



Once in the city

Birk Rohelend
Jan Kaus
Janar Ala



Foreword

To all appearances, the work we do in Extery is clearly delineated: we make high-quality, long-lasting, eye-catching urban furniture. Of that we have no doubt. In planning and designing our products we always think about what they will add to our shared space, and what events and activities they will facilitate and support, or even give rise to.

But at the same time we remind ourselves that the things we make serve as a backdrop on the urban landscape, the shared living room that shapes our every day, in which stories and happenings are born and intermingle. We pass through this space on a daily basis. We celebrate special occasions here. It is somewhere we experience the planned and the routine, but also where we are open to unexpected events and random encounters. Here tales are told and lives come together.

Extery furniture is a prop on this stage. We give it a final polish, but its true meaning and importance are only revealed within the urban space it inhabits once it becomes part of people's own unique stories. Those stories are very important to us.

Sharing their stories with us in this album are Estonian writers who shine light on the unseen dimension of what we create – offering an insight into our products which is not reflected in marketing images or facts and figures. Happy reading!



The EXTERY team.

Let's work together to enrich the urban environment:



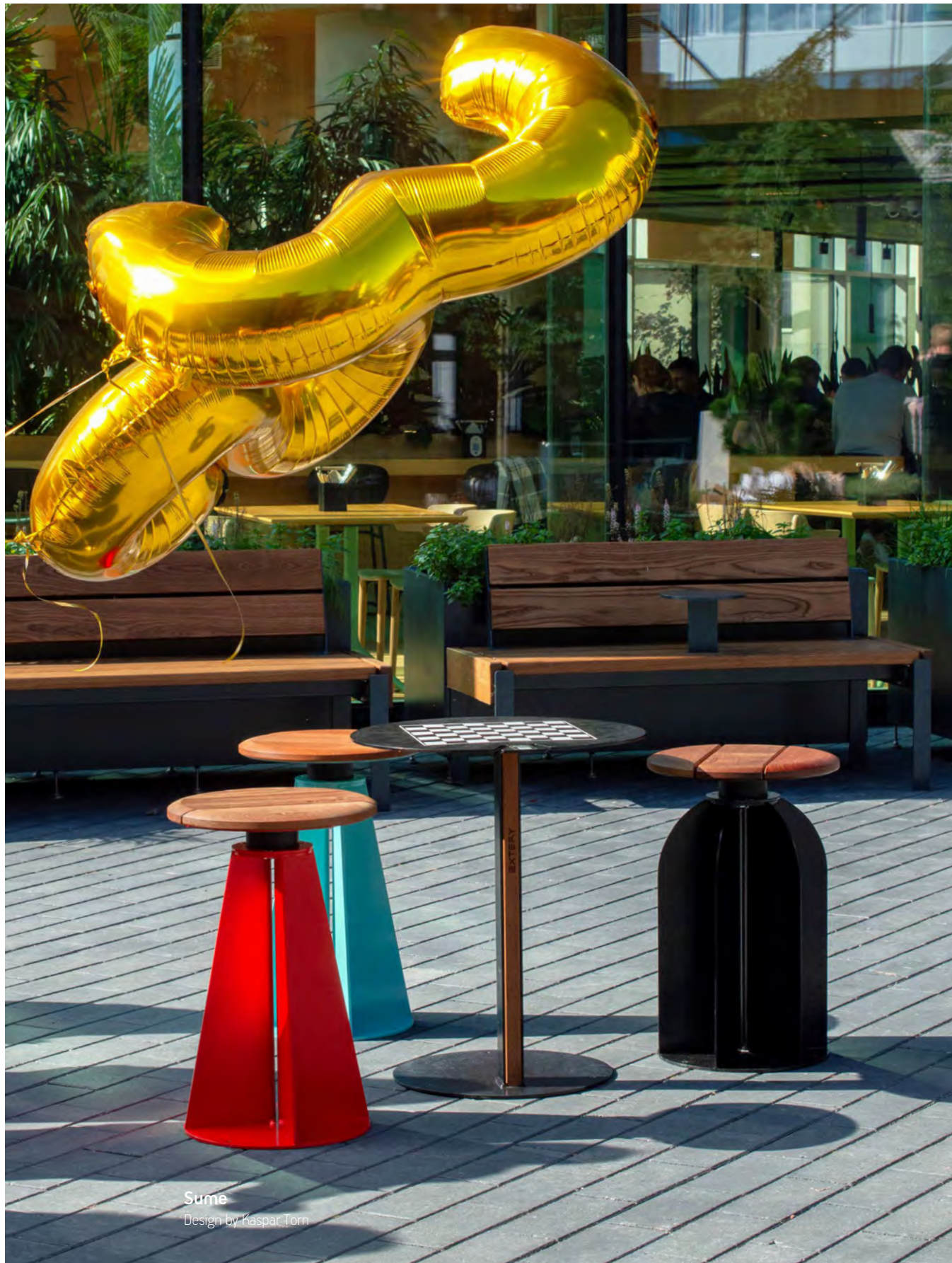
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Sume
Design by Kaspar Torn

A restaurant with floor-to-ceiling windows/a turned-around hunger artist

There's a restaurant with floor-to-ceiling windows in my neighborhood. It's an aquarium-like curiosity where passersby can stop to study and inspect the diners if they wish. At insignificant moments – earlier this morning, for instance – the way the light falls can even produce the atmosphere of, let's say, an Edward Hopper-like painting. The question is what would happen if poor people walked by and those poor people stopped and curiously stared and their curiosity grows and they slowly and instinctively draw closer to the glass and then they're glued to it and pressed against it and rub and grind against it, which makes the diners interrupt their eating and eaters' gazes and eaters' discussions and eaters' pauses and cry out: Behold, my fellow eaters, the terrible moment that has arrived! Now, my question concerns the membrane: when should you call the police in that situation? Should it be right away, or should you wait until the glass breaks first?

Janar Ala









Jada
Design by Pentti Talvet

The smooth surface of the wood caresses his coarse skin

There are patterns, grooves and curves winding this way and that. For some reason, the man – we'll call him Theo – looks back over his life.

It has curves as well. It has grooves, too. When he considers his three former marriages, he reckons they similarly progressed along a line.

Or, well, more like down a gutter.

At first, they were wonderful.

Then, fiery.

Now, the marriages are like forgotten jars of jam lined up on a dusty shelf in the pantry of memory, a thick coat of mold concealing their true contents. Somewhere, his children are going about their business. They've grown up and have long since forgotten their father.

A simple man, some might say with a shrug.

His fingertip traces a groove, then stops suddenly at a darker patch.

A knot, he recognizes. His whole life feels like a solitary dark knot.

The grooves wound around him, clashing with rancorous density

time and again. He stood steadfast amid all those benders and

curvers, his brow furrowed and unchanging, his feet planted, his

hands on his tool. Work made his hands rough; it only increased the

darkness and rancor layer by layer, ring by annual ring.

