

PRESS
KIT

FRANKLIN AZZI
DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

MAISON&OBJET PARIS
JANUARY 2022



© Noé Manalili



FRANKLIN AZZI DESIGNER OF THE YEAR

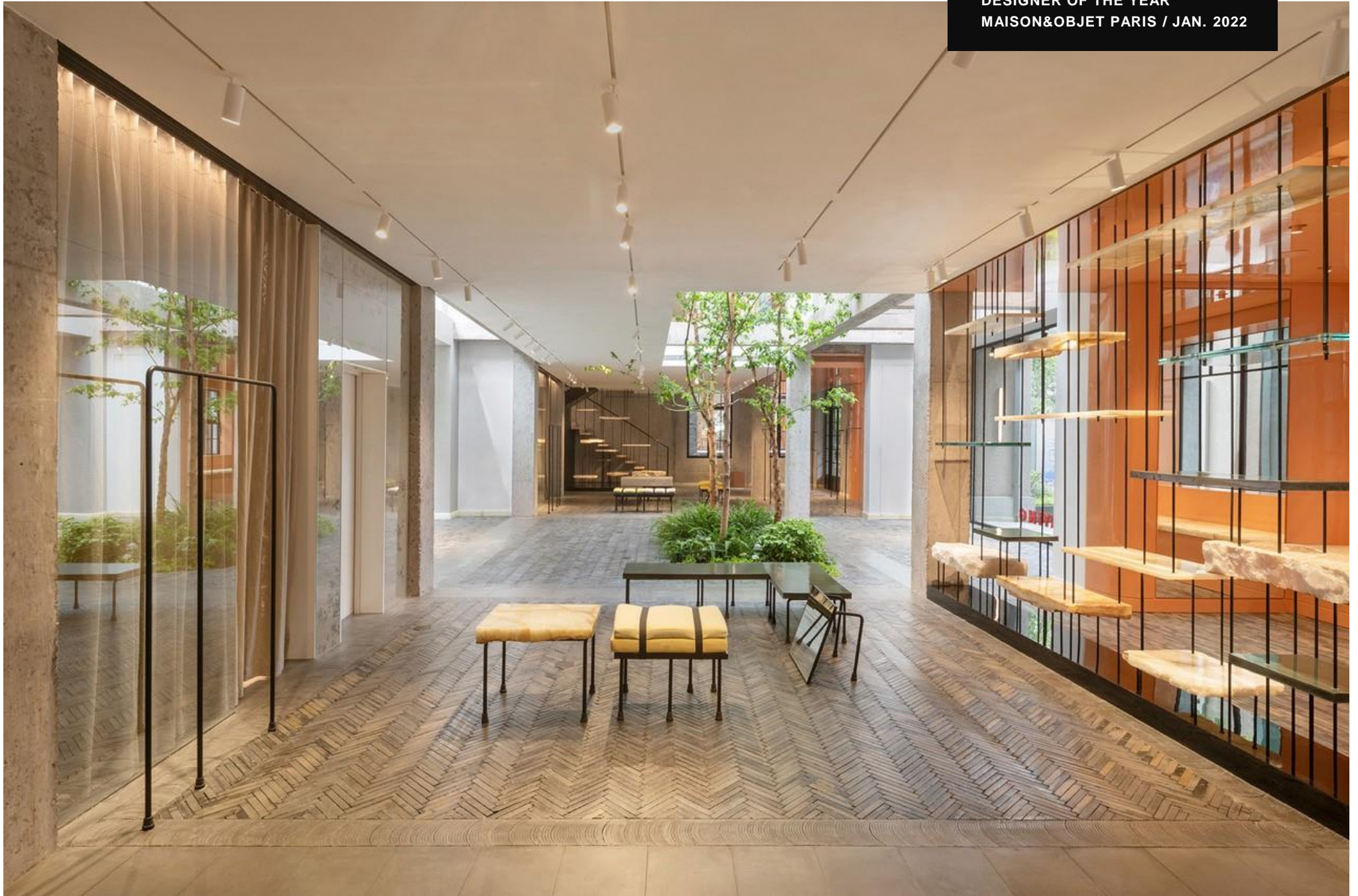
At each edition, Maison&Objet* names a Designer of the Year, celebrating the work of the most outstanding talents in the international design and decoration scene. Having been unable to present his installation after receiving the accolade in September 2020, Franklin Azzi will now take centre stage at the January 2022 edition with RETRO FUTUR, an immersive exploration of his creative process.

