hans Eiser and Frits Ullmann retired in 1974 and the family firm was eventually sold. Further changes followed in quick succession. Pastoe fell into the hands of Wyers NV, an Amsterdam wholesaler in furnishing fabrics. The takeover was followed by years of increasing losses and successive rounds of dismissals. The showrooms in Rotterdam and The Hague had to shut down. Finally, in 1978, all that was left over was the so-called "Group of 45," a team of employees who were to build "Pastoe new style."

Wyers informed its customers by letter. The management explained, that the takeover had been meant to "help Pastoe develop into an attractive subsidiary activity of our company."²– But even as a "subsidiary activity" it



was unsuccessful. The letter described the “new Pastoe” as a company “focusing on design, finish and assembly, as well as on the wholesale and importing of furniture.” It seemed Pastoe had run out of prospects. At best it would scrape into the commemorative book of Dutch design.

Harm Scheltens together with the acting managing director Siemen Tiekens took over the running of the firm in 1981. Wyers had first recruited Tiekens from a business operating in the middle sector of the furniture market. He had very little interest in quality design or in workmanship. His aim was to quickly achieve an annual turnover of 45 million guilders. He was not particularly interested in the kind of furniture needed to achieve this goal, which he also explained to the designers. Harm Scheltens – originally working at the carpet division of Wyers – noticed immediately that half-finished models made it to the showroom. Their designs were not fully developed and also the finish left a great deal to be desired. The “L series” of cabinets (designed in 1979) was fitted with the cheapest possible plastic drawers and a thin piece of hardboard sealed the back. Scheltens seized the moment when Tiekens left in 1984 and rejected the great majority of the collections. Commercial collections such as Paspak (a line of self-assembly furniture sold in DIY shops) and Fristho were discontinued.⁻³⁻ It was time for Pastoe to focus on quality once again.

The downward spiral was broken with far-reaching improvements to the “L series” and the consistent development of new models within this range. Admittedly the storage units became twice as expensive, but they did start to generate sales. At least as important was the unexpected success of the cupboards in the “A’dammer” series (about which more in a later chapter) by Aldo van den Nieuwelaar. The “L series” and the “A’dammer” finally gave Pastoe the financial breathing space it had desperately needed, and which meant that by the end of the 1980s it was able to cautiously consider new investments, resulting in “Perception.”

The quality of this product was – and still is – beyond any doubt. “Perception’s” minimalist design fitted in perfectly with the cupboard systems the

company had developed during its heyday, and the technical details were a contemporary variation of the engineering work of the Johan Bus years. The aluminium shelves, which could span a maximum of 225 cm without extra support, were constructed in such a way that they never sagged. As thin as airplane wings, they were suspended between plywood supports. Their design allowed for electrical cables to pass through and filing cabinet folders could hang from them. The construction of these shelves was immediately patented. A great deal of work was also carried out on the design of a special hinge for the doors to allow for a turning angle of 180 degrees, so that in one simple movement the unit could be turned into completely different divisions and patterns of colour. Everything about “Perception” was right, except for its sales figures. The investments in the advanced technical solutions had been very high and the storage units were very expensive. Despite good reviews in the press “Perception” never became a commercial success.

Still, and this is important, Pastoe got its courage back. As a design company it gained credibility, first and foremost in specialised media. Scheltens understood to what extent the survival of the company depended on the public attention he would manage to generate for the product. Designers are essential assets at international furniture fairs and help getting one’s name in newspapers and specialized international magazines. In a speech at the launch of “Perception” he summed this up as follows: “The power of the enormous amount of products on offer is great and we are only small. We must act, but so do you: designers, industry, retailers and last but by no means least, the press.”^{–4–} This required big names and from time to time it also required a perfect one-off creation such as “Perception.”

– 2 – Letter from Wyers Beheer NV to the customers and clients of UMS Pastoe, 20 July 1978.

– 3 – Even bottom-end furniture retailers refused to stock the collection in their shops. To get rid of the remaining Fristho furniture, the pieces were sprayed white and sold directly to the consumer. Verbal communication from Harm Scheltens to the author, 25 October 2012.

– 4 – Harm Scheltens’ opening speech at the anniversary presentation of *Pastoe 80 jaar vormgeving* (Pastoe 80 Years of design), Nicolaaskerk, Utrecht, 14 June 1993.

Cees Braakman

For all the celebrity designers listed in the company’s catalogues – from Mart Stam and Aldo van den Nieuwelaar to Maarten Van Severen and Shiro Kuramata – there is one name that above all others will be forever linked to Pastoe: Cees Braakman (1917–1995). As the youngest son of the managing director Dirk Braakman, he practically grew up in the factory and had all sorts of jobs there. He left his mark on the collection as a designer in the post-war period, without in fact positioning his design identity between the brand and the customer. Braakman’s work was Pastoe and Pastoe was his work: in the mid-20th century, design could still be as easy and as anonymous as that.

A A Pastoe chair (Swedish collection) being salvaged during the great flood of 1953.

Photographer unknown

B Tea trolley Mobilo PE03, design Cees Braakman, 1953. Jaap d'Oliveira



A



B

For Cees Braakman, there was very little glamour to his work. The purchase of good timber and the finest veneer was at least as important as fine-tuning models. A top-notch production line was far more interesting to him than the unique quality of a design, because in his eyes it was the production technique that led to originality.⁻⁵⁻ In fact, anyone who expected to find a row of tilted drawing tables in the design department at Pastoe would have been sorely disappointed. He once told a reporter at the *Het Parool* newspaper in 1964: "Design takes place inadvertently, in among all sorts of other activities."⁻⁶⁻ Perhaps that is why the iconic portrait of Cees Braakman – upright at a draftsman's table, propelling pencil at the ready – is such an intriguingly incorrect image: it is a cliché designer pose, most probably at the request of the photographer.

Cees Braakman took over as designer on his return from a study trip to the United States in 1948. The company's direction changed almost overnight. Braakman Jnr. adopted an international focus for his designs and as a direct result the collections rapidly developed a more universal character. Suddenly Pastoe started gaining ground on modern Scandinavian designs. So it is not surprising that from 1952 the company included a Swedish furniture section in its catalogues, which included curved chairs designed in accordance with the ergonomic insights of Dr. Bengt Akerblom. By way of introduction the catalogue states: "Akerblom chairs are the result of the scientific studies carried out by Dr. Akerblom and ensure the best sitting position. They are broader and lower and provide strong support for the back because of their shape." Chairs produced by Fritz Hansen and designed by the Danish architect Arne Jacobsen, a designer greatly admired by Braakman, were also added to the UMS Pastoe catalogue. In a break from its customary reticence regarding the identity of its designers, Jacobsen's name was mentioned in the catalogues from the very beginning. The Scandinavian contribution grew, particularly in the chair and sofa department, with a major role for the Swedish architect Yngve Ekström.

**“Seating Unit Bamboo Chair 4”, entry for the International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture Design. Design Junzo Sakakura, c. 1950. Photo collage and gouache on panel (49,5 x 78,7 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York (donation by the designer)
(See model FB03 by Cees Braakman, Index p. 205)**



The near anonymity of the designer reveals a great deal about how this professional group was regarded at the time. The actual piece of furniture was essential since it was meeting a demand. Manufacturing methods were important because the furniture had to be made with an economic use of materials and at low production costs, while still providing the best possible quality for the user. The individuality of the design was simply less important. Braakman appears to have felt comfortable in this subordinate role, a place from which he could comfortably follow the innovations of other designers, in particular of those in the United States.

Reference was made above to the International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture Design, for which the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York took the initiative. In 1948 the MoMA invited the global design community to participate. The competition reveals the urgency of affordable design products at the time, particularly in the furniture sector. The results – a few hundred entries from which the Dutch industry was absent – were exhibited at the museum from May 1950. The MoMA collection still contains a presentation panel of the contribution from the Japanese architect Junzo Sakakura.⁻⁷⁻ His drawing of the Seating Unit Bamboo Chair 4 is a big surprise for anyone familiar with Braakman's work: it is the very FB03 “Combex” armchair which was presented by the UMS in 1952.

Several authors in the past have commented on Braakman's keen eye for the designs of his contemporaries. Unlike his work on storage units and his dedication to system design, chairs were not his forte. It is particularly in this part of his oeuvre that the source of his inspiration often remained strikingly obvious. For example, the “SB02,” dating from about 1950,

clearly reveals the traces of the armchairs made of curved plywood by Charles and Ray Eames in 1946. The “SB09” dining table chair appears to have a direct link with the “Leggera” chair by the Italian architect Giò Ponti. The “SM05” wire chair (1957), developed by Braakman and A. Dekker from Tomado refers to a model by Eames and to the wire chair of Harry Bertola, both of which were produced in the United States from 1952.⁻⁸⁻

Nowhere is his inspiration more visible than in the “FB03”. Perhaps this is because the designer assumed that Sakakura’s creation would never see the light of day without his intervention. Was this a shameless assumption? Not for Braakman, who believed his fundamental task was creating contemporary, affordable furniture that could be produced in series for a broad and, in the first instance, Dutch market. He did this by involving all the different departments in the development of new models, but in particular also by spotting the opportunities for “adapting” attractive examples. For “Combex” he created a furniture series around the chair, expanding the jigsaw principle of the basic design by applying it to linking side tables and chests of drawers. Braakman transformed the original idea into a family of objects and in this way appears to have turned a borrowed idea into his own invention.

– 5 – Braakman’s argument that it is unnecessary to copy existing models, even of an archetypal shape such as that of a chair, is characteristic. In an interview with the *Interieur* (Interior) magazine (November 1961) he said: “After all, there are so many ways of making a chair, that as regards the design, the result does not come close to any other model.”

– 6 – “Pastoe furniture has found an international market,” *Het Parool*, 30 May 1964.

– 7 – In the 1930s Junzo Sakakura had worked in Le Corbusier’s studio, amongst other places.

– 8 – On the occasion of the 1957 Trade Fair for Interior Design and Textile, Pastoe distributed a descriptive leaflet of the collection, mentioning the cooperation with Tomado and referring to American predecessors, “wire armchairs and chairs have become very common in the United States these past few years. Our chairs and armchairs are in many respects an improvement on and innovation of the foreign design, particularly as regards the seating qualities.”

The myth

On the one hand, the ease of “borrowing” underlines how little information on international design reached the Netherlands in the 1950s. Braakman got away with it unnoticed. On the other hand it reflects the sudden myth that has developed around Cees Braakman in recent years, as well as his increasing popularity with buyers of vintage furniture.⁻⁹⁻ While for a long time Braakman was a fairly anonymous footnote in the success story of the company, attention now focuses on how his role as a designer propelled Pastoe forward. How can his work as a designer be understood?

This is not an easy question to answer. Braakman was not very forthcoming on the subject of his creations and even less so about himself, which only very recently resulted in a literary pursuit in *Braakman en ik* (Braakman and I) by the novelist Maria Barnas. Barnas tries to unearth the soul of a designer who has fascinated her for years: “His furniture moves me and even saddens me. I think I can descry a personality in his designs which tries in vain to struggle free.”⁻¹⁰⁻ Her sometimes fictitious and sometimes quasi-factual



**Wire armchair FM15,
design Cees Braakman & Adriaan Dekker.
Waldo van Suchtelen, 1958**



**page 92/93 Furniture display
on roof terrace.
Waldo van Suchtelen, 1957**





reconstruction of Braakman's life and work never really gets any closer to its subject and ends on a downer. The U-shaped legs characteristic of the birch cabinets from 1950 proved not to be a unique design by her protagonist. They had appeared earlier in the work of the American furniture designer Edward Wormley.

Evidence suggests that Braakman was not particularly concerned with (alleged) originality. Towards the end of his professional life he charted his design career based on the materials he had used for his collections. He referred to his "oak" period, his "birch" period and the era of teak, instead of talking about the stylistic phases of his designs. His strength lay in combining technology, production, design and market considerations with an integrated process of product development. To insiders of contemporary design this will not sound particularly earth shattering, but in Braakman's day this approach was uncommon. Braakman was not dogmatic. When his aim to achieve a completely modular design for a range of flexible storage units finally bore fruit in 1955 with "Pastoe naar Maat", the market once again showed an interest for individual, ready-made storage furniture. In 1958 Braakman met this demand with the so-called "U+N" series. These were elegant sideboards (no matter how much he despised that specific type of furniture) and cupboards on a delicate metal frame, fitted with recessed handles made of a black synthetic material.

In 1968 the Association for Art and Industry awarded Pastoe the BKI Prize for good industrial design. Pastoe was honoured because it considered design not merely as an expression of good taste and industrial production not merely as a licence to churn out soulless furniture. Handing over the prize, the chairman L.C. Kalff made special reference to the fact that "UMS's courageous management and the young Braakman had managed to combine increasing sales, an increasingly sophisticated production process with a design that did not make any concessions to bad taste."¹¹ The director Frits Ullmann expressed his gratitude and proudly responded that "our the product is now truly linked to art," and predicted that the business would retain "its own recognizable image that is carefully considered and well thought-out."¹²

The prize was awarded in the Berlage Stock Exchange in Amsterdam, the location of the then Institute for Industrial Design (IIV). It staged a retrospective of twenty years of furniture production from Utrecht which also included Pastoe's most recent designs, such as the prototype of the "Kubus" (Cube), which would come onto the market in 1969 as "Q-bus". The folder for the exhibition described the design as follows: "He [Braakman, ed.] now runs technical test on how best to fold a functional cubic cupboard from a flat sheet. This can be done with a few mechanical movements, more or less like folding a cardboard box. This concept provides unimaginable possibilities for highly industrialized manufacturing, but requires huge initial investments in equipment and machinery. It is necessary to think in large numbers and an extremely extensive range of possible applications."¹³

The “Q-bus” marks a final return for Braakman to a modular combination range. Anyone who sees the actual products now, made of chipboard covered with a layer of plastic foil, might not be impressed about the material qualities of the cabinets. It is the folding mechanism that bears interest. The four sides of the cupboards are made of a single sheet and a groove is cut out along the folding lines. However, the details and the finish of the product leave a great deal to be desired. The knobs and legs look as though they have accidentally collided with the austere basic shapes of the cupboards.

The furniture was intended to break into a younger market but the product struggled. Just as in the case of “Perception” many years later, the high initial costs for development and equipment meant that the product was expensive. Competitors did not have to copy the ingenious construction – which Pastoe actually still uses today to produce, for example, the “Boxes” and “Totem” ranges – to force the original out of the market with much cheaper cube furniture.

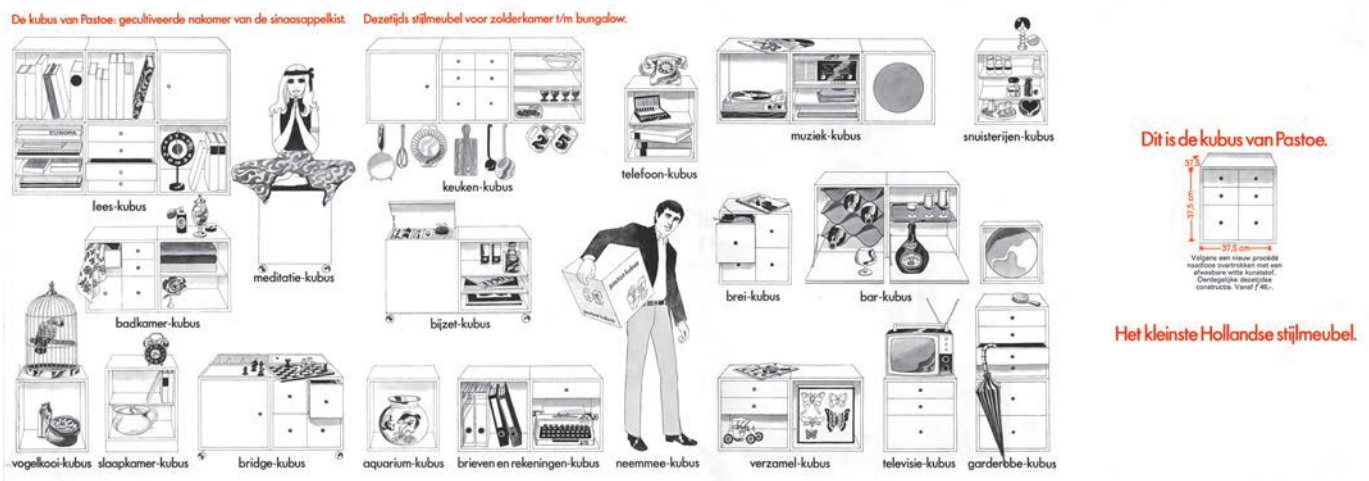
Design climate

Cees Braakman's role in establishing a design climate in the company was undoubtedly pivotal. Following the death of Frits Loeb in 1959, he had to deal with the managing director Eiser and the commercial director Ullmann. Those who knew Hans Eiser describe him as old-fashioned and hierarchical, a man of discipline. Frits Ullmann was the director with a sense of design and an art lover who cultivated a more subtle approach to human interactions. When the company started to employ an increasing number of external designers during the 1950s, Frits Ullmann must have been the one who represented the designers to the board of directors. Occasionally, they contributed to the furniture collection itself, as for example Dirk van Sliedregt, P.J. Muntendam and Jan van Grunsven, and during the 1960s, Cornelis Zitman.

The introduction of external designers is far more visible in the contributions to the identity of the company: in advertisements, catalogues and at trade fairs. Graphic designers such as Dick Bruna, Harry Sierman, Otto Treumann and Gerard Wernars – each one of them top professionals in their field in post-war Netherlands – worked for the UMS. Their names were proudly mentioned in the printed matter of the company. In addition, the company employed established photographers such as Paul Huf, Nico Jesse, Jaap d'Oliveira, Cas Oorthuys, Ed Suister and Jan Versnel, followed shortly afterwards by Eddy Posthuma de Boer and a young Ed van der Elsken. The interior designer Benno Premsele, who together with the architect Jan Vonk designed the stands at trade fairs, directed several photo shoots for the annual catalogues of the company. With his excellent connections in the contemporary art world, it seems that Premsele was able to convince the sculptor Carel Visser to install exclusive, “veneered sculptural works” for the introduction of “Pastoe naar Maat” at the 1955 annual trade fair.

A Brochure "This is the Pastoe Cube. The smallest piece of Dutch period furniture", c. 1968

B Brochures "Pastoe Q-bus", c. 1967

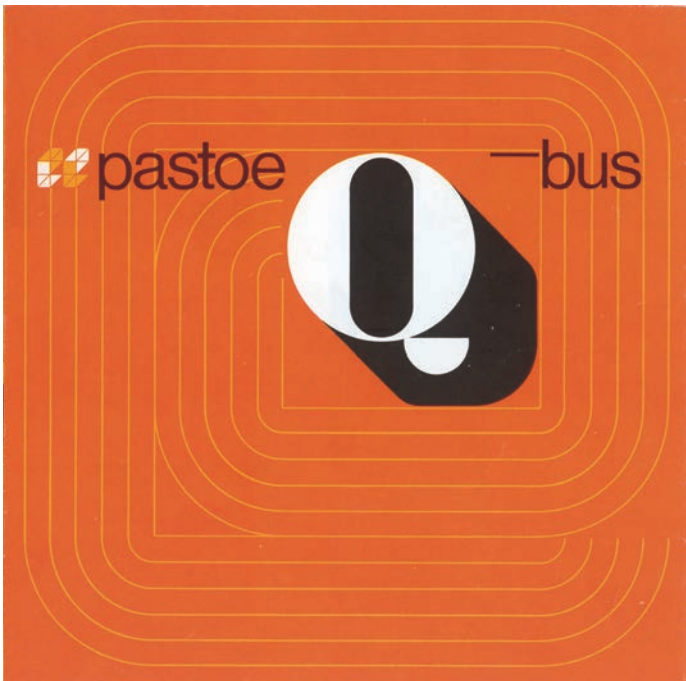


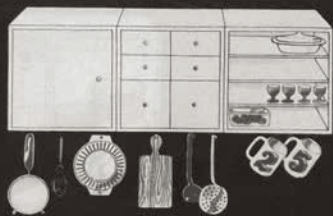
A

UMS Pastoe discovered the designer in the mid-1950s and capitalised fully on the quality resulting from this. The company made enormous progress. In 1950, Frits Ullmann replied rather apologetically when the English magazine *Design* asked him for information. Ullmann described the Dutch consumer of industrially produced furniture as "plain, conservative, middle class."¹⁴ He concluded his letter with the words: "We are, however, trying to develop other and perhaps better things and to bring them into production as soon as commercial and mechanical circumstances permit this."¹⁵ Two years later he was so pleased with the new product catalogue that he sent a copy to the British Council of Industrial Design. The UMS received an enthusiastic letter of thanks from Paul Reilly, an employee and later director of the Council, who used words such as "delightful" and "excellently produced" to praise the quality of the catalogue. He considered it "an example of modern typography and layout."¹⁶

Reilly sang a different tune in his article about the catalogues of Knoll and Fritz Hansen, two British furniture manufacturers, and the UMS catalogue in question: "That the Dutch are still behind in their interpretation of the contemporary style is suggested not only by the geometrical sans serif layout and typography, but also by the rather stiff, angular, pale furniture inside the catalogue."¹⁷

Unfortunately Frits Ullmann's written response has not survived, but a letter from Reilly dated 16 July 1952 reveals that it must have been a lengthy one. Reilly emphasized that he believed the strict puritanical line discernable in the designs from the Utrecht firm would not long survive. He was prepared to summarize Ullmann's arguments and to print them as a letter to the editor in the next issue of *Design*. In this, Frits Ullmann concluded: "Furniture should be useful and not playful, made according to practical needs and priced so that people can afford to buy it. The purchasing power of the public is limited, and a factory that produces furniture for a middle class public cannot produce delicate works of art. We are definitely approaching the age of the machine and a time of austerity."¹⁸





keuken Q-bus



planten Q-bus



lectuur Q-bus



zit Q-bus



slaapkamer Q-bus



tafel Q-bus



klok Q-bus



badkamer Q-bus



naai Q-bus



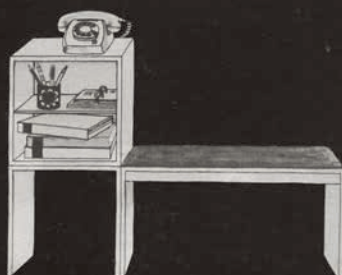
Dit is de -bus van Pastoe.
Stijlvolle nakomer van de sinaasappelkist.



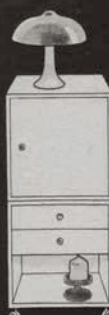
neem mee Q-bus



pocket Q-bus



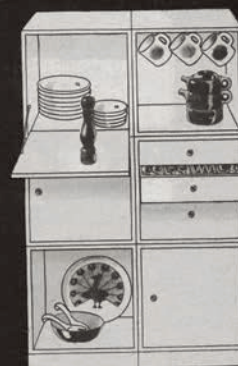
telefoon-zit Q-bus



lamp Q-bus



dia-film Q-bus



ontbijt Q-bus



schrijftafel Q-bus



hal Q-bus

pastoe 

Stuurt u mij de allernieuwste folder met alle maar dan ook alle mogelijkheden, maten en prijzen. Want ik ben geïnteresseerd in die Q-bus van Pastoe.

Naam: _____

Adres: _____

te: _____

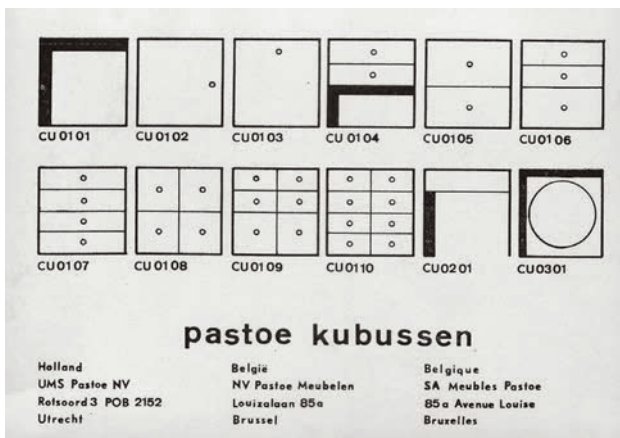
Aan UMS-Pastoe N.V., Postbus 2152, Utrecht

yr/pa-1690b

- A Q-bus television cabinet, 1970
 B Brochure "Pastoe cubes", c. 1967
 C Variety of Q-bus models, c. 1965



A



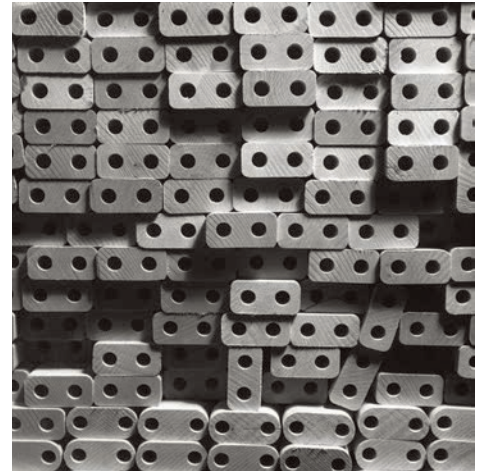
B



C







- 9 – The turning point was in about 2000, with an exhibition of Cees Braakman's work in the R Gallery in New York: *Made to Measure, UMS-Pastoe and Cees Braakman: 1948-1968*. A catalogue of the same title accompanied the exhibition.
- 10 – Maria Barnas, *Braakman en ik* (Braakman and I). Maastricht 2012 (Cahier nr. 1 in the Spiegel series of the Jan van Eyck Academy), p. 11.
- 11 – 1968 BKI prize, anonymous, undated cutting in the Pastoe archive.
- 12 – Ibidem.
- 13 – Folder BKI prize Pastoe, 1968.
- 14 – Dutch furniture for "plain conservative middle class' trade," *Design*, nr. 13, January 1950, p. 51.
- 15 – Ibidem.
- 16 – Letter from Paul Reilly (Council of Industrial Design, London) to F. Ullmann, 28 March 1952.
- 17 – P.R. [Paul Reilly], "The catalogues speak. Five ways of presenting modern furniture," *Design*, nr. 43, July 1952, p. 8.
- 18 – Undated cutting in the Pastoe archive.

The Opel Kadett of furniture

The Pastoe design philosophy was expressed in crystal-clear terms in the correspondence with Paul Reilly. The collection is based on a sense of urgency, functionality, affordability and thus on industrial manufacture. Frivolity and artistic ambitions are left to others. This clear vision was watered down during the mid-1960s, when the organization had again expanded to

300 employees and the market started to falter. In the Netherlands, furniture sales declined as a result of rising rents and house prices. Exports slumped. The Sales department became more important than Product Development and the position of the designer and deputy director Cees Braakman was affected. During the previous period he had succeeded in developing his ideas about the storage unit to complete “walls of cupboards,” architectural elements which, according to design critic Simon Mari Pruys, could be described as “a perfectly functioning background against which life could take place in a natural way.”⁻¹⁹⁻ Pruys argued that because these designs necessarily had to be manufactured on a large scale, their aesthetic pretensions could only be small. The result was uniformity, and according to Pruys that was exactly what the market increasingly did *not* want.

Pastoe however obstinately clung to its origins. It limited its response to the fashion for white furniture with “Cube” and the “S100” storage unit range (1970), designed by Braakman and Jan des Bouvrie. Neither of these models was particularly successful. Licensees of the patented Bus-system in various European countries turned out to use it far more innovatively than the patent holder itself. External marketing agencies were called in to define the furniture of the future. Their advice was to concentrate on the B market in favour of the high-end category. During that same period the designer Karel Boonzaaijer found himself in the eye of the storm. Braakman, his assistant Stef Kerkhof and the designers Pierre Mazairac and Karel Boonzaaijer were members of the Pastoe Design Team created to breathe new life into the collection. Boonzaaijer: “What was missing was the soul of the design. As a designer you can sense this: it becomes much easier to defend a design if it has a soul. Braakman was no longer able to communicate the core of his designs. Meanwhile, these marketing agencies were carrying out market research into the taste of the average consumer. The only thing this could possibly produce was the Opel Kadett of furniture.”⁻²⁰⁻

Boonzaaijer describes the seventies as a period in which the company was governed by mistrust. Precisely because of this the design team could claim free rein. They worked hard to initiate new developments, largely ignoring the Sales department as they did so. The “L 160” cabinet series was tangible proof of the direction the designers were aiming for. The design developed from the idea that an object becomes stronger when you fold it. “We applied this notion to the top of the ‘L 160’. By folding the top over the bulk of the furniture, so that it formed a bridge, we created a robust volume which had a clear visual strength.”⁻²¹⁻ Although the idea proved to be a good one in the long term, in the short it did not result in better sales figures, mainly because of the poor quality of the finish.

It was not until the 1980s that things began to change for the better. By then the company had been reduced to a few dozen employees. A “design committee” was installed to draw up the outlines for a new design policy that would serve as the leading principle of the company. The director Scheltens shaped and reshaped the Pastoe philosophy, delving into those elements from the company’s history that best served his purposes.

A Umbrella stand A101, design Shiro Kuramata, 1986

B Perception cabinet system, design Ninaber, Peters, Krouwel, 1992



A



B

He went in search of designs that could reinforce a contemporary design profile both inside and outside the company.

The temporary flirtation with post-modernism was illustrative of that period. In about 1984 Pastoe collaborated with Rob Eckhardt, a well-known architect-designer in the Netherlands. Eckhardt presented a Dutch take on the designs of leading Italian labels such as Memphis and Studio Alchymia, and the designs of Philippe Starck. He was very successful with it for a short period but the episode turned out to be a blip in the history of Pastoe. His work was not in harmony with the company's minimalist philosophy and emphasis on timelessness as formulated by Harm Scheltens shortly afterwards.

Things could have gone very differently in the case of Shiro Kuramata, whose furniture designs for the Italian producer Cappellini became world famous in the mid-1980s. Harm Scheltens saw them at the Salone del

Sideboard L160, design Studio Pastoe, 1975



Mobile in Milan and he immediately travelled on to Tokyo to meet Kuramata. He hoped to persuade the designer to work on a new cupboard. Kuramata was charmed by the Pastoe collection and during a later visit he showed Scheltens his contribution, not a cupboard, but an umbrella stand. Although the product did not fit in neatly with the Pastoe product range the director decided to go with it anyway. This scenario was repeated several times. Kuramata pieces of furniture would be included in the collection, each time in anticipation of the definitive new design. The designer assured his guest “the seed is in my head,” but the cupboard never arrived. Shiro Kuramata died in 1991 at the age of 56. Since then, Harm Scheltens has cherished a tea table Kuramata made for him, but which was never included in the collection.

– 19 – Simon Mari Pruys, “Norm en uniform.” *De nieuwe onzakeijkheid*, Amsterdam 1971, p. 154.

– 20 – Quotation taken from a conversation with Karel Boonzaaijer, 19 October 2012.

– 21 – Ibidem.

Mental compass

Reading the final paragraphs of the catalogue for *UMS Pastoe. A Dutch furniture factory from 1913–1983* it becomes clear that by 1983 the company had stopped thinking in industrial terms and had given priority to creativity: “The machine is now seen as an instrument which must be able to make what man has thought of.”^{–22–} Despite this rather clumsy formulation (for when have machines not made what men have thought of?) the intentions are clear. It was not the production facility but the design that had become decisive for the furniture produced by the company. If Pastoe’s

own machines were not suitable, production could take place elsewhere. The factory bade farewell to a tradition. According to the catalogue, what survived was only the name of the company and the decision to make modern furniture.

Pastoe became a different company after the hardships of the 1970s. The production of basic components has been outsourced to subcontractors. The work in the production halls has been scaled back to varnishing, finishing, assembly, checks and packaging. The question is whether this is essentially any different from the approach during the Braakman years. The essence of the whole process, viz. high quality design of sustainable furniture that can be industrially manufactured has not changed. Over the past thirty years, product development has slowly become the core of the company. One could even argue that between the period of its seventieth anniversary in 1983 and its current centenary, Pastoe became more successful in creating a recognisable identity, even with a carousel of different designers. The products gained originality and therefore served as better ambassadors for the company's ambitions. The philosophy of the furniture as a reflection of "the age of austerity" (Ullmann, 1952) still serves as the mental compass today. Just look at the current product range.

Austerity is no longer a response to shortage but a deliberate restraint in the use of material and visual resources. This opens up possibilities for functional requirements and the user's imagination. In fact, it is exactly what Cees Braakman had in mind when he started to make storage units that could be assembled by the consumer and that could be rearranged if necessary. This applies to the work of the Japanese designer Shigeru Uchida, who designed the series of cupboards known as "Furniture as Remembrance" for Pastoe in 1988.⁻²³⁻ His designs – such as the "Horizontals" (1999) and the "Matrix" range of book cases (2003) – embody the wealth of austerity aimed for by Pastoe. Even more recently there was the folding furniture "Motion" (2008) by the German artist Elisabeth Lux, which links visual paucity with maximum expressiveness, while the consumer is not given any instructions on how to use this piece of furniture. The "Vision" series is characterised by the same combination of qualities. This ultimate minimalist range of storage units has been in production at Pastoe without interruption since 1985 and has elicited new interpretations from designers and users up to this very day.