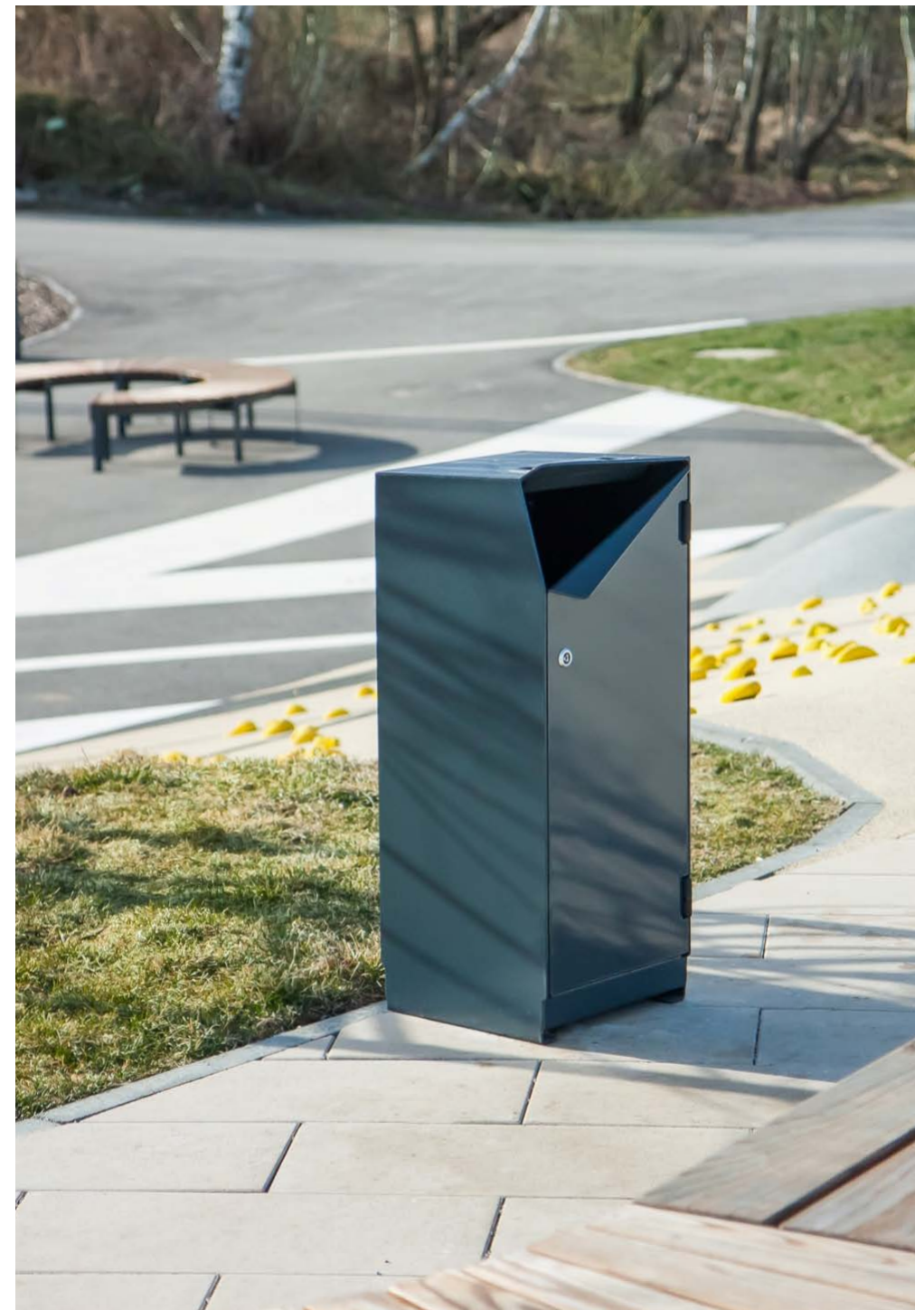
Ah, let life curve around me. I'll just stand right here.

Theo is a good name. It has heaviness and substance. Perhaps a little maturity, too; a certain dignity.

Luckily, that isn't his name.

