

IMAGINE  
A  
PLACE:

# A CITY YOU'VE NEVER BEEN



MATTIAZZI  
ITALY

Imagine a place: a city you've never been. It is home to a shady, anonymous airport, flights taking off to who knows where; an arched library filled with towering spires of books; a restaurant in the desert, with a table set for a future banquet; and shimmering courtyards looking out over the sea, palm fronds shivering in the wind.

This locale is an enigma: it summons your wildest dreams, your deepest fears. It's wide and open, but layered with silent, intricate mysteries. As blinding bright as a night-time sun, as dark as a jet black swan, it's a place you almost know, might get to know, or could one day find yourself in.







PREVIOUS PAGE:

*MC1 He Said / She Said by Nitzan Cohen*  
CHAIR black on ash

*MC10 Clerici by Konstantin Grcic*  
LOUNGE red on ash  
TABLE red on ash

*MC1 He Said / She Said by Nitzan Cohen*  
CHAIR black on ash









PREVIOUS PAGE:

*MC10 Clerici by Konstantin Grcic*

LOUNGE iroko oiled

TABLE iroko oiled

*MC1 He Said / She Said by Nitzan Cohen*

CHAIR black on ash

*MC10 Clerici by Konstantin Grcic*

LOUNGE iroko oiled



“You take  
delight

not in a

city’s seven

or seventy  
wonders,



but in the  
answer

it gives to a  
question

of yours.”



Words allow us to create images, to construct an environment that never really existed. We can “see” in our mind’s eye, a city we know nothing about, whether it’s a bustling square full of blank faces or a cold, anonymous place that seems almost uninhabited.

Those syllables imagine places that are not real – perhaps they will be in the future, perhaps they never could be. Words can corral our other senses into submission, conjuring up towering skyscrapers made of thin air, winding streets consisting of empty atoms, parks and meadows filled with nothing more than the flimsy fancy of fiction.



*MC2 Branca by Sam Hecht & Kim Colin*  
CHAIR natural ash  
CHAIR black on ash  
TABLE white on ash











PREVIOUS PAGE:

*MC2 Branca by Sam Hecht & Kim Colin*

CHAIR natural ash

TABLE white on ash

*MC4 Medici by Konstantin Grcic*

Various colours

*MC4 Medici by Konstantin Grcic*

Various colours

*MC2 Branca by Sam Hecht & Kim Colin*

CHAIR natural ash



*MC4 Medici by Konstantin Grcic*  
LOUNGE yellow on ash  
TABLE yellow on ash  
LOUNGE red on ash





“Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else,” Italo Calvino writes, in his 1972 novel, *Invisible Cities*.

In this book, the Italian author imagines a historical conversation between Marco Polo and the aged emperor Kublai Khan, where the seasoned explorer describes 55 fictional cities across the world, portraying their inhabitants, the secrets and tales the places offer those who visit.



*MC3 Osso by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec*  
ROUND TABLE natural oak  
CHAIR various colours on ash