Working out of his Parisian agency, which was created in 2006, Azzi develops a cross-disciplinary approach that draws on a potpourri of perspectives and disciplines. By relentlessly sparking a dialogue between architecture, interior design, design and modern art, and with the backing of his dedicated endowment fund, he hones a talent for design and creation that embraces all scales and spaces.

From the kind of urban microarchitecture embodied by the Eiffel Kiosque and its prefabricated structure, to towers in Dubai and Paris, and not forgetting the refurbishment of existing structures such as the Alstom warehouses in Nantes, his work is underpinned by a quest for sustainability tailored to meet users' needs. Turning his back on formal style, Azzi develops architecture that is both minimalist in its aesthetic and maximalist in its multi-faceted functionality and environmental quality, resolutely advocating a return to 'common sense'. He walks firmly in the footsteps of philosopher and urban planner Paul Virilio, the exploratory thinker and creator of whom he was once a student.

**Maison&Objet is a trade fair organised by SAFI, a subsidiary of Ateliers d'Art de France and RX France.*

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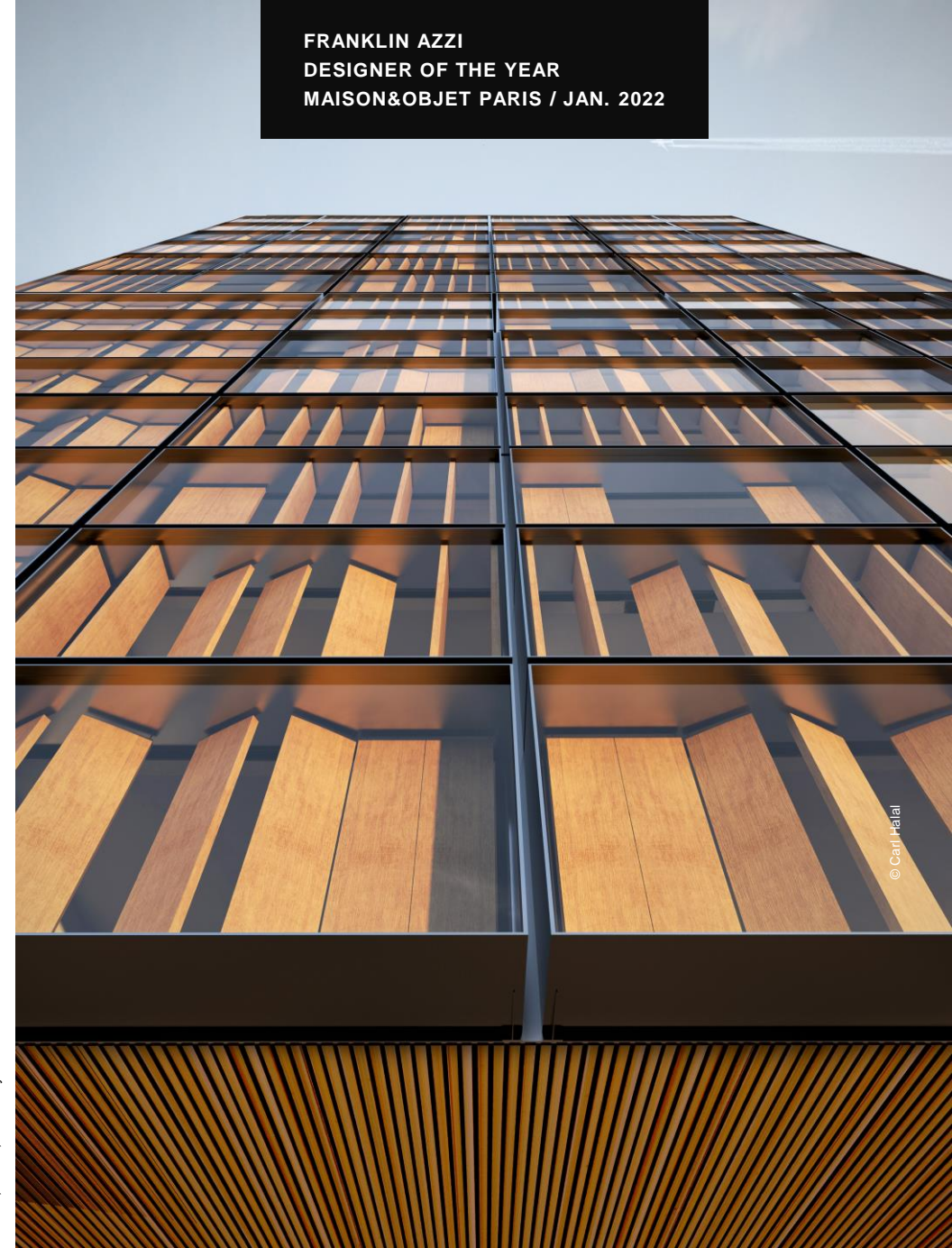