Birk Rohelend





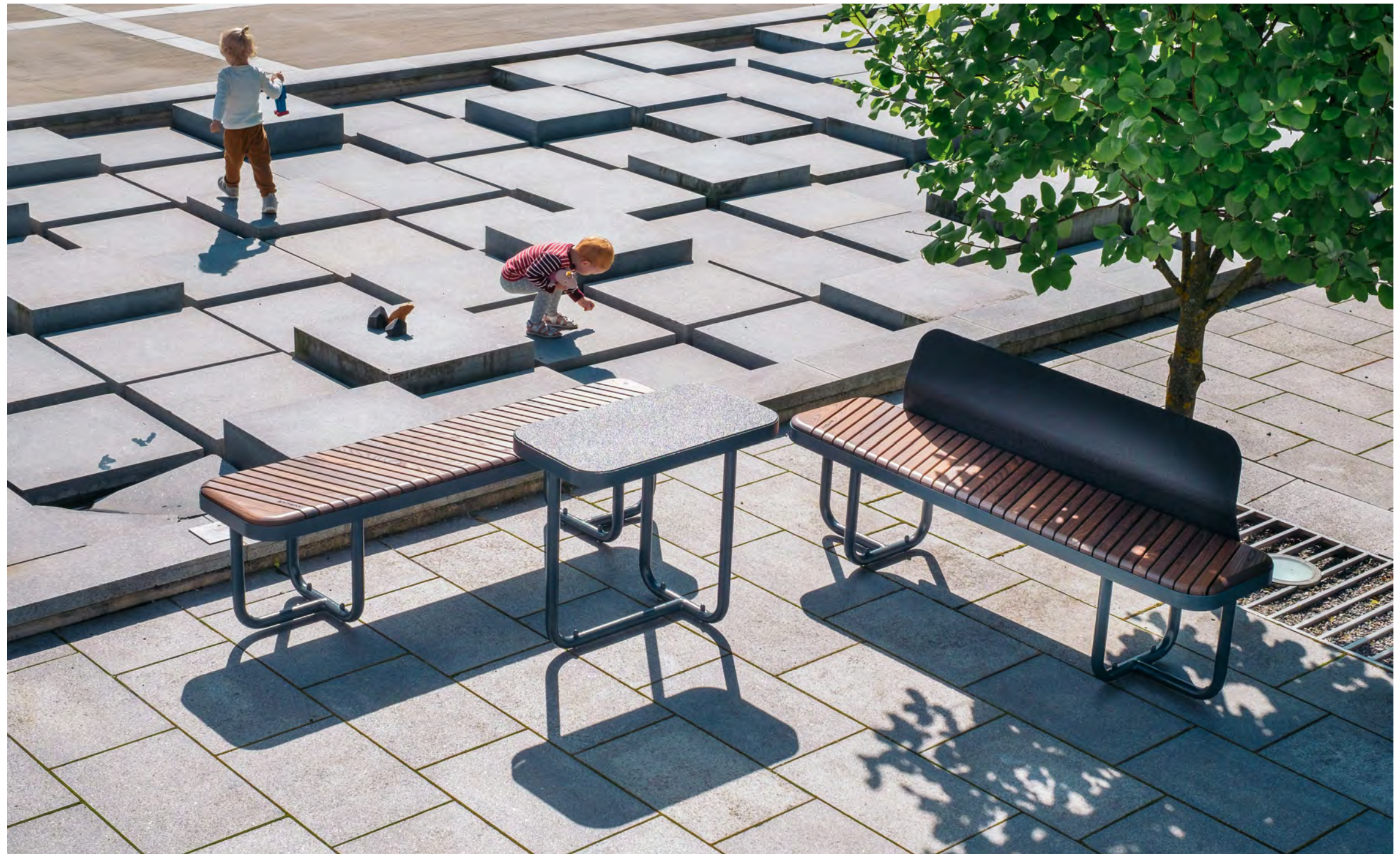


A city without daring young women isn't a city at all. You know – the ones who treat risk and reason equally; who pull you along into the night. She comes to mind when he sits on the bench across from the technical college. They'd met at a party downtown, danced, things progressed, she agreed to go somewhere else. The fresh air was invigorating; she proposed to walk. It was a mild Friday in the 90s, a night teeming with urban hyenas, three kilometers down the road – not far at all. And at that very intersection, she hopped into a fountain and started dancing. It'd been left on overnight and she insisted the opportunity shouldn't be wasted. He was struck with fear – what if the police spotted them? Now, there's a manmade knoll and an aquatic installation in its place, much more stylish than the old rectangular pool. The little hill was plopped right where the fountain once stood, making it look like the water is forced to seep out from one side. He enjoys sitting there and reflecting on the girl – it's "their bench". He never found out her name. She vanished from his side and his whole life by the very next morning. For some reason, he's sure she's doing just fine. He wonders if the waters of bygone times have welled up beneath the knoll and will burst through the pavement at some point, erupting in honor of all the dreams that are covered up and buried. If it ever does happen, then he'll simply sit there and allow them to sprinkle down upon him.

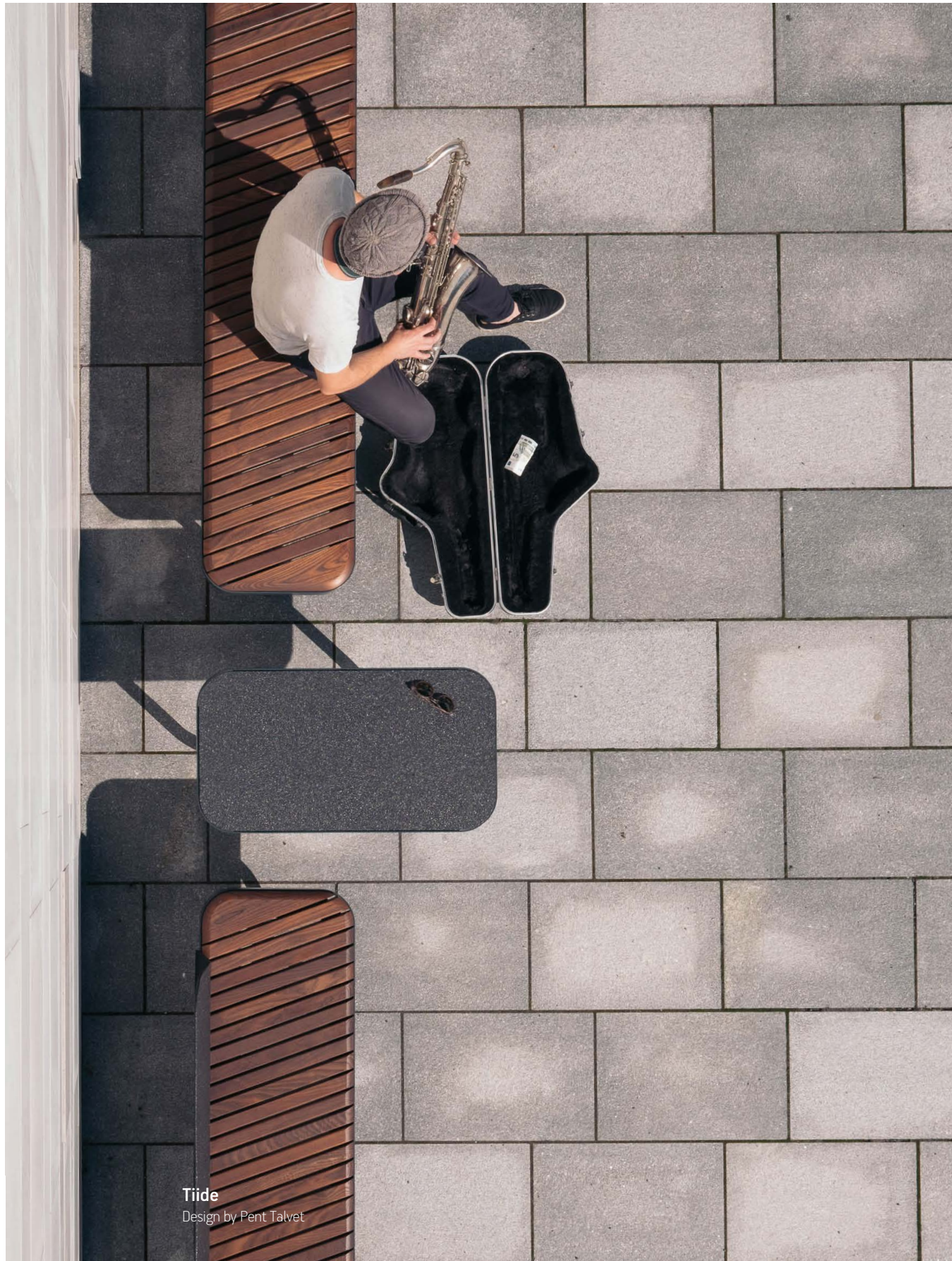
Jan Kaus











Tiide
Design by Pent Talvet

Will It/won't It

On the job: I come across a little white Starship package robot attempting to climb onto the sidewalk. The curb poses a problem like a well-crafted sign of destiny. It almost flips over! My heart explodes with the same crushing cute-o-meter as when watching a little kid or an animal making a sincere but inept stab at something. Struggling with the tug-of-war forces of existence.