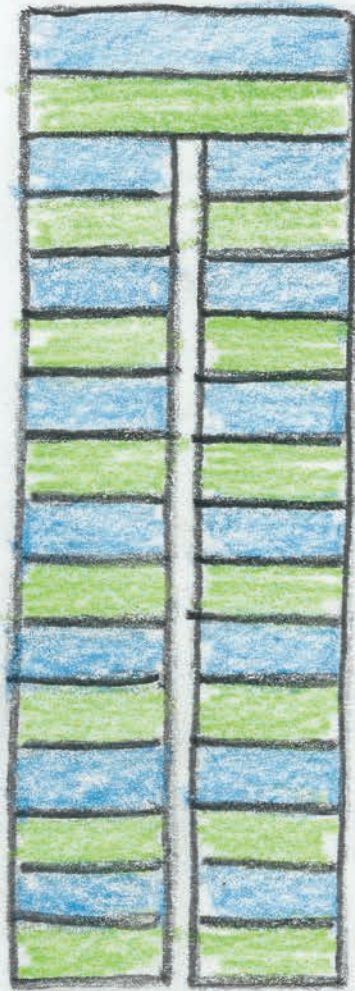
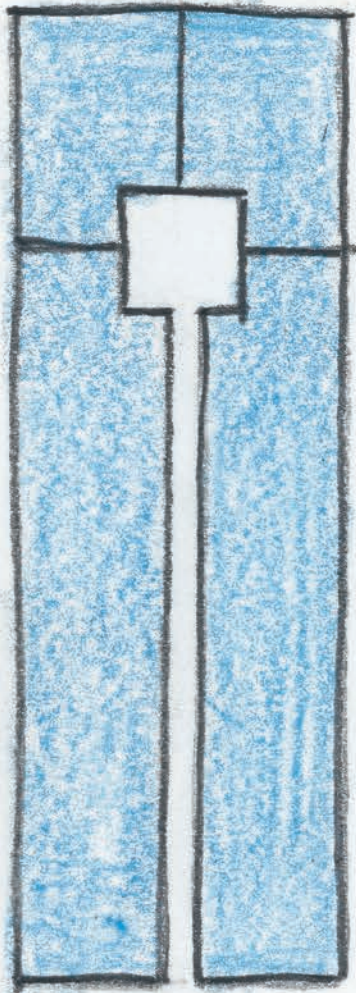
– 22 – G. Vreeburg and H. Martens (ed.), *UMS Pastoe. Een Nederlandse meubelfabriek 1913-1983* (UMS Pastoe. A Dutch furniture factory). Catalogue for the exhibition at the Centraal Museum, Utrecht 1983, p. 90.

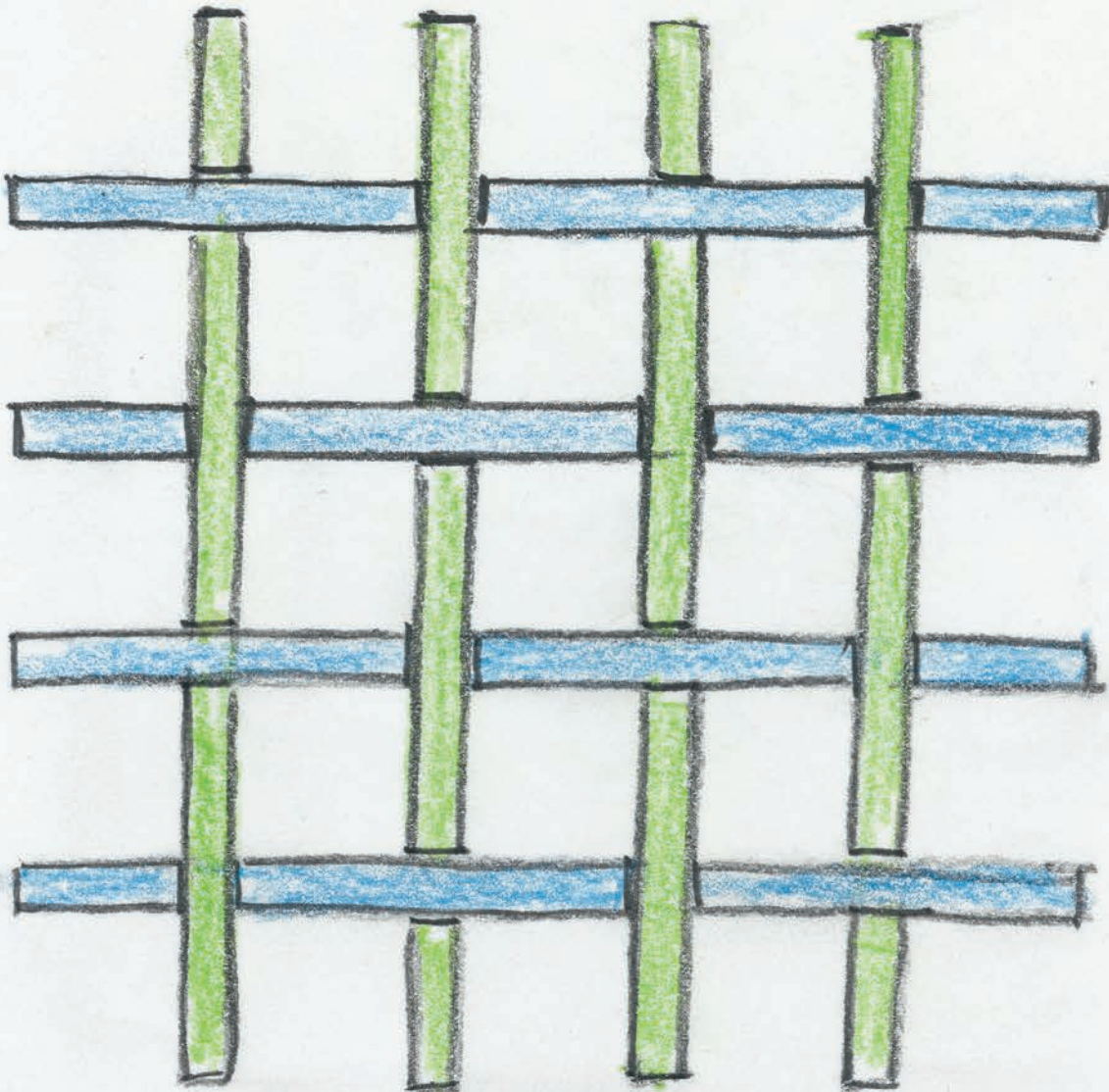
– 23 – Harm Scheltens remembers how visitors became emotional when they saw the "Furniture as Remembrance" in a classical villa in Milan because of the strength of the breathtakingly serene presentation. Verbal comment, 25 October 2012.

Motion cabinet, design Elisabeth Lux, 2008

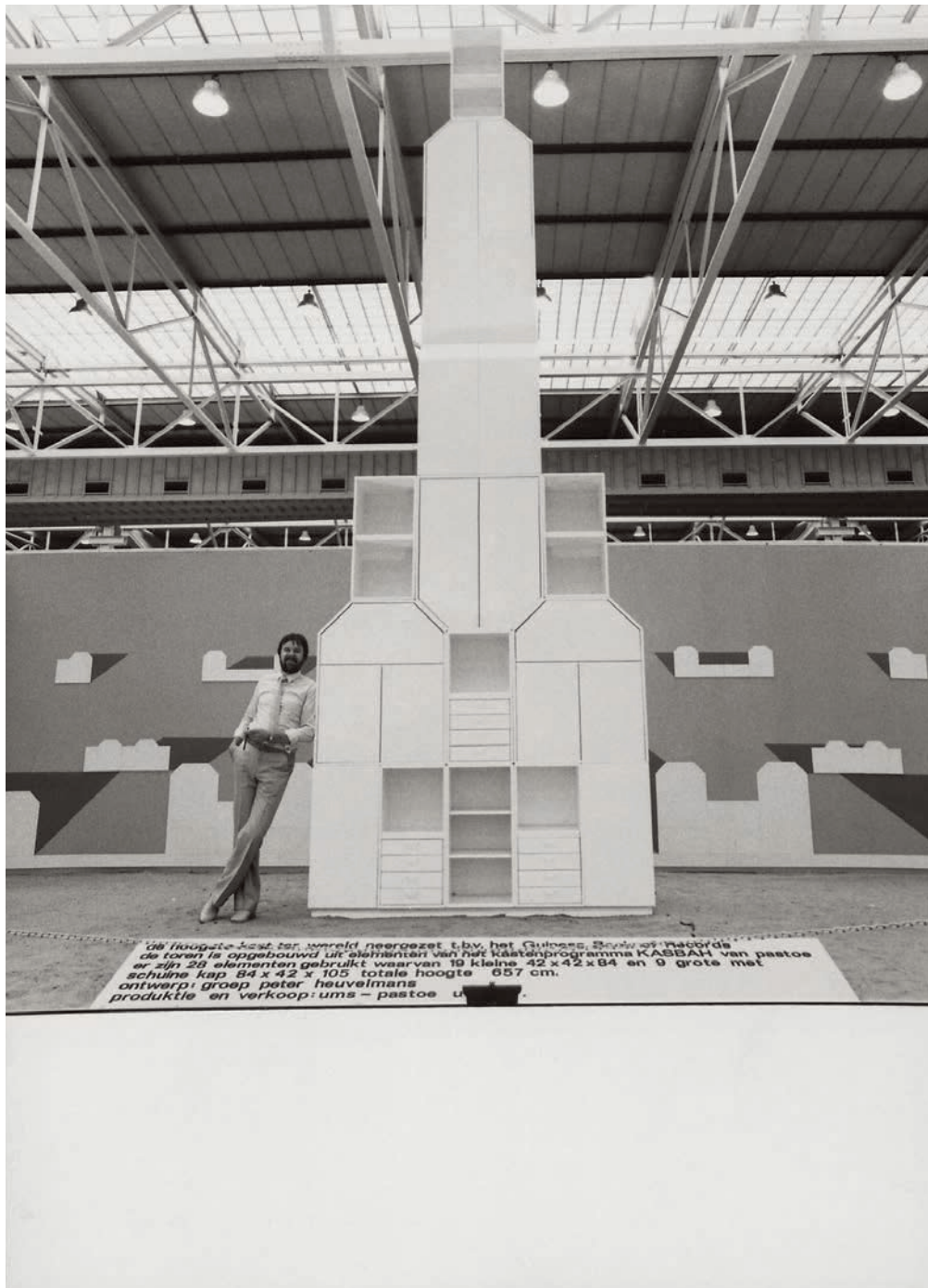


Sketches for the "Furniture as Remembrance", Shigeru Uchida, 1992
From the left: cabinet Ramona, chest of drawers Come Rain,
chest of drawers Come Shine, bookcase Day by Day



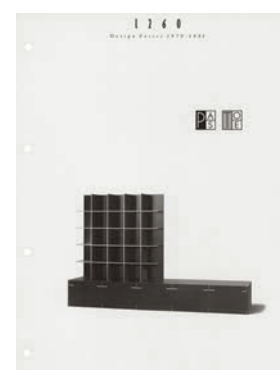
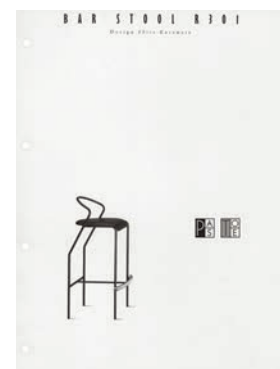
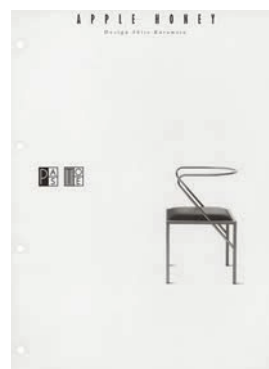
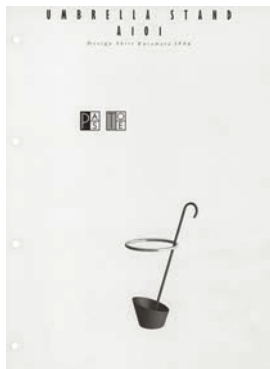
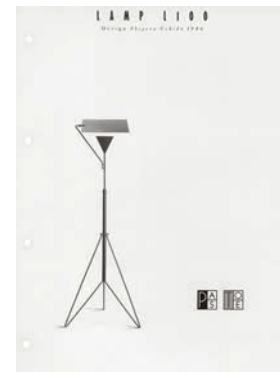
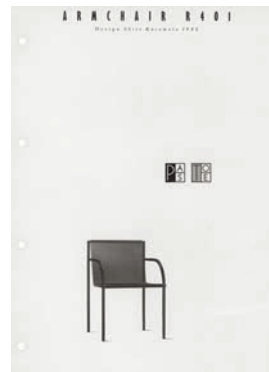


**Cabinet Kasbah, the highest storage unit in the world,
shown during the Utrecht Furniture Fair (657 cm, Guinness Book of Records),
design Peter Heuvelmans, 1981**





Covers of 1980's furniture brochures









Educating taste and Pastoe's self-image

A good design for a better world. A few years ago, art historian Mienke Simon Thomas used this description as the title for her chapter on design in the Netherlands between 1925–1965.⁻¹⁻ The emergence of industrial manufacturing and the cultural innovation this stimulated resulted in a strong awareness of new social norms. Especially in the Netherlands the modern aesthetic ideal was linked to a desired moral effect with almost religious zeal, which is why Simon Thomas speaks of Moralistic Modernism.⁻²⁻ Curiously, this term was never explicitly used to describe the production of UMS Pastoe, as it certainly applied to various chapters of the company's history.

Modern architecture and the “responsible” application of new materials and construction techniques would improve the lives of the masses, just as modern art could. Such was the assumption in the first decades of the twentieth century. This principle was also applied to modern consumer products. Designing and manufacturing products such as furniture in a responsible way would give the working classes access to a world that previously had been available only to the wealthy bourgeoisie: good design would lead to a better society. This is why in the Netherlands the structural governmental support for art and culture was considered as one of the foundations of society. Grants and subsidies served as a healthy counterweight to popular taste. Dutch design, a leading international force over the past twenty years, probably never would have achieved this prominent position without this structural support. And it is certainly no coincidence that the Dutch government was a far more important client of Dutch design than most governments in other countries were for their designers.⁻³⁻ In contrast, the Netherlands never developed a strong industrial policy.

– 1 – Mienke Simon Thomas, *Goed in Vorm. Honderd jaar ontwerpen in Nederland* (English edition: *Dutch Design. A History*, London 2008), Rotterdam 2008, pp. 89-132.

– 2 – Ibidem, p. 89.

– 3 – For example, see Aaron Betsky/Adam Eeuwens: *False Flat. Why Dutch Design is So Good*, London 2004.

The collective force of innovation

Pastoe played its own part against this backdrop. Sometimes as a soloist, but on the whole it was in good company. The company's pre-war period has already been outlined: the UMS was no pioneer, nor did it lag behind. Its furniture targeted a broad market and the manufacturer's message was a practical one. This changed significantly after the war, partly as a result of the government's austerity measures. This new philosophy corresponded directly with the modernist thinking of around 1930. The credo of light, air and space from the heyday of “het Nieuwe Bouwen” (the New Building 1924–36) penetrated the Dutch living room with a delay of about fifteen

A Brochure "New Times... New Lines...", 1952

B Advertisement "Well distributed space is double space", 1957



A

goed verdeelde ruimte is dubbele ruimte!

Lang niet iedere woning heeft voldoende ruimte. Omdat Pastoe meubelen aan alle omstandigheden kunnen worden aangepast, werken zij een goede ruimtelijke verdeling in de hand. Dankzij de uitgebreide collectie kunt U Uw woning geheel in Uw persoonlijke sfeer inrichten en... U beschikt over meer ruimte.

Vraagt de catalogus aan. Na overschrijving van f. 2.50 op postgiro 51638, met vermelding van letter LI op het girostrookje, sturen wij U gaarne de volledige Pastoe-catalogus.

pastoe

Toonkamers: UTRECHT, Catharijnesingel 34 — ROTTERDAM, Groothandelsgebouw, Conradstraat 34 (stationszijde)
Levering door de goede woninginrichter

Nr. 36 - 15

B

years, at least among the progressive elite of architects, interior designers, designers and consumers. Increasingly this was the environment where UMS Pastoe furniture found a home.

The proponents of the modern interior met each other in all sorts of cooperative ventures. There was Stichting Goed Wonen (The Good Living Foundation), founded in 1946 as a means to inform consumers about a responsible modern interior and to help put retailers on the right track. The founding members included designers, manufacturers, shopkeepers and consumers. Goed Wonen, which had to manage without any government support, addressed the issues of a lack of style and the shortage of materials and housing.⁻⁴⁻ It had high ideals. The time was ripe for the true twentieth-century man to take centre stage. He would need suitable housing and a fitting interior. The foundation — “a social-cultural institution without funds, capital or any business experience” — was aware of its pioneering role.⁻⁵⁻ Goed Wonen encouraged a number of selected businesses, including the UMS, to develop furniture especially designed for the foundation. It also introduced its own trademark to help consumers choose from a growing range of products. Goed Wonen used many methods to inform the population. Model houses and model rooms were a crucial instrument. They were included in new-build projects throughout the country. These, the selected shops and the Foundation’s own showrooms reflected the new living conditions in contemporary Netherlands. Many people came to have a look, particularly during the first post-war years. The public was eager to learn. UMS furniture was a standard product on show in these widely visited, stylish rooms for the new age.

Four years after the birth of Goed Wonen, the Instituut voor Industriële Vormgeving (Institute for Industrial Design, IIV) opened in Amsterdam,

the first design institute to be financed by the government. Again, bonds were struck between commercial parties, consumers and the cultural avant-garde to help create the new look of a nation reborn. Like *Goed Wonen*, IIV had a clear, educational agenda.

With ever increasing frequency and urgency the IIV began to insist on the industry's environmental and social responsibilities, something that ultimately would accelerate its demise. But in the early years it emphasized the benefits of good industrial design for society as a whole.

– 4 – See, inter alia, Gert Staal and Hester Wolters, *Holland in Vorm. Vormgeving in Nederland 1945-1987* (Holland in Form. Design in the Netherlands 1945 – 1987), The Hague 1987, p. 140 et seq. and Mienke Simon Thomas, *Goed in Vorm. Honderd jaar ontwerpen in Nederland*, Rotterdam 2008, p. 117 et seq.

– 5 – J. Bommer, "Keurmerk-artikelen" (Articles with labels), *Goed Wonen*, June 1951, p. 83.

True beauty

In 1952 the UMS produced a small brochure for the Belgian market: "Nieuwe Tijden... Nieuwe Lijnen..." (New Times... New Lines...). The typography resembled that of a poem, with short indented lines and broad white margins. The text read like a strange type of commercial poetry: "We bring you some ideas / for your future home / The home you have probably dreamt of... / decorated with ideal furniture / What are the requirements for an ideal piece of furniture? / Undoubtedly that it is / elegant / and austere / strong / and efficient / tasteful / and rational. Your furniture is ready for you... Your wish will soon be fulfilled." In a rather messianic tone, the brochure concludes with the words: "A new style is born, / adapted to the requirements of our modern lives / Simplicity is the symbol of true beauty."

No matter how lofty this text may sound to us now, it suited the times. It is interesting to note what the designer W.H. Gispen, the founder of the eponymous furniture factory had to say about the annual trade fair in Utrecht in 1952. His article, with its splendid title "Ugly furniture is a lie,"⁻⁶⁻ was published in *Elseviers Weekblad* (Elsevier's Weekly Magazine). At the annual trade fair Gispen discovered "sideboards like steam carousels, tea tables like crusty puddings (...) and other pathetic articles." He railed against manufacturers who were exhibiting "harmful kitsch with the deliberate aim of misleading buyers." Getting to the heart of his argument: "An ugly piece of furniture is a symptom of something sick in the soul."

His conclusion undoubtedly met with agreement in the circles of *Goed Wonen*. After all, the opposite was also thought true; a beautiful piece of furniture is an expression of – and possibly even a condition of – a healthy mind. Every opportunity was taken to emphasize the link between what was true, beautiful, simple and healthy. This worldview was beautifully expressed at an event in 1957. On completing its ten thousandth so-called "B.G. House" the Bouwfonds Nederlandse Gemeenten (Building Foundation for

Dutch Municipalities) organised an exhibition on modern housing entitled "The bride's house." For ten days that summer, model houses were furnished in 39 towns, from Alblasterdam to Zwolle.⁻⁷⁻ Interior architect S. Aardewerk designed the floor plans.

A brochure accompanied the exhibition with an introduction by architect J. J. Vriend. In his attempt to link the modern style of housing with a contemporary lifestyle he listed virtually all the arguments of *Goed Wonen* and the enlightened industry.⁻⁸⁻ The author accepted that modern interiors sometimes leave a rather bewildering impression. He stated that modern people were going through a transitional period, breaking away from centuries of tradition. Meanwhile the housing culture was being propelled forward by a "turbulent industrial world of mass production." Vriend reassured the doubting Thomases that they would be persuaded to let go of the old when they saw "the new things." The urge to live a more healthy, comfortable and easy life contrasted sharply with the horrors of the filthy and constricted urban districts of the nineteenth century. Following Le Corbusier, he described the contemporary home as a "useful living machine."

Beauty was an essential aspect. According to Vriend, experts were agreed that beauty had a purpose and was essential to our lives. Furthermore, experience had shown that opinions about beauty could change "as our insights become more profound and as we therefore know more about things." In other words, professionals are better judges than the average consumer. This also answered the question whether the new was necessarily costly. Yes, a modern interior could be expensive when people tried to imitate a film décor "equipped with doors and drawers that open up in every direction." The model houses however showed it was possible to furnish a contemporary home with modest means. "The furnishers of the model home merely wanted to say: 'Look, this is how you do it at a reasonable price, and in accordance with the taste of designers whose judgment you can trust.'"

— 6 — W.H. Gispen, "Lelijk meubel is een leugen" (Ugly furniture is a lie), *Elseviers Weekblad*, 20 September 1952.

— 7 — The architect H.A. Maaskant designed almost half of these homes. The term "bride" proved to be elastic: the house was designed for a family with three children.

— 8 — J.J. Vriend, "Levensstijl en woonstijl" (Lifestyle and Living style), *Het huis van de bruid* (The bride's house) Bouwfonds Nederlandse Gemeenten (Building Foundation for Dutch Municipalities) 1957, pp. 3–9.

An offensive on civilisation

By the summer of 1968, as worker and student revolts tore through Europe's city centres, this kind of rhetoric had become inconceivable. Not because the population was now fully educated on what was good and what was beautiful. The class of 1968 simply did not tolerate the paternalistic tone. Not when it concerned authority or a political ideology, and certainly not when it concerned their lifestyle choice. In this respect the architect Vriend had been right. "The bride's house" certainly did mark a period of transition.

But it would be going too far to characterize the event as an aftershock of post-war reconstruction. It symbolized a time-lagged response of the middle-class to ideas about a collective future. In 1968 a lifestyle was a choice. Ten years earlier it had been imposed almost by decree. What was good, was good for everyone and what was ugly, had to be ugly for everyone.

Obviously the message only reached part of the population, and even in the late 1950s there were many signs of growing individualism and radical opposition. However, these counter movements lacked sufficient substance to be a match for the moralistic modernism of post-war Netherlands. It is not surprising that initiatives such as Goed Wonen and companies like UMS Pastoe diligently continued to seek out support for their offensive on civilisation. UMS Pastoe found it for instance in Dr. Mary Zeldenrust-Noordanus' doctoral thesis on the psychological aspects of how houses were furnished.

The newspaper *de Volkskrant* reviewed her thesis in 1956 and asked the UMS director Frits Ullmann to add a few words. In her research Zeldenrust found that the buyers of UMS's furniture tended to be intellectuals, technically educated people and young graduates fresh out of vocational school. On the other hand, labourers for example, appeared barely susceptible to the rational arguments with which modern furniture was advertised. She attributed this to the fact that this population group had a "low level of experience of housing" and was therefore inclined to opt for imitations of ostentatious furniture styles. The article paraphrased her vision as follows: "Modern furniture will only be found in their houses when their mental horizons are extended first." Ullmann confirmed this analysis: "When purchasing furniture, emotional considerations play a more important role than the utilitarian element. That is why those who are inclined to buy modern furniture are primarily those who have had a certain education in artistic or technical fields."⁹

New consumer groups were needed to encourage growth. The company decided to take on the education of the public itself. Special furniture suites were displayed in shops and department stores such as the Bijenkorf.¹⁰ Advertisements were placed in daily newspapers and magazines in order to tempt a larger public. Gradually the presence of UMS Pastoe became more significant in the printed media of the 1950s and 1960s, including advertisements in Belgian, French, German, Spanish and American papers and magazines to promote exports. The company recognized the need and practical use of marketing. Ullmann and his people did not subscribe to the idea that good furniture sold itself. With the support of the Vorstelman advertising agency in Amsterdam, the brand was forcefully presented.

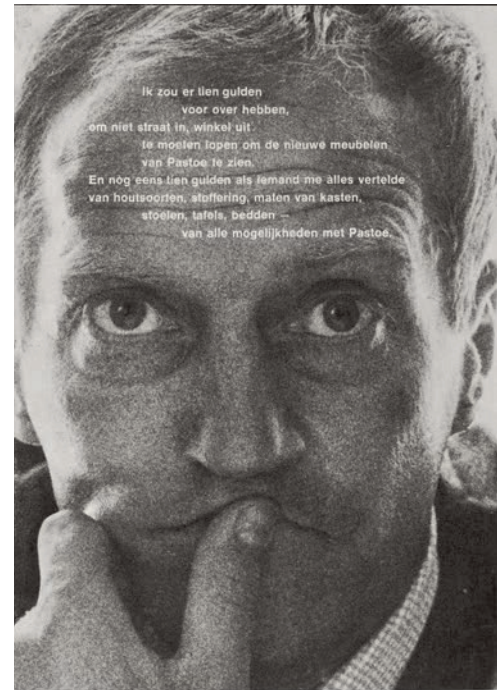
The slogan "Good modern is also a classic," (1957) is nothing less than an appeal to the conservative consumer to review his prejudices about the fashionable contemporary style. That year anyone wanting a larger home could read in a campaign that, "Space that is divided cleverly is double space!" In this way the copywriters tackled a theme topical also in the company's more recent history. The idea that a house furnished with Pastoe

A Advertisement “Space is scarce right now, give yourself space”, design Gerard Wernars, 1954

B Advertisement “Every possibility with Pastoe”, 1964



A



B

furniture looks larger than the same house with different furniture seemed to catch on. Magazine articles from the 1950s discussed this effect and letters from consumers seemed to confirm it. Pastoe also used the argument to convince sceptics. During his final years as director, Harm Scheltens liked to relate an anecdote he had been told by a resident in a flat for the elderly. Her fellow residents were convinced that the woman who had furnished her flat with Pastoe furniture had one more room at her disposal than they did.

– 9 – “Het interieur toont de revolutie van de vorm (The interior reveals the revolution in form), *de Volkskrant*, 26 September 1956.

– 10 – Exhibitions such as “Ons Huis – Ons Thuis” (Our House – Our Home), organized in the early 1950s by Martin Visser and Benno Premela. See Mienke Simon Thomas, *Goed in Vorm. Honderd jaar ontwerpen in Nederland*, Rotterdam 2008, p. 130. During the 1950s and 1960s the Bijenkorf and Pastoe often worked together on the presentation of new products.

Obstinate perseverance

Pastoe's commercial strategy also attracted the attention of the Dutch advertising periodical *Ariadne*, which described itself as, “a guideline for the world of advertising, sales development, sales technique and organization.” The November issue in 1957 stated that Pastoe had developed a unique brand of advertising. Everyone in the business could learn from its tenacity. “Pas-Toe sells an idea. It doesn't want to sell furniture that more or less appeals to people's taste. It has achieved a situation whereby people buy Pas-Toe furniture as a mark of good taste.” That tenacity set an example for other

advertisers. The article concluded that, "...obstinate perseverance should be 'applied' more often."

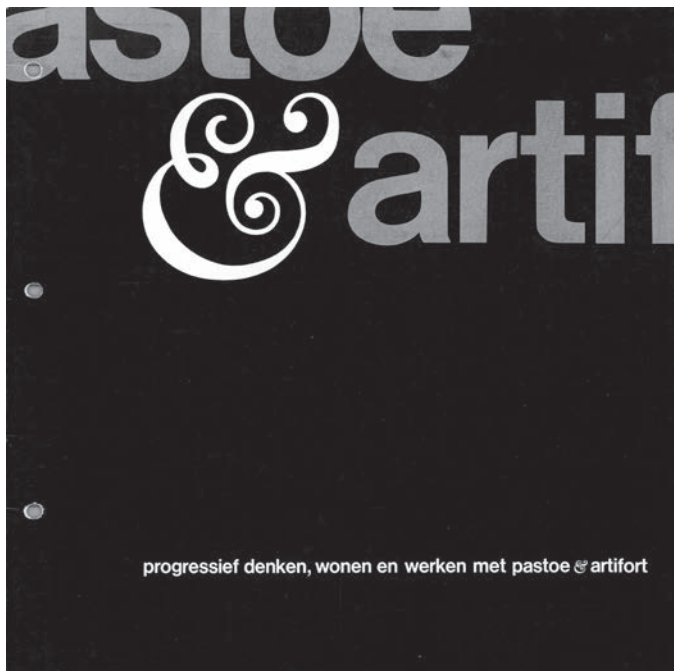
The company showed its perseverance in many ways. It kept its conviction, irrespective of market developments. In the 1960s it continued to present consumers with the notion that life was better with Pastoe furniture in it. However, there was a slight change of perspective. Whereas the company's 1950s advertising mainly referred to its own qualities ("Pastoe furniture will be placed here!" 1957), the 1960s heralded the consumer's perspective ("Pastoe understands me", 1965).

A series of striking advertisements in periodicals and national newspapers was used to sell Pastoe's 1965 catalogue. The campaign consisted of black and white portrait photos. Each forehead had a different question printed across it. In one advertisement a middle aged man wanted to know if it was possible to buy a catalogue for ten guilders so that he wouldn't need to leave his home to see the new Pastoe collection (and if another ten guilders would perhaps buy him expert advice). Another ad showed a young woman saying she knows where she is going to live, but not yet how? A young man wondered if he really needs an architect for a modular system. In all cases the answer was clear as a bell: order your new Pastoe catalogue from the manufacturer at only 4 guilders.

The catalogue, with its striking photographic direction by Benno Premsele, also found its way to the critic K.-N. Elno, for whom the social significance of art and design was an important subject.⁻¹¹⁻ Elno acknowledged that going

A Brochure "pastoe & artifort", 1964

B Catalogue "Pastoe '65", design Harry Sierman, 1965



A



B

through the publication gave him great aesthetic delight but also some moral irritation, “because it evokes a dream world which tempts us to forget that there is another world: a world of the struggle for survival... and everything becomes twice as difficult when you consider that the people who are behind the book probably have a greater social conscience than the smooth boys who advertise their ‘social furniture’ day-in, day-out.”^{–12–}

Elno hit a nerve. It wasn’t so much the contrast between beautiful furniture and the less than perfect outside world that mattered – few designers, let alone furniture companies, have ever managed to close this gap in any way, whatever their high-flying ideals. The nub of the matter is those “smooth-talking boys.” The apparently unbridled growth of the furniture market, which continued well into the early 1960s, attracted countless fortune hunters. The sector was beset with cowboys, both in production and in retail. For companies like Pastoe it gradually became more difficult to set itself apart from a huge range of mediocre companies. More than ever, allies were needed to become sufficiently distinctive for potential buyers.

– 11 – K.-N. Elno was a pseudonym of Karel Horemans, who was also a lecturer at the Academy for Industrial Design in Eindhoven. See: F. Huygen, *Visies op vormgeving. Het Nederlandse ontwerpen in teksten* (Visions of design. Dutch design in texts), part 2: 1944–2000, Amsterdam 2008, pp. 110–11.

– 12 – K.-N. Elno, “Meesterlijk maar niet voor de massa” (Masterful but not for the masses) *Het Parool*, 23 January 1965.