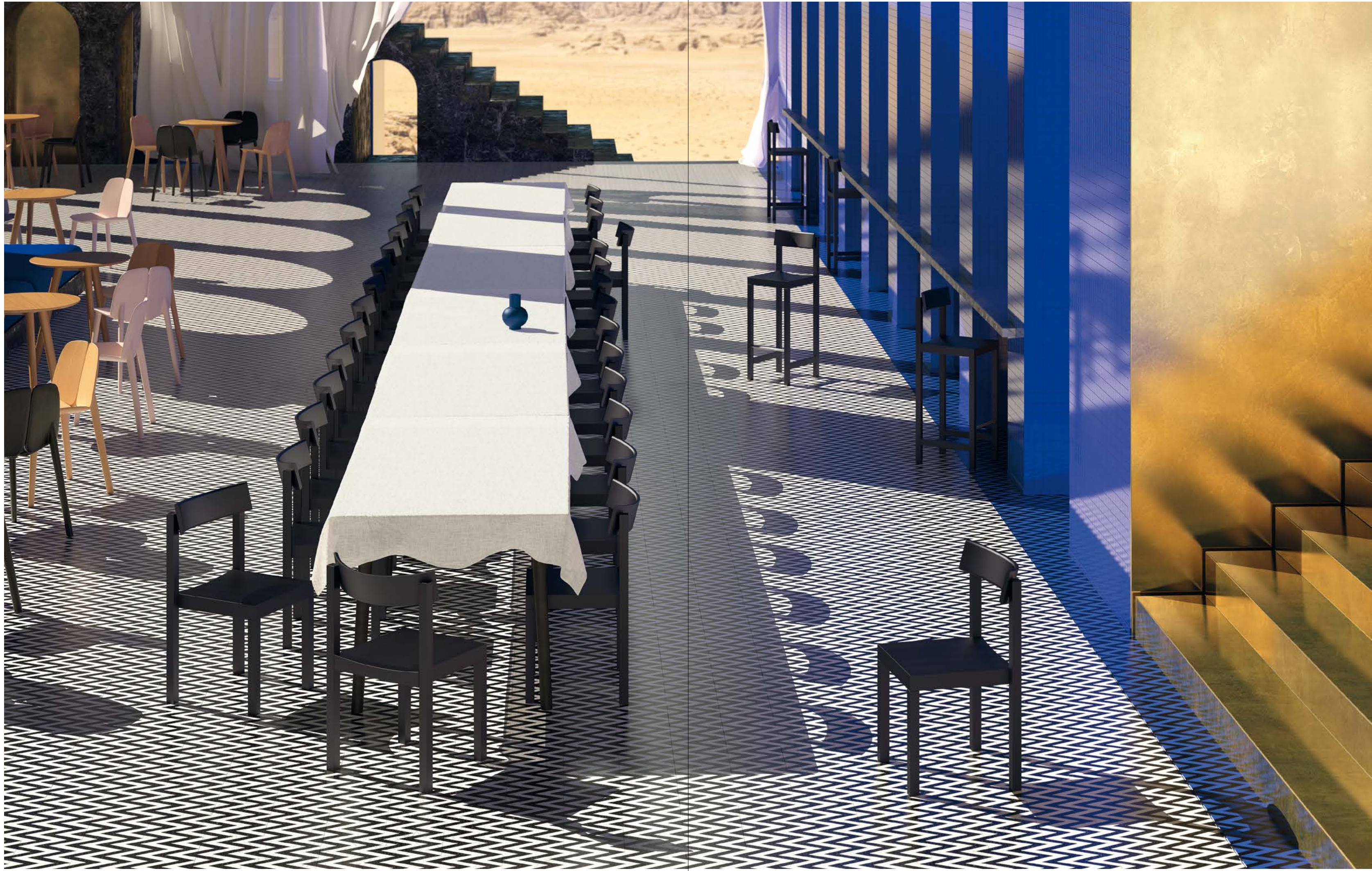
NEXT PAGE:  
*MC3 Osso by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec*  
ROUND TABLE natural oak  
CHAIR various colours on ash













Previous page:

