

# The future is now

**In our continued bid to support emerging Belgian talent of all walks of life, we turn to five established designers, and their view of the scene, calling upon them to handpick the up-and-coming Belgian designers of tomorrow. Say hello to the future.**

Interviews SARAH SCHUG



# Marina Bautier

✓ MARINA BAUTIER (35) was nominated Belgian "Designer of the year" in 2014 and launched her own label, MA, in May 2013. She runs her own shop in Brussels, where she also regularly hosts lunches.  
✉ [marinabautier.com](http://marinabautier.com)

I met Pierric De Coster from ATELIER DIALECT<sup>①</sup> at my studio during Design September's Open Doors last year. We had a chat about our working process, and I was immediately drawn to the way their studio functions. The making of things is really at the core of their business. They

have a very hands-on approach, something that feels more common among designers in the UK, where I studied. I appreciate the fact that they value the craft as much as the design process. My favourite Dialect piece is probably

"Nero", a small side-table with a drawer: finely-crafted, nicely proportioned and practical. At the same event I met LAURA GREINDL<sup>②</sup> and was touched by her strong character and will to initiate a great project like Atelier 365. I like how she values woodwork and combines interior design with craftsmanship. Her set-up is brilliant: during the day she teaches woodwork and in the evening she can work on her own furniture projects. LEVISARAH<sup>③</sup> I also only discovered last year, and I was very impressed by their work's coherence. Every single detail is thought through and nothing seems to be left to chance. I particularly like their "Perimeter high-shelf", which cleverly combines wood and metal. As these examples show: there is not one single way to be a designer and finding your own path only happens through working hard. Just trust your thinking, be confident, work at your rhythm, and follow your own route. It takes time and perseverance to succeed.



① ATELIER DIALECT PIERIC (31) & JONAS (29) studied architecture and interior architecture in Antwerp.  
✉ [atelierdialect.be](http://atelierdialect.be)

② LAURA GREINDL (28) studied Design Fundamentals at Central Tafe Perth, Australia as well as product design and interior architecture at the College of Advertising and Design in Brussels.  
✉ [atelier365.be](http://atelier365.be)

③ LEVISARHA SARHA DUQUESNE (26) & LEVI DETHIER (26) graduated from ECAL in product design in 2012 and 2013.  
✉ [levisarha.com](http://levisarha.com)

# Muller Van Severen



✓ MULLER VAN SEVEREN is an Antwerp-based design duo consisting of husband and wife Hannes Van Severen and Fien Muller. While Hannes studied sculpture at Sint-Lukas Ghent, Fien earned a degree in photography at Ghent's KASK and also studied sculpture at Sint-Lukas. This year they won the Belgian "Designer of the year" award.  
 ☞ [mullervanseveren.be](http://mullervanseveren.be)

**We know SVEN from when we worked with him on our first book, a project that was very important to us of course. Sven really knows how to leave his mark on something while respecting both form and content, and without imposing himself. We have a great deal of respect for him and stand in awe of how much a graphic designer pays attention to details, such as designing a letter, which is an incredible thing to do. In a way we do something similar, but on a totally different scale. Sven's work is very pure and very direct at the same time, which is something we find extremely attractive. At first sight his work appears very clear and simple, but if you look closer you discover more and more details, and a great feel for proportions and sophistication as well as a feeling for materials. Sven has to take a great amount of things into account when designing, and he makes it look so easy.**



✓ SVEN BEIRNAERT (38) studied typography and design at the Hogeschool voor Wetenschap & Kunst, Sint-Lucas Beeldende Kunst, in Ghent, Belgium where he graduated in 1999.  
 ☞ [svenbeirnaert.be](http://svenbeirnaert.be)



# Sylvain Willenz

✓  
SYLVAIN WILLEENZ (37) studied design at the Royal College of Art in London and since 2004 runs his own industrial design studio in Brussels. In 2009 he won the award for "Designer of the year" in Belgium.  
∞  
[sylvainwillenz.com](http://sylvainwillenz.com)

**It's hard for me to pick emerging talents, not because there aren't any, but rather because I don't necessarily understand their work. JULIEN RENAULT shares my philosophy and his designs are friendly, simple and clean, but also warm, and naïve in a good way. We are both big**

**fans of Jasper Morrison. He actually used to be my assistant for a few years. He's a hands-on person, and his strength lies in the making of things. He has a very clear understanding of what he's doing and produces all his prototypes himself. An interesting aspect of his practice is his so-called inventory, a collection of random,**