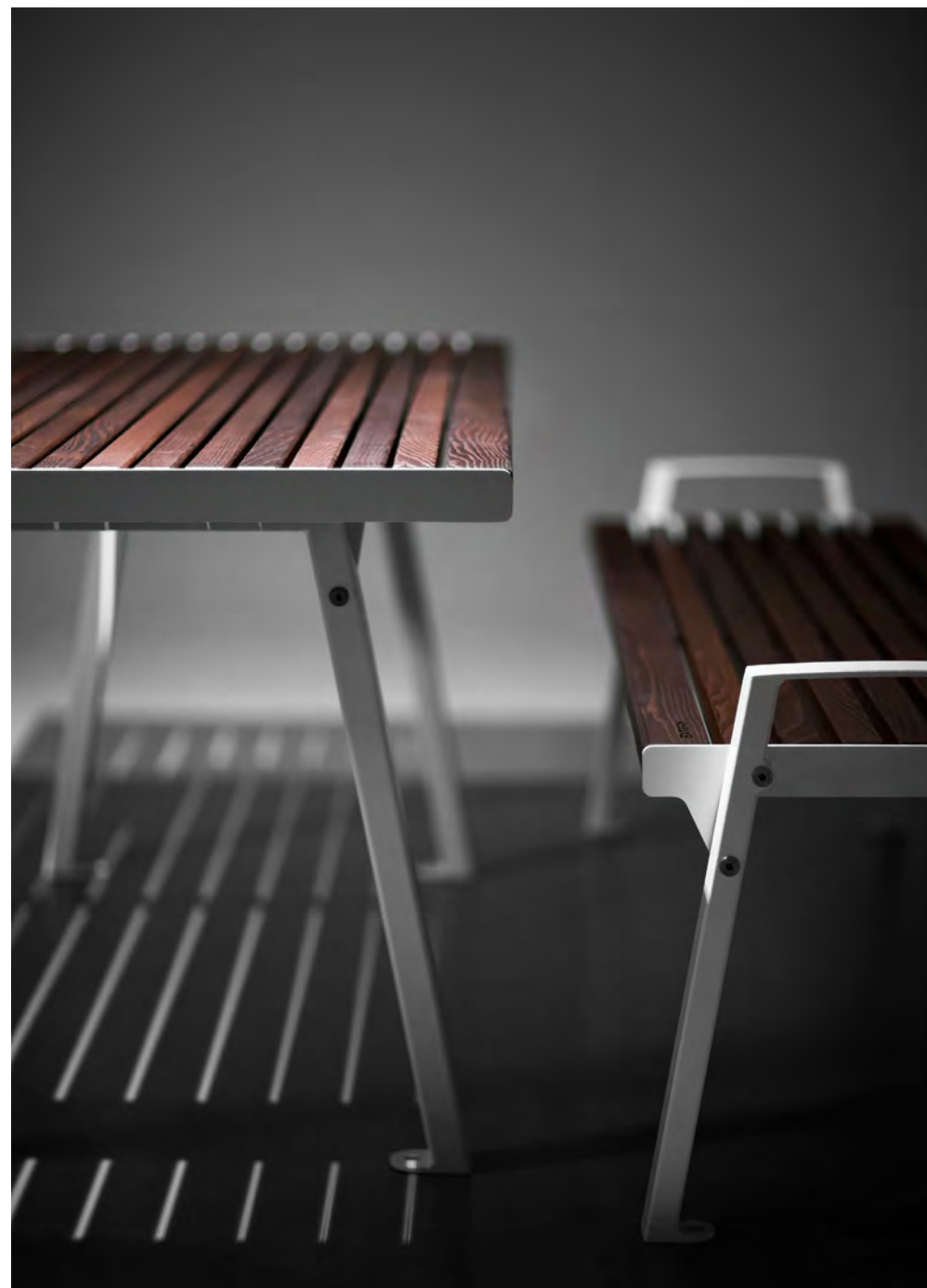
Not on the job: It's always nice to take note of somebody you know "doesn't do any kind of work or anything".

His gait is wonderfully wandering and his mouth always pulled into a grin. He may not know where his path leads, exactly. Everything earns his endless approval on that sunny day, be it a passing car or a mother tugging at a stroller or the old late-October sun itself, shining down from the sky.