© EP Yaying, Shanghai, 2021 ©Matjaz Tancic

HIS APPROACH

Franklin Azzi's agency boasts more than sixty talented members of staff, and by combining their expertise with a research and innovation laboratory he asserts a deep-rooted desire to blaze a new trail. Closely focusing on people and their environment, he queries, examines, analyses and explores contexts, production methods and materials prior to breathing life into each space. The agency's creative process begins by focusing on the flexible use of a space and transforming what is "already there" with a view to tackling the modern-day goal of creating future-proof cities. As well as rising to the challenge of being of high environmental quality, the Daumesnil building, which he is currently developing in a brand-new neighbourhood in Paris's 12th arrondissement, flies the flag for flexibility, having been specifically designed so that its offices can be turned into residential spaces.

© © Franklin Azzi Architecture, Mama Shelter, Dubai, 2017 Hayashi





©Franklin Azzi Architecture, Daumesnil, Paris, 2021



© The Bureau - Monsigny, Paris, 2020 © Valerio Geraci Wada

Azzi's commitment as a designer-creator infiltrates every aspect of his work, from the largest scale projects to the tiniest manufacturing details, permeating public and private commissions alike, both in France and overseas. He breathes new life into built heritage, invents the living and working spaces of the future (The Bureau, Be In for LVMH), designs urban environments that sit sympathetically in their surroundings (Beaupassage for Emerige), and devises dismantlable and removable structures (the pavilion on the roof of the Galeries Lafayette department store).

Emblematic in its capacity to create and innovate through re-use, the new Montparnasse Tower, planned for 2024, seeks to summarise its vision of the vertical city: low in energy use, open and resilient. Convinced of the strength of collective intelligence to meet the challenges of our time, Franklin Azzi has been working on this major project since 2017 with Nouvelle AOM – a collective that he initiated for the international Demain Montparnasse competition – teaming up with practices Chartier Dalix Architectes and Hardel Le Bihan Architectes.

All these spaces shape a brand-new landscape of possibilities, serving up sustainable and contemporary solutions designed to benefit their users.