**ordinary found objects that inspire him. I really like his cap hooks for example, which are based on heavy, thick metal caps that are usually used to close metal tubes. Design in Belgium doesn't really have an identity, just as the country itself. There's a lot of freedom and everyone does his own thing. And with the arrival of the Internet, borders and national preferences are disappearing more and more. There are plenty of opportunities for designers in Belgium, but it's still too focused on exhibitions. What young designers really need are workspaces, not exhibition spaces. In the Netherlands they've already understood this. My advice is: do your own thing; don't look at others. And keep in mind that the system changes. Don't just react to the changes, but anticipate them. Work with the right people for the right reasons. Don't make the typical mistake to get seduced when someone wants to produce your creations for the first time and wait until you find the right match. I'm always surprised by how little this business part is taught in schools. It took me years to figure it all out.**



✓  
JULIEN RENAULT (30) studied at ESAD in Reims and at ECAL in Lausanne until 2009.  
∞  
[julienrenaultobjects.com](http://julienrenaultobjects.com)





# Xavier Lust

✓ XAVIER LUST (45) studied interior design in Brussels and opened his own studio in 1992. His work has been shown in over 50 exhibitions worldwide and his creations are part of museum collections such as Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum and Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.

**The designers I picked each convinced me with their works and their personal abilities to translate a concept into an object. I really like MARGOT THYSSEN's "Suprême" collection,<sup>①</sup> which is interesting when it comes to the material and the colors, and I'm intrigued by the use of transparency. She actually**

**regularly makes use of innovative surface treatments. My favourite piece by UNFOLD is "Kruiskop".<sup>②</sup> I like the transformation of the shape between two opposite forms. I feel like it is a project that I could have done. BENOIT DENEUFBOURG impressed me with his "Crossing table",<sup>③</sup> which is simple, elegant and very rational at the same time. The traditional material he uses gives it a touch of timelessness. Generally, there is a lot of support from institutions for young designers in Belgium, but what is most important is to experiment and create your own universe.**



① MARGOT THYSSEN (50), originally a trained graphic designer, graduated from Academie-Noord in Brasschaat in Ceramics Art & History in 2013.

⇒ [margotthysen.be](http://margotthysen.be)

② UNFOLD / CLAIRE WARNIER (37) & DRIES VERBRUGGEN (35) both graduated from the Design Academy Eindhoven in 2002. Claire also received a Master of Arts at the University of Ghent in 2008.

⇒ [unfold.be](http://unfold.be)

③ BENOIT DENEUFBOURG (38) studied interior architecture at Saint-Luc Brussels, where he graduated in 2001.

⇒ [benoitdeneufbourg.com](http://benoitdeneufbourg.com)



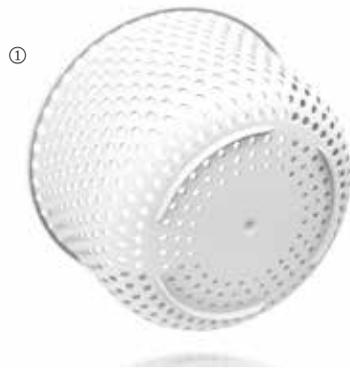


# Jean-François d'Or

✓ JEAN FRANCOIS D'OR (41) launched loudordesign studio in 2003, an industrial design office based in Brussels. He has a degree in industrial design from La Cambre and two years ago won the Belgian "Designer of the year" award.  
 ∞ [loudordesign.be](http://loudordesign.be)

**My three nominees are quite different from each other, but they all have an approach that is very personal. I've been following their high-quality work for years. JUDICAEEL<sup>①</sup> is someone who doesn't search the spotlight of the media. He doesn't make a lot of noise about his work, and I'm happy he's getting some exposure here. I'm impressed by his work the did for Tupperware for example, where he as a designer stood in the shadow of the brand,**

**but made very good work. I also remember his research for acoustic products a few years ago, which was innovative, new, complete and sensitive all at the same time. FRÉDÉRIQUE<sup>②</sup> was one of my students at CAD, and already back then her work was interesting: very experimental and personal. She made her own version of a spinning top, turning it into a new toy for kids and grown-ups with surprising results. DAMIEN<sup>③</sup>'s creations are more art objects than design. His work is very experimental, and it's a lot about research and finding solutions. My advice to young designers: Really go for it and don't make compromises. Go all the way in your research and experiment. Every generation brings new solutions, not only new models or a new style.**



① JUDICAEEL CORNU (29) graduated from Brussels La Cambre in 2008.  
 ∞ [judicaelcornu.com](http://judicaelcornu.com)

② FRÉDÉRIQUE FICHEROULLE (27) graduated in Interior Architecture & Design from Brussels' College of Advertising and Design (CAD) in 2012.  
 ∞ [frederiqueficheroulle.com](http://frederiqueficheroulle.com)

③ DAMIEN GERNAY (39) studied at ESA Saint Luc in Tournai and at Le Fresony in Tourcoing Cedex.  
 ∞ [damiengernay.com](http://damiengernay.com)



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