Janar Ala







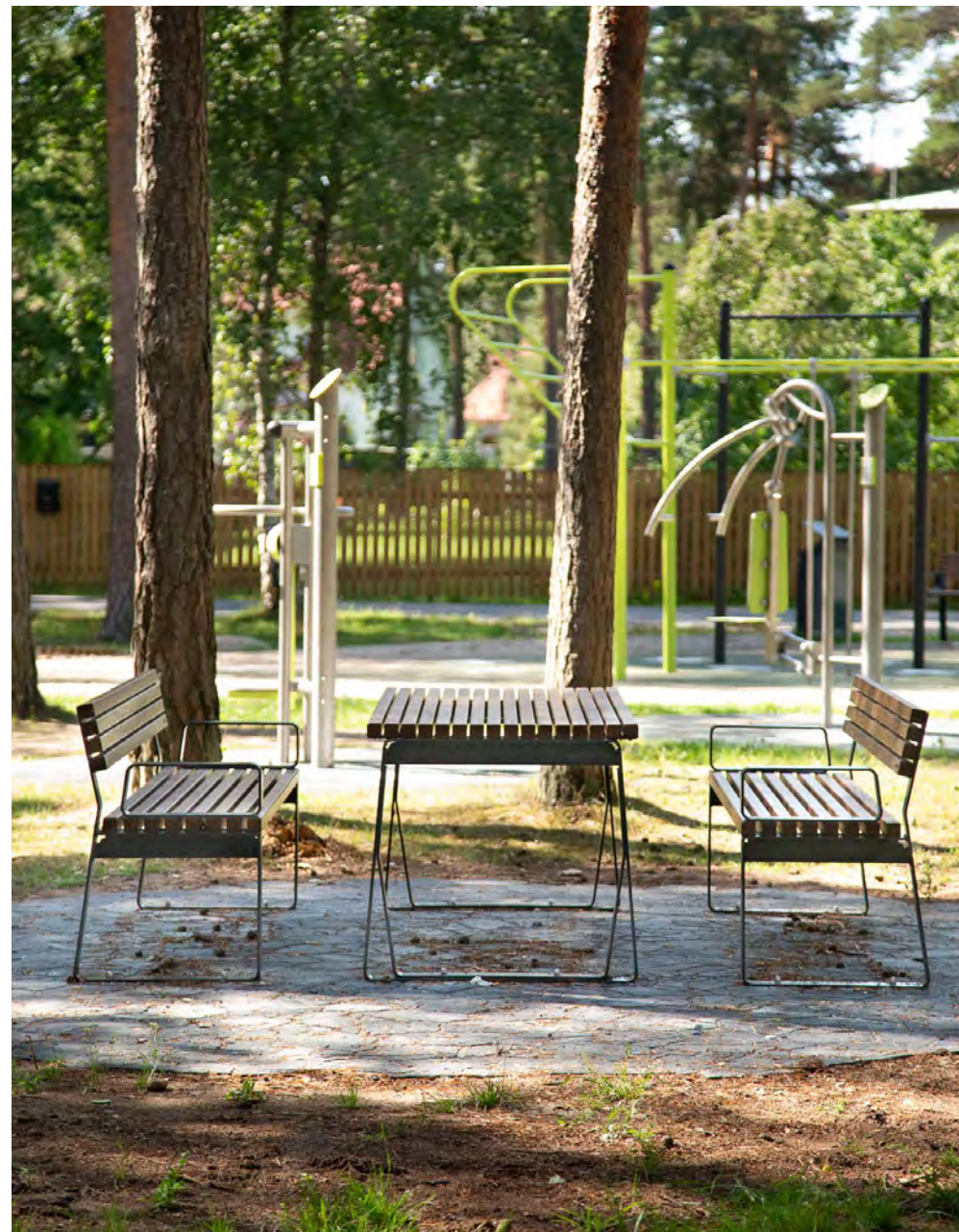


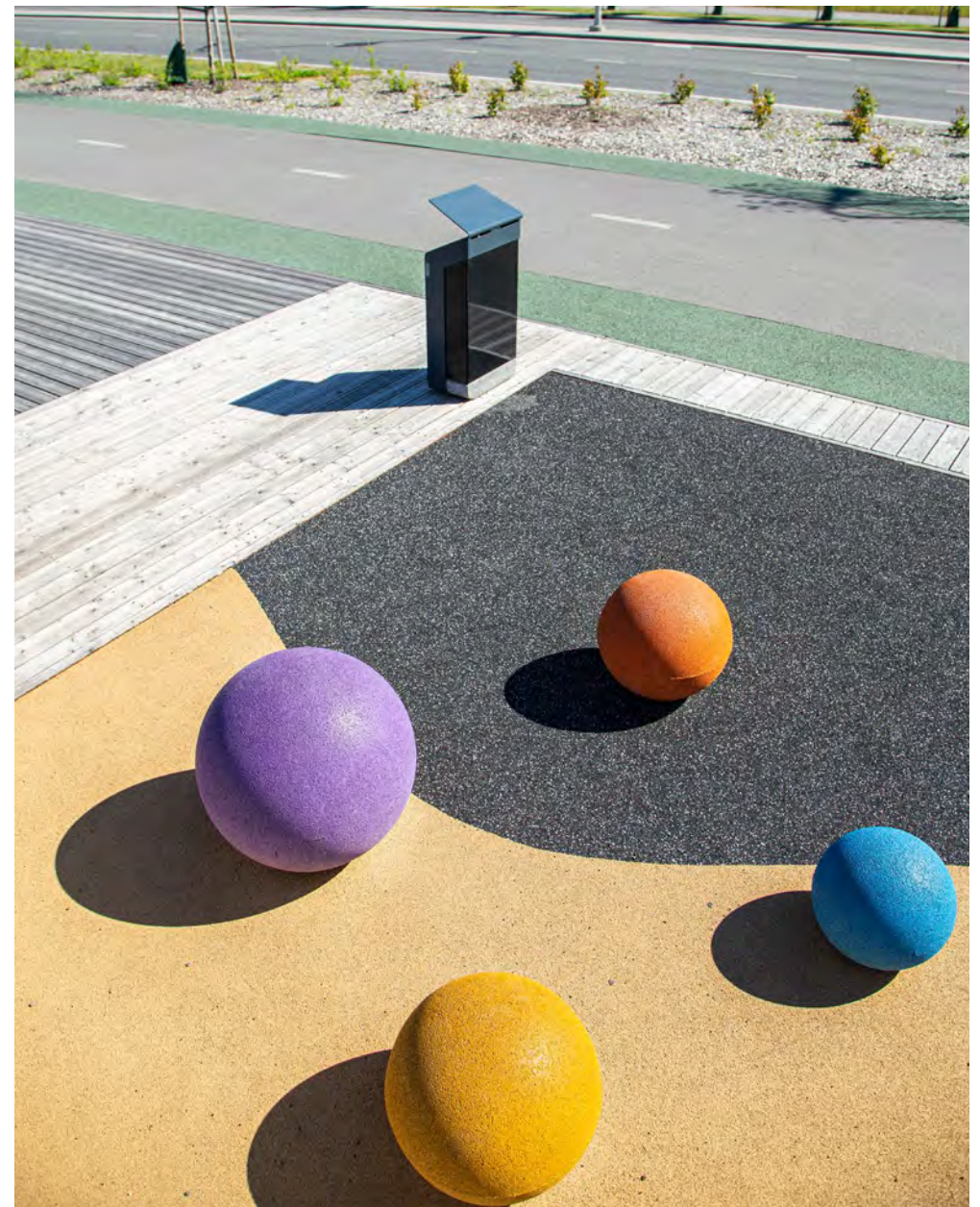


Klaar Steel
Design by Martin Pärn

A woman at a birthday party yesterday was talking about how animals have feelings and thoughts, which reminded me of a recent encounter. I was on my evening stroll. I'd stopped at a park bench to rest my legs when a seagull landed next to me. It was gigantic. And right on the backrest, a couple feet away! I was so startled that it didn't even cross my mind to shoo him away. I just sat there, staring. The seagull stared back. It made me think of Dad. Of how he and I would run from our home to the stadium and back every morning, sometimes all the way to the obelisk. We'd almost always pass a certain statue on our way. Dad would have made it into the Olympics if he hadn't developed arthritis. A seagull made of bronze and granite was perched on the statue's shoulder. It wasn't the original, as the bird was stolen over and over until the whole monument was finally carted away. As the seagull of flesh and blood eyed me from just an arm's length away, I found myself wondering if it might be the same one the sculptor had used as a model. It stared at me, I thought of my father, and suddenly, I noticed a glint of resentment in its eye, as if it meant to say: "What the hell's your problem?" Dad always disliked seagulls. He called them "peegulls". Clever, right? I still felt like it was trying to tell me something. The next day, I drove to the cemetery for the first time in years. I raked, weeded, and lit a candle at Dad's grave.

Jan Kaus







They're coming

The ground seems to shake beneath their feet; even granite steps would quake. Frozen leaves rustle, crumbling into a thousand fragments. Their stares are resolute. Experience, hope, and faith reside in their crow's feet.

We will manage. We will do this.

It's early. The rosy sky teases the promise of a new day.

Clouds of warm breath burst into the chilly morning.

Sweatpants, leggings, ankle warmers, sneakers, fingerless gloves, and gloves with fingers shoot up and down, side to side, forward and back. Spines curl and stretch towards the sun; leg muscles strengthen right here, right now, tingling with exertion.