*MC3 Osso by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec*

TABLE natural oak

CHAIR various colours on ash

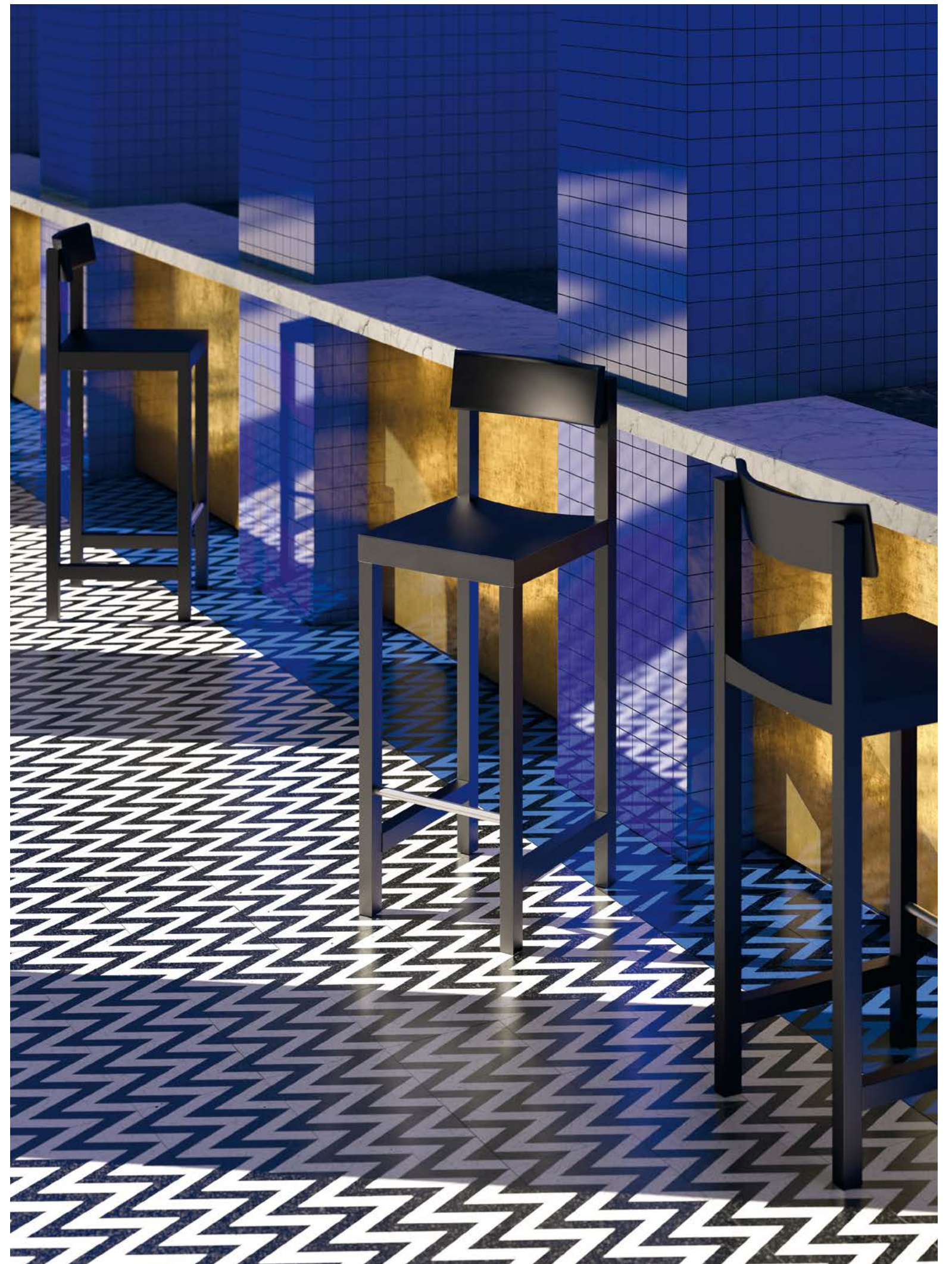
*MC14 Primo by Konstantin Grcic*

CHAIR black on beech

STOOL black on beech

*MC14 Primo by Konstantin Grcic*

STOOL black on beech





“Memory’s  
images,

once they

are fixed in

words, are  
erased.”



Polo's descriptions of these cities set a stage, where his characters dart and flicker with the memory of vitality, only to be replaced with another place's personality a moment later. They remain hypothetical, floating fictions: suggestions of humanity's chaotic variety.

But try as he may, though, Marco Polo can't fight the pull of his home, Venice: "Every time I describe a city, I am saying something about Venice," he tells his interlocutor. In these circumstances, we have to ask: which is the real city, and which the mythical one?



*MC13 Facile by LHM*

TABLE natural and black on ash

BENCH natural ash

*MC12 Tronco by Sam Hecht & Kim Colin*

CHAIR various colours on ash, upholstered

NEXT PAGE:

*MC13 Facile by LHM*

TABLE natural and black on ash

BENCH natural ash

*MC12 Tronco by Sam Hecht & Kim Colin*

CHAIR various colours on ash, upholstered









*MC12 Tronco by Sam Hecht & Kim Colin*  
CHAIR Black and red on ash, upholstered  
TABLE natural ash

NEXT PAGE:

*MC13 Facile by LHM*  
TABLE black on ash

*MC12 Tronco by Sam Hecht & Kim Colin*  
CHAIR various colours on ash









In the 18th century, Étienne-Louis Boullée designed many neoclassical buildings inspired by the majesty of geometrical forms. Sublime and deeply impressive in size, his buildings make the viewer feel microscopic, aiming for perfection in form through geometry. Compared to nature's majesty, we are as insignificant as an ant, looking at the mind-boggling universe.

Infinity, conjured out of classical, sculptural forms. Take his round-topped cenotaph for Isaac Newton, that included a spherical interior space, a homage to the scientist's interest in celestial bodies. Covered with cypress trees, its underground secret was buried, a carefully engineered space waiting to be discovered.