Shopping as entertainment

Pastoe found a strong ally in the Artifort brand that was managed by the Wagemans family and consulted on aesthetics by the interior designer and architect Kho Liang Ie. Artifort, based in Maastricht, produced some striking chairs by French designer Pierre Paulin and had gained quite a reputation. In about 1963, Pastoe & Artifort combined forces in joint campaigns and presentations, as for example at the Cologne Furniture Fair. A brochure dating from 1964 shows combinations of seats from Maastricht and storage units from Utrecht. To mark their relationship the two companies described each other in a brief text. The consumer could read that its partner saw Pastoe as “the greatest revolutionary in interior design” in post-war Netherlands and as “an intelligent searcher for industrial solutions based on an honest feeling for quality.”^{–13–}

The collaboration developed on the basis of a shared conviction that the two manufacturers did not simply sell furniture. They sold the progressive consumer a concept, as is evidenced by an advertisement in which the customer claimed: “There are so many furniture manufacturers who want to sell me a modular system! I don’t want that – I want an idea, a philosophy of furniture design.”^{–14–} Both companies expressly worked with shapes, materials and constructions that could stand the test of time and supported both a formal and informal lifestyle. According to Pastoe, its “deceptively simple” tables were suitable for both rustic earthenware *and* Sèvres porcelain.

Advertisement pastoe & artifort, "Two designers had a thought",
Joop Smit / Advertising agency Prad, 1963

Twee ontwerpers dachten na



Wat hier achter Pierre Paulin en C. Braakman staat zijn „gedachten". Want wat zijn een Artifort zitmeubel en een Pastoe bergmeubel anders? Ze bestaan uit materialen, vakmanschap, maar vooral uit ideeën.

Het Artifort zitmeubel is een „dubbel-fenomeen: tegelijk een grafische ordening van vlakken die het oog rust geven en een samenstel van steunen die het lichaam ontspannen." Het Pastoe bergmeubel is een „soort relativiteits-theorie in de praktijk: achter de deuren dijt de ruimte uit maar het oog neemt het meubel waar als een slanke, elegante vorm."

Voor de ontwerpers zijn meubelen adembenemende oplossingen van uiterst moeilijke problemen. „Een fauteuil maken vraagt stoutmoedigheid," zegt Pierre Paulin. „Een centimeter te veel kan een meubel ruïneren," vindt Braakman. Alleen het samenspel van strenge creativiteit, materiaalkeuze en vakmanschap kan de gedachte van het hedendaagse meubel werkelijk realiseren.

pastoe & artifort

Het bergmeubel

Het zitmeubel

Een juiste combinatie van stijl, denkwerk en vakwerk.

The increasing diversity of lifestyles characteristic of the 1960s was used more forcibly as an argument in favour of the timelessness of its designs. The message was: "our furniture will accommodate your changing tastes and social position because of its universal qualities." Artifort and Pastoe also consulted Martin Lederman, an American retail expert also employed by De Bijenkorf department stores. He focused on trends and discussed new sales methods for the two companies.

By the mid-1960s traditional furniture stores no longer seemed to be the right outlets. Frits Ullmann noticed that the brands and products of the two companies "were wasted on retail outlets and interior design shops which only wanted to sell the most profitable products."¹⁵ Lederman's consultancy resulted in the idea of developing a joint "shop inside a shop." He was familiar with the American model but it was a new concept in the Netherlands. Pastoe and Artifort were to start displaying their wares in pavilions in selected stores. When Lederman arrived for a meeting on 2 July 1968, the experiment had already been put in place in two shops. It had not yet resulted in a resounding success, partly because it proved difficult to find suitable locations. Some headway had been made, Mr. Wagemans explained, "in the shop of a young man short on cash for his refurbishments," He had allowed them to use half of his shop floor. This young man was Jan des Bouvrie, who would one day become a household name in Dutch interior design. Wagemans argued that so far the joint shop only presented the best furniture from the two collections. What was lacking was a clear, distinctive identity. Martin Lederman tried to make his clients appreciate that major changes were afoot. He discerned a dwindling trend among important retailers in large global cities. Many of these retailers no longer made their own choices on what to buy from their preferred suppliers. They increasingly left the selection of their stock to the manufacturers who understood their products best and knew exactly when to introduce innovations. Pastoe and Artifort would be able to anticipate this development in their "shop inside a shop." Furthermore, it would allow them to observe their customers, an additional advantage.

Lederman also identified another trend, which he called "one of the greatest needs of our time," the need for entertainment. A growing section of the population considered shopping "one of the greatest pleasures people can have." Furniture on its own would not provide a dynamic enough experience to fulfil this demand, so hence furniture shops would also need to offer a rapidly changing array of products. By way of example he referred to the "multiples" by pop artists from New York. Lederman was thinking of artists such as Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg and Roy Lichtenstein, who, as he commented, created, "an enormous numbers of things."

— 13 — Brochure "pastoe & artifort. progressief denken, wonen en werken met pastoe & artifort" (pastoe & artifort, progressive ideas, living and working with pastoe & artifort), 1964.

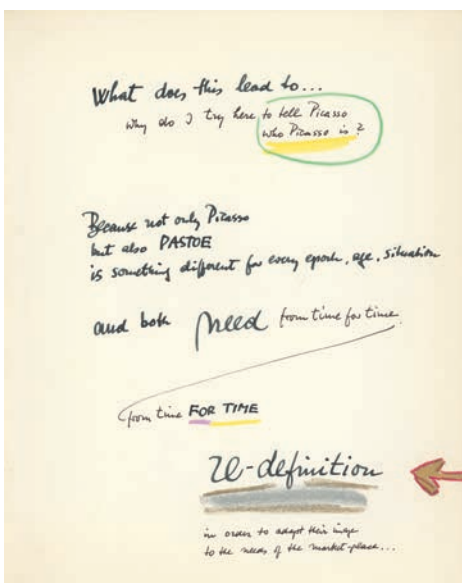
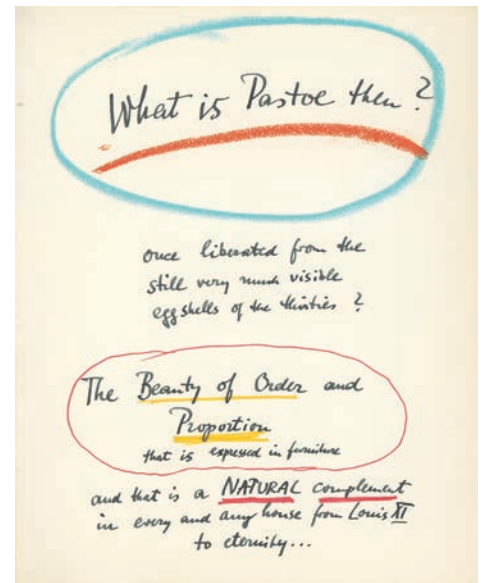
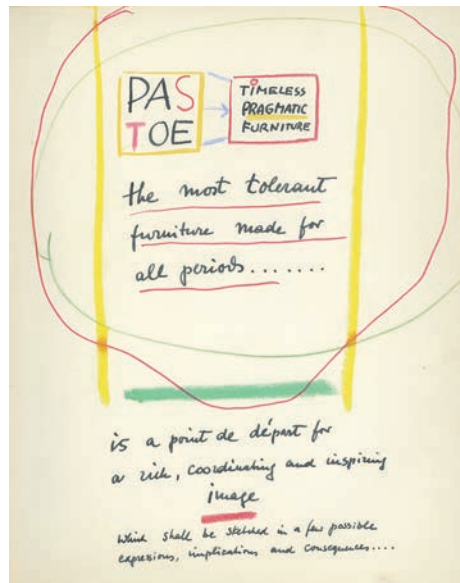
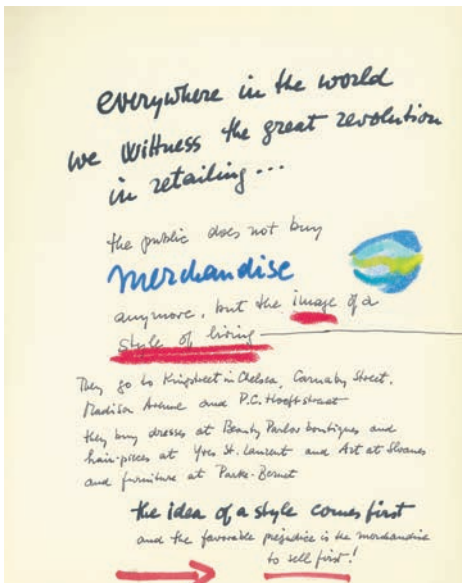
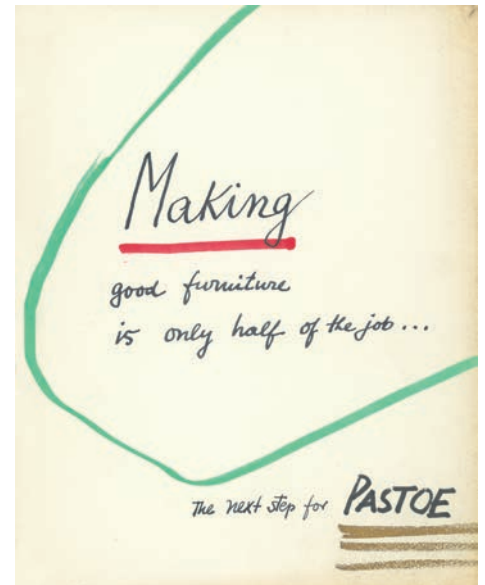
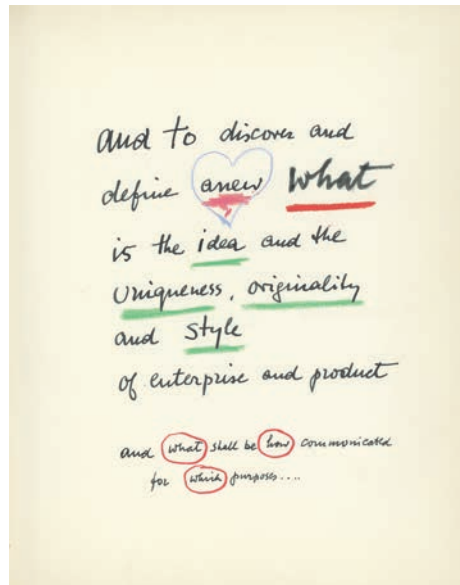
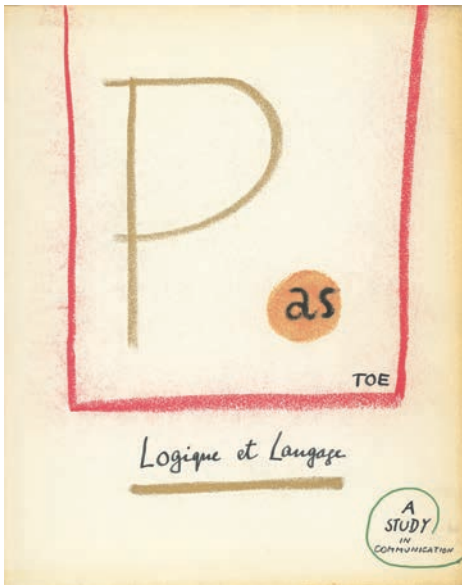
— 14 — Advertisement, "Pastoe maakt meubelen met mensenkennis" (Pastoe makes furniture which understands people), autumn 1965.

— 15 — The Lederman séance. Internal report of the conversation with Martin Lederman, 2 July 1968, p. 1. The directors H. Eiser and F. Ullmann represented Pastoe. H. and A. Wagemans and the designer/advisor Kho Liang Ie represented Artifort.

The consumer learns how to live

126

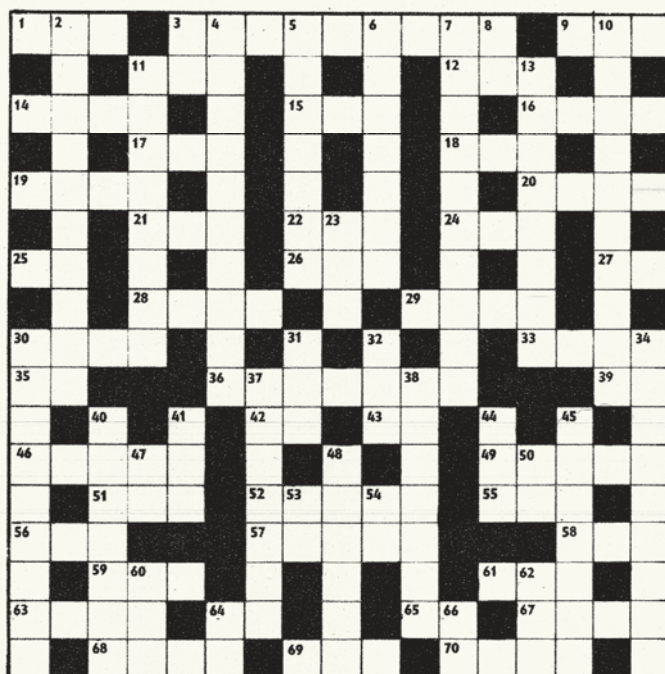
Pages from the marketing books "A study in communication" and "The next step for Pastoe",
Martin Lederman, 1965-66



PASTOEGRAM

HORizontaal. (1) U mag hem die niet afsnijden als hij zich goed over PASTOE wil oriënteren. (3) Opa viel van Europa en ging met de I-trein naar de toonzaal waar hij 'n hele mooie PASTOE-inrichting koos! (9) Hij wilde zonder de onbekende noten eten en deed daarom de deur dicht. (11) Het is in orde zei hij Amerikaans toen hij het prachtige hout van de PASTOE-meubelen zag. (12) 'Ik himnik' zei hij in het Zuid-Nederlands en hij haalde de thee niet. (14) Als u de prachtige PASTOE collectie ziet is het alsof Roma u omgekeerd 'n nieuwe liefde geeft. (15) Wat 'n dot, zei ze, toen ze dat fauteniltje zag, en per se niet het tegenovergestelde, want het was van PASTOE. (16) Van begin af aan was hij op de volksvergadering, maar hij had geen gin bij zich. (17) Een ontkenning. (18) Ook deze zeer belangrijke Engelsman kocht PASTOE-meubelen. (19) Hij bemoeide zich ambtshalve niet met PASTOE en kwam toen bij een zuilengang in Oud-Griekenland. (20) Van wie is dit gas een kind? (21) Die Zwitserse weide is gek. (22) Een plechtige verklaring in Gelderland. (24) Je ziet snel dat PASTOE tot een goed soort behoort. (25) Keer het om, dan zit er nikkel in. (26) Die Tartaarse vorst haalde een aal uit de waterweg. (27) Een Griekse letter die met wiskunde te maken heeft. (28) Om 12 uur was hij met de negende toon bezig. (29) Ik zou er 'n eed op kunnen doen dat deze PASTOE fautenil door een Europeaan is ontworpen. (30) Stele een bezoek aan de PASTOE toonzalen niet uit tot het laatste. (33) De man met de zware stem liet zijn ros buiten, toen hij het nomadische huis binnenging. (35) Ik vind het een plus, als ik niet geheel de nwe ben in horizontaal 33. (36) Die zanger in Tiel vindt de PASTOE-meubelen ook stevig. (39) Een dubbel water. (42) Als u op reis gaat naar Portugal, hebt u ze nodig, maar neem geen ei mee. (43) In het begin moet u 15 minuten op de maan zitten. (46) Als vader niet op PASTOE zit, hangt er 69 cm aan. (49) Als je me op dit ogenblik 100.000 gulden geeft, is het niet meer van nut. (51) Onder de schijn van het masker. (52) Als je A in de tram ziet, zeg hem dan dat hij deze maand nog de PASTOE-showrooms moet bezoeken. (55) Ik zou wel van het bordes willen verkondigen dat PASTOE zo prima is, maar ik mis een bazige vrouw. (56) Omgekeerd had de ijdelruit Engels plezier in haar PASTOE-meubelen. (57) Het is een latijnse gewoonte om er een knoeier van te maken. (58) Toen de handenwarmer ondersteboven viel, werd het bijzondere briket. (59) In Scandinavië betalen ze PASTOE-meubelen met een twiig. (61) U hebt toch meer dan alleen lager onderwijs? (63) Haal Koos van die vrucht af en stop de rest in een wachthuisje. (64) Er zit een slee in de mast. (65) De Middeleeuwen zijn mij hetzelfde. (67) Zonder vee moet je die overzetborden wel loven. (68) De romp van een berg. (69) Een keurige loot. (70) Dat geslacht komt voort uit een paal.

VERTICAAL. (2) In de PASTOE-catalogus staan ze met cijfers aangegeven. (3) Als ik de pee in heb, wordt ik 'n boen. (4) En, drs. Eland, zijn de PASTOE meubelen van buitenlands fabrikaat? (5) Een koe die thee drinkt in een van de PASTOE-toonkamers. (6) En 'n ledikant van PASTOE moet je zonder kant rangschikken. (7) Verse uilen? U bent in de war, dat zijn PASTOE meubelen. (8) Er is een noot. (10) Als u achter een Amerikaanse staat uw voet



Presentation of Pastoe furniture during the Salone del Mobile in via Cerva, Milan, 1992



Dutch Design Centre

Although both boards of directors were interested and the venture expanded in 1968 with De Ploeg, a manufacturer of interior textiles, a joint sales formula never really got off the ground.⁻¹⁶⁻ Anyone reading the internal reports of the “Lederman séance” will discover how different the views of the manufacturers actually were. The document reveals an even wider gap between the two Dutch companies and the thriving world represented by Lederman: the great department stores of London, Paris and New York. The Dutch furniture sector had started to decline. By 1966 Pastoe was forced to reduce the working hours of its 300 employees in order to cope with falling sales figures and growing competition from abroad. Nevertheless, there were aspects of the Lederman sessions which continued to influence the image Pastoe was trying to project. The *Living with Pastoe* campaign in 1969 was characteristic of this. The pay off read: “Pastoe is a mentality, a lifestyle, that's why it is so attractive.” Gone were the references to pragmatism or future necessities; the brand needed to be associated with pleasure.

During the economically difficult 1970s Lederman's advice to keep a careful eye on the customer first took the form of lengthy and rather fruitless market research. Under Harm Scheltens' management in the 1980s Pastoe returned to trade fair presentations as a means to understand its audience. Scheltens explained to his employees that the stands at trade fairs should not only be perfectly managed but also closely observed. “I always did, for hours on end. I'd take up position opposite the stand and watch. Where do people go first? What makes them stop, and what did they ignore? What do they find interesting about a piece of furniture? How do they respond to colours? What is talked about? You can learn an awful lot just from looking and listening”¹⁻¹⁷⁻

Scheltens saw a similar role for Pastoe's extensive factory complex, that was half empty since part of the actual manufacturing was outsourced in the early 1980s. He founded the Dutch Design Centre, a joint showroom for six like-minded Dutch furniture manufacturers, in August 1982.⁻¹⁸⁻ The joint presentation offered direct access to consumers and retailers, but even more importantly, something constructive was being done in a market under great pressure. In an interview Harm Scheltens explained: “We had to do something or go bust. (...) With the Dutch Design Centre we tried to show retailers and consumers, both in the Netherlands and abroad, the entirely new style and approach of Dutch interior design.”⁻¹⁹⁻

It was not only the customer that Pastoe had to educate, it was also time to train the retailer – the weak link Ullmann had identified years earlier. Pastoe organised so-called “key dealer days” in a different Dutch museum each year from 1984. The guests were treated to an extensive cultural program. In 1987 the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam hosted the key-dealer day. Its director Wim Crouwel lectured on the importance of design and the marked difference between design and styling. Exhibition tours were organized, thus providing the desired cultural background for the Pastoe collection. The initiative echoed the unbridled dedication that

has characterised Pastoe since 1983. The company had a story to tell and would not miss an opportunity to do so, even in difficult circumstances. Pastoe's 70th anniversary was celebrated under the black cloud of an economic depression but with a large retrospective exhibition in the Centraal Museum in Utrecht.⁻²⁰⁻ The 75th and 90th anniversaries again provided the alibi to organise exhibitions and seminars, in the Berlage Stock Exchange in Amsterdam and the Centraal Museum respectively.

To this day moralistic modernism is part of the genetic make-up of the company. Two posters hang side by side in the Pastoe offices which perfectly describe the ideal world of the company as follows: "Intelligent people buy Pastoe / they buy Pastoe from intelligent people / It's not a matter of snobbery / but a matter of insight / Pastoe makes intelligent furniture."⁻²¹⁻ In the words of Mary Zeldenrust: "This product is not for people with 'little experience of living.'"

– 16 – The collaboration between Pastoe, Artifort, and De Ploeg was abbreviated as PAP. They presented themselves to the public as "Drie van deze tijd" (Three for this age), a name also used in joint advertising. Through photography in particular, they expressed what had previously been communicated with model homes.

– 17 – Statement made to the author, 25 October 2012.

– 18 – The founding companies were Arco, Castelijl, Metaform, Montis, Pastoe and Rohé. The number of participants quickly grew. In 2008 the name was changed to Toonkamer (Showroom). At present the collections of over 20 companies are on permanent display.

– 19 – J. Koekebakker, "Meubelfabrikanten gaan malaise te lijf" (Furniture manufacturers fight economic depression), *FEM*, 3 November 1984, p. 87.

– 20 – *UMS Pastoe. A Dutch furniture factory 1913-1983*, exhibition in the Centraal Museum Utrecht, 22 October to 4 December 1983. Priority was given to the exhibition and publication over, for example, a staff party. The bank still had to give permission for the GLD 150,000 budget for the 1988 exhibition and publication.

– 21 – Published in 1963.

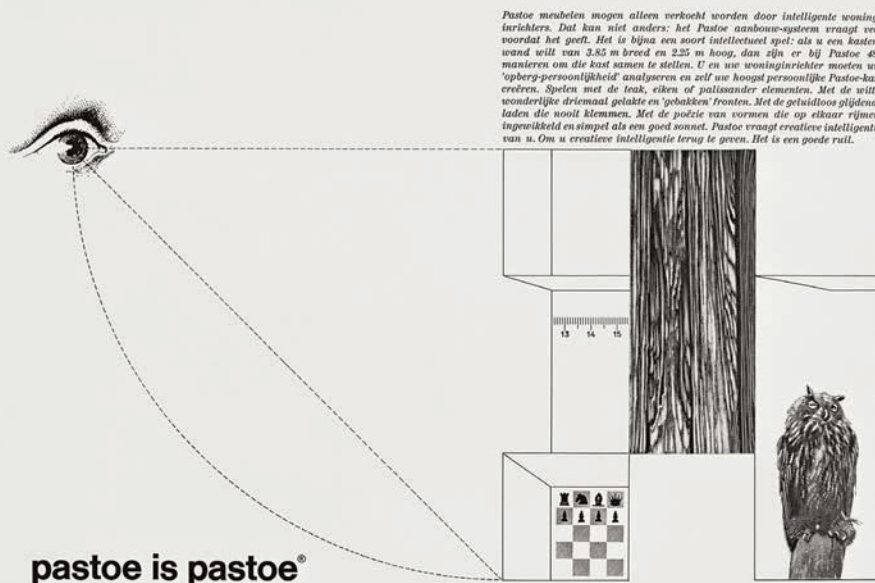
- A Text "artifort sees pastoe", published in brochure "pastoe & artifort", 1964
 B Advertisement "pastoe is pastoe", 1963

artifort ziet pastoe

als de grootste woonstijl-revolutionair van de Nederlandse naoorlogse jaren, als een hout-en-metaal-geworden begrip voor hedendaags wonen. Artifort ziet Pastoe als een intelligent zoeker naar industriële oplossingen, die stoelen op een eerlijk gevoel voor kwaliteit. Artifort ziet Pastoe als meubelen van vandaag, gemaakt voor verre jaren. En daarom voelt Artifort zich aan Pastoe verwant.

A

**intelligente mensen kopen pastoe
 ze kopen pastoe bij intelligente mensen
 het is geen kwestie van snobisme
 maar van inzicht:
 pastoe maakt intelligente meubelen**



Pastoe toonzalen in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag en Utrecht. Documentatie op aanvraag UMS-Pastoe, postbus 2132, Utrecht.

B

– A design icon in the making – 132

The A'dammer: a story of success and trouble

A'dammer cabinets, design Aldo van den Nieuwelaar, 1978



Who can say if Pastoe would have weathered the economic storms of the 1980s without the “A'dammer” range by Aldo van den Nieuwelaar's? Mind you, even a magician would have had his hands full bringing about that kind of a miracle. Pastoe's history with the “A'dammer” (short for Amsterdammer, the name given to the capital city's traffic bollards) began in 1977, after Pastoe's sales manager Hennie de Jong first saw an actual model of this roll-top cupboard. It was to be the start of a long and turbulent relationship between the designer and the manufacturer. Its appearance remains unaltered to this day and has become iconic because of the characteristic sliding top with horizontal ribs running the entire length of the unit. The design has been a part of the Pastoe catalogue for 35 successive years and is still included in the 2012 catalogue. This seems logical for a product that has enjoyed huge success both in the Netherlands and abroad. However, on closer inspection things were not as straightforward as they seem.

Aldo van den Nieuwelaar (1944 – 2010) was by no means an established designer when he presented his latest project to Pastoe. He had acquired a modest reputation in specialised circles, as a designer of idiosyncratic light fittings, and it was above all his preference for neon tubes that distinguished him from his contemporaries. In an age of nostalgic lampshades and quasi-Tiffany hanging lights, Van den Nieuwelaar opted for the coldest possible light and the most austere possible expression. He was a modernist purist.

In the late 1980s a journalist from the weekly periodical *De Tijd* visited the designer. The annually increasing royalties of the “A'dammer” had already made him a wealthy man. The reporter asked him what he would do if he were asked to be the Minister of Culture. Van den Nieuwelaar admitted this

Lamp TC 6, design Aldo van den Nieuwelaar, 1969



was an attractive option. “I’d be tempted to say yes... I would constitutionally prohibit anyone from being bothered by cosy lighting fixtures forthwith.”⁻¹⁻ His “TC 6” lamp dating from 1969, which became famous, is in every respect the polar opposite of the much-maligned standard lamp.

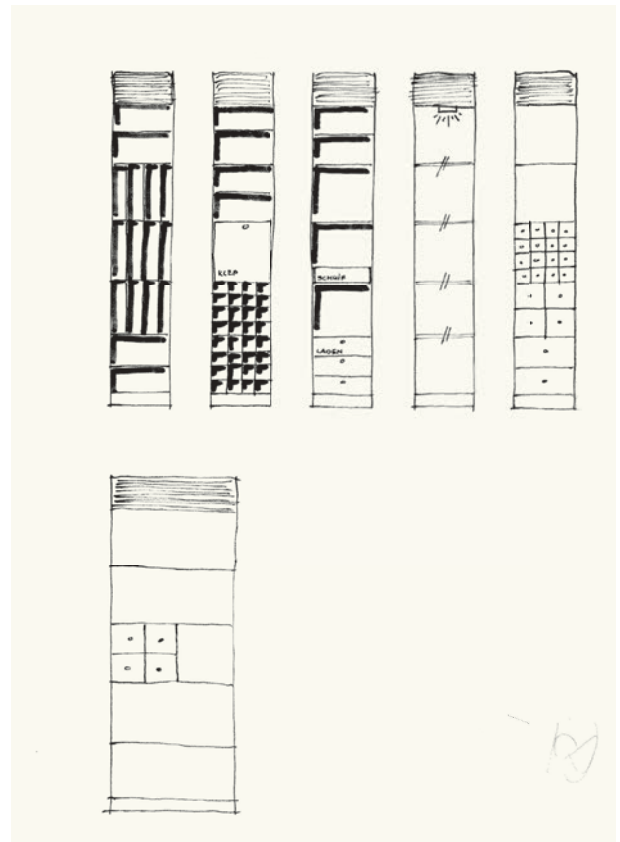
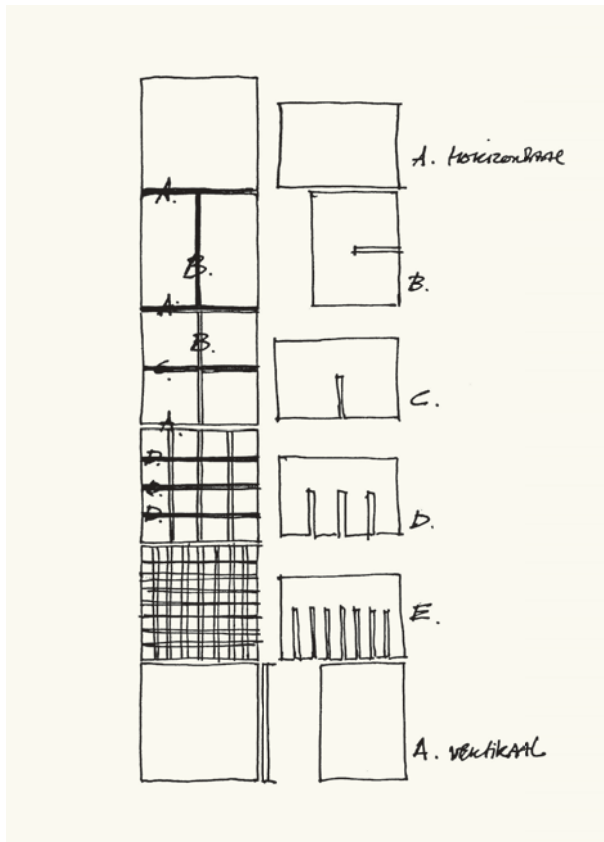
This radical choice for visual understatement linked the design to the austere iconography Pastoe had cultivated for decades. Furthermore, before he established himself as an independent designer in 1969, Van den Nieuwelaar had spent a couple of years working for Premsele Vonk’s architectural office, which had designed several of Pastoe’s presentations at trade fairs.

He started work on the “A’dammer” in 1973, describing the first stage of the design process as follows in 1985: “The design started out as a storage unit for gramophone records. I was thinking of something tall and narrow, a cupboard you could close, but without doors. I then started studying materials, synthetic, metals.” Metal required too much processing. “So I thought: ‘Let’s try it with wood,’ and damn it, that was it. When you heat up a varnished sheet you can mould its shape in a vacuum. The result is a ribbed roll-top. It looks like plastic but it’s made of wood. Where I got the idea? Perhaps from my grandfather’s pita pater desk... Once I had the material down, the design soon took shape. I started applying the process to other pieces of furniture. To bookcases and sideboards, to everything with sliding doors. Wim Crouwel called it: ‘An absolutely excellent idea.’”⁻²⁻ The narrow, tall storage unit with the rounded top seemed particularly suitable for stylish offices.

– 1 – Matt Dings, “Aldo van den Nieuwelaar”, in: *De ontwerpers* (The designers) (special edition of *De Tijd*), 1987, p. 4.

– 2 – Jan Brokken, “Bezigheden” (Activities), *Haagse Post*, 26 October 1985, p. 20.
Two years earlier, in 1983, the catalogue of the Centraal Museum in Utrecht on Pastoe had already published a photograph of a Swiss design dating from 1969 that was very similar to the “A’dammer.”

Sketches of the A'dammer, Aldo van den Nieuwelaar, 1970's



Zeitgeist

The model that Hennie de Jong saw at Van den Nieuwelaar's workshop had a hard, flat sheet of Formica that slid shut. It was not very easy to move, although the idea of having a perfect sliding mechanism was clear enough. De Jong decided to send the designer Pierre Mazairac to Amsterdam for a second opinion. There were doubts in the company. "Is this really a piece of furniture?"⁻³⁻ Mazairac's enthusiasm has probably been the deciding factor for Pastoe's Product Development department to start collaborating with Van den Nieuwelaar.

In retrospect this seems an almost incomprehensible step. Why, when Pastoe was clearly going through a phase of indulging market tastes in all sorts of ways, did it take the plunge with a designer who couldn't care less about the Zeitgeist, deplored the short-sightedness of the middle classes and had very little time for what he called Dutch "interioritis." Van den Nieuwelaar wanted to be ahead of his time, he said, and good design needs to mature slowly if it isn't to be overtaken by fashion whims. He expected the manufacturer to share his vision. Yet several producers had already shown him and his storage unit the door before Pastoe came along.

The Pastoe Product Development department started work on the design in mid-1977. It soon transpired that in addition to the narrow model with a base of 37 x 37 cm, a broader version was also desirable. However, the slide proved to be almost unworkable at a double width: the thin synthetic sheet simply buckled. According to product developer Stef Kerkhof, this led

to the idea of making the slide ribbed and therefore sturdier.⁻⁴⁻

In a farewell document, compiled when Kerkhof left Pastoe in 1991, he mentioned that vacuum forming the slide first created the ribbed effect. This made the cabinet look more like an old-fashioned roll-top desk, while simultaneously characterizing its most functional quality. The horizontal ribs were placed at intervals the thickness of a finger, giving the user an easy handle at every required height. Of course, the horizontal lines also added an interesting optical effect. Appearance and function interacted beautifully, undoubtedly to the satisfaction of the purists at Pastoe.

– 3 – Stef Kerkhof, *UMS Pastoe*, 1991; a retrospective of the history of Pastoe with a small print run, published when Kerkhof retired from the company after 35 years. Pastoe Archive.