Sparse wisps of cloud drift aimlessly across the sky, marveling at the vibrant, active little dots – motes of dust on the varnished floor of the cosmos; algae in immense, immeasurable, vaulted spacetime.

They exercise.

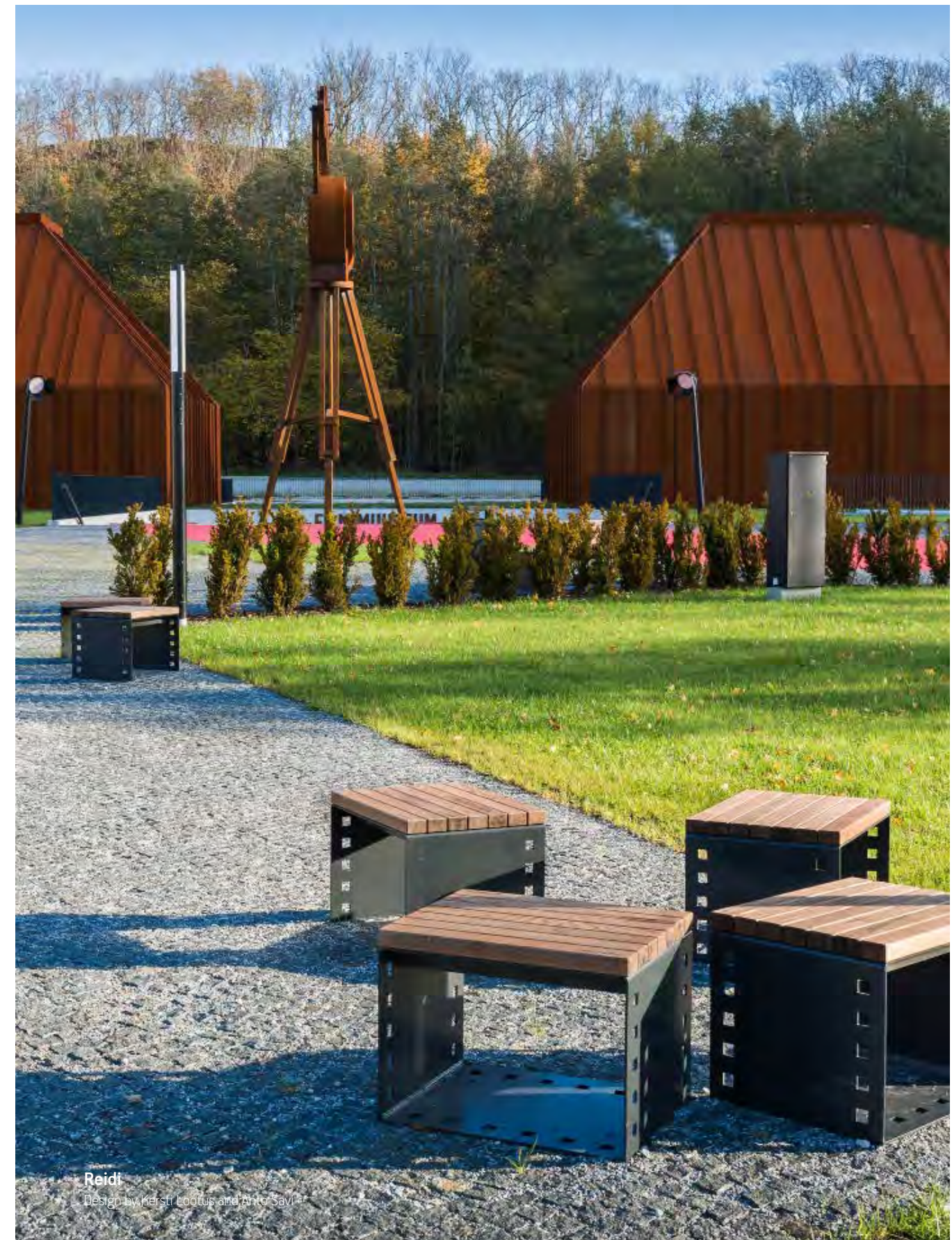
For themselves, for the sensation, for their spirits.

They are mothers and daughters, sisters and friends, lovers and creators.

They will not die – certainly not today.

They are not names carved into stone. They are living, breathing force.