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© Franklin Azzi Architecture, Isabel Marant, 2012

Franklin Azzi Architecture, Halles Alstom, Nantes, 2017 © Luc Boegly



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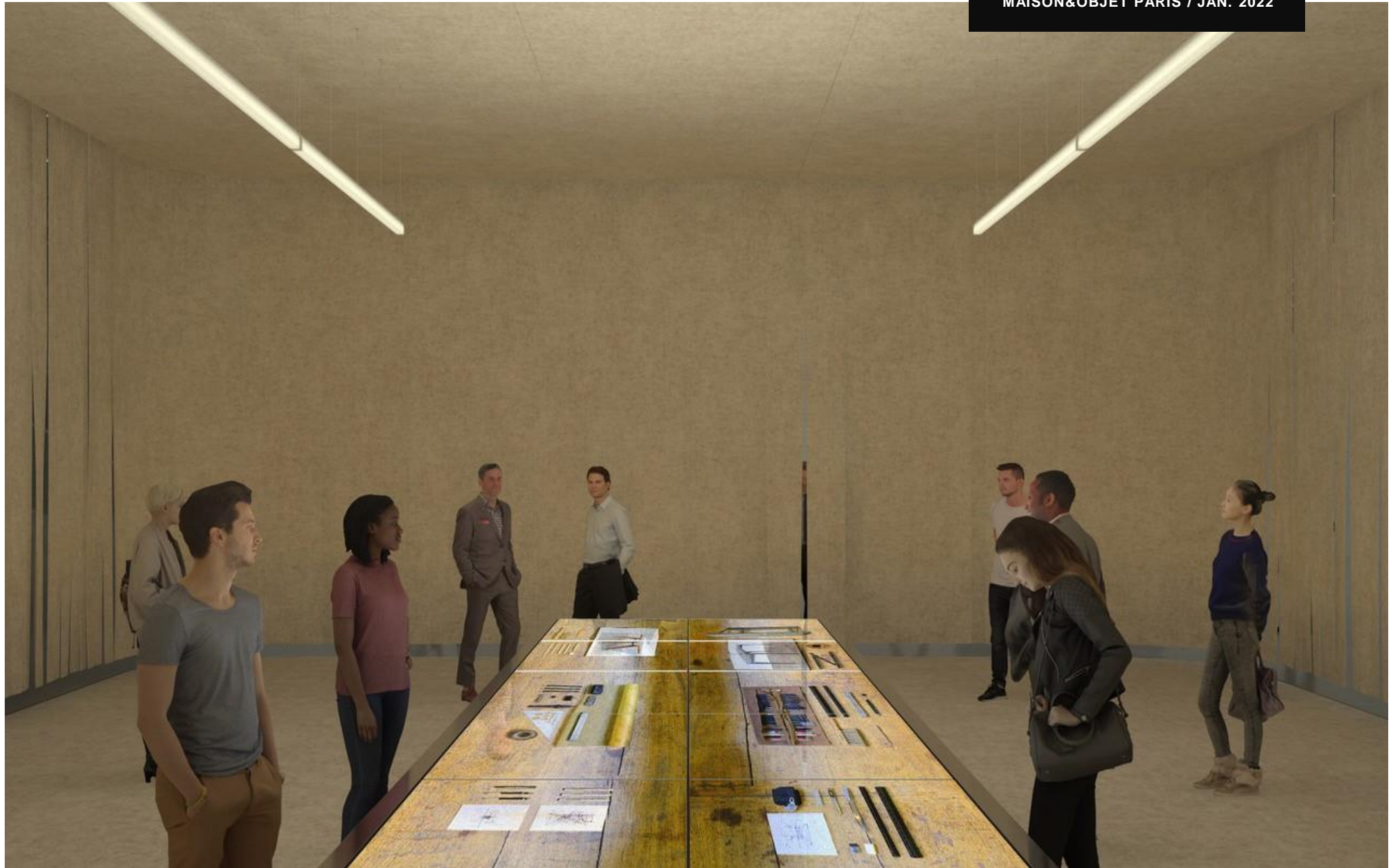
SEE YOU IN THE “RETRO FUTUR”

RETRO FUTUR is an artistic installation that explores the creative processes of the future using tools from the past, echoing the way in which Franklin Azzi approaches his work as an architect.