– 4 – Karel Boonzaaijer, who was closely involved in the technical development of the model, also states that Pastoe introduced the ribbing. Conversely, his colleague Pierre Mazairac wrote on 23 March 1998 that the ribbed sliding top was already an option when Van den Nieuwelaar showed him the poorly functioning prototype with a flat sheet of Formica in 1977. Mazairac remembered that he had already seen detailed sketches of the ribbed sliding top during that visit.

Disappointing figures, words of praise

After several tests it was decided to produce the slide in ABS, a synthetic material sufficiently flexible to roll over the top of the cupboard without causing friction, and which also proved easy to colour. The production facility was a firm specialised in pressing the chassis for camper vans.

The product was still nameless and described as an “element with slide.” Opinions were divided from the start. By the time the first results were shown to a select group of shopkeepers in 1978 the design department was convinced; the more sceptical production staff not so. Retailers, predominantly those who had connections to the former Goed Wonen, placed their orders immediately. The designer Karel Boonzaaijer understood why the model was appreciated: “The design perfectly complemented the evolution of the company. Our furniture always gave the customer room to play with. So did the ‘A’dammer.’ It could fit in anywhere and aficionados recognized that quality straightaway.”⁻⁵⁻

The first public presentation took place at the 1978 annual trade fair in Utrecht. It hardly set the tills on fire, but was favourable reviewed in the trade press. The trade journal *Meubel* (Furniture) had its reservations though. Its editor, interior designer Ep Simons questioned the sliding roll-top. “Strictly speaking, this sort of slide is not very useful, because if you want something from the top shelf you inevitably have to slide the whole thing up and then of course back down again. The most important requirement is that it can slide easily, for at least 100,000 times. If synthetic material loses some of its softening agent, wouldn’t this lead to greater rigidity?”⁻⁶⁻ Before such consequences could become known the product first had to find its way into living rooms and boardrooms. This was not yet happening after the initial presentation. For the time being, both parties at Pastoe were right: the production team pointed at disappointing sales figures, the design team to high praise.

Eventually, the “A’dammer” became a hit.⁻⁷⁻ At the International Furniture Fair in Cologne (1979) public queued up to catch a glimpse. Two years later, in June 1981, an editor of *de Woonbode* went to Pastoe’s showroom and commented on the unexpected success of the product. Had any market research been done, he wrote, then the “A’dammer” would surely not have seen the light of day. Behind the scenes, things were less rosy. The traditional end of year letter to the staff did not bring good tidings. “The rapidly deteriorating economic situation has affected us very badly and we have only narrowly avoided having to close down permanently.”⁻⁸⁻ But as soon as the crisis started to wane and the market got used to the look of the Van den Nieuwelaar’s design, sales took off and continued to grow steadily over the following years. In 1983, the “A’dammer” brought in a total of 5.5 million guilders. A year later, that figure grew to 6.2 million and the prognosis for 1985 amounted to more than 7 million guilders. What had been a lifebuoy for the company turned into an unparalleled financial success.

Perhaps it had been a stroke of luck, perhaps it was proof that the eccentric designer had been right, in any case the appreciation of design changed significantly in the early 1980s. The foam brown sofas were beyond repair, the geraniums had shrivelled up and the slim display cabinet of knickknacks had gathered so much dust that it had begun to resemble one of Zero-artist Jan Schoonhoven’s reliefs. In the early 1980s people were clearing out their interiors and interested in a more economical, purer sort of design. Aldo van Nieuwelaar’s “A’dammer” had hardly changed since 1973. In contrast, the context in which it emerged ten years later – in galleries, museums, the interior design world *and* the Dutch living room – had been transformed completely.

– 5 – Statement made to author, 19 October 2012.

– 6 – Ep Simons, “Pastoe met Scandinavische invloed” (Pastoe with a Scandinavian influence), undated photocopy from magazine *Meubel* (Furniture), p. 1268. Pastoe Archive.

– 7 – “Pastoe. Van stoelenfabrikant tot toonaangevend meubelindustrie” (Pastoe. From a manufacturer of chairs to a leading furniture industry), *de Woonbode*, 19 June 1981.

– 8 – Letter to the employees, December 1981. Private archive, Wim Verlinden.

Taking risks and keeping faith

In 1988, UMS Pastoe marked its 75th anniversary with an exhibition at the Berlage Stock Exchange in Amsterdam. The exhibition offered a brief overview of the company’s history but devoted the most space and attention to the current products on offer. Its latest collection was characterized by a diversity of shapes, materials and production methods. Managing director Harm Scheltens explained the design philosophy of his company in his opening speech: “Design means dealing with uncertainties, not in a calculating or servile way, but by taking risks and keeping faith. Design determines the continuity of the company and is therefore central to the Pastoe concept.”⁻⁹⁻ Furthermore, the company was targeting an exclusive and interna-

A Exhibition “Pastoe 75 years of design”, Amsterdam Stock Exchange, 1988

B Exhibition of Aldo van den Nieuwelaars work at ioN Foundation, Rotterdam, on the occasion of the Kho Liang Ie price, 1986



A



B

tional market, the “active living experience” market – jargon the management had borrowed from recent research published in the social sciences. It approached the market of the “active living experience” with a very diverse range of chairs, sofa’s, tables and cabinets.

The catalogue mentions in passing the great diversity and approach of the different Pastoe designers.⁻¹⁰⁻ For example, whereas Rob Eckhardt tried to incorporate as many aspects of the complexities of 1980s life in his furniture as possible, Aldo van den Nieuwelaar opted for a visual timelessness, one wherein the product was subordinate to the user.⁻¹¹⁻ Van den Nieuwelaar explained this choice as follows: “I expect my products to be abstract and neutral. They must fit every mood. When you come home from a funeral my lamp should not be smiling at you. And when you are drunk you should not trip over my cupboard doors.”⁻¹²⁻

Timeless expression became second nature to Pastoe products, but such a characteristic is insignificant when products have a limited functional life-span. This became a serious problem for the “A’dammer.” The initial doubts expressed in the trade journal *Meubel* proved to be well founded. In use the synthetic sliding panels actually lost flexibility and were prone to tear over time. In less than three years the slide-producer changed materials several times. Pastoe assessed the damages on 1 January 1988. In over a quarter of the “A’dammers” sold since 1981, the slide had been replaced or was expected to be replaced fairly soon. More than 800,000 guilders worth of repairs were at stake in the ensuing conflict with the slide-producer. Eventually a Belgian supplier took over the contract with significantly better results.

– 9 – Opening speech for the exhibition Pastoe. *75 Jaar vormgeving* (Pastoe. 75 years of design), Berlage Stock Exchange, Amsterdam, 15-27 November 1988.

– 10 – G. Vreeburg (ed.), *Pastoe. 75 Jaar vormgeving*, exhibition catalogue, Utrecht 1988, p. 17.

– 11 – This is what Van den Nieuwelaar was referring to when he said: “A chair must make less of a statement than the person who sits on it.” Gert Staal, “Aldo van den Nieuwelaar, gentleman-designer”, *Dutch Art + Architecture Today* 23, June 1988, p. 29.

– 12 – Brokken “Bezigheden” (see note 2), p. 21.

Postcard "original | infringement", describing the "unique" outcome of the legal proceedings concerning the A'dammer, 1984



UNIEK VONNIS VOOR PASTOE

De president van de Haarlemse rechtbank heeft op 10 december 1984 vonnis gewezen in een door Aldo van den Nieuwelaar en de firma Ums Pastoe aangespannen rechtszaak tegen de Duitse fabrikant Welle en de Nederlandse firma's Mijnders en Mobell.

Kern van de zaak is dat het de gedaagden niet langer is toegestaan om een secretaire, hoge roldeurkast c.q. wandmeubel, voorzien van een schuifplaat van kunststof met een specifieke profilering als van de door Pastoe uitgebrachte zogenaamde A'dammer kastelementen te fabriceren, in voorraad te hebben, aan te bieden, te verkopen of te leveren.

De president heeft gekonstateerd dat in zijn totaliteit bezien de bedoelde kastelementen in overheersende mate aan elkaar doen denken.

Ik meen er goed aan te doen om u als Pastoe-dealer over dit goede nieuws te informeren.

Harm Scheltens/Pastoe.

Pastoe, Rotsoord 3, Postbus 2152, 3500 GD Utrecht.
Tel. (030) 512141. Telex 47564.



Plagiarism

There were even more pressing problems to be dealt with. The success of the “A’dammer” didn’t go unnoticed. Van den Nieuwelaar received two prizes in the United States, and in 1986 the city of Amsterdam awarded him the Kho Liang Ie prize for industrial design.⁻¹³⁻ The ever-increasing turnover figures also attracted attention. The first recorded replica was presented at the 1984 Cologne furniture trade fair. The German manufacturer in question was ordered in summary proceedings to remove the product from the trade fair, but in vain. When a second German manufacturer appeared on the market in the Netherlands with a very similar model, Pastoe did win the case. The successful legal proceedings inspired Pastoe to print a triumphant postcard. This showed the Aldo van den Nieuwelaar models side by side with the German manufacture’s illegal copies: “original” next to “infringement.” The text on the address side clearly showed who the card was aimed at: retailers considering selling replicas.

Meanwhile the “A’dammer” range grew. In 1981 for example, a dressing table with a mirror, lights and a sliding shelf was introduced on the market, followed in 1982 by a low sideboard version. In 1983 a variation on the cupboard appeared as part of a range of writing desks, and a year later a tapered model followed this. There were versions with a rounded “belly” to accommodate a television and audio equipment and penguin-shaped models. In 1987 there were no fewer than 71 different models available and the range of colours was also gradually extended. The original cupboard could be ordered in white, black or grey; a few years on customers had a choice of fourteen different colours, metallic varnishes and speckled finishes.

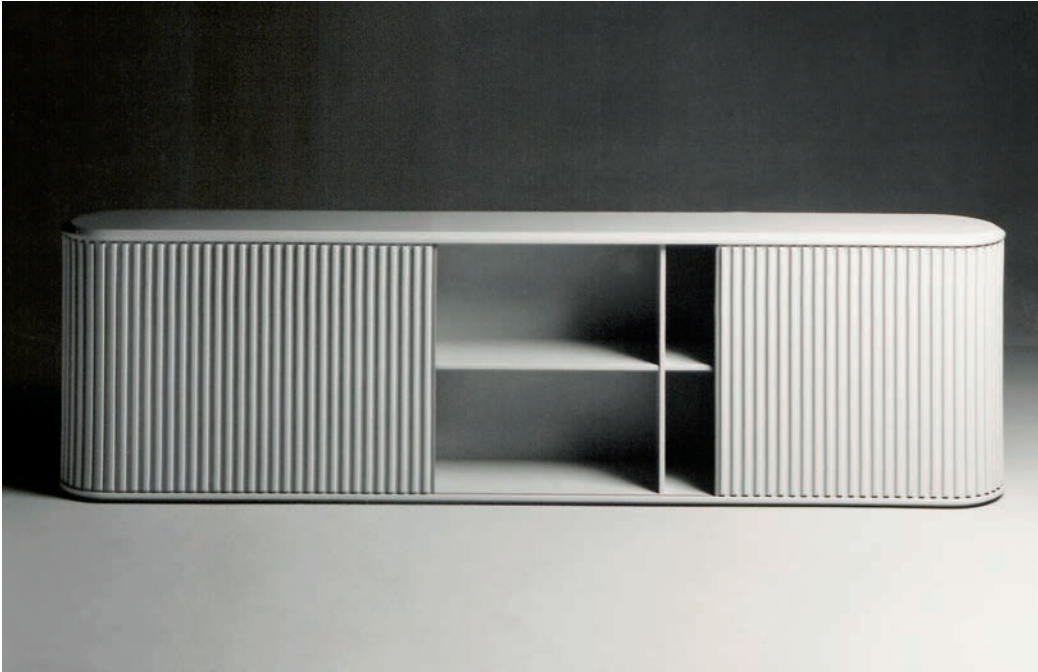
The legal case won by Pastoe did not deter other producers from further attempts at piracy. During the 1980s and 1990s Pastoe instigated dozens of legal proceedings against Danish, German and Italian infringements of copyright.

All of a sudden though, the legal conflicts took a completely opposite direction. Initially the model’s unique qualities had formed the persistent legal base in copyright cases. Mid-1990s the time had come to change the arguments completely. The company had been aware as early as 1983 that the Swiss designer Klaus Vogt had designed a roll-top cupboard that was very similar to the “A’dammer.”⁻¹⁴⁻ Vogts prototype had been presented in 1969 by the Swiss firm Thut. The roll-top of this model was constructed using traditional wooden slats. In 1972 an illustration of Vogt’s cupboard had appeared in the Italian design journal *Abitare*, with a roll-top made of synthetic material with fine ribs.

Pastoe did not draw any conclusions from this knowledge in 1983. Neither did the Swiss manufacturer nor its designer. In the late 1990s, Professor Jan Jacobs, who worked at the department of Industrial Design at the Delft University of Technology, compared the two models. The Pastoe archives contain a draft of Jacobs’ declaration of expertise in which he states that Klaus Vogt’s design had introduced a new archetype of the roll-top

A design icon in the making 140

- A A'dammer sideboard, design Aldo van den Nieuwelaar, 1982.
Photography Alphons Koppelman
- B A'dammer Penguin, design Aldo van den Nieuwelaar, 1990.
Photography Alphons Koppelman
- C Aks cabinets, design Aldo van den Nieuwelaar, 1994.
Photography Alphons Koppelman
- D Space cabinets for Hennie de Jong, design Aldo van den Nieuwelaar, 1984



A



B



C



D



cupboard. Jacobs ascertains that “it is striking that neither the designer, Klaus Vogt, nor the Thut company fought for exclusive rights to the roll-top storage cupboards with their rounded top. To all intent and purposes it seems that they accepted Van Nieuwelaar’s detailing of the slide on their archetype as a further development and not as an infringement on copyright.”⁻¹⁵⁻

Jacobs’ declaration was used in Pastoe’s legal conflict with Aldo van den Nieuwelaar, which ran for many years. The fight had started in the early eighties with minor irritations. Van den Nieuwelaar was not happy with the lack of feedback on the finalisation and marketing of his designs.⁻¹⁶⁻ The manufacturer in his turn believed he was acting in everyone’s best interests when he anticipated the demands of the market as quickly as possible – within the limited possibilities of a small company. It was impossible to consult a designer who had gone to live in New York at every stage of the development process.

Pastoe was outraged when the designer developed a small, block-shaped version of the “A’dammer” for the label of ex-employee Hennie de Jong in 1984. Strict agreements had to be made with regard to this range of furniture, known as “Space”, in order to avoid an escalation of the conflict. When this happened anyway, it was above all because of the financial relationship. The designer thought he deserved more royalties. The original contract had put this at three per cent. However, Van den Nieuwelaar considered that the success of his design justified a better distribution of the profits. After a great deal of controversy the percentage was increased in 1985.

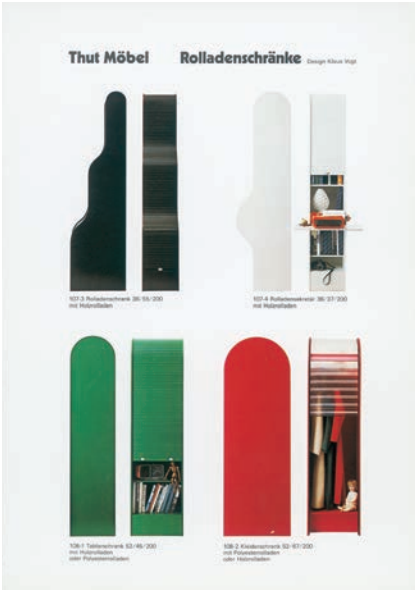
Despite their differences of opinion, the two parties continued to develop new products together. In 1986, Pastoe produced the prototype of the

- A** Sikkens programme of basic and highlight colours for the Pastoe collection, 1983/84
- B** Collection of roll top cabinets in the catalogue of Thut Möbel, design Klaus Vogt, mid 1970's
- C** Seating system Amstel, design Aldo van den Nieuwelaar, 1986

Aksentkleuren/Highlight colours/ Akzentfarben/Couleurs d'accent			LAKKLEUREN LACQUER COLOURS LACKFARBEN COULEURS DE LAQUE	
PASTELGRIS PASTEL GREY PASTELLGRAU GRIS PASTEL	71			
PASTELROSE PASTEL PINK PASTELL ROSA ROSE PASTEL	21			
PASTELBLAUW PASTEL BLUE PASTELLBLAU BLEU PASTEL	91			
PASTELGEEL PASTEL YELLOW PASTELLGELB JAUNE PASTEL	81			
PASTELGROEN PASTEL GREEN PASTELLGRÜN VERT PASTEL	61			
Geringe kleurafwijkingen voorbehouden. Slight differences in colour are possible. Geringe Farbunterschiede möglich. Minimes différences de couleur sont possibles.				
De kleuren corresponderen met die van de volgende Sikkens-nrs.: pastelgrijs nr. 054133, pastelrose nr. 063860, pastieblauw nr. 063862, pastielgeel nr. 063861, pastielgroen nr. 063863.				

Aksentkleuren/Highlight colours/ Akzentfarben/Couleurs d'accent			LAKKLEUREN LACQUER COLOURS LACKFARBEN COULEURS DE LAQUE	
DONKERGRIS DARK GREY DUNKELGRAU GRIS FONCÉ	0			
ROOD RED ROT ROUGE	2			
BLAUW BLUE BLAU BLEU	9			
GEEL YELLOW GELB JAUNE	8			
GROEN GREEN GRÜN VERT	6			
Geringe kleurafwijkingen voorbehouden. Slight differences in colour are possible. Geringe Farbunterschiede möglich. Minimes différences de couleur sont possibles.				
De kleuren corresponderen met die van de volgende Sikkens-nrs.: donkergrijs nr. 063746, rood nr. 063630, blauw nr. 063744, geel nr. 063745, groen nr. 063864.				

			LAKKLEUREN LACQUER COLOURS LACKFARBEN COULEURS DE LAQUE	
ZWART BLACK SCHWARZ NOIR	1	Basiskleur / Basic colour / Grundfarbe / Couleur de base		
WIT WHITE WEISS BLANC	5	Basiskleur / Basic colour / Grundfarbe / Couleur de base		
GRIS GREY GRAU GRIS	7	Basiskleur / Basic colour / Grundfarbe / Couleur de base		
DONKERROOD DARK RED DUNKELROT ROUGE FONCÉ	3	Aksentkleur / Highlight colour / Akzentfarbe / Couleur d'accent		
GEBROKEN WIT OFF WHITE EIERSCHEIDENWEISS BLANC CASSE		Basiskleur / Basic colour / Grundfarbe / Couleur de base alleen L 160 / only L 160 / nur L 160 / seulement L 160		
Geringe kleurafwijkingen voorbehouden. Slight differences in colour are possible. Geringe Farbunterschiede möglich. Minimes différences de couleur sont possibles.				
De kleuren corresponderen met die van de volgende Sikkens-nrs.: zwart nr. 000744, wit nr. 059908, grijs nr. 204235, donkerrood nr. 059992, gebroken wit nr. 056269.				



A

B



c

“Amstel” modular seating system. “Amstel” consisted of three rectangular elements and two elements with a rounded top. By linking them together, the customer could build his own sofa or chair, with or without a flat surface and storage space. The design was characteristic of Van den Nieuwelaar’s obsession with modular solutions. In 1994, work continued on the introduction of the most complicated design ever produced by Van den Nieuwelaar, the “Aks” cupboard, an asymmetrical design modelled on the computer. Not a single part had the same dimensions. Van den Nieuwelaar presented two versions: a single cupboard that was attached to a wall, and a double version that balanced on the floor on two razor-sharp runners. Again the designer considered these two models as merely the beginnings of a complete range of related products, but Pastoe was no longer prepared to follow him. The “Aks” was presented at the Amsterdam design gallery *Binnen*, in October 1994, but things went downhill very quickly from then on. Van den Nieuwelaar blocked the launch of the “Aks” three months later at the Cologne furniture trade fair at the very last moment. That, for Pastoe, was the last straw.

– 13 – The furniture won the first American award in 1980. The “A’dammer”, which was sold in the United States under the name “Manhattan,” was awarded the International Product Design Award by the American Society of Interior Designers. Three years later it was awarded the Roscoe Design Award.

– 14 – Published in Guus Vreeburg and Hadewijch Martens (ed.), *UMS Pastoe. Een Nederlandse meubelfabriek 1913-1983*, exhibition catalogue Centraal Museum, Utrecht 1983, p. 74.

– 15 – Professor J.J. Jacobs, Draft of the expert declaration relating to cabinets, 27 September 1997, pp. 3-4. Pastoe Archive.

– 16 – Letter from Aldo van den Nieuwelaar to UMS Pastoe, 6 October 1983, Pastoe Archive.

No winners

There is no point in reconstructing the complete legal proceedings that followed within the scope of this publication, but lawyers on both sides had their hands full well into the 21st century. Pastoe asked Klaus Vogt of all people to design a new generation of roll-top cabinets: the “Fibre” (1996). Vogt used a semi-transparent, flat slide made of a synthetic material with a handle. Aldo van den Nieuwelaar felt prompted to initiate further legal proceedings against Pastoe. The court ruled in 2006 that in view of its close bond with the designer, the company should have discussed the development of the “Fibre” with Van den Nieuwelaar first. Pastoe then tried to come to an arrangement, offering Van den Nieuwelaar a limited royalty payment for each “Fibre” that had been sold. But the designer refused the offer and prepared for another court procedure.

Till Kolle, who legally represented Aldo van den Nieuwelaar, describes the court battles as a “bitch fight.” No one won. In fact, he thinks that the two parties were too dependent on each other to cope with the conflict, and that the personalities of the protagonists were decisive. “Aldo was an exceptionally difficult person. He lacked the pragmatism you often find in great German and Italian designers. And Pastoe – or I should say, Harm Scheltens – gradually lost sight of the fact that you should value the designers you work with, as the great international design firms do, in my experience.”⁻¹⁷⁻

Wasn't it Wim Crouwel, the director of the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum at the time, who uttered the memorable words at the opening of an exhibition about Aldo van den Nieuwelaar: “Good management in many cases also involves choosing the right designer and knowing how much space they need”?⁻¹⁸⁻ It took a new director at Pastoe to normalize relations. Some time after he was appointed in 2006, Remco van der Voort resumed a dialogue with the designer. His efforts were appreciated, but came too late. On 23 September 2010 Van den Nieuwelaar's life came to an abrupt end.

– 17 – Statement made to the author, 27 August 2012.

– 18 – Prompted by the award of the Kho Liang Ie prize for industrial design the Netherlands Foundation for Industrial Design (ioN) devoted an exhibition to the work of Aldo van den Nieuwelaar in 1986. Wim Crouwel opened the exhibition.

Fibre cabinets and sideboard, design Klaus Vogt, 1996



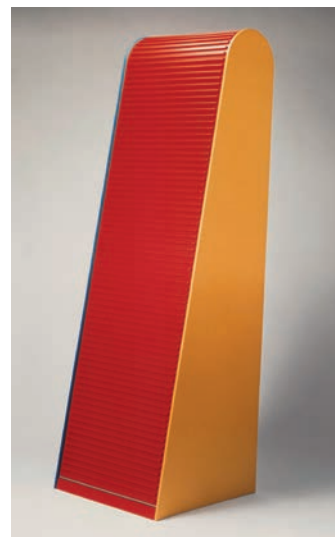




A'dammer kastelement
Ontwerp: Aldo van den Nieuwelaar
KR 176 inclusief laden en TV-plateau.
In de kleuren wit en zwart.

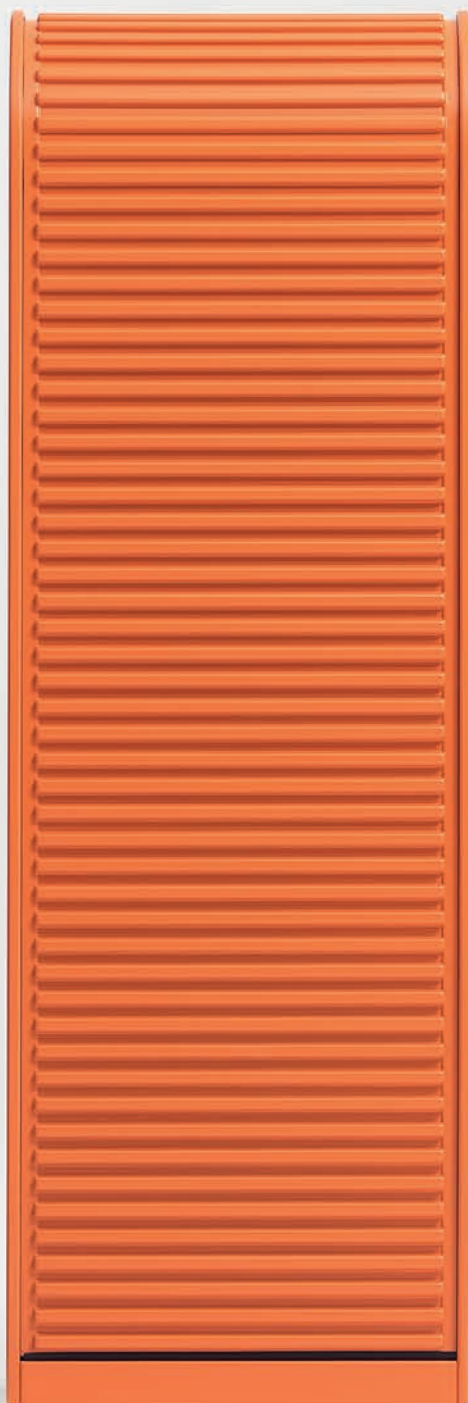
Schränkelement „Amsterdam“
Entwurf: Aldo van den Nieuwelaar
KR 176, incl. Schubladen und TV-Platte,
in den Farben weiß und schwarz lieferbar.

Variety of A'dammer models, Aldo van den Nieuwelaar, 1978



A'dammer models featured in the 2011 Pastoe sales book





– The zero degree of design – 150

Views on “Vision”

In 2010 designer Karel Boonzaaijer celebrated the 25th anniversary of the “Vision” furniture range he and Pierre Mazairac had designed for Pastoe. Boonzaaijer initiated the publication of a booklet containing a solid cube of black MDF that echoed the dimensions of the original modular furniture system but measured no more than $2.5 \times 2.5 \times 1.5$ cm. A square hole was punched out of the centre of the book entitled *Vision. Space for the imagination*, so that the black block fitted snugly into the hole. To use it as bookcase, one simply glues the little block to the wall and slides the publication over it. Even if it serves only a single book, Boonzaaijer comments, “this is still the smallest bookcase on record.”

The studio of Boonzaaijer and Mazairac signed up for the design of the “Vision 90” in 1985.⁻²⁻ When they started working on the project the designers did not have the ambition to create a cupboard at all. In the initial stages of the designing process they expressly ignored anything related to production, such as the dimensions imposed by the machines in a furniture factory. That kind of restrictions had always been the starting point of their work when the two designers were still employed by Pastoe, some years earlier. Now, their early sketches began with an almost abstract examination of surface planes and how they relate to each other. They studied the sizes of window frames and doors and domestic objects around which you could design storage space. Boonzaaijer explains: “Our research was carried out on something between a Mondrian and a removal box. We stared endlessly at almost nothing when finally a common denominator to all interiors emerged. We discovered multiples of 90 mm in all sorts of objects. Although this did not correspond at all to the standardized sizes used in the furniture industry, 90 mm became our module.”⁻³⁻

From the very start, the designers were interested in an object that could float in space. This explains the metal frames on which the first versions of “Vision 90” rested. Even then they still thought of their product as more of an object than a storage system.

The development of the “Vision” was a response to a question that dated back to the mid-1980s when Pastoe director Harm Scheltens asked Mazairac and Boonzaaijer to create a piece of furniture that combined the sculptural quality of the “A’dammer” cabinets with the modular qualities of the “L 160” series that symbolised Pastoe’s history of flexible storage units. It is no coincidence that these two ranges were the best selling products in the company’s portfolio at that time. The underlying expectation was that the “Vision” would multiply the appeal of two successful but essentially different products. It was an almost impossible task. Perhaps that is why the designers felt free to set aside all practical considerations for the time being. This feeling of freedom also applied when they decided that the “Vision” had to be produced in several different depths, a suggestion that was tantamount to sacrilege in the church of furniture manufacturing. The concept for the “Vision” focused wholly on its visual impact.

A Vision storage units in the showroom of G.P. Calzature in Milan.**Photography Christian Fiorentini****B Book "Vision – Space for Imagination" by Karel Boonzaaijer, Ilka Helmig and Johannes Bergerhausen, 2010****A****B**

More than a quarter century later the core philosophy of the company, embodied by its Product Development department, is still much the same. Pastoe's current art director Joost van der Vecht not only designs the identity and representation of the brand, he is also still involved in the development of new and existing products, including the "Vision." It is here that his affinity to the work of minimalist artists such as Donald Judd and the architects of the Japanese agency Sanaa seems to find a natural continuation. The "Vision" system, which borders on being invisible because it is so understated, leaves room for the user's imagination precisely because of that.

Van der Vecht considers it his task to share its almost inexhaustible potential. He developed new configurations, such as "Vision Objects." Prior to that he played around with the spatial qualities of the "Vision" by freely mounting its individual elements to the wall (the "Brasilia"), which turned out to actually fit the 90 mm grid perfectly. The blank space between the elements in particular was brought to life in this way. More recently he worked on the development of "Boxes", a separate design but in keeping with the "Vision." For Van der Vecht it is the versatility of the system that makes it a classic in the Pastoe collection. The former director Scheltens describes the "Vision" as "the most beautiful cube there is; you could not make it any more pure or serene."-4-

Obviously Van der Vecht realizes that the grid has always been a strong basis for Pastoe. He is certainly prepared to defend this heritage. "But I also see it as my task to create a feast for the eye. In some cases by deliberately stretching the grid, as with the "Brasilia", in others by using striking colours you wouldn't normally associate with the product – as at the Salone del Mobile in Milan 2007. I always keep the user in mind: the user needs visual aids to be able to translate an abstract piece of furniture such as the "Vision" into his own home."⁵

What is the strength of the product? For Joost van der Vecht the quality lies in the balance between suggestive visual abstraction and the extreme precision with which the product was created. Every specimen is the result of flexible computer-aided machine production and highly skilled, hand-crafted finishes. The panels for the body and door sawn at a 45° angle, the absence of handles, the bespoke hinges and lock mechanism: all are especially developed (in fact, Mazairac and Boonzaaijer based the locks on a system they found in the French Panhard cars). Not forgetting the high quality lacquering process for the perfect end result. "For me Pastoe's quality – and like all perfection, this is particularly true of the "Vision" – lies in the detail. Or should I say, in designing away every detail."⁶

– 2 – The addition of a 90 refers to the size of the modular unit. Later it became known as the "Vision 2000, alluding to the change of the millennium that was ahead." These days the system is called simply "Vision."

– 3 – Discussion with the author, 19 October 2012.

– 4 – Discussion with the author, 25 October 2012.

– 5 – Discussion with the author, 7 October 2012.

– 6 – Ibidem.