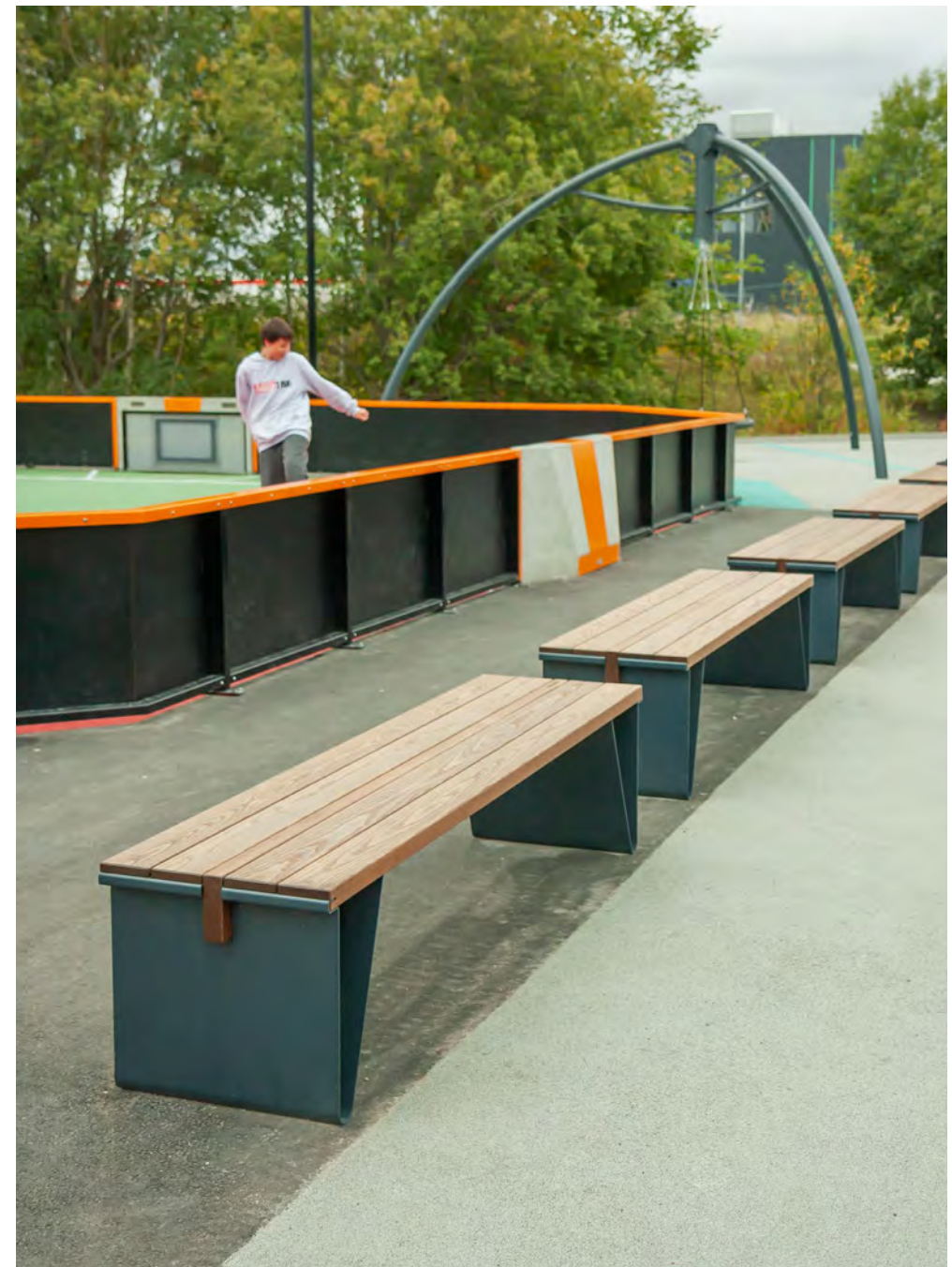
Birk Rohelend



Reidi

Design by Kersti Loois and Antti Savijärvi









At first, it seemed so bizarre – are there really people who opt for an apartment that looks out over dense traffic? But then, he spotted the oak. It was a mighty tree with a galaxy of branches, just a couple paces from the end of the highway. Trees are bizarre, he thought. Plants, in general. They live halfway underground. The oak's root system had to be just as spectacular and broad as its crown. Part of the organism embedded in darkness, part in the airy light. While riding in a friend's car, he'd heard a radio program where a biologist was talking about trees' ability to communicate. Apparently, they possess a myriad of sensory organs. Could the oak sense the park benches? Their wood? If it could, then what was that perception like? The way people view robots? He often enjoyed resting on the bench while walking home, facing the oak, his back to the sea. Funny – there were lights draped around its branches. Was the tree glad to be decorated, or did the light disturb its sleep cycle? Perhaps humans have a subconscious desire to impress the tree; to react to the impression it gives us. He didn't know the answer but liked to think that the oak was the very reason why the bench was placed there.

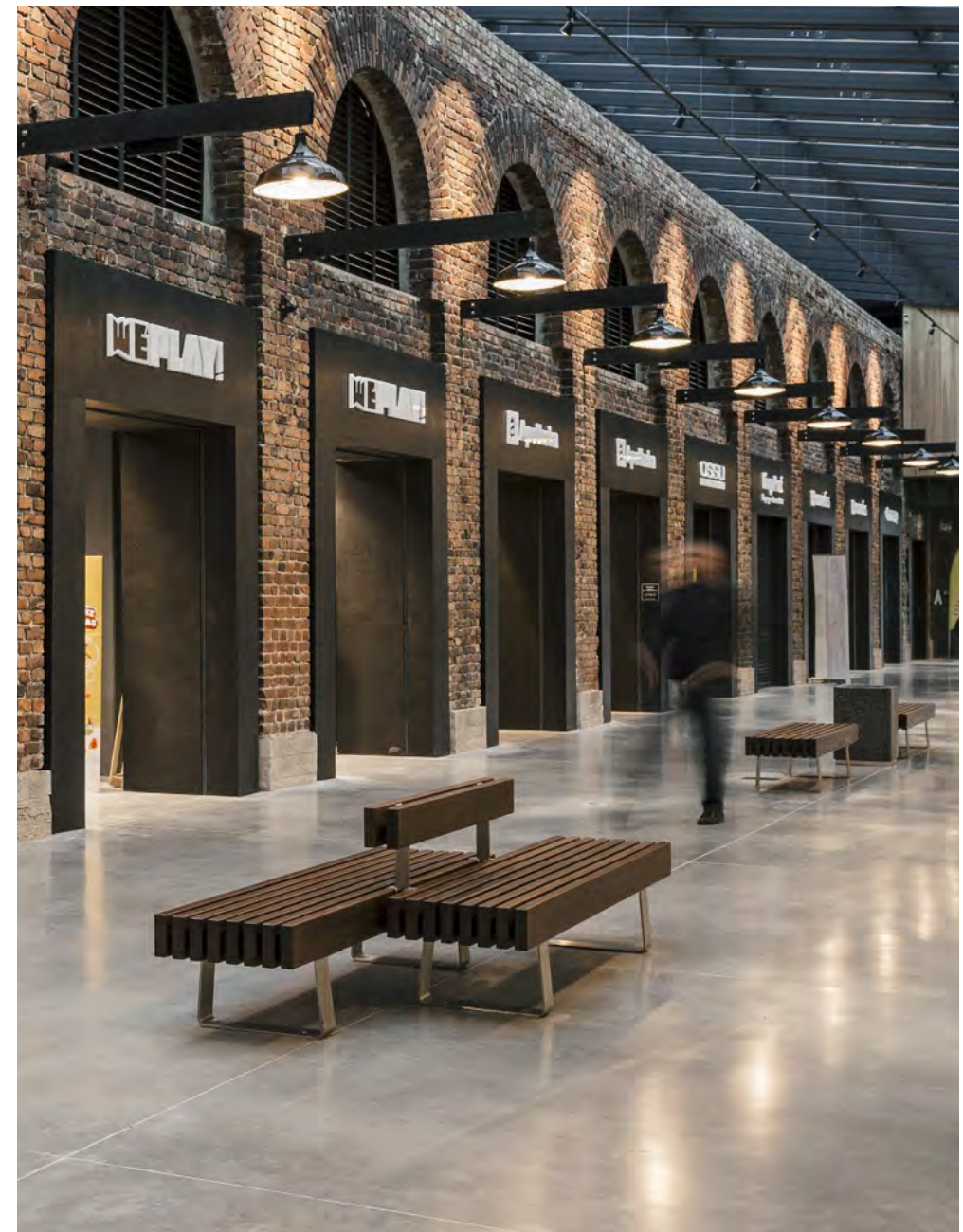
Jan Kaus



Nippon Duo / Nove
Design by Kersti Lootus







“Want it?”

Lisa looks into a pair of dark eyes rimmed by lashes fluttering angrily, glaring at her from behind a mound of yellow, pink, and red. The bouquet strikes her like an attack. She locks up, then takes a step back. The stranger eyes her demandingly, irritated, as if Lisa herself is to blame for something.

Thunk!