The immersive RETRO FUTUR installation stages the architect's day-to-day activities via a digital, modular and pared-back table in black lacquered metal: it diffuses, across a series of screens, a selection of basic and traditional tools specific to the trade (set square, rotating pen, tracing paper, light table, etc.) as well as the various items required each day when developing a project: architectural models, materials, sketches, etc.

Static and moving images appear in succession, showcasing the manual techniques the architect employs in conjunction with his latest creations.

Strapping made from strips of upcycled industrial felt separates the object from the rest of the lounge. As Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) was keen to convey, felt is an outstanding natural material that can help retain heat, a source of energy that served as a veritable creative driver for the German artist's work.



© RETRO FUTUR, Franklin Azzi, 2022

The space itself is entirely upholstered with felt, including the ceiling, creating an acoustic bubble that fosters concentration. The slatted curtain, meanwhile, invites visitors to enter and exit the installation at will. The durable and natural felt, which is manufactured in France by *Le Feutre*, imbues the space with an intimate, calming vibe. The installation resolutely embraces the retro futurism* trend that is sweeping through the creative arts (design, architecture, cinema, literature, fashion, etc.), and is one of the sources of inspiration underpinning the agency's overall approach. It is characterised by a fusion of imagery that sees progress and science-fiction pictured in the past with a view to seeing all futuristic aspects of the present become retro-futuristic over time.

Azzi's architecture is never intentionally decorative, echoing the iconic film *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982), whose central theme revolves around the issues surrounding identity, ultimately becoming a metaphysical quest and challenging the very notion of humanity.



© Franklin Azzi Architecture, Kiosque Eiffel, Paris, 2020 ©wearecontent

The tote bag Franklin Azzi has designed for Maison&Objet 2022 shines a light on his multi-faceted approach and his project-style methodology. Alongside his historical analyses, his scrutiny of materials and his examination of the original matrix, the architect draws inspiration from iconographic accumulation. This almost compulsive creative process sees all senses and subjects being freely explored, allowing him to break out of the mould and better grasp the challenges of the here and now.

Having grown up as part of the “sampling” generation fed on a multidisciplinary diet of references, Franklin Azzi has learned to digest, assemble and reassemble over and again to adapt to each context. Relentlessly reinventing his approach, the architect continually seeks to fuse his influences. The chosen design pays tribute to some of his preferred sources of inspiration, including military functionalism which can be seen in certain objects and furnishings he has been collecting for years and that never leave his side. His chromatic and typological research resulted in the choice of a timeless symbol, the target, which sits against a background of the M&O trade fair’s iconic Pantone 485 C red.



His take on the tote bag delivers a simple, effective and universal manifesto rooted in playful and incisive design.

ABOUT MAISON&OBJET

For 25 years, Maison&Objet, organized by SAFI (a subsidiary of Ateliers d'Art de France and RX France), has been engaging with and bringing together the international design, home decor and lifestyle community. Maison&Objet's trademark? Its unique ability to generate connections and accelerate business, both during tradeshows and via its digital platform, but also its unique talent to highlight trends that will make the heart of the home decor planet beat. Maison&Objet's mission is to reveal talent, spark connections and provide inspiration, both on- and off-line, thereby helping businesses grow. Through two yearly tradeshows for industry professionals and Paris Design Week, a public event in September that brings the creative energy of designers and brands together in the City of Lights, Maison&Objet is the go-to platform for the whole interior design sector.

Unveiled in 2016, Maison&Objet and more, or MOM, enables buyers and brands to continue their conversations all year round, launch collections and create connections beyond physical meetings. The weekly roundup of exciting new finds constantly stimulates business across the sector.

To take things still further, the Maison&Objet Academy now provides industry professionals with an exclusive web channel that broadcasts monthly content focusing on training and deciphering market trends. Our social media platforms, meanwhile, keep all those design discoveries going by engaging daily with an active community of almost one million members on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Xing and WeChat.

For all press information,
please take a look at the press room:
<https://www.maison-objet.com/en/paris>

Password to download visuals:

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