1985



1991

**Vision storage units, design
Pierre Mazairac & Karel Boonzaaijer, 1985**



1992



1995

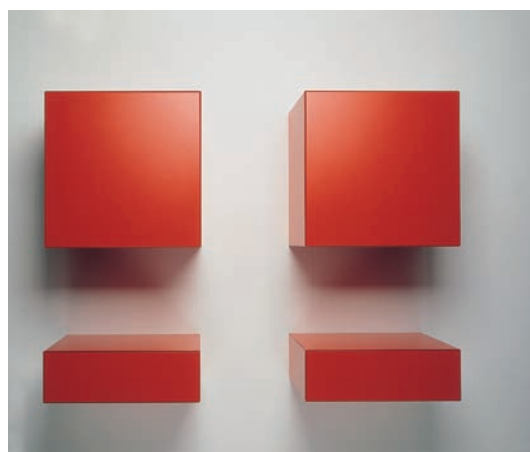


2000

Vision storage units



2000



2004



2005



2006



2009

Vision storage units



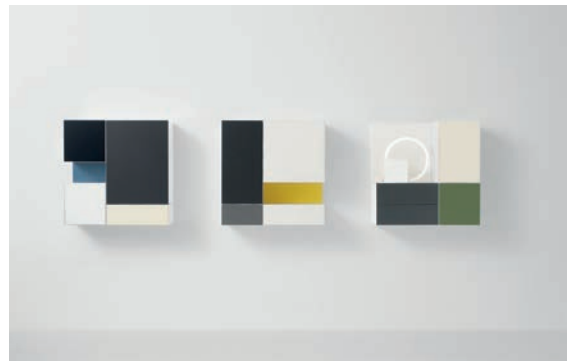
2009



2009



2009



2010



2011



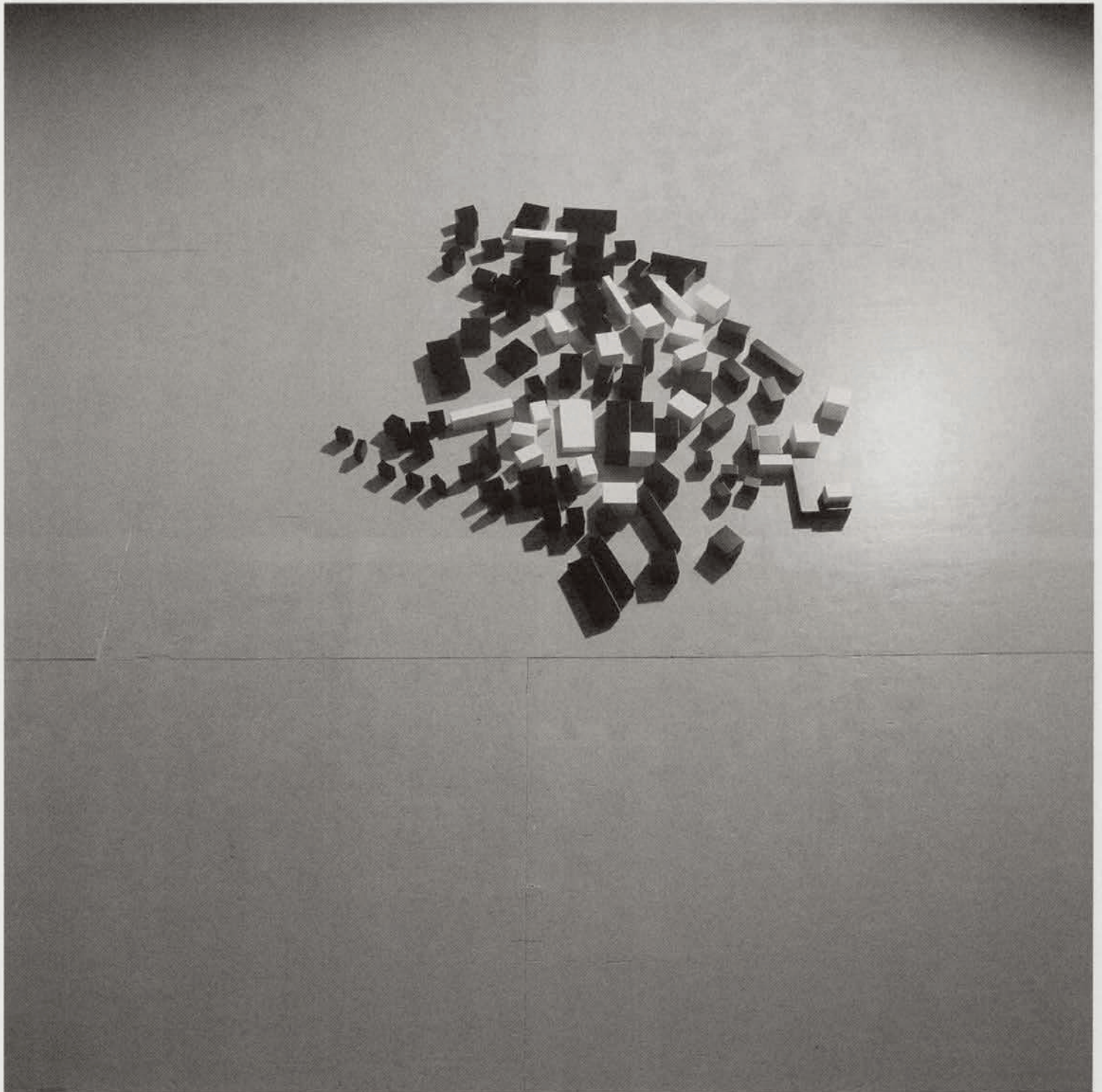
2012

**Vision Elements jubilee cabinet, 2013,
cabinet CB01, 1951 and U+N cabinet CU06, c. 1964**



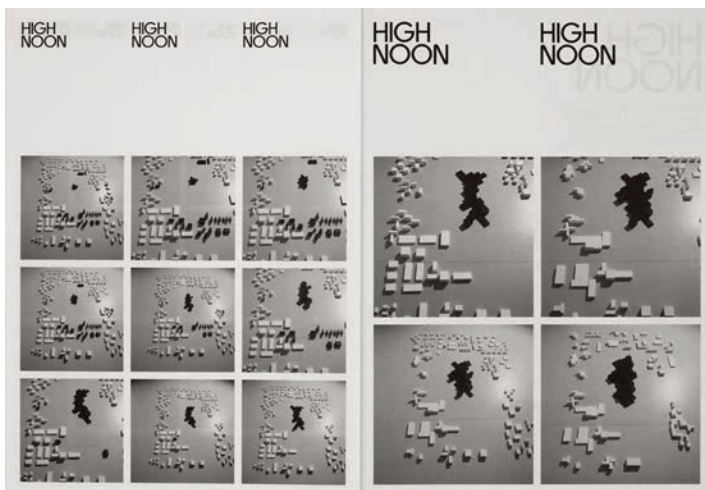
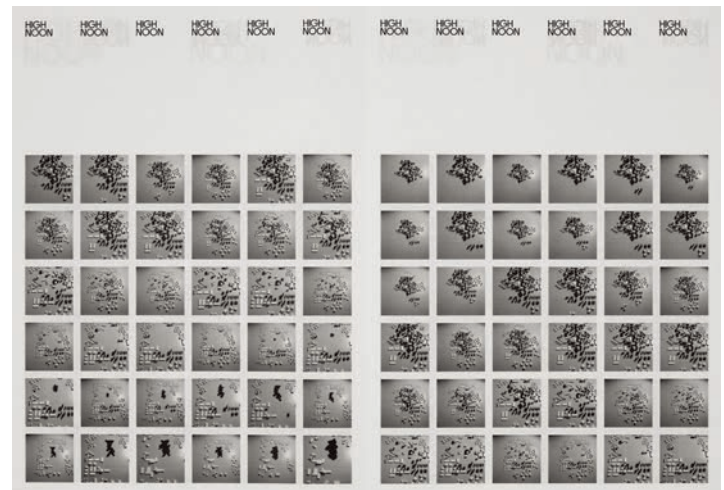
Vision Elements jubilee cabinet, 2013

HIGH NOON

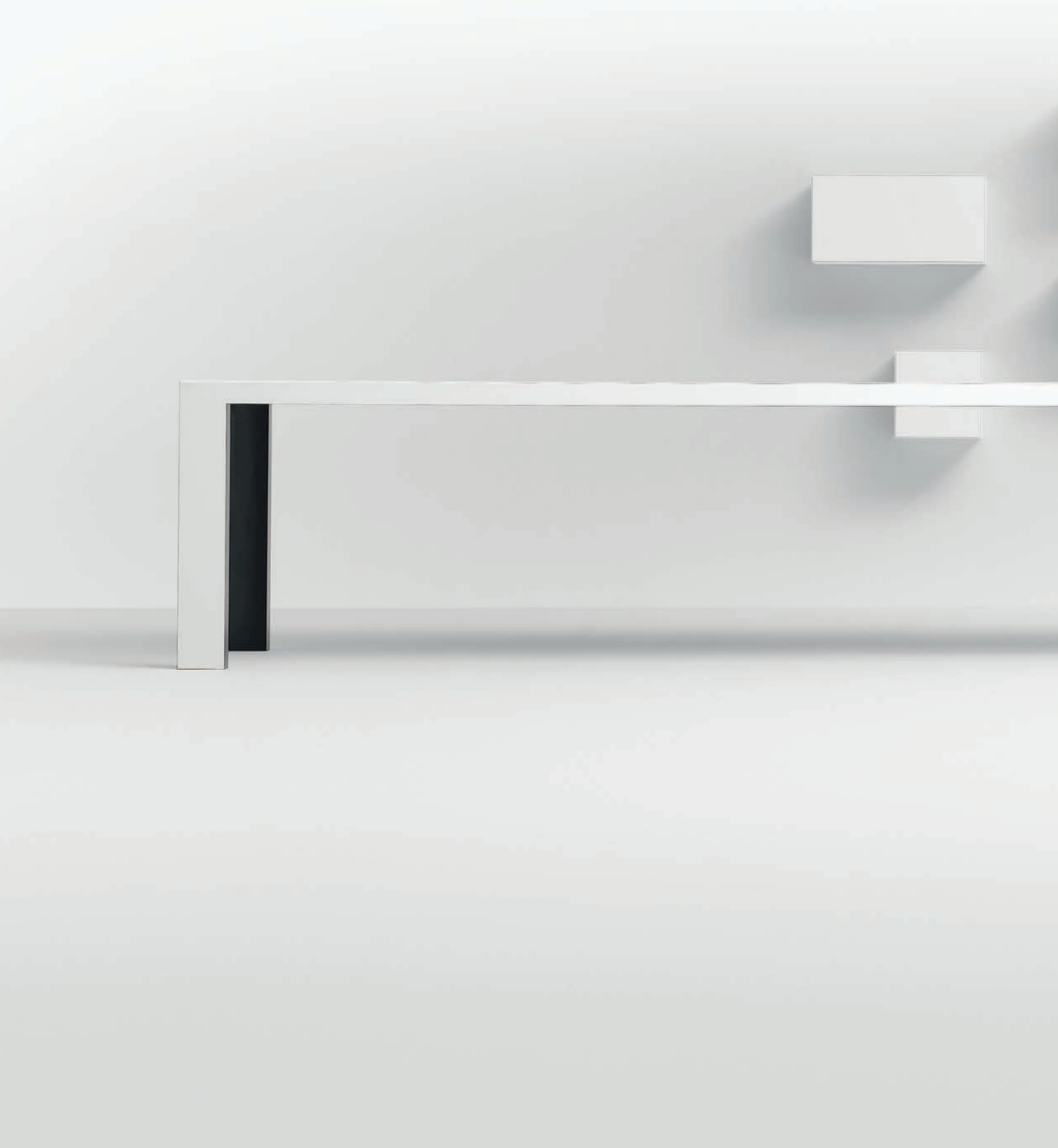


High Noon. Publication by photographer Johannes Schwartz with Experimental Jetset for the exhibition "Now. Pastoe 90 years", Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 2003.

The structures are based on miniatures of the Vision cabinets



Vision storage units, design Pierre Mazairac & Karel Boonzaaijer, 1985
Quadro table, design Giampaolo Babetto, 2004







– Environments –
Now. Pastoe 100 years

Gert Staal

**Krijn de Koning
Anne Holtrop
Dirk Laucke**

The brand between social design and social media

The history of Pastoe was a constant struggle for survival. From the very first order for twelve chairs in 1913 all the way through to its centenary in 2013, Pastoe has always employed all available resources and design models in order to outsmart its competitors on a relatively small playing field and steer clear from pending financial disaster. The furniture factory has stood on the brink of ruin but is still standing strong. According to current managing director Remco van der Voort: “Survival is part of this company’s genetic make-up.”⁻¹⁻

In this respect the company is not really very different from other companies weathering periods of prosperity and adversity that come and go like the tides. During the past hundred years the peaks have sometimes been very high for UMS Pastoe and sometimes the troughs many fathoms deep. But each time the company managed to reinvent itself within the tight confines of its professional arena and scramble back on its feet. It stuck to its trade: Pastoe makes furniture. Home furniture. Its trade is based on a tradition of carpentry and has combined machine manufacturing with a craftsman-like finish, from its earliest beginnings to the present day. It has led the market of quality furniture and good taste for a century. And for most of the century it has been characterized by innovative design.

How should we interpret this dedication to “the new”? What is Pastoe’s relationship with the modernity of the twentieth and early twenty-first century? After turning the archives inside out, discussions with people directly involved and an examination of other publications on Pastoe’s role in the history of Dutch design, it is fair to say that there is no simple answer. The archives contain documents that contradict every conclusion one could draw. Nevertheless, it is necessary to try and answer these questions in order to understand how the company operates in 2013, what market it is targeting and what the expectations are with regard to its collaboration with designers.

The writer and philosopher Dirk van Weelden recently made a comparable effort at the launch of the book *Braakman en ik* (Braakman and I) by Maria Barnas. He focused on the 1950s, the golden age of UMS Pastoe and designer Cees Braakman. Van Weelden referred to his own growing up in a Goed Wonen (Good Living) interior and his fascination with his neighbours’ eclectic house. It was so different from his own. The living room of his youth symbolised the desire to live a truly modern life, with linoleum floors and Pastoe chairs to sit on. According to Van Weelden it was a desire that could not be fulfilled, because beauty and art cannot possibly express a truth. This observation brought him to the heart of his argument: “One can also interpret this failure of art and design to bring harmony and meaning, purpose and peace in a different way. Every artist, every work of art and every design style fails in a unique way. That is where its real value lies. Not in being overwhelmed by truth or by the pointless and disastrous aspects of reality, but by continually reinventing wonderful forms of postponement and failure.”⁻²⁻

Van Weelden perceives design as futile and therefore valuable antidote to an unpredictable reality. There have been several periods in the factory's history when this description would have been perfectly applicable. Throughout the years Pastoe has continued to present itself as a reflection of a *heile Welt*, a perfect world in which the quest for harmony and beauty was paramount.

– 1 – Discussion with the author, 7 October 2012.

– 2 – Dirk van Weelden, essay read out at the book launch of *Braakman en ik* by Maria Barnas, Athenaeum Boekhandel, Amsterdam, 21 June 2012.
Source: <http://www.janvaneyck.nl>

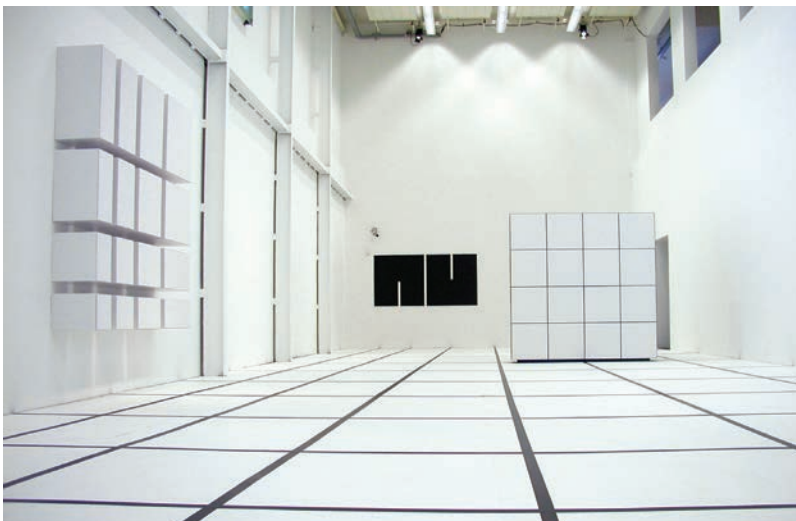
The inhabited vacuum

The term “moralistic modernism” has been mentioned before, in particular in relation to the civilizing offensive the company unleashed on the consumer from 1948 to the mid-1960s.⁻³⁻ The goal was sales, the means education. Traces of this approach are visible in Pastoe's more recent past, both in the collection and in its branding. Take for example the exhibition “*Nu. Pastoe 90 Jaar*” (Now. Pastoe 90 years) at the Centraal Museum in Utrecht in 2003.⁻⁴⁻ The 90th anniversary exhibition did not include any Pastoe furniture other than the “Vision” modular storage units, to the great frustration of some of the visitors. The reviewer of *NRC Handelsblad* wrote in total astonishment, “...the New Man has arrived: he likes ideas but not furniture. His home is emptiness, the inhabited vacuum.”⁻⁵⁻

While the *Neo* exhibition, organized by curator Frans Haks, was on in the main building of the Centraal Museum, the exhibition in the Post CM annex focused entirely on the current meaning of modernism. The modernist heritage, and in particular the idealistic component at the heart of 1920s modernism, was investigated through the contributions of a young generation of designers and artists such as Experimental Jetset, Will Holder, Johannes Schwartz and Alexander van Slobbe. They reflected on the influences of

**A Exhibition “Now. Pastoe 90 years”, design
Pieter Zeegers and Experimental Jetset, 2003**

**B Installation by Experimental Jetset for “Now. Pastoe 90 years”,
Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 2003**



A



B

modernism on Pastoe's current situation and examined the problematic history of the artistic movement. After all, the ideology behind the modernist experiment – viz. the ambition to renew the world, not only in a material sense, but above all to create a new world order – had nurtured great art as well as political monstrosities such as Nazism, Fascism and Stalinism. In his installation, Will Holder used the famous *Black Square* (circa 1915) by the Russian painter Kazimir Malevich to refer to both the idealist and the nihilist perspective. Experimental Jetset presented two poster walls to confront the formal functionalism of Pastoe with the critical idealism of May 1968, both of which had emerged from the same modernist source.

For the then managing director Harm Scheltens, *Now. Pastoe 90 years* was reason to take a fresh look at a goal he had already formulated at the time of the 1988 Pastoe exhibition: to create a permanent forum for “design thinking”. Asked whether he thought the foundation of a national design institute was a good idea, Scheltens replied that he preferred the idea of a large design biennial.⁻⁶⁻ Clearly this notion stayed with him. Shortly after *Now. Pastoe 90 years* cautious speculation on the topic of a design biennial were held at the company's Rotsoord offices in Utrecht. Under the title *Utrecht Manifest* the biennial would focus public attention on “design with a mission” at least until Pastoe's centenary. The first *Biennial for conscientious design* took place in 2005.

Scheltens had his finger on the pulse of the changing Zeitgeist. It was probably above all his intuition telling him that there should be a greater socio-cultural context for his business ventures. While previous managements had been inclined to flatter market tastes under the pressures of Pastoe's annual accounts, Scheltens ran into the future. Into an even more abstract connection between brand and cultural environment.

He knew how a changing society and the rapid adjustments to the fluctuating economic climate influences the world of design, and more specifically, has an impact on the position of the furniture sector. From 1996, Pastoe and a handful of loyal allies in the design sector organized and financed a series of seminars for the Dutch Design Centre initiative (DDC-i).⁻⁷⁻

The series gradually revealed how the vanguard in architecture and graphic and industrial design had started to concentrate on subjects other than ideal furniture or the perfect living environment. Increasingly they were concerned with design with a pronounced social agenda. There was a clear interrelationship, both at the level of personnel and in terms of content, between DDC-i and the new design biennial, and Pastoe was at the heart of all. From 2007 *Utrecht Manifest* was reputed to be a biennial for *social design*.⁻⁸⁻

– 3 – See chapter 5, note 2.

– 4 – *Nu. Pastoe 90 jaar* (Now. Pastoe 90 years), exhibition at the Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 15 September – 12 October 2003, curated by Guus Beumer and Gert Staal.

– 5 – Ileen Montijn in *NRC Handelsblad*, 23 September 2003, quoted in Arien Heering, *Modern, technisch en vooruitstrevend. De bedrijfsfilosofie van de Utrechtse meubelfabrikant UMS/Pastoe* (Modern, technical and progressive, the company philosophy of the Utrecht furniture manufacturer, U.M.S./Pastoe), *Oud-Utrecht*, periodical for the history of the city and province of Utrecht, year 77, nr. 4, August 2004, p. 95.

– 6 – Jim Schilder, “De wederopstanding van Pastoe” (The Resurrection of Pastoe), *De Tijd*, 11 November 1988.

– 7 – The initiators also included Forbo Krommenie, AkzoNobel and Philips Lighting. Since 2000 there has been an annual programme based on social themes, which are discussed in relation to architecture and design. Pastoe has been a permanent partner.

– 8 – In 2007 Ed Annink was the artistic director of *Utrecht Manifest*. The 2009 event was led by Guus Beumer and in 2011/12 Jurgen Bey was artistic director of an edition named “The New Working Landscape.”

A sharp focus

Harm Scheltens’s directorship spanned a period (1981–2006) during which the primacy of design had to first be fought for, then exploited and finally be reformulated. In retrospect, the first stage – the fighting and convincing – was closest to his personality and probably the most productive. The period of exploitation could be seen as the weakest stage of his directorship, for reasons outlined below. And in the reformulation period it proved difficult – if not impossible – to reintroduce the interests of a furniture manufacturer back at the heart of contemporary design culture.

The furniture sector exploited the fight for emancipation in the 1980s to its advantage. Design could be anything, but first and foremost it was associated with furniture and household articles. At least this was the perception of the public, and it was not very different for professionals. Memphis (1981) and even the international breakthrough of Droog Design in 1994 might serve as examples. Changes in design, even at a theoretical level, first became manifest in furniture and interiors. In the 1980s and well into the 1990s the furniture sector took centre stage, having its annual bonfire at the Salone del Mobile in Milan, and Pastoe was able to bask in the glow of that light. It was not until the new millennium that furniture design gradually moved from centre stage into the wings. Now the avant-garde explores completely different perspectives on design, but for many of these initiatives the Salone del Mobile still provides the chosen platform.

The editorial re-orientation of *Domus* magazine seems to illustrate the case quite comprehensively. For decades the Italian periodical has been the supreme arbiter on issues concerning contemporary architecture and living. Since Joseph Grima took over as editor-in-chief in 2011 *Domus* has undergone a radical transformation and little remains of its traditional subjects such as the furniture industry. Grima sees his periodical as a militant player in the design debate. He attempts to approach design from the perspective of the “third industrial revolution” – a term that denotes the effects of digitalization and the reduction of scale in the manufacturing process made possible by a number of parallel technological developments.^{–9–} A major shift, Grima recently noted, which the traditional design community refuses to recognize.^{–10–} Perhaps this is why *Domus* chose the Salone del Mobile 2012 to stage its radical views on contemporary design in an exhibition called *The Future in the Making*.

Of course Joseph Grima targeted a group of people for whom design still is the expression of good taste, material comfort and thought-out

industrial production processes, a world in which furniture designers and producers tend to spend a great deal of time. The connection between Pastoe and an event such as the *Utrecht Manifest*, biennial for social design can be seen as an attempt to achieve a turnabout à la *Domus*, at least as regards the image of the company. The realization that the third industrial revolution is knocking at the door of the traditional furniture factory has only recently begun to sink in.

For Pastoe it has been the aspect of sustainability that provided a link to the dominant design agenda of the past decade. By emphasising high quality of production and usability, in combination with the long visual lifespan of the products, the brand could justifiably claim to be sustainable. Then there is the location of the factory; once situated on the edge of Utrecht, with the Vaartse Rhine as the supply route for raw materials, today the site is part of the warp and weft of the urban fabric. The business will leave the historic site in the foreseeable future (2015 according to the latest predictions) and the complex will become available for a new purpose. The future designation of the factory and its social environment was subjected to several design research projects of *Utrecht Manifest*, the latest being designer and curator Jurgen Bey's "new working landscape".⁻¹¹⁻

– 9 – The economics researcher Jeremy Rifkin introduced the term "Third Industrial Revolution." In April 2012 the British journal *The Economist* published a themed edition devoted to the revolution in the manufacturing industry with the same title.

– 10 – Joseph Grima during a public interview with Jan Boelen, Media & Design Academie, Genk (B), 19 September 2012.

– 11 – *Utrecht Manifest* 2011/12, see www.utrechtmanifest.nl

Added value

But what about the product itself, the collection and the company? Or to return to an earlier question: how does Pastoe relate to the early twenty-first century sense of modernity? The current managing director Remco van der Voort no longer seeks the answer exclusively in the outside world. Under the management of his predecessor Pastoe had added value and a certain



Design research for the "New Working Landscape", Utrecht Manifest, 2012.
Maarten Kolk & Guus Kusters

sense of urgency to its products though relationships forged with the art world, through a showroom collective and by investing time, energy and resources in initiatives such as DDC-i and Utrecht Manifest. These were all extensions of the company's own mission and characterized by the moralistic modernism Pastoe had embraced so energetically under the management of Harm Scheltens. Such activities could be justified because the position of contemporary designer furniture was still strong at the time. Van der Voort is facing very different challenges. Supported by Pastoe's production manager Ben Prins he went ahead with an extensive reorganization in 2009, limiting the production to storage units. This meant it was possible to make the necessary cuts in personnel. Pastoe now focuses on cupboards and a small range of object furniture.

There was another problem Van der Voort needed to solve first, one that had been gnawing at the roots of the company for many years: delivering furniture to clients on time. During the 1980s and 1990s the figures for delivery times and delivery reliability were undeniably poor.⁻¹²⁻ At the turn of the century, an external consultancy agency asked Pastoe dealers what improvements they would like to see. "Better delivery times!" replied 33% of the respondents. Reflecting on his time as manager director Harm Scheltens said: "As a general rule I would argue that it is the task of any director to hand over the company in a better state than it was in when he took the job on. That I have achieved. I built a strong collection with the 'L series', the 'A'dammer' and the 'Vision.' If only I had managed to improve delivery times; I would have been able to look back at that period with satisfaction."⁻¹³⁻

His successor Van der Voort was able to achieve results very quickly with a series of structural changes. He still encounters doubt though, particularly abroad. Pastoe can't permit itself any mistakes with foreign deliveries, as any delay is a painful reminder of its recent past. And the damage it did to its brand image meant that Pastoe fell behind in the growing market of the 1990s. Unlike its competitors, the company found it difficult to capitalise on its prominent position in the design sector.

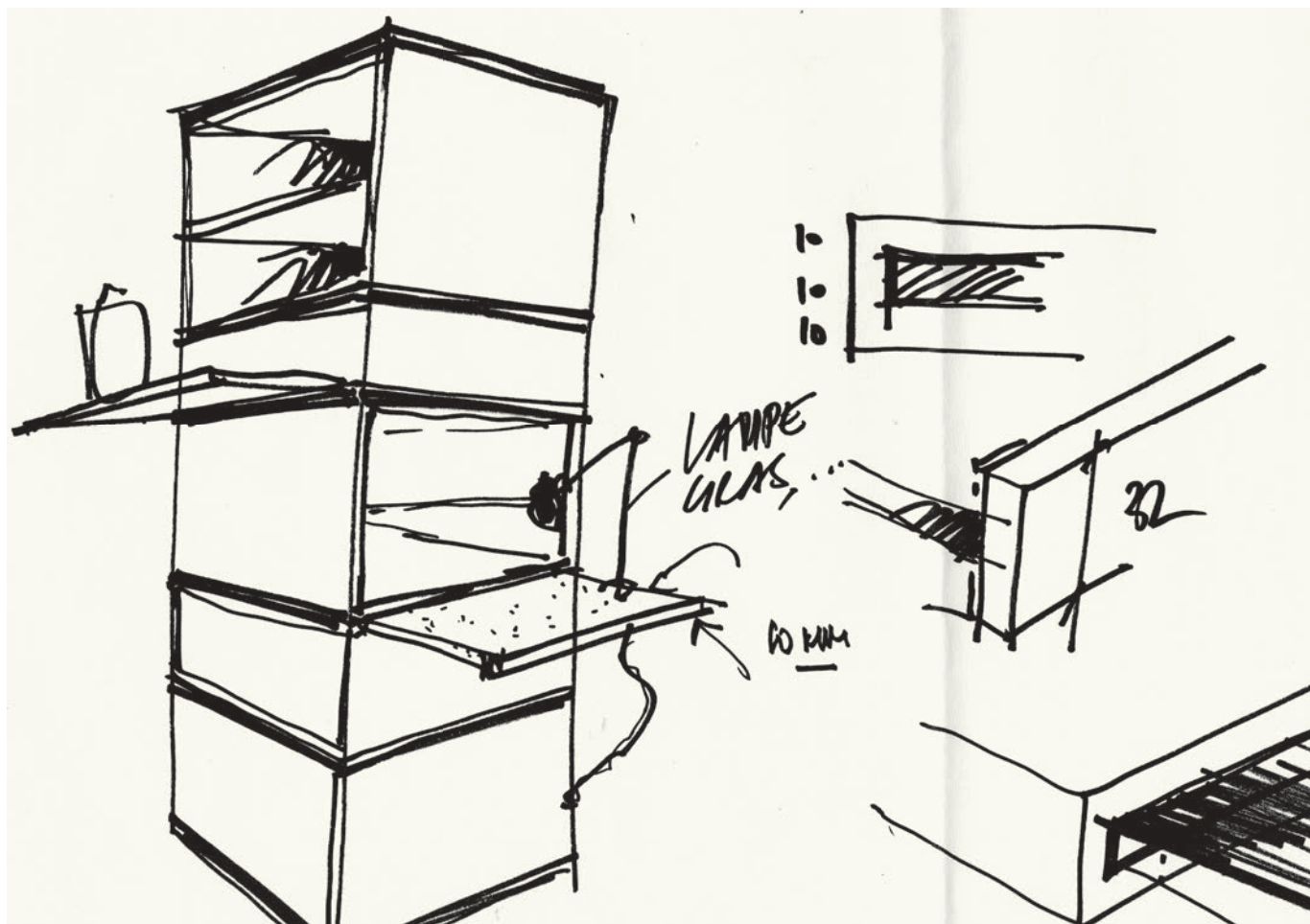
According to Van der Voort, Pastoe today achieves even shorter delivery times and consequently is able to keep pace with the declining patience of consumers. In his opinion, this development is characteristic of the momentum of the early twenty-first century: Pastoe no longer relies on a constant flow of new designs but will have to fine-tune the qualities already present in the collection more intelligently to the expectations of the market. Despite the recession and a decline in spending, the 2011 profits appear to confirm his view.

Does this mean that Pastoe has come to the end of its role as a designer label? This is a dicey question, one that might touch a few nerves, and the answer will be unreliable, as future predictions often are. The current collection contains some classics: the "L series", the "A'dammer" cabinets, and the "Vision" system, which in absolute numbers and sales figures puts the

rest of the collection in the shade. Other designs such as the “Matrix” by Shigeru Uchida (2003), the “Totem” by Vincent Van Duysen (2010), the “Shift” by Scholten & Baijings (2011), and the “Landscape”, a recent design by Studio Pastoe (2012), all boast qualities that give them a place of their own in the collection, but none of them can touch the undisputed status the “Vision” managed to acquire. Even this should be seen in relative terms: for the first ten years of its life the “Vision” was fairly anonymous, and its spurt in growth did not really start until 1995. Pastoe’s patience gave the product the opportunity to mature and ultimately excel.

– 12 – In 1991 Linda Zomer, a student at Nijenrode Business University, interviewed 48 Dutch retailers for her work experience with Hennie de Jong. With regard to service, finish, lacquering and delivery times, Pastoe came out bottom of seven Dutch furniture companies that were reviewed. Report of her research, October 1991, Pastoe Archive.

– 13 – Discussion with the author, 25 October 2012.