The bouquet lands in the trash bin next to the bench and its impatient owner stamps off, heels clicking angrily against the pavement. Lisa looks around self-consciously. No one noticed. Seagulls wheel and cry in the overcast sky. Passersby come and go, come and go; only the right bus makes her wait for what seems like ages.

Cautiously, furtively, Lisa turns her head to peer at the bin. A particularly blood-red rose catches her eye. The blossom is phenomenal, giant and vivid, proud and alone, standing out from the others, gorgeously lush and falsely sentenced.

Lisa manages to free it with a little bit of tugging. She holds the rose, smirking. I could say it's from a secret admirer; no one will know the truth.

A glowing 18 approaches on the street. Lisa's gaze drops back to the bin. At least twenty, no, thirty blossoms. Someone's failed attempt at an apology. A rejected boyfriend.

Flowers of a defeated soul.

She decisively pokes the blossom back among the others moments before boarding the bus.

Birk Rohelend



Net
Design by Margus Triibmann









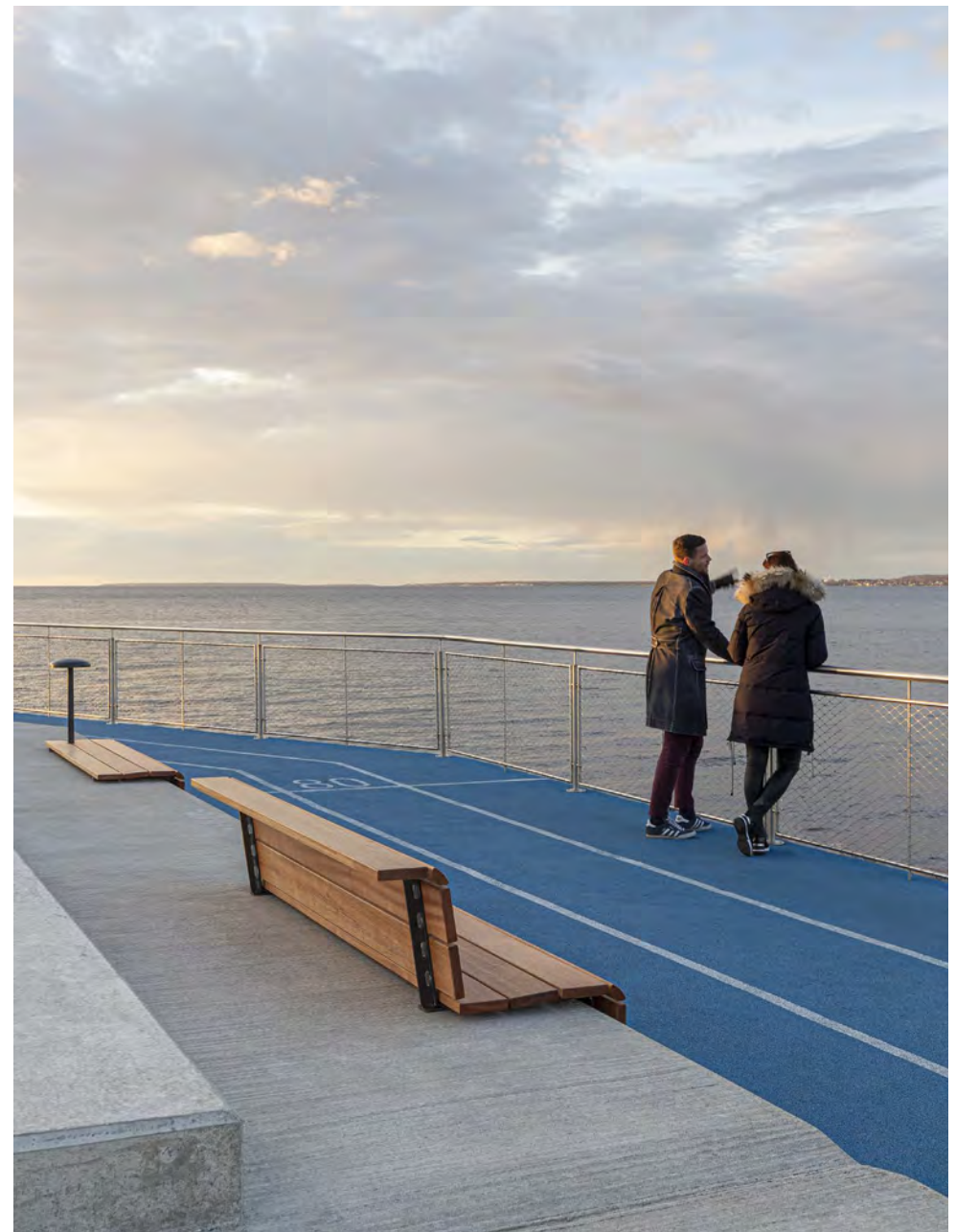
The night was snowy and blustery, perhaps the wildest blizzard she could recall. Though it was a wonder she could remember anything from that night – the afterparty was a doozy. It came after her musical debut, which produced a tidal wave of joy that slowly deteriorated into a series of celebratory excesses. She can't remember leaving the theater, why she left at such a godforsaken hour, or why she hadn't called a cab. When she stumbled into the park, she hesitated, unsure of which direction to take. In her own hometown, no less! But she soon got her bearings – home was somewhere to the right, duh. She plopped down on a bench all the same. The wind had carved tall, feathery snowdrifts into its gentle curve, looking like a cross between pillows and clouds. That's when she noticed the statue. His head was tilted at a slight angle. Strange. As if listening, pricking up his ears, even though it allowed the snow to settle on his nose. Maybe he heard my footsteps. Her gaze drifted across the park. Ugh, I'm so fed up with this wasteland; with this sort-of-city, she thought, and yet, how impossible it'd be to live in any other, no matter how much I've had it with all these people, parties, and life in general. She dug her hands deeper into her pockets, feeling warm and cold simultaneously.

Jan Kaus



Dog Station M4









Hi hi hi hi

You overhear all kinds of things through a window. Mostly snippets of conversation. The story is just getting interesting, some juicy detail is about to be revealed, and then, the speakers disappear. Lone words are left lingering and before long, they also dissipate like condensation on the window or yet another pair of socks from the corner of your bedroom or the memory of a past romance.

But sometimes, you manage to catch a complete episode: beginning, climax, and conclusion.

The characters: some people and a dog. The setting: outside the bakery downstairs.

Indistinct noises.

An older man, apparently leading a dog on a leash (though from what I can hear, I'd guess the dog is leading him), exclaims a little ecstatically and in happy surprise: Ha! He wanted to go in!

An older woman, making the kind of sound people often do when addressing animals, high-pitched and childish, obviously to the dog and apparently even grabbing his paw: hi hi hi hi hi hi hi hi

And how did the dog react? I bet he smirked.

Janar Ala

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sense, style and
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