“For those  
who pass it

without

entering,  
the city  
is one thing;



it is  
another  
for those

who are  
trapped

by it.”



Though this building was never built, its impact was unmistakable in architectural circles at the time. Spreading through engravings and drawings (without photographs, how else could a 18th-century building spread?), Boullée showed that architecture can be just as influential when it is “only” about an idea.

A place that doesn't exist can tell us more than we might think. It can tell us about our desires, fears, hopes and dreams. What happens if we miss a step in the staircase? And what happens when up appears to be down, when north comes out looking like south? “Are you really sure that a floor can't be a ceiling?” asked M.C. Escher, as he scribbled a hand that draws itself, or a staircase leading to its own bottom step.



*MC15 Quindici by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec*  
LOUNGE black on ash

*MC9 Uncino by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec*  
STOOL black on ash

NEXT PAGE:

*MC15 Quindici by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec*  
LOUNGE black on ash

*MC9 Uncino by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec*  
STOOL natural and black on ash









*MC9 Uncino by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec*  
 CHAIR VERSION A black on ash  
*MC15 Quindici by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec*  
 CHAISE LONGUE natural ash

NEXT PAGE:

*MC15 Quindici by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec*  
 CHAISE LONGUE natural ash  
 LOUNGE black on ash  
*MC9 Uncino by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec*  
 CHAIR VERSION A black on ash









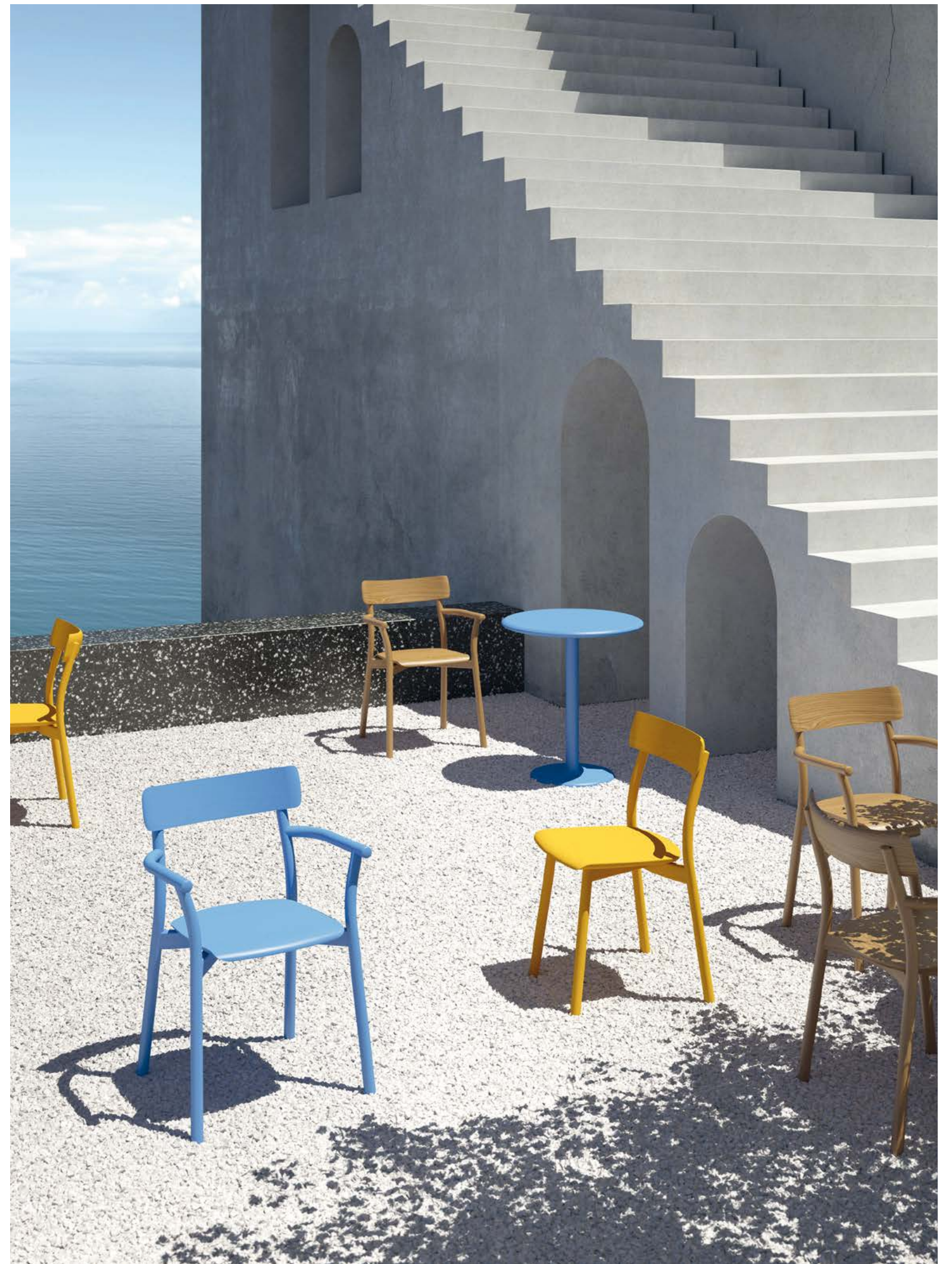
Escher, like Boullée was deeply inspired by the inherent rules of the natural world, and found in them a way to save humanity from its own inexorable chaos. His drawings force the viewer into choosing a solution that is impossible – is that pillar at the front of the picture plane, or the back? Of course, it is neither, and it is both. We float, in the impossible, irresolvable. We must accept ourselves as being ... nowhere.