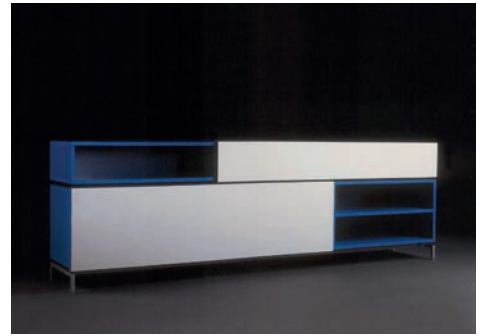
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A Sketch of Totem cabinet, design Vincent Van Duysen, 2010

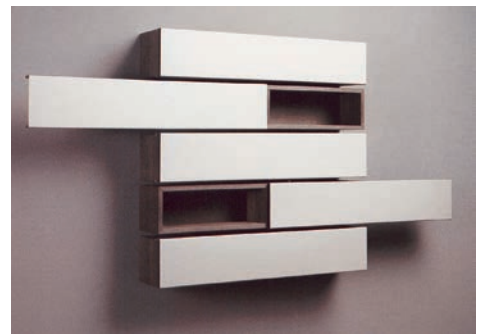
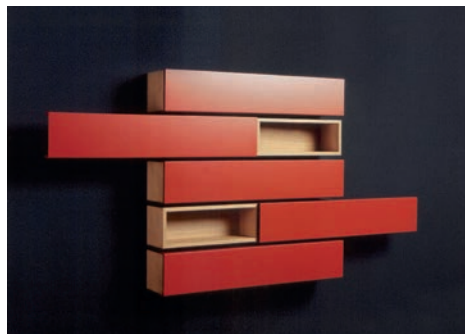
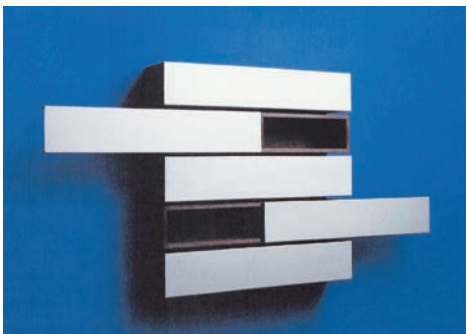
B Totem cabinet, Vincent Van Duysen, 2010



- A** Slide cabinet system, design Shigeru Uchida, 2001. Photography Alphons Koppelman
B Horizontals cabinets, design Shigeru Uchida, 1999. Photography Alphons Koppelman, Pastoe



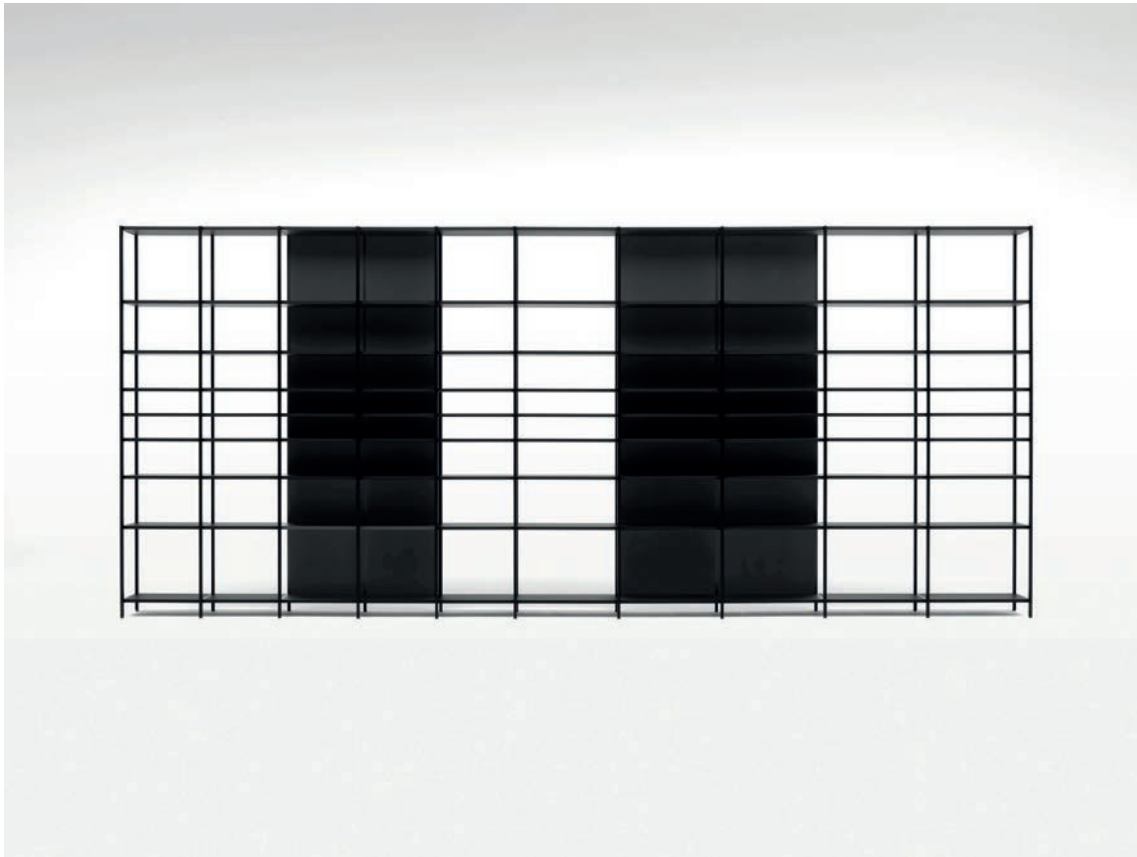
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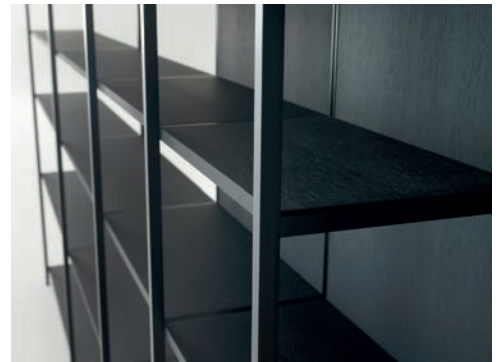
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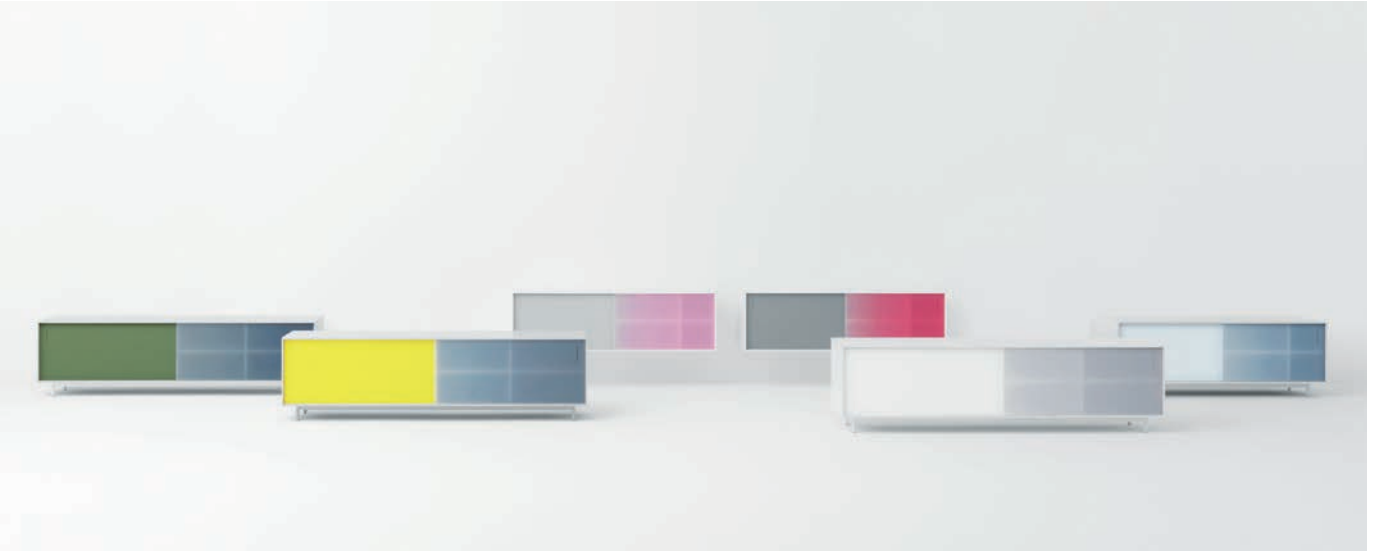
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- A Matrix System, design Shigeru Uchida, 2000
- B Shift cabinets, design Scholten & Baijings, 2011
- C Landscape cabinet system, design Studio Pastoe, 2012

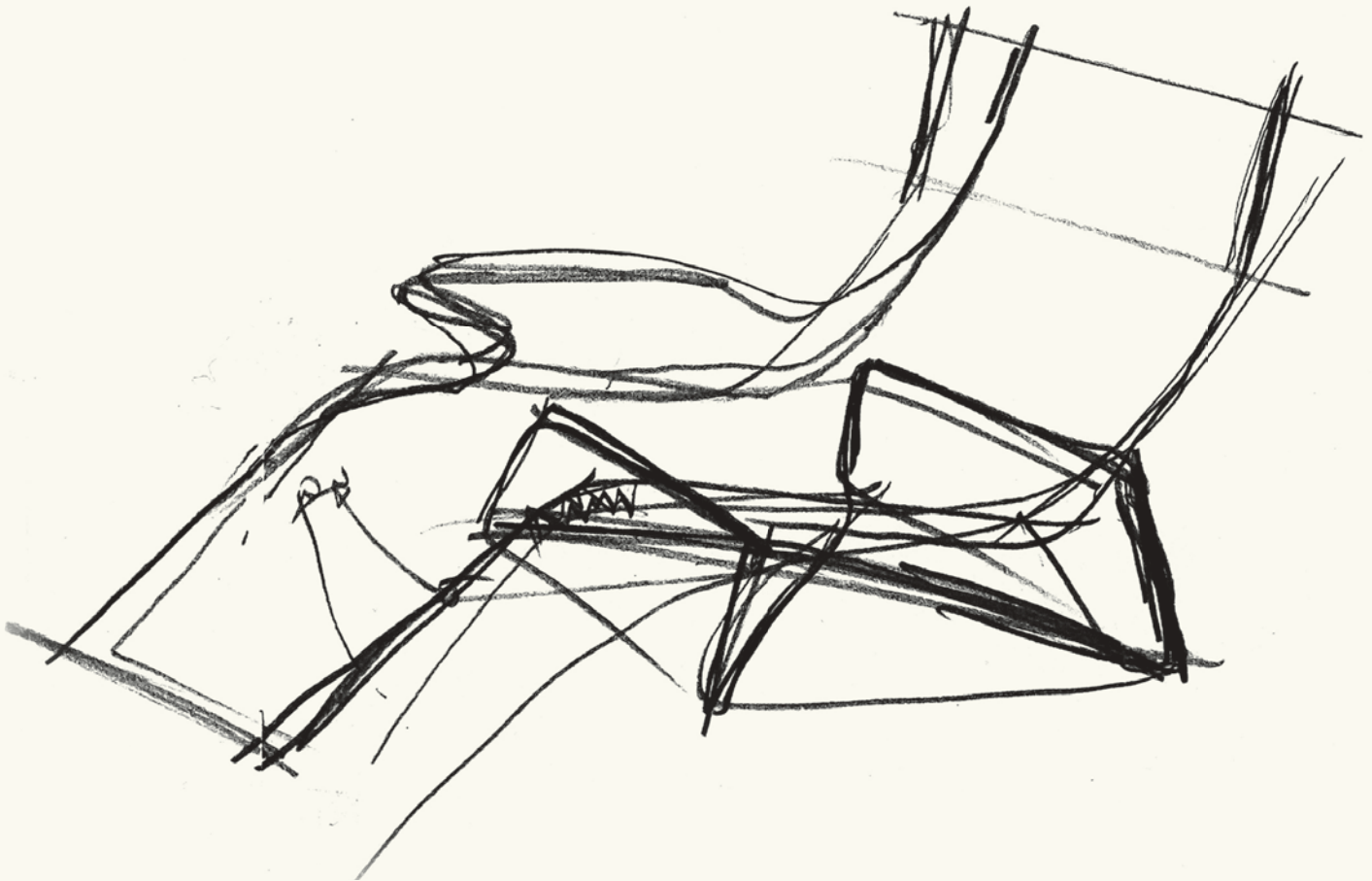


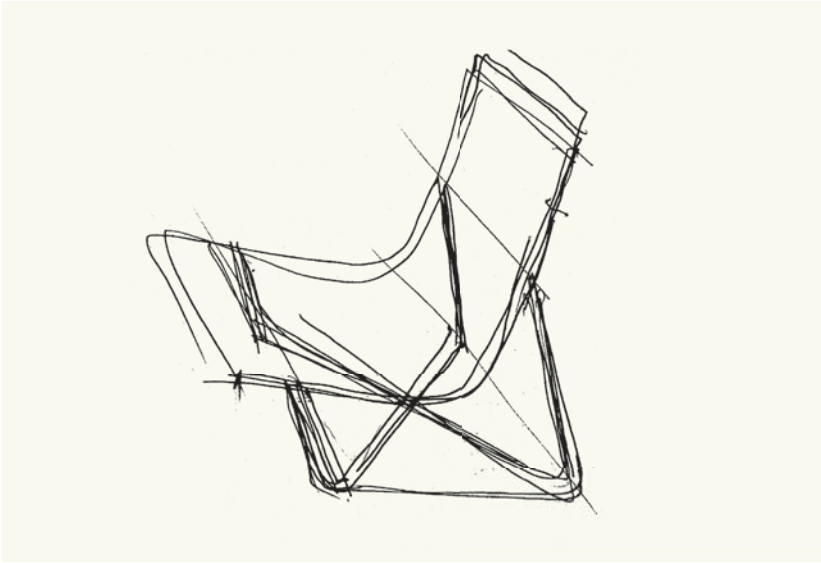
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**B****C**

- A Sketch of the Leather Lounge Chair LL04, Maarten Van Severen, 2004
B Low Chair LC03, design Maarten Van Severen, Fabian Schwaerzler, 2003





Maximalist

The contribution of Maarten Van Severen to Pastoe was exceptional in every respect, and not just because it concerns seating furniture. His “Leather Lounge Chair” and the “Low Chair” were only added to the Pastoe collection after the Belgian designer’s death in 2005. Not that there hadn’t been contact between Van Severen and the company for many years before. Van Severen was a perfectionist craftsman, working sometimes in collaboration with a manufacturer but usually in his own workshop. The extreme simplicity of his work often tempted viewers to use the term “minimalism”. Van Severen did not think this description did his work justice. He tried to achieve maximum expression with minimal resources and therefore preferred to call himself a “maximalist.”

Pastoe was fascinated by the purity of his designs. Van Severen’s ambition to find the ultimate shape for every object that passed through his hands, no matter how much the effort, was the reason for Harm Scheltens’ regular trips to Ghent. Unfortunately Pastoe could not meet Van Severen’s wish to experiment with new technology and new materials, something he was unable to do in his own studio. Scheltens explains: “We did not have the clout, not with the architects, not in the export market. It would have meant an adventure along the lines of the ‘Perception’ cabinets, which had been a leap of faith that almost cost us our downfall. I was very sorry to see Maarten leave for Vitra but I also knew I did not want to lose the fight, and so we stayed in touch. I was extremely pleased that, with the help of his family, we were able to develop the prototype of the ‘Leather Lounge Chair,’ which Maarten had in his studio, into a finished article. And I’m proud that we succeeded in approximating the quality of his handmade model.”¹⁴

The “Leather Lounge Chair” soon became just as powerful a symbol for the company as the “A’dammer” had been in the 1980s and 1990s. Although the chair does not comply with the current ambition of maintaining a clear focus on the storage furniture sector, and although it will probably never parallel the spectacular sales figures of the “A’dammer”, the chair does have the status of a media-friendly high-end design. It is proof of a successful approach and gives legitimacy to the current collection.





- A** Current Pastoe colour programme, developed with AkzoNobel, 2009
B Vision storage units in a house in Aschaffenburg, Germany
C Vision storage units published in *Arquitectura y Diseño* (Spain), photography Cristina Rodés



A

Marketing expert Martin Lederman had advised Pastoe in the late 1960s on a fundamental problem regarding the sale of furniture.⁻¹⁵⁻ The product does not have a dynamic enough presence on the shop floor to give customers a sense of constant surprise. Consumers are not sufficiently stimulated to visit and revisit showrooms and shops. Lederman had suggested combining furniture with a carousel of objects such as works of art to create this dynamic edge. In essence, it is not very different from what the director Remco van der Voort tries to do today when he activates the social media around the product.

Lederman wanted to use the works of Andy Warhol and Claes Oldenburg to create fresh settings for furniture displays and a sense of an experience around the product. Pastoe now makes use of social media to the same effect by sharing an already existing brand experience and new social interaction around the brand. This can take the shape of a conversation with the owner of an authentic Braakman cabinet looking for information on its provenance, or a potential buyer interested in an unusual combination or colour scheme. Or it could be a brand enthusiast who stumbles upon a shop interior with Pastoe furniture on his travels in Italy, wanting to share this discovery with the manufacturer. Conversely, Pastoe uses social media to present new models, provide information about special presentations and invite responses to the collection. Pastoe's advanced use of social media makes the company a pioneer in its field.

– 14 – Discussion with the author, 25 October 2012.

– 15 – See Chapter “The consumer learns how to live.” p. 125



B



C

Close to the customer

For the past year Pastoe has been working on the development of an app. Users can project a composition of the “Vision” units onto their own living room walls from the comfort of their sofa. Dimensions, colour schemes, arrangement, function: the desired combination can be outlined on the computer with an online drawing program and then uploaded in the app. The spatial dimensions of the storage unit can be perfectly evaluated in this way. For some people this may just be an interesting game, for others it is a serious opportunity to prepare for a purchase. This sort of development illustrates Van der Voort’s wish not to continue adding new products but to innovate within the already existing collection. “It’s very important for us to show the public who we are. In this respect, the 2010s are fundamentally different from the 1990s. At that time you could still believe that a good design would just sell itself. That strategy no longer works.”⁻¹⁶⁻

Ongoing interaction with the customer also means that the principle of “Pastoe naar maat” – the flexible modular storage units with which the company caused a furore in 1955 – will once again play a prominent role in the business. The “Vision” has all the qualities to become a more flexible product. Van der Voort considers a made-to-measure version of the “Vision” to be the logical next step. This means producing furniture to the customer’s specifications. He recently went on record in newspaper *Het Parool*, stating that, “Flexibility requires a lot of communication.” (...) We can do that because we are close to the customer.”⁻¹⁷⁻ This was exactly the future that the designer Pierre Mazairac had in mind when he wrote: “Virtual technology creates possibilities to personalise the “Vision.” Nothing is impossible, from cute or funny to serious, from a basic approach to Punch & Judy, adaptable before and after, all without compromising on function!”⁻¹⁸⁻ A completely interactive open source design and production practice is not always within the scope of a sector like the furniture industry, where production techniques,

distribution and sales are still organised in a largely traditional way. Nevertheless, the underlying mentality gradually seems to be gaining ground in the Pastoe strategy: design, even the design of furniture in the top sector, is no longer the playing field solely for the initiated.

This change of direction means a breakthrough in a long-cherished role. In the early 1950s the designer dictated the shape; Pastoe dictated the taste. This formula was repeated more explicitly midway through 1980s. Pastoe knew what was right, especially for the consumer, and knew this better than most other companies. Harm Scheltens, who is still a shareholder and a board member, described the situation perfectly when he said: “In my uncertainty and in searching for answers, I have always been more certain than those who claimed they knew it all.”^{–19–}

The archives contain a document dated 17 June 1986 entitled “Longer-term vision for the Pastoe policy.” This memorandum, barely two pages long, summarises the future commercial policy point by point. The plan anticipated a collection that would consist of storage furniture, tables, chairs, carpets and bedroom furniture. The aim was to develop activities in the project market both nationally and (on a more modest scale) internationally. It was to add suitable products by other manufacturers to the Pastoe collection. Finally, the company would open up its own Pastoe shops in the Netherlands, and if the Dutch pilots proved successful, it would roll out the formula internationally.

The plan contained just one commercial aim that was actually achieved by 2012, viz., to generate half of its turnover in the Netherlands and the other half from abroad. The task for the current management is to increase the total volume of sales by increasing consumer brand awareness. As Van der Voort sums up: “Pastoe has been a *designers* label for a long time, but now we tend to operate as a *design* label. The next few years will be more about the brand than about the individual designers. Interestingly, it appears that precisely because of this we are once again attracting a particular type of designer. People like Naoto Fukasawa – certainly not an unknown quantity in his field – can identify with our way of working. He sees the potential of a product for the user, and the interaction between the object and the user as being much more interesting than the designer’s personal statement. Perhaps we are definitively leaving that stage behind us.”^{–20–}

– 16– Discussion with the author, 7 October 2012.

– 17– Caroline Abcouwer, “Honderd jaar eigenzinnig” (A hundred years of individuality), *Het Parool*, 12 October 2012, PS, p. 3.

– 18– Karel Boonzaaijer e.a., *Vision – Ruimte voor verbeelding / Space for the imagination*, Oostkamp 2010.

– 19– Discussion with the author, 25 October 2012.

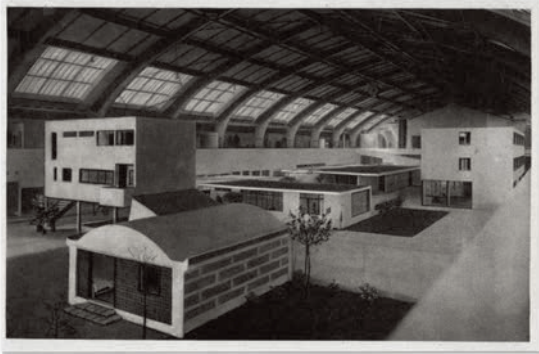
– 20– Discussion with the author, 12 November 2012.

— Exhibition “Like Pastoe” —
 Krijn de Koning, visual artist
 Anne Holtrop, architect

Krijn de Koning My own work consists largely of physical constructions which organise perception in some way. For example, with colour, shape and materials you can change an existing reality and reveal the whole or parts of the whole more clearly. In this way you can play around with the idea of value: something which attracts attention is also attributed greater value. As a visual artist I think it's interesting to show what's special in an existing and specific situation which is often related to a particular place. This can be a certain aspect of beauty, but also, for example, a problem. For me, examining and presenting the Pastoe archives is strongly related to this. What are the beautiful, special and unusual aspects of the objects, and to what extent was and is their value part of a construction? Furniture is constructed in a physical sense, but also mentally, in its own time and in connection with the *zeitgeist*, or just ahead of it. It's always interesting to put your finger on this, even if this can be quite a few years later. In the course of its history Pastoe has initiated a large number of projects and has produced furniture which may in retrospect reflect a typical, or in some cases an atypical aspect of a particular period. You immediately see not only how, but also in what conditions the furniture and related products were created. Taste, as well as aesthetic preferences are closely related to the *zeitgeist* and are used in some cases as arguments “for”, and in other cases as arguments “against”. Selecting and organising a hundred years of history once again clarifies the way in which Pastoe was seen in the past, as well as its position in the present. In the exhibition for the Pastoe centenary, Anne Holtrop and I emphasised the importance of conditions by literally organising the exhibition on the basis of very different empty spaces with their own individual character. ♦

Anne Holtrop The starting point for my cooperation with Krijn de Koning was to create the actual house for the objects to be exhibited. One source of inspiration for this was the Berliner Bauausstellung (Berlin, 1931) by the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. We deliberately opted for a total architectural concept in which three independent buildings serve as autonomous environments. Each of these environments was characterised by its own individual atmosphere and spatial experience. In each case the house is constructed with a different basic shape, different materials and a different colour, and light plays a different role. The Felt Pavilion, inspired by the work of Robert Morris, involves a natural environment which is flexible, with a very pronounced and independent character in terms of material and texture. The Window Pavilion is very different: the material is fairly neutral, but the rooms and colours form a striking and chaotic grid. The different planes, colours and spaces have specific consequences for every object in them. In contrast, the Black Pavilion is closed and minimalistic with a fixed shape and monotone colour. It's an environment without a particular colour or shape in which the objects acquire a strong presence and atmosphere. The exhibition rooms as such are small worlds in the reality of the Kunsthal. In these worlds the physical objects the furniture, but also the photographs, printed work, models and miniatures enter into a relationship with the environment. The

presentation is a reflection of the reality in which the furniture and objects are also presented in a constantly changing context. The spatial arrangement and the effect of light and other environmental factors determine how we experience an object and use a piece of furniture, just as in a real room, in a real house. ♦



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B



C

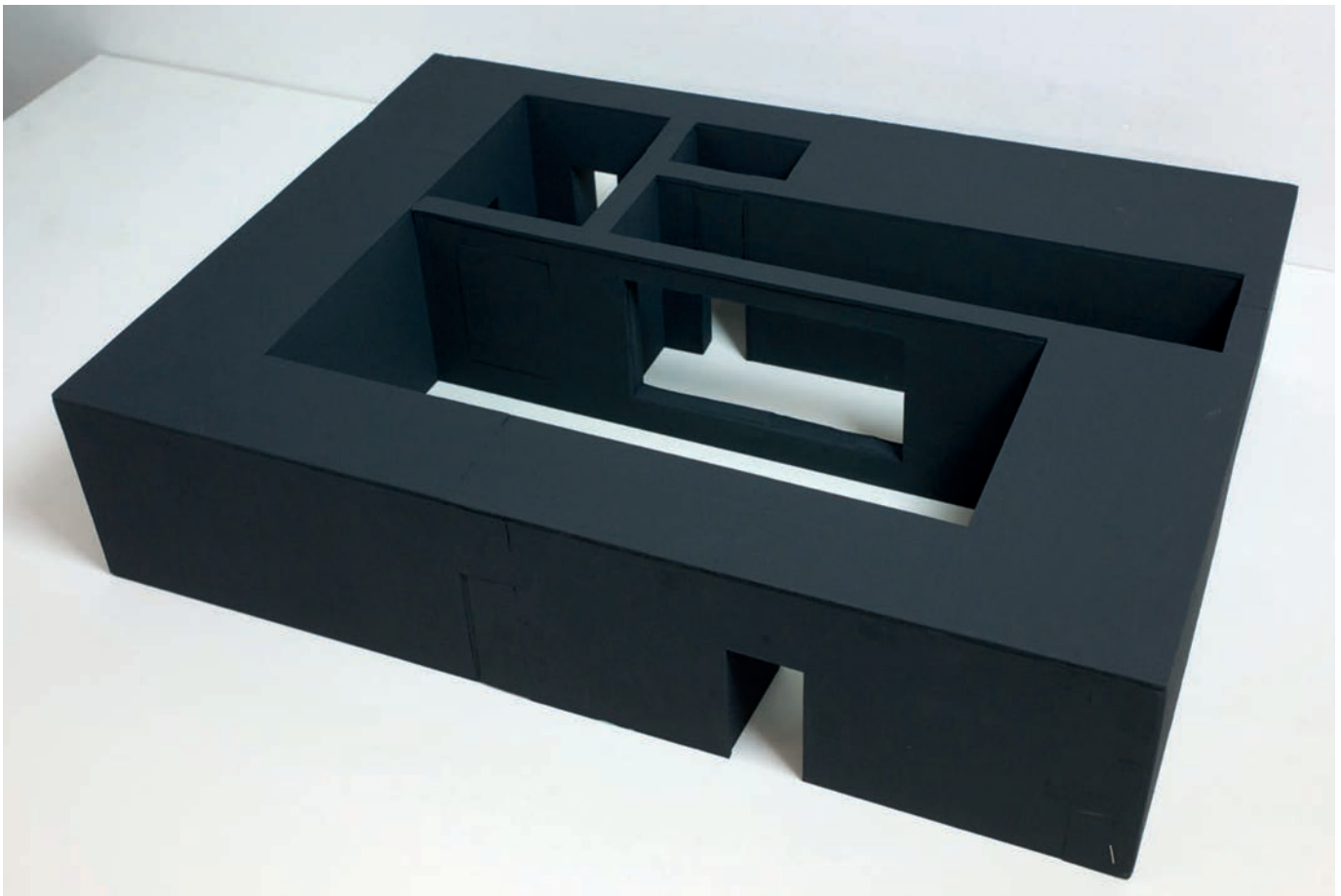
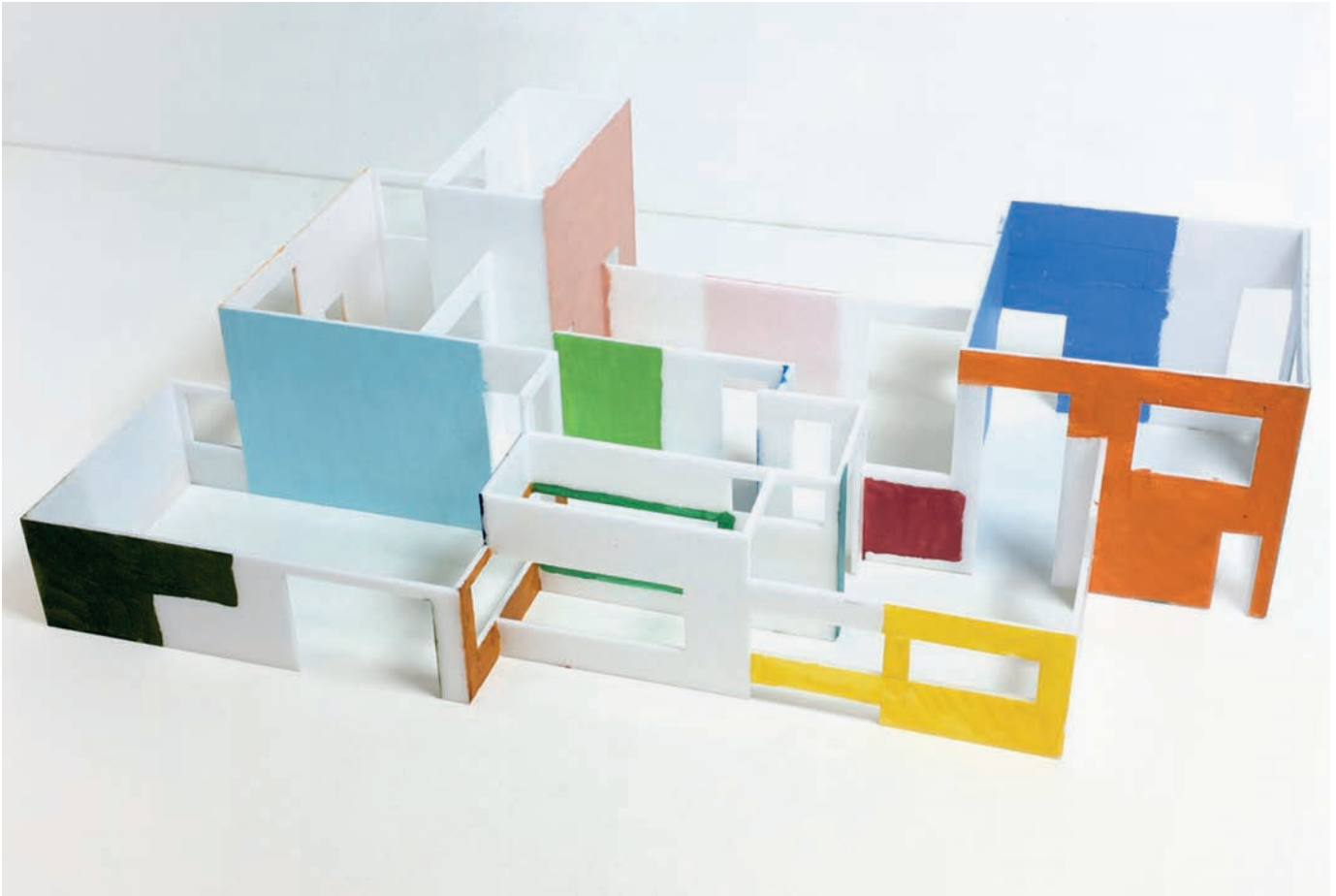


D



E

- A **“Die Wohnung unserer Zeit” (The Home of Our Times) in an exhibition of German buildings, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1931**
 B **“Office”, Krijn de Koning, 2008**
 C **“Untitled”, Robert Morris, 1967/68**
 D **“Vides pour un Patio”, Krijn de Koning, 2011. Temporary, site-specific work for the patio of the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nantes, France**
 E **Krijn de Koning, “Pontivy”, France, 2012**





— Exhibition “Like Pastoe” —

Dirk Laucke, typographer and graphic designer

I found a Pastoe chair. It was on the street, jammed in between bags of rubbish and the panels of an old bed, and not entirely visible. Perhaps that's why for a moment I thought I had discovered an Eames DCW, although I suspected that no one in the Amsterdam district where I live would ever have owned such a valuable piece of furniture. The Pastoe chair, designed by Cees Braakman, does look remarkably like it. Starting with the name, SB02. I assume that this was intended to emphasize the fact that this piece of furniture is part of a larger series. Just like the Eames chair with the name DCW, which stands for Dining Chair Wood. There is a slightly lower model, the LCW, where the L stands for Lounge. Both pieces of furniture have opted for a name that is free of any type of seduction or promise of delight. Perhaps the poetry resides in the self-confidence that is on show. This furniture speaks for itself to such an extent that it doesn't really need a name.

Braakman's design follows Eames's design to a large extent as regards the use of materials, the design of the legs and their connection with the seat and the backrest. However, this version is much more austere. The SB02 is to its American predecessor what a DAF is to a Cadillac. It has a more compact, economical design, and is more modest. Perhaps it's even slightly more intelligent. It certainly radiates less glamour, but the quality and functionality of this Dutch design are clear for all to see. Nevertheless, the previous owner of my chair must not have thought this or must have had different ideas about it.

The advertising slogans for Pastoe seem to have been inspired – particularly during the 1960s – by the potential buyer's strong desire to be educated and elevated. The need to make the world a better and more beautiful place with plain and functional furniture is behind the way in which the acquisitions of modernism are defined by aspects of timelessness and high quality. Meanwhile, we are so permeated with these modernist values that I am aware of a certain degree of boredom. It is possible that Dick Bruna also already felt this boredom more than fifty years ago.

While I trawled through the archive of Pastoe images, I came across a poster by the Utrecht designer dating from 1961. A clown in front of a black background stands on a Pastoe chest of drawers, balancing a Pastoe cube in each hand. The clown is made of roughly torn pieces of paper and is reminiscent of the Stedelijk Museum catalogs of Willem Sandberg dating from the same period. Thus it is clearly a clever clown – one could even say an intellectual amongst clowns. Nevertheless, he does not seem to know exactly what to do with all these chests of drawers – this is what happens with modular systems. So he's just climbed on top and is holding up two of them.