The English word “utopia” is derived from two separate Ancient Greek words, both with very different meanings: eu-topia (a good place), and ou-topia (a non-place). A utopia is not. A utopia cannot be. An ideal, perfect place, in its very formation, is impossible. But why should that be a bad thing?



*MC8 Chiaro by Leon Ransmeier*  
CHAIR AND ARMCHAIR various colours  
*MC5 Solo by Nitzan Cohen*  
TABLE blue on ash

NEXT PAGE:  
*MC8 Chiaro by Leon Ransmeier*  
CHAIR AND ARMCHAIR various colours  
*MC5 Solo by Nitzan Cohen*  
TABLE various colours on ash













PREVIOUS PAGE:

*MC5 Solo by Nitzan Cohen*

TABLE AND CHAIR various colours on ash

*MC8 Chiaro by Nitzan Cohen*

CHAIR AND ARMCHAIR natural oak

*MC5 Solo by Nitzan Cohen*

TABLE AND CHAIR various colours on ash

*MC8 Chiaro by Nitzan Cohen*

CHAIR AND ARMCHAIR natural oak





“He who  
wonders  
  
discovers

that this  
  
is in itself a  
wonder.”

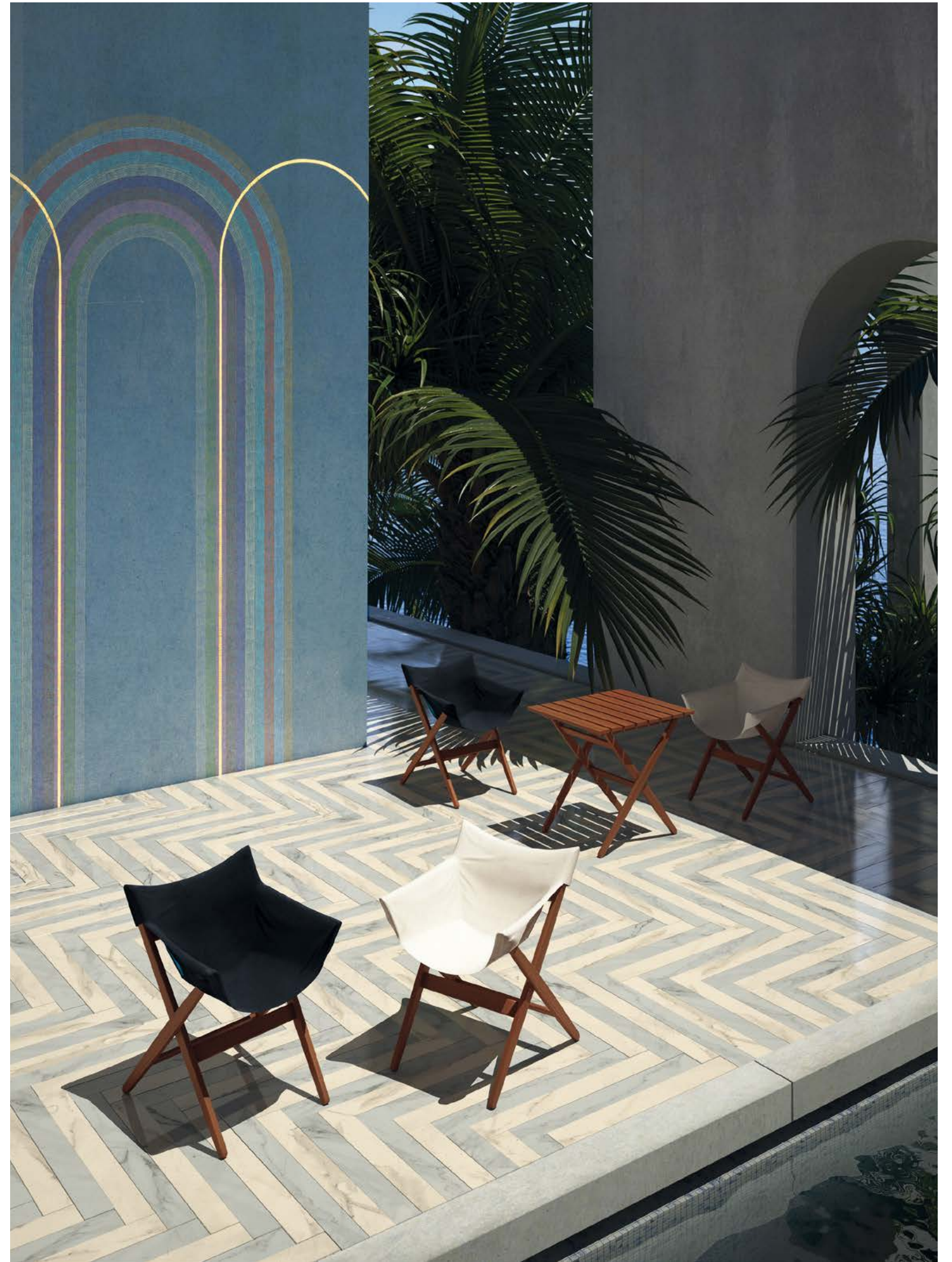


Today, we float as much as ever in the impossibility of cities as Boullée, Escher, and Calvino suggested. And now a new kind of city lives in the cloud: virtual communities gathering inside walls made of numbers and the sheer power of mathematics. Wouldn't Escher be proud?

But we haven't lost our yearning for what we can touch, the aura of a physical locus that we can exist in. Looking up into an infinite celestial darkness can only take us so far. We want specifics. People need culture, society, the secrets of the world that Calvino's Marco Polo offers to whisper in our ears.



*MC6 Fionda by Jasper Morrison*  
CHAIR oiled teak frame,  
black and natural canvas  
TABLE oiled teak





*MC6 Fionda by Jasper Morrison*  
 CHAIR oiled teak frame,  
 black and natural canvas  
 TABLE oiled teak

NEXT PAGE:

*MC7 Radice by Sam Hecht & Kim Colin*  
 CHAIR yellow on ash  
 STOOL yellow on ash  
*MC4 Medici by Konstantin Grcic*  
 LOUNGE natural walnut









*MC7 Radice by Sam Hecht & Kim Colin*  
CHAIR yellow on ash  
STOOL yellow on ash





Aren't all cities ideas: fictions of humanity? They offer a system under which humans interact or perhaps pass by each other like ghosts in the night. But whatever kind of system it is, urbanity is about exchange. Knowledge, money, food, goods: humans must find our centres in order to become more than an individual.

The urban space holds power, still – as an embodiment of society, and all its possibilities. It is this intangible possibility that remains irreplaceable, even today. As Calvino puts it: “You take delight not in a city’s seven or seventy wonders, but in the answer it gives to a question of yours.”



# Imprint

CREATIVE CONCEPT, ART DIRECTION & DESIGN

Lambl Homburger

LOCATION DESIGN

bloomrealities  
Lambl Homburger

RENDERINGS

bloomrealities

ART WORK

Claudia Wieser  
(p.17 – 23,74 – 81)

TEXT

Josie Thaddeus-Johns

QUOTE ON WALL  
Jorge Luis Borges  
(p.45)

RUGS / WALLHANGING

cc-tapis  
Studiopepe.  
“Quadro Celeste”  
(p.7)

Garth Roberts  
“After Party”  
(p.54 – 57)

Alex Proba  
“The One and The Other”  
(p.60,61)



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ITALY



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