I'm certainly very fond of Dick Bruna. He is an upright person and the poster was not meant to contain any cynical comments, although you shouldn't really climb up onto cupboards. Everything in Bruna's work follows the rules of “good” modernist design, and yet he seems to be wary of dogmatic applications. Beauty resides not only in the shape, but in the story told by the shape. A tree, an ice cream or a balloon would also have been possible. ♦

Flyer "Like Pastoe", Studio Laucke Siebein, 2012



— Propositions —

Naoto Fukasawa

Konstantin Grcic

Claudio Silvestrin

Scheltens & Abbenes

— Outline —

Naoto Fukasawa, industrial designer

When I was introduced to the Pastoe collection, it immediately felt familiar to me. I saw an identity in the brand which corresponded with my interests as a designer. Minimal, simple, and above all, comprehensible without any further explanation. Little details in the furniture serve as “pointers”. They refer to the use of the product in a very subtle way. As a consumer you don’t really have to think about it at all.

The way you perceive an object immediately translates into the way you behave. In other words, the interaction between the furniture and the human body is completely spontaneous. No intellectual effort is needed to understand the design. That’s what I look for in my work – design which dissolves into action – and that is what I think I recognise in Pastoe as well.

When I recently visited the Schröder house designed by the architect Rietveld in Utrecht, I found a splendid example. He had made a narrow shelf in exactly the right place next to a washbasin, where Mrs. Schröder could put her glasses when she washed her face. She probably never thought about it, but it must have happened countless times. She takes off her glasses and puts them down without a thought. A completely natural act is brought about by this exceptional design. Rietveld obviously also realised that good design results from the close observation of human behaviour. To describe this shelf with a generic term such as “minimalism” doesn’t do it justice. I prefer to talk about the maximum effort required to create such a fantastic product. Minimalism is extremely difficult to achieve.

For me, the question is whether minimalism is interesting in itself. I’m much more interested in finding the context of a product, the complexity and individuality of its use. This also applies for my design for Pastoe. An extremely simple shelf appears to protrude from the wall without any support. For me this was an image which I had in my mind, a visual ideal. Obviously it’s technically impossible to put up the shelf on the wall without any support, but we worked on this with the ambition of getting as close as possible to the ideal, down to the smallest details. If additions are needed, they refer to possibilities for use which are ultimately determined by the user. In relation to the manufacturer I see my contribution as that of a cook preparing the stock. In the end it’s Pastoe which will add its taste to the soup. My product is the basis for this. Pastoe has been able to survive all this time because the business does not want to impose its own pronounced taste or stamp. It’s precisely because of this attitude that I’m confident that the final product will not impose anything on the user. It will be in harmony with his body. ♦



— Clouds —

Konstantin Grcic, product designer

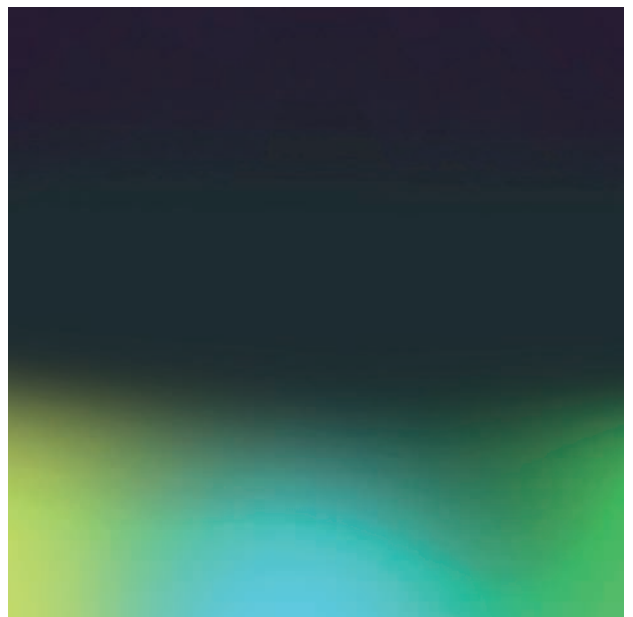
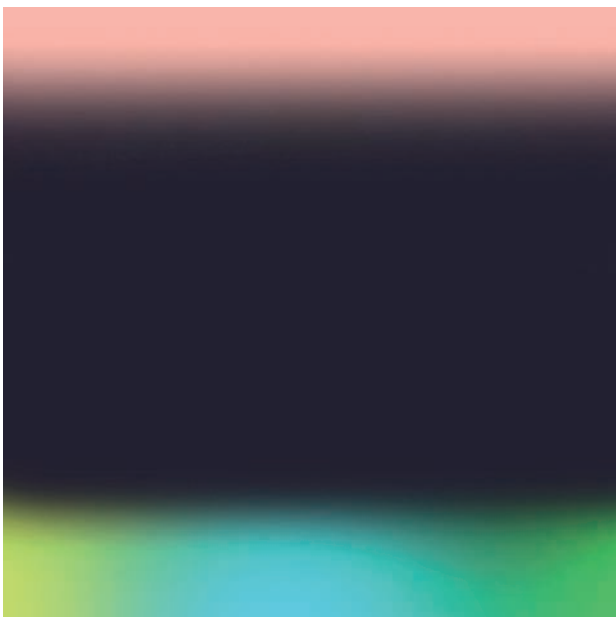
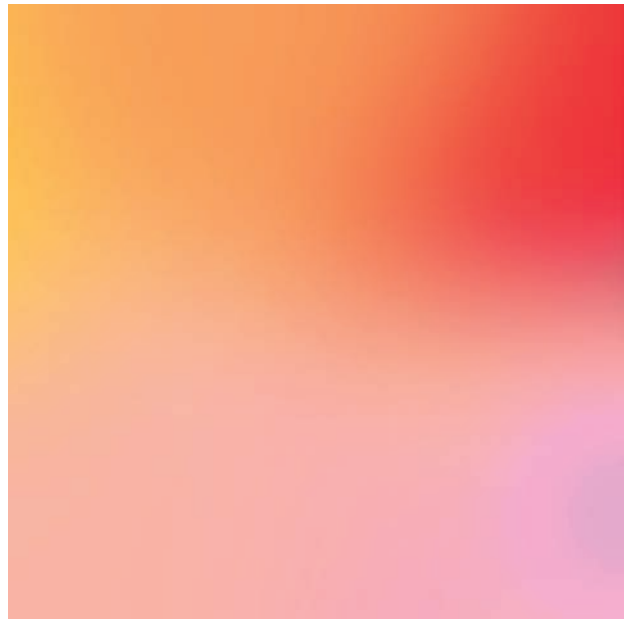
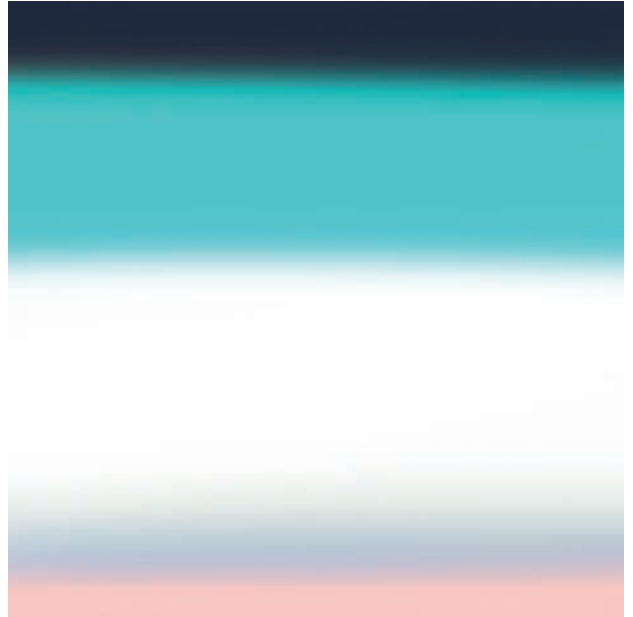
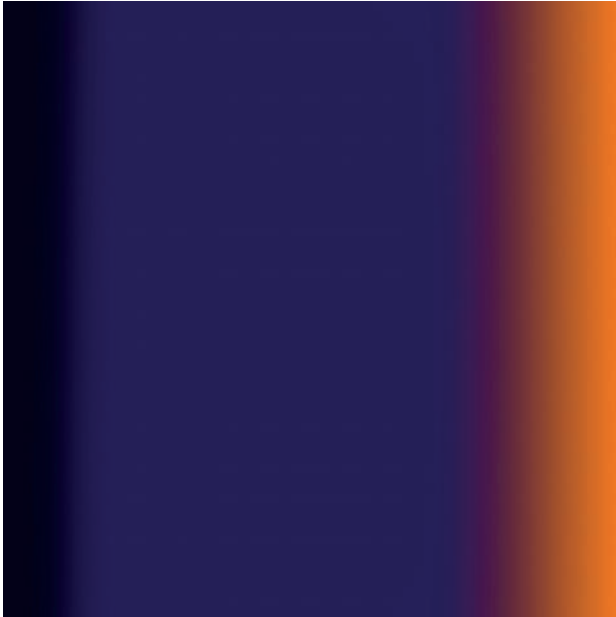
Pastoe's invitation to explore the relevance of craftsmanship in today's industry made me think of a recent experience in Italy. In the small town of Penne (near Pescara) I was invited to do a project with the tailoring workshop of Brioni, a producer of bespoke fashion. The company, which employs ca. 500 craftsmen producing the finest handmade suits, coats and accessories for a worldwide clientele, runs its own school for training future employees from an early age. Even if students from all around the world apply to enter the Brioni Scuola di Sartoria (Brioni's Tailoring School) their aspirations are declined. Brioni only accepts students from the local region; those who will be staying with the company like their parents and grandparents, thus keeping the skill and expertise in house.

These high-end tailors and Pastoe's interests are linked because both companies cherish their dedication to craftsmanship and individuality. The quality of the current Pastoe collection is largely based on the skills employed in the finishing which give the products their added value. Especially the manual lacquering is considered a distinguishing quality of the storage systems such as Pastoe's "Vision".

Craftsmanship, however, does not limit itself to manual skill. Machines and digital technologies create their own sets of skills which have a significant potential to furniture producers such as Pastoe. I generally think that craft is not necessarily conditioned by the hand-made. A machine-made product can also be considered craft. In such a scenario craftsmanship stands for quality (in terms of perfection) and for the bespoke (in terms of individuality).

What is interesting about Brioni is that their suits are not only made to the highest standards of quality, but they are also customized in their design and made to measure for the individual client. Such an approach could also fit Pastoe. The idea of customized furniture production may not be revolutionary, but the development of new technologies now makes it a lot more feasible to switch from a repetitive to an individualized production. Our proposition entails an investigation into new forms of craftsmanship which enrich the standardised production systems of the furniture industry not only in terms of skill and workmanship, but also by making it more flexible for customization.

Our project focuses on the lacquering of cabinets – a crucial process at Pastoe. Several options were researched: some traditional such as Asian lacquer and hand-painting, but also state of the art techniques like robotic automation painting and digital print. Even though our "Clouds" project is speculative, we were aiming to chart the frontiers of new production technologies that can be seen as contemporary crafts. Our particular interest was drawn to the possibility of digital printing onto solid board materials like those used by Pastoe for making the carcasses. The challenge was to carve out the true potential of digital printing which wouldn't reproduce what the craftsman can do anyway. We wanted to explore completely new finishes (patterns, grids, effects) which could only be done by a printer. As the tool for creating the digital artwork is the computer it invites us taking the whole idea even one step further. What if, as designers, we don't design specific artwork but rather create a programme which enables anyone to generate their own personal design, putting the tools in the hands of the consumer?

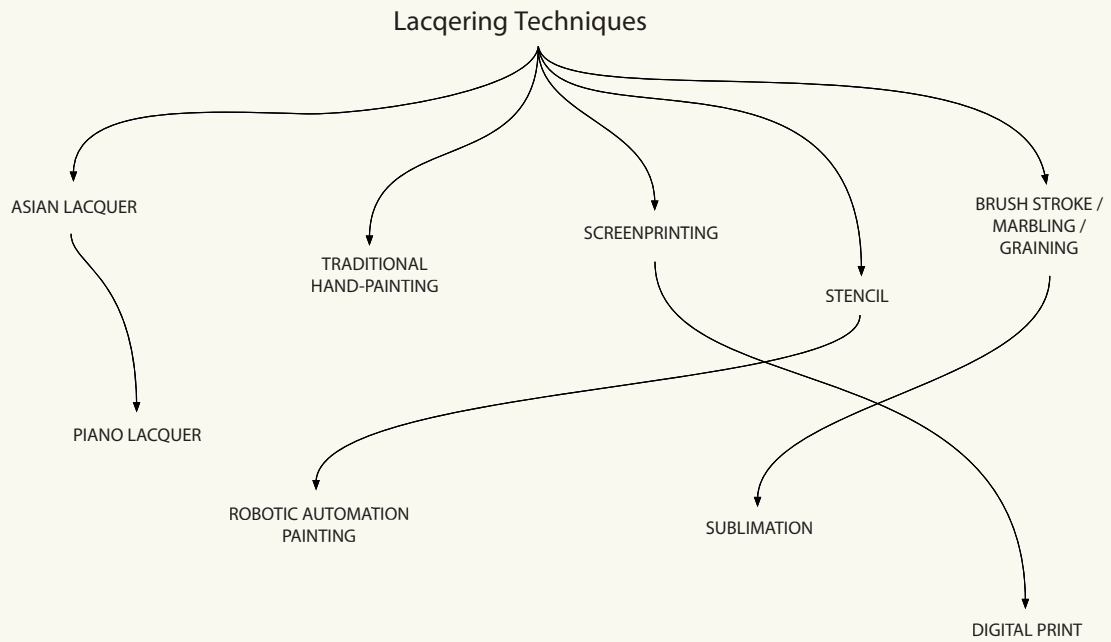


A tempting thought. Reality forces me to say however that digital tools always seem to promise an easy route for amateurs to become professionals instantly. The truth of the matter is that it hardly ever works that way. Experimenting with new techniques is always a major challenge. It takes a long and demanding process of trial and error, driven by expertise and skill, to reach satisfactory results. Which brings us back to the relevance and indispensable value of true craftsmanship. ♦

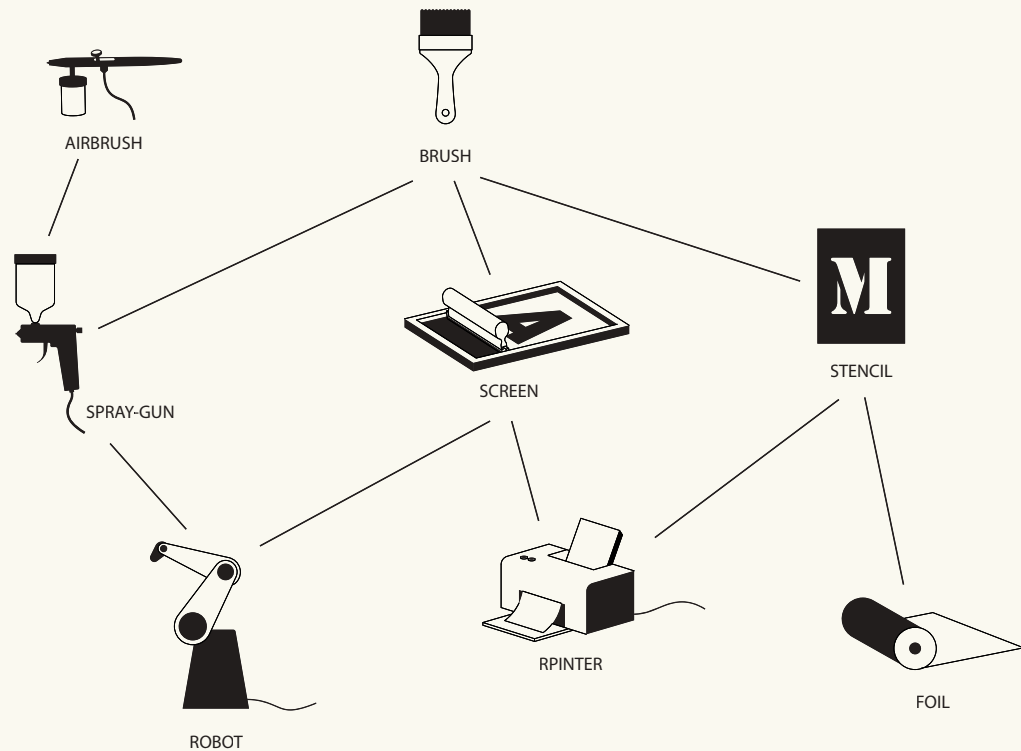


Clouds, Konstantin Grcic, 2012

Diagram_A / Techniques



Diagram_B /



— Prospettive —

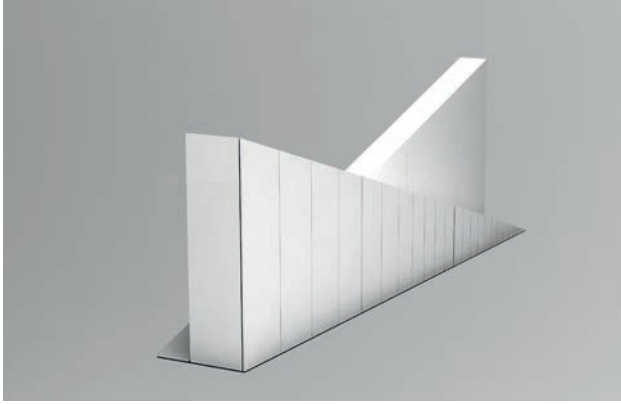
Claudio Silvestrin, architect

The design for Pastoe's "Prospettive" had to be unpredictable: that was my starting point. Just look at all the bookshelves around you, the libraries we know. There is not much difference between them. In fact, they all seem to be related. By using an architectural approach as a starting point I tried to create a different look. I wanted to achieve an inventive design, and that is what I saw as my fundamental task. I had to find new forms of expression within the rationale of our discipline. In this case I prefer to refer to an architectural work than to a piece of furniture. Whether this concerns a building, a bench for Cappellini, or this project; the principals remain the same, the relationship between what is constructed and its space. I hope that people are tempted by the design to play with the elements that constitute this cupboard, by moving them freely in space. The use of colour could play an important role in this, although this will have to be explored in more detail in the design. While bookcases, usually, look heavy, this project intends for the bookcase to suggest lightness and movement, both visually and physically.

The wedge shape is an important indication for the history which I refer to in the design. Perspective plays an important role in this. The term "perspective" – or *prospettiva* in Italian – refers to physical facts in many languages, but also has a metaphorical significance: looking into the distance, into the future, into one's horizon. In the design I make sure both aspects are present.

In Italy particularly the word "perspective" has an important cultural connotation, the reference to the Renaissance. Very gradually Renaissance painters (starting with Giotto) discovered how you could suggest depth in your representations by working with a vanishing point. This discovery transformed the art of painting, and even more importantly, human perception: society as a whole changed significantly. Man started to be at the centre of the world, of the universe, a role which had been reserved for God only in the preceding centuries. Perhaps it is no longer appropriate to refer to perspective in the singular in the modern world. There are all sorts of ways of viewing everything, several vanishing points, different truths, many perspectives (*Prospettive*).

This approach – I think – suits the Pastoe collection. When I studied it for the first time I was immediately struck by the perfectionism, the will to make things as they should be. This was clearly reinforced by the company's tradition of craftsmanship. Reality will always be imperfect, but as architects and manufacturers, it is our task to continue seeking perfection. When you occasionally get close to this, the results are magical. ♦

Prospettive, Claudio Silvestrin, 2012

view 1



view 2



view 3



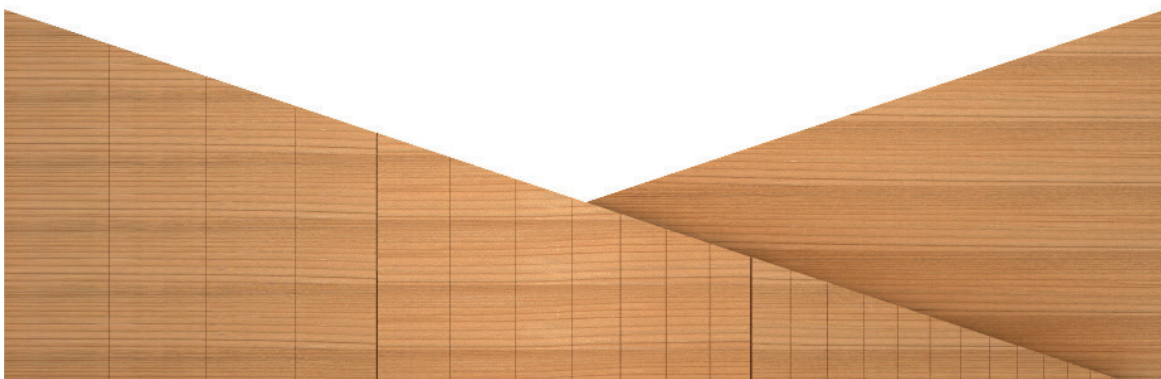
view 4

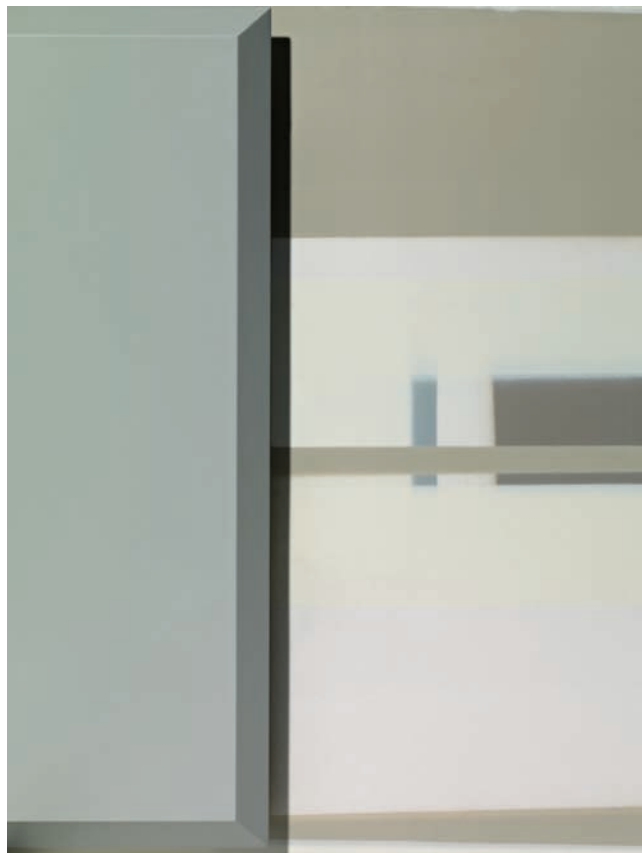
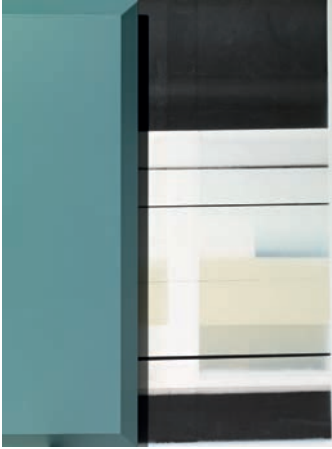


view 5



view 6



Pass Through, Scheltens & Abbenes, 2012

— Pass Through —

Scheltens & Abbenes, photographers

Pastoe! “I saw it in my mind straightaway ... a chest of drawers that stood in the hall in my grandparents’ house.” Even details that were not visible at first sight – like the insides of the drawers – were executed in a striking way with subtle curves in the wood in the corners. These drawers were wonderful, anticipating more high-tech systems using rollers, and worked perfectly. Wood on wood. A reliable place for hats, gloves, and granny’s shawls.

My grandparents were ordinary, liberal citizens and the interior of their house totally reflected this: simple and functional, but still personal and warm because of the curious combination of chairs, tables and all sorts of related useful or aesthetic additions they had made themselves. This wooden chest of drawers had not managed to retain its natural colour either, and had been treated with a green wood stain. The stain had penetrated into the deepest fibres and the chest of drawers could no longer be imagined in any other way.

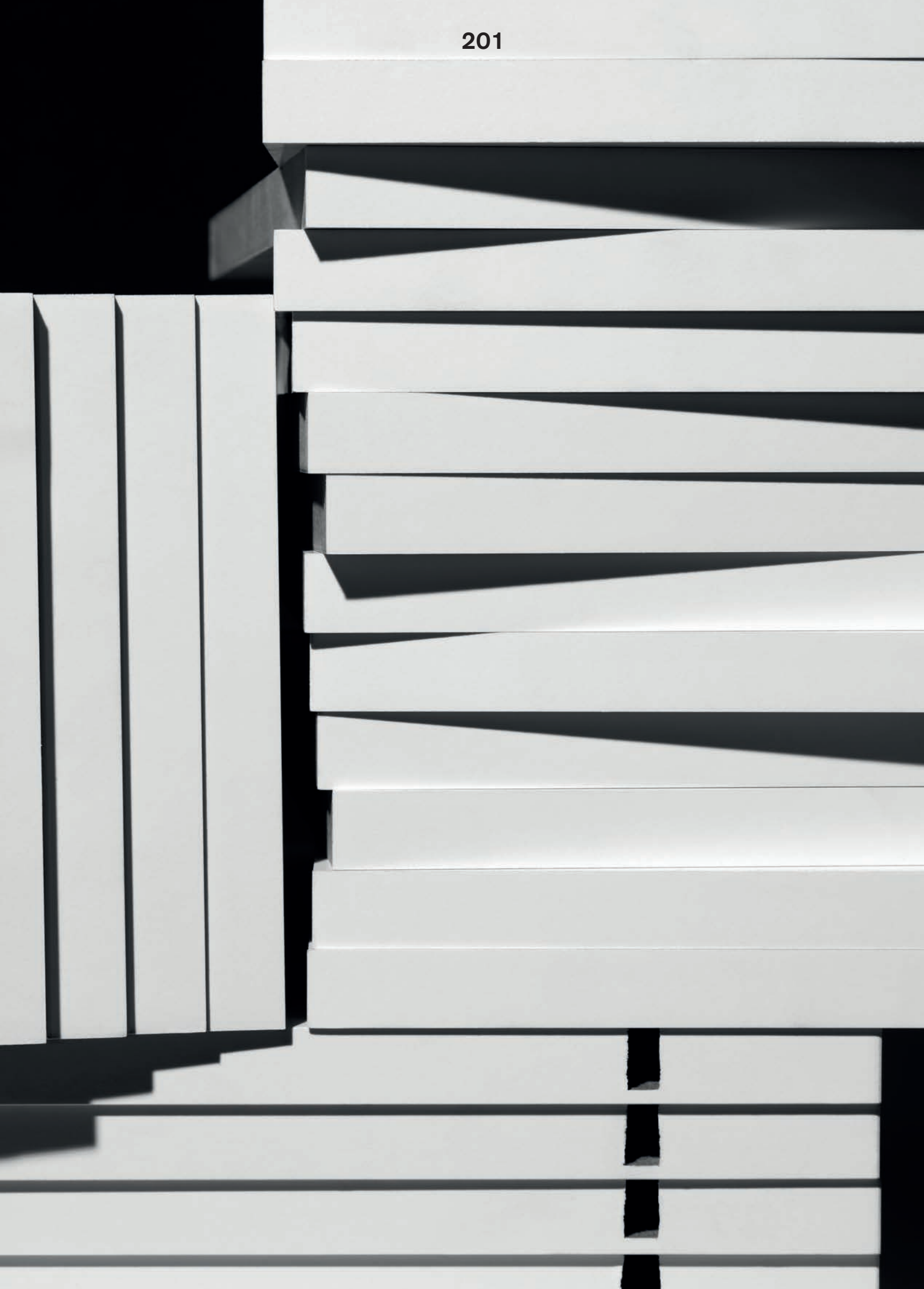
The chest of drawers and my grandparents are now no longer with us, but the memory is strong, and for me everything in my grandparents’ house still has its own familiar place. When I was faced with the choice of taking it home with me, I thought that the chest of drawers should only really be in that place.

Walking through the Pastoe factory we recognise something of the mentality of my grandparents. Everyone in the workshop developed his own methods to work as efficiently as possible, and every workplace has its own identity. Working with a wide range of parts and a palette of colours stimulates individual creativity. The tools, the dustbins, as well as the remaining chests of drawers and individual panels were coloured by employees by hand and were given a personal stamp. These remaining bits and pieces which fall outside the production line are pleasing signs of disobedience which are found in places where discipline is required.

In the same factory there are the pieces of the Vision puzzle, arranged by size, colour and the stage of completion. We see “cupboards turned inside out”, forming an army, a parade of lines, holes, angles and shadows which fit together perfectly. Vision, presented as a handleless cube which serves as an architectural element and as a functional cupboard, is also assigned a third quality, that of a semi-manufactured product. By revealing the hidden flexibility in the size and composition, we expose the soul of the chest of drawers.

We can record these signs with our camera and see them as perfect examples of the flexible application of shape and colour which has become so characteristic of the company: semi-manufactured articles which live in the factory, but for us they belong in the “Pastoe museum”. ♦





Pastoe 1913–2013

The index presents a chronological survey of special, exemplary or unknown works from the 100 year Pastoe catalogue: furniture, drawings, posters and photographs. Thus the index contains a major part of the selection of objects made for the anniversary exhibition “Like Pastoe” in the Kunsthall, Rotterdam (2013).

Due to limitations, both in terms of space and availability, it was impossible to include all pieces produced by Pastoe over this period of 100 years. Every object in the index has been identified, either by UMS or Pastoe signs on the actual object, or by reference in the company's catalogues.



**Aquarelle of the UMS
factory at Rotsoord**

1925

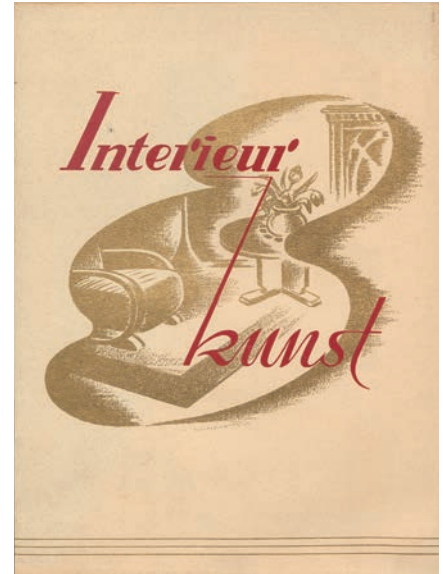
Artist **Dirk L. Braakman**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Steel tube chair

1932

Designer **Herman Frederik Mertens sr.**
Photographer **Pastoe**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Catalogue 'Interieur Kunst' (Interior Art)
1940

Designer **Unknown**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Cabinet

1930

Designer **W. Barnasconi**
Photographer **Alphons Koppelman**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Steel tube chair

1934

Designer **Herman Frederik Mertens sr.**
Photographer **Ernst Moritz**
Photograph and object from **Centraal Museum Utrecht**



Sideboard Eric

1947

Designer **Cees Braakman**
Photographer **Hans Spies**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**
Object from **Centraal Museum Utrecht**



Table

1931

Designer **Dirk L. Braakman**
Photographer **Unknown**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Sideboard D

1936

Designer **Dirk L. Braakman**
Photographer **Unknown**
Photograph from **Pastoe**
Object from **Centraal Museum Utrecht**



Chair Irene

1948

Designer **Dirk L. Braakman**
Photographer **Hans Spies**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**
Object from **Pastoe**



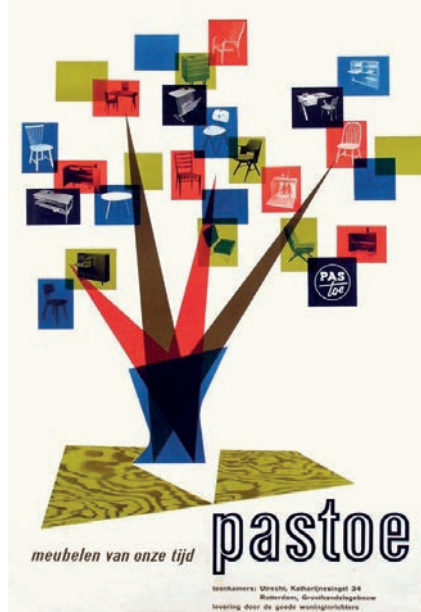
Sideboard C2-29

1948
Designer **Mart Stam**
Photographer **Pastoe**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Catalogue 'Pas Toe meubelen. Geknipt voor kleinbehuisden' (Pas Toe furniture. Ideal for small homes)

1949
Designer **Unknown**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Poster 'Pastoe. Meubelen van onze tijd' (Furniture of our times)

c. 1950
Designer **Otto Treumann**
Photograph from **Van Sabben Poster**
Auctions
Object from **Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam**



Poster 'Pas-toe meubelen. Op hun plaats in ieder Hollands huis' (Pastoe furniture. At home in every Dutch house)

c. 1950
Designer **Harry Sierman and Gerard Wernars**
Photograph from **Van Sabben Poster**
Auctions
Object from **Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam**



Sofa MB01

c. 1950
Designer **Cees Braakman**
Photographer **Hans Spies**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**
Object from **Collectie Centraal Museum, Utrecht**



Tea trolley Rolo PB31

1950
Designer **Cees Braakman**
Photographer **Hans Spies**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**
Object from **Pastoe**



Catalogue 'De woninginrichting in nieuwe banen!' (Home furnishing in new directions!)

1950
Designer **Unknown**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Catalogue 'De woninginrichting in nieuwe banen!' (Home furnishing in new directions!)

c. 1951

Designer Unknown

Photograph and object from Pastoe



Cabinet NB01

1951

Designer Cees Braakman

Photographer Hans Spies

Photograph from Nederlands Fotomuseum

Object from Pastoe



Combex armchair FB03

c. 1952

Designer Cees Braakman

Photographer Hans Spies

Photograph from Nederlands Fotomuseum

Object from T. Anrys



Radio cabinet

c. 1951

Designer Cees Braakman

Photographer N.V. Philips

Photograph from Pastoe



Cabinet CB01

1951

Designer Cees Braakman

Photographer Hans Spies

Photograph from Nederlands Fotomuseum

Object from Pastoe



Combex tables TB14

c. 1952

Designer Cees Braakman

Photographer Hans Spies

Photograph from Nederlands Fotomuseum

Object from J.W. van den Tempel



Cabinet BB05

1951

Designer Cees Braakman

Photographer Hans Spies

Photograph from Nederlands Fotomuseum

Object from Pastoe



Dressing table EB01

1951

Designer Cees Braakman

Photographer Hans Spies

Photograph from Nederlands Fotomuseum

Object from Pastoe



Swedish chairs (SZ05) in the Bergkerk Amersfoort

c. 1952

Photographer L.H. Hofland

Photograph from Pastoe



Product catalogue UMS Pastoe
1952
Designer **Harry Siemann**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Product catalogue 'PasToe berkenmeubelen' (birch furniture)
1952
Designer **Unknown**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Combex bench AB05
c. 1953
Designer **Cees Braakman**
Photographer **Pastoe**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Side table TB39
1953
Designer **Cees Braakman**
Photographer **Jan Versnel**
Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**
Object from **Pastoe**



Mimi side tables TB21
1953
Designer **P.J. Muntendam**
Photographer **Jaap d'Oliveira**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**
Object from **Collectie Centraal Museum, Utrecht**



Tea trolley Mobilo PE03
1953
Designer **Cees Braakman**
Photographer **Jaap d'Oliveira**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**
Object from **Collectie Centraal Museum, Utrecht**



Side table TM05
1953
Designer **Cees Braakman**
Photographer **Jan Versnel**
Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**
Object from **J.W. van den Tempel**



Side table TM04
1953
Designer **Cees Braakman**
Photographer **Jan Versnel**
Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**
Object from **J.W. van den Tempel**



Side table TM03
1953
Designer **Cees Braakman**
Photographer **Jan Versnel**
Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**
Object from **J.W. van den Tempel**



Product catalogue 'Pastoe '53'

1953

Designer **Unknown**
 Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Product catalogue 'Pastoe '54'

1954

Designer **Harry Sierman**
 Object from **Pastoe**



Combex low chair FM03

1954

Designer **Cees Braakman**
 Photographer **Jan Versnel**
 Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**
 Object from **Pastoe**



Combex cabinet

c. 1954

Designer **Cees Braakman**
 Photographer **Hans Spies**
 Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**
 Object from **J.W. van den Tempel**



Armchair FT30

1954

Designer **Cees Braakman**
 Photographer **Jan Versnel**
 Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**
 Object from **Pastoe**



Armchair FM33

1954

Designer **Cees Braakman**
 Photographer **Jan Versnel**
 Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**
 Object from **Pastoe**



Table TM10 and chair SM01

1954

Designer **Cees Braakman**
 Photographer **Jan Versnel**
 Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**
 Object from **Pastoe**



Chair SZ52

c. 1954

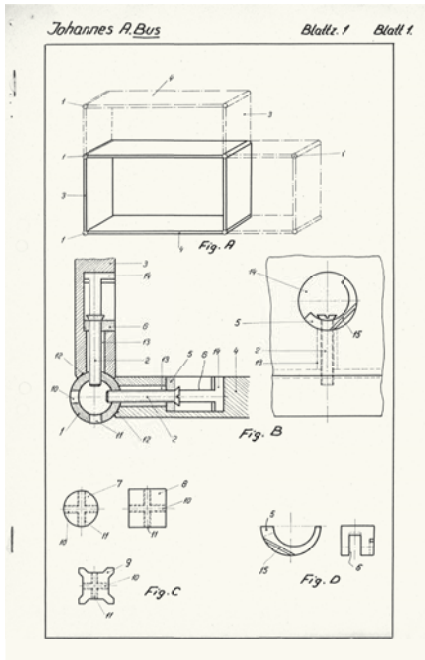
Designer **Cees Braakman**
 Photographer **Jan Versnel**
 Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**
 Object from **Pastoe**



Chair SM01

1954

Designer **Cees Braakman**
 Photographer **Jan Versnel**
 Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**
 Object from **J.W. van den Tempel**



Technical drawing
of the Bus system

1954
Designer Johannes A. Bus
Photograph and object from Pastoe



Advertisement 'U heeft gewacht op
Pastoe meubelen!' (You have been
waiting for Pastoe furniture!)

1954
Designer Gerard Wernars
Photograph and object from Pastoe



Advertisement 'U heeft gewacht op
Pastoe meubelen!' (You have waited for
Pastoe furniture!)

1954
Designer Gerard Wernars
Photograph and object from Pastoe



Campaign book Pastoe

c. 1955
Designer Unknown
Photographer Jan Versnel
Photograph and object from Pastoe



Armchair FB14

c. 1955
Designer Cees Braakman
Photographer Jan Versnel
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut
Object from Stedelijk Museum
Amsterdam



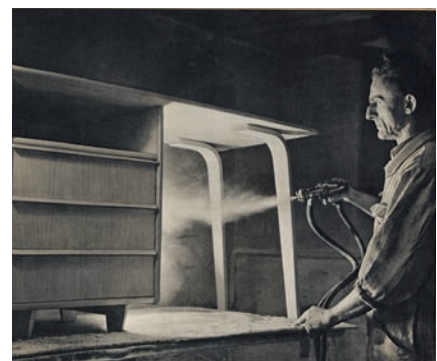
Publicity photograph
Swedish Chair SZ52

c. 1955
Photographer Ed van der Elsen
Photograph from Nederlands Fotomuseum



Publicity photograph stool PZ01, table
TB16, Windsor chair SZ02 and
Swedish chair SZ52

c. 1955
Photographer Ed van der Elsen
Photograph from Nederlands Fotomuseum



Furniture lacquering

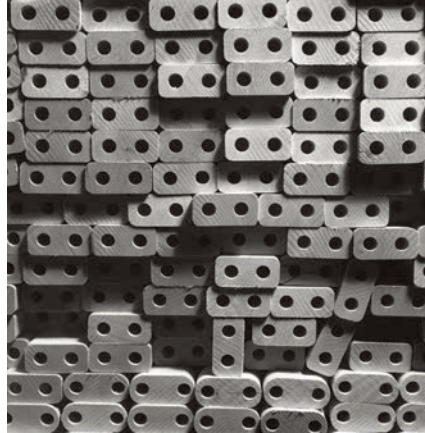
c. 1955
Photographer Cas Oorthuys
Photograph from Nederlands Fotomuseum



Furniture production

c. 1955

Photographer **Cas Oorthuys**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**



Production

c. 1955

Photographer **Cas Oorthuys**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**



**Nurses' lounge furnished by Pastoe
1950's**

Photographer **Unknown**
Photograph from **Pastoe**



Factory UMS Pastoe

c. 1955

Photographer **Cas Oorthuys**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**



Production

c. 1955

Photographer **Cas Oorthuys**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**



**Nurses' lounge furnished by Pastoe
1950's**

Photographer **Unknown**
Photograph from **Pastoe**



Pastoe company vehicles

c. 1955

Photographer **Cas Oorthuys**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**



**UMS Pastoe stand at the
furniture fair 1955**

1955

Designer **Benno Premela**
Photographer **Jan Versnel**
Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**



Factory UMS Pastoe

c. 1955

Photographer **Cas Oorthuys**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**



Entrance of the factory at Rotsoord

c. 1955

Photographer **Cas Oorthuys**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**



Instruction for the assembly of 'Pastoe naar Maat' (Pastoe Made to Measure)
1955
Photographer Jan Versnel
Photographs from Maria Austria Instituut



Low chair FB18

1955
Designer Jan van Grunsven
Photographer Jan Versnel
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut
Object from D. van Grunsven



Chair SB03

1955
Designer Cees Braakman
Photographer Jan Versnel
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut
Object from Pastoe



UMS Pastoe stand at the furniture fair 1956

1956
Photographer Jan Versnel
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut



Product catalogue 'Pastoe 1956'

1956
Designer Unknown
Photograph and object from Pastoe



UMS Pastoe stand at the furniture fair 1957

1957
Photographer Waldo van Suchtelen
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut



UMS Pastoe stand at the furniture fair 1957

1957
Photographer Unknown
Photograph from Pastoe



Furniture display on rooftop

1957

Photographer **Waldo van Suchtelen**

Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**



Product Catalogue 'PasToe 1957/1958'

1957

Designer **Harry Sierman/**

Waldo van Suchtelen (cover photo)

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



New Years greetings 'Pastoe 58'

1957

Designer **Dick Bruna**

Photograph from **Pastoe**

Object from **Centraal Museum Utrecht** (courtesy
Dick Bruna/Mercis bv 2000)



Poster 'Pas Pastoe Toe' (Apply Pastoe)

1958

Designer **Dick Bruna**

Photograph from **Van Sabben Poster**

Auctions

Object from **Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam**



Poster 'Pastoe meubelen'
(Pastoe furniture)

1958

Designer **Theo Stradmann**

Photograph from **Van Sabben Poster**

Auctions

Object from **Pastoe**



Chair SM05 and table TM10
1958 (SM05 reproduced since 2011)
Designer **Cees Braakman & Adriaan Dekker**
(SM05)

Photographer **Jan Versnel**

Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**

Object from **Pastoe**



Armchair FM06

1958

Designer **Cees Braakman & Adriaan Dekker**

Photographer **Jan Versnel**

Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**

Object from **Pastoe**



Stool KM05

1958 (reproduced since 2012)

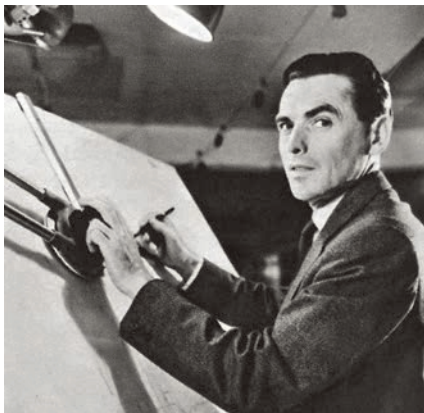
Designer **Cees Braakman & Adriaan Dekker**

Photographer **Pastoe**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Publicity photograph chair FM15
c. 1959
Photographer Waldo van Suchtelen
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut



Cees Braakman at the drawing board
c. 1959
Photographer Waldo van Suchtelen
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut



The factory building after
the extension of 1957
1959
Photographer KLM Aerocarto nv
Photograph from Pastoe



Product catalogue 'Pastoe 1959-60'
1959
Designer Unknown
Photograph and object from Pastoe



Poster 'Pas Toe Meubelen naar Maat'
(Pastoe Made to Measure)
1959
Designer Bonini
Photograph from Van Sabben Poster
Auctions, Hoorn
Object from Pastoe



Armchair FM08
1959
Designer Cees Braakman
Photographer Jan Versnel
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut
Object from Pastoe



U+N sideboards
DU02, DU03, DU01 and D10
1959
Designer Cees Braakman
Photographer Jan Versnel
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut
Object from J. Smeets (sideboard DU03)



U+N desk EU01
1959
Designer Cees Braakman
Photographer Jan Versnel
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut
Object from Pastoe

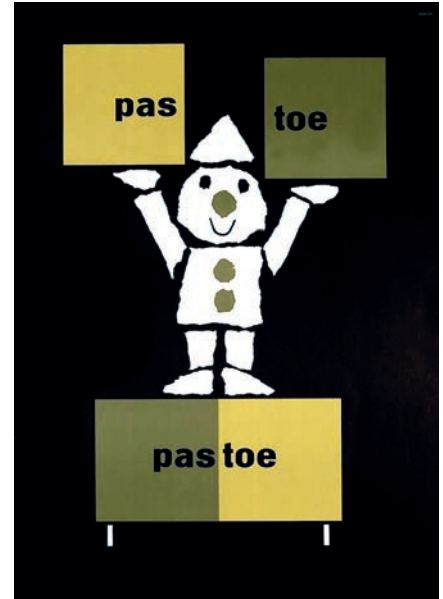


Publicity photograph Pastoe chairs
1950's
Photographer **Nico Jesse**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**



Publicity photograph Pastoe naar Maat
(Pastoe Made to Measure)

1960
Photographer **Ed Suister**
Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**



Poster 'Pas Toe'

1961
Designer **Dick Bruna**
Photograph from **Pastoe**
Object from **Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam**



Publicity photograph chair FZ21, stool PB04, table TB16 and chair FB18
1950's

Photographer **Nico Jesse**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**



Publicity photograph Pastoe naar Maat
(Pastoe Made to Measure)

1960
Photographer **Ed Suister**
Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**



Catalogue 'PasToe Photo pocket'

1961
Designer **Frits Müller**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Publicity photograph armchair FZ21
1950's

Photographer **Nico Jesse**
Photograph from **Nederlands Fotomuseum**



Publicity photograph chair SH42

1960
Photographer **Jan Versnel**
Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**



'Pastogram', from
'PasToe Photopocket'

1961

Illustrator **Frits Müller**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Publicity photograph U+N desk EU01,
from 'PasToe Photopocket'

1961

Photographer **Paul Huf**

Photograph from **Maria Austria Instituut**



Product Catalogue 'PasToe naar Maat.
PasToe sur Mesure'
(Pastoe Made to Measure)

c. 1962

Designer **Unknown**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**

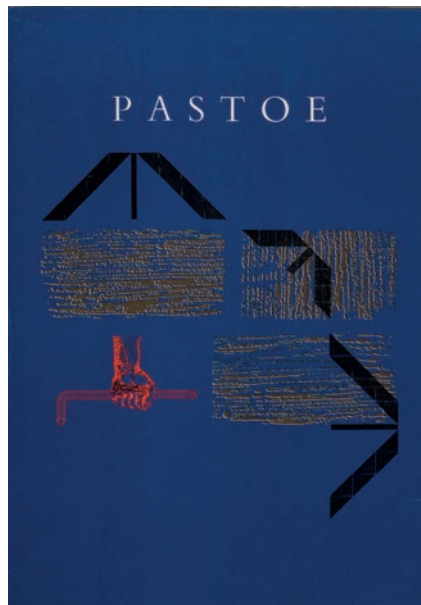


Publicity photograph armchair FM08 and
cabinet 'Pastoe naar Maat'
(Pastoe Made to Measure)

1962

Photographer **Gerrit Schilp**

Photograph from **Pastoe**



Product catalogue 'PasToe 1962'

1962

Designer **Unknown**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Armchair FH32

1962

Designer **Unknown**

Photographer **Unknown**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Advertisement 'Pastoe is Pastoe'

1963

Designer **Unknown**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Advertisement 'Pastoe is Pastoe'

1963

Designer **Unknown**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Publicity photograph U+N-series
c. 1964
Photographer Jan Versnel
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut



Chairs FM50 and FM52
c. 1964
Designer Cornelis Zitman
Photographer Jan Versnel
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut
Object from B. Prins (FM50)
Object from F. de Groot (FM52)



U+N cabinet CU06
c. 1964
Designer Cees Braakman
Photographer Jan Versnel
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut
Object from Pastoe



Stool PM2395
c. 1965
Designer Cees Braakman
Photographer Unknown
Photograph and object from Pastoe



Catalogue 'Pastoe '65'
1965
Designer Harry Sierman
Photograph and object from Pastoe



**Publicity photograph 'Pastoe...
past in ieder(s) decor'
(Pastoe fits every scene)**
1965
Photographer Jan Versnel
(art direction Benno Premsele)
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut



**Publicity photograph Pastoe naar Maat
"hoeklijst" (Pastoe Made to Measure
"corner frame")**

1965
Photographer Jan Versnel
(art direction Benno Premsele)
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut



Publicity photograph Pastoe transport
1965
Photographer Jan Versnel
(art direction Benno Premsele)
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut



Publicity photograph chairs
1965
Photographer Jan Versnel
(art direction Benno Premsele) in collaboration
with Nederlands Danstheater
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut



**Publicity photograph armchairs
and tables**
1965
Photographer Jan Versnel
(art direction Benno Premsele)
Photograph from Maria Austria Instituut



Q-bus cabinets

1965
Designer Cees Braakman
Photographer Pastoe
Photograph and object from Pastoe



Q-bus cabinet system

1965
Designer Cees Braakman
Photographer Unknown
Photograph from Pastoe



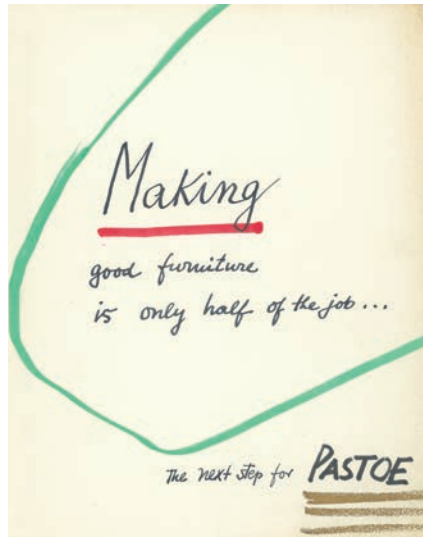
Q-bus cabinets

1967
Designer Cees Braakman
Photographer Unknown
Photograph from Pastoe



Q-bus cabinet

1965
Designer Cees Braakman
Photographer Pastoe
Photograph and object from Pastoe



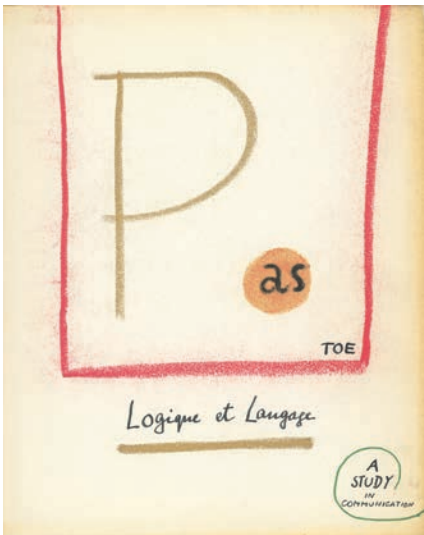
Marketing book
The next step for Pastoe

1966
Author Martin Lederman
Photograph and object from Pastoe



Catalogue 'Pastoe 125M'

1967
Designer Unknown
Photograph and object from Pastoe



Marketing book *A study in communication*

1965
Author Martin Lederman
Photograph and object from Pastoe



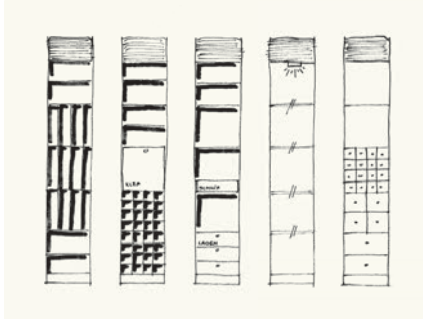
Publicity photograph Q-bus cabinet system

1967
Photographer Louis Drent
Photograph from Louis Drent



L-series sideboard

1975
Designer Studio Pastoe
Photographer Alphons Koppelman
Photograph and object from Pastoe



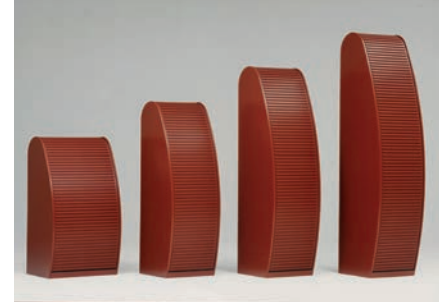
Drawing of A'dammers

c. 1978
 Designer **Aldo van den Nieuwelaar**
 Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



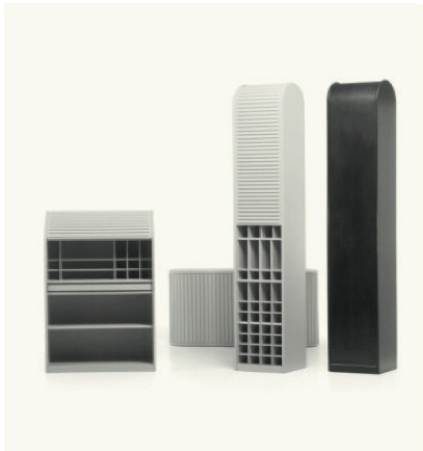
Armchair Radboud FM60

1980
 Designer **Radboud van Beekum**
 Photographer **Alphons Koppelman**
 Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



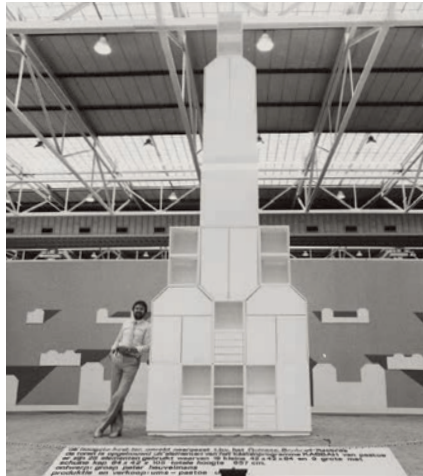
A'dammer Penguin

1982
 Designer **Aldo van den Nieuwelaar**
 Photographer **Alphons Koppelman**
 Photograph from **Pastoe**



A'dammers

1978
 Designer **Aldo van den Nieuwelaar**
 Photographer **Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam**
 Photograph and object from **Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam**



Kasbah, highest cupboard in the world
 (657 cm, Guinness Book of Records)

1981 (during Furniture Fair Utrecht)
 Designer **Peter Heuvelmans**
 Photographer **Unknown**
 Photograph from **Pastoe**



Vision cabinet system

1985
 Designer **Pierre Mazairac & Karel Boonzaaijer**
 Photographer **Pastoe**
 Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



A'dammer Obelisk

1978
 Designer **Aldo van den Nieuwelaar**
 Photographer **Alphons Koppelman**
 Photograph from **Pastoe**



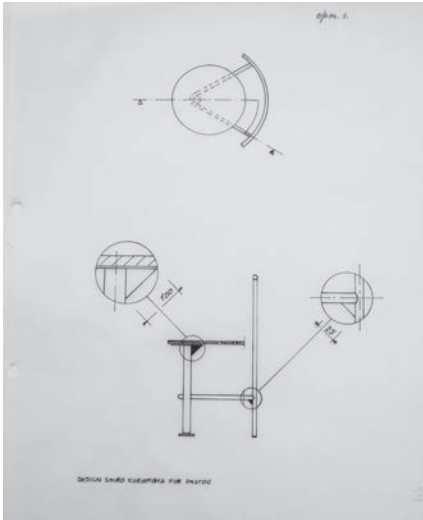
Kubus cabinet system

1981
 Designer **Pastoe**
 Photographer **Alphons Koppelman**
 Photograph from **Pastoe**



Vision cabinet system

1985
 Designer **Pierre Mazairac & Karel Boonzaaijer**
 Photographer **Alphons Koppelman**
 Photograph from **Pastoe**



Drawing of chair R108

c. 1986
Designer **Shiro Kuramata**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



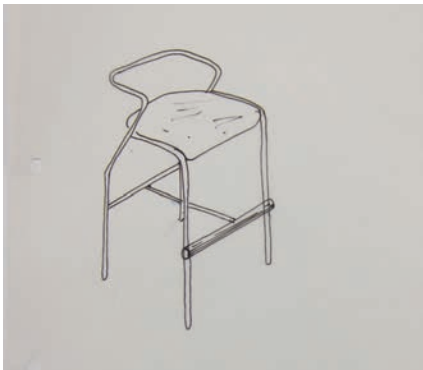
Table T8008

1986
Designer **Shiro Kuramata**
Photographer **Unknown**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Armchair R401

1986
Designer **Shiro Kuramata**
Photographer **Unknown**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



**Drawing of Kuramata
furniture piece**

c. 1986
Designer **Shiro Kuramata**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Chair R301

1986
Designer **Shiro Kuramata**
Photographer **Unknown**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Chair R108

1986
Designer **Shiro Kuramata**
Photographer **Unknown**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Bar stool BK86000

1986
Designer **Shiro Kuramata**
Photographer **Unknown**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Umbrella stand A101

1986
Designer **Shiro Kuramata**
Photographer **Unknown**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Chair Sing Sing Sing

1986
Designer **Shiro Kuramata**
Photographer **Unknown**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Lamp L100

1986
Designer **Shigeru Uchida**
Photographer **Unknown**
Photograph from **Pastoe**
Object from **W. van Hecke**



Chair Apple Honey

1986
Designer **Shiro Kuramata**
Photographer **Unknown**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



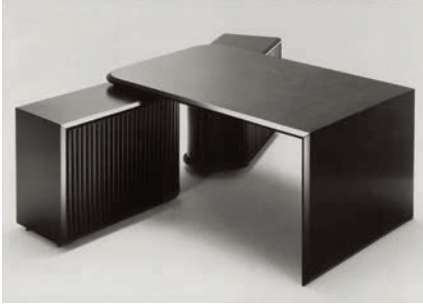
Pouffe Garni

1986
Designer **Rob Eckhardt**
Photographer **Alphons Koppelman**
Photograph from **Pastoe**
Object from **Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam**



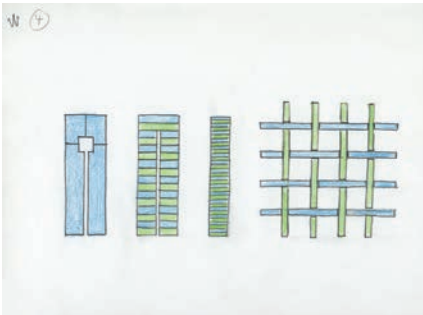
Fauteuil NY Chair II

1986
Designer **Shigeru Uchida**
Photographer **Nacása & Partners Inc.**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



A'dammer desk

1988
Designer **Aldo van den Nieuwelaar**
Photographer **Alphons Koppelman**
Photograph from **Pastoe**



**Drawing of the
'Furniture as Remembrance'**

1992
Designer **Shigeru Uchida**
Photograph from **Pastoe**



Chair Okazaki

c. 1991
Designer **Shigeru Uchida**
Photographer **Pastoe**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Chest of drawers Come Shine

1991
Designer **Shigeru Uchida**
Photographer **Takuyuki Ogawa**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



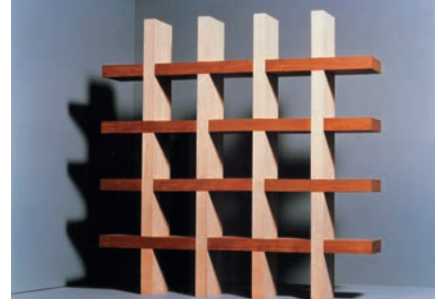
Cabinet Ramona

1991
Designer **Shigeru Uchida**
Photographer **Takuyuki Ogawa**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Chest of drawers Come Rain

1991
Designer **Shigeru Uchida**
Photographer **Takuyuki Ogawa**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



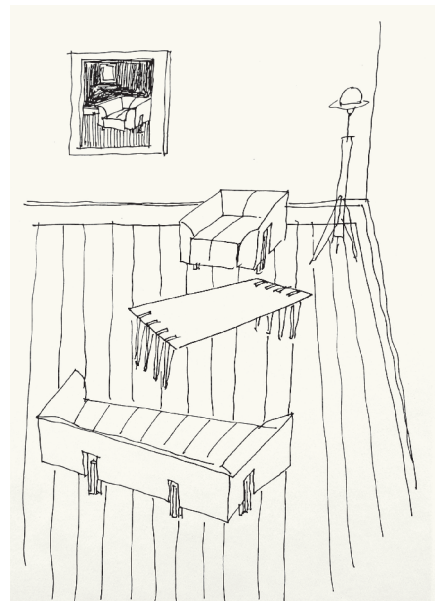
Cabinet Day by Day

1991
Designer **Shigeru Uchida**
Photographer **Takuyuki Ogawa**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Drawing of sofa Isu and table Taku

1995
Designer **Shigeru Uchida**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Drawing Uchida furniture pieces

1995
Designer **Shigeru Uchida**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Horizontals cabinets

1999

Designer **Shigeru Uchida**

Photographer **Alphons Koppelman**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**

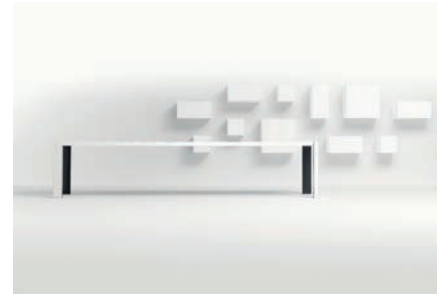


Drawing of Low Chair LC03

2003

Designer **Maarten Van Severen, Fabian Schwaerzler**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Quadro table

2004

Designer **Giampaolo Babetto**

Photographer **Pastoe**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Vision cabinet system

2000 (1985)

Designer **Pierre Mazairac & Karel Boonzaaijer**

Photographer **Alphons Koppelman**

Photograph from **Pastoe**



Low Chair LC03

2003

Designer **Maarten Van Severen, Fabian Schwaerzler**

Photographer **Pastoe**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Pastoe stand at the Interieur biennial, Kortrijk

2006

Photographer **Photosandmore**

Photograph from **Pastoe**



Drawing of Leather Lounge Chair LL04

2004

Designer **Maarten Van Severen**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Motion cabinet

2008

Designer **Elisabeth Lux**

Photographer **Pastoe**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Matrix cabinet system

2000

Designer **Shigeru Uchida**

Photographer **Pastoe**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Leather Lounge Chair LL04

2004

Designer **Maarten Van Severen**

Photographer **Pastoe**

Photograph and object from **Pastoe**

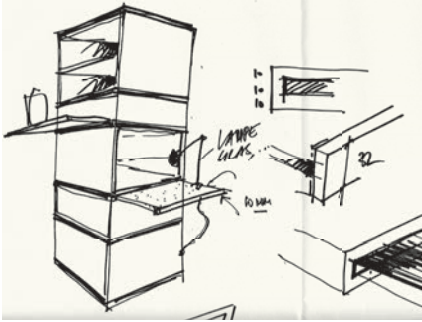


Pastoe presentation, Salone del Mobile, Milan

2009

Photographer **Thomas Libiszewski**

Photograph from **Pastoe**



Drawing of Totem cabinet

2010
Designer **Vincent Van Duysen**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Landscape cabinet system

2012
Designer **Studio Pastoe**
Photographer **Pastoe**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Totem cabinet

2010
Designer **Vincent Van Duysen**
Photographer **Pastoe**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Vision Elements jubilee cabinet

2013
Designer **Studio Pastoe**
Photographer **Pastoe**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Shift cabinets

2011
Designer **Scholten & Baijings**
Photographer **Pastoe**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Prospettive

2012
Designer **Claudio Silvestrin**
Photograph and object from **Claudio Silvestrin**



Boxes cabinets

2011
Designer **Studio Pastoe**
Photographer **Pastoe**
Photograph and object from **Pastoe**



Outline

2012
Designer **Naoto Fukasawa**
Photograph and object from **Naoto Fukasawa**

Of great importance for this publication was the work of art historians Guus Vreeburg and Hadwijch Martens who started to compile the Pastoe archive preparing the exhibition UMS. *Pastoe. Een Nederlandse meubelfabriek 1913 – 1983* (Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 1983). Building on their effort the work was continued by Hans Coeling Bennink between 2008 and 2011 as part of the preparations for the centenary. He completed the Pastoe archive until 2005 together with the Utrecht Archive and with the generous support of the Mondriaan Fund. The Pastoe archive can be seen at the Utrecht Archive and is fundamental for this publication.

Special thanks to Joost van der Vecht, art director at Pastoe and responsible for all presentations of the company since 2006, and to Wim Verlinden for his valuable contributions throughout the research and writing process. Thanks also to the people who kindly agreed to be interviewed for this book.

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