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BENELUX





By EVELIEN REICH

CRAFT

Ahead of the curve

Design, at its best, is about timing – and knowing that growth never really stops. For Mia Karlova and Jordan van der Ven, that truth revealed itself in a single chair.

Curving planes that stretch and fold, together forming a chair that's both a sculpture and a functional seat. When Amsterdam-based gallerist Mia Karlova encountered this piece during Dutch Design Week three years ago, it stopped her in her tracks. "It was a stunning sculptural work, with its form pulling against itself in unexpected ways," she recalls.

The maker was Jordan van der Ven, someone she had met years earlier at the Masterly exhibition in Milan. Back then, she had noticed the promise in his work, and over time, she watched his practice deepen, his visual language becoming more pronounced. This chair, part of his ongoing *Curved Sculptures* series, marked a turning point. "It's rare to come across a form you've truly never seen before," she says. "Beyond the look, beyond the craft, I felt that Jordan was inventing the world anew. Within his pieces, he's connecting dots where they don't connect yet, and by doing so, moving beyond the conventional."

Van der Ven has spent two decades honing his craft. Trained as a carpenter and based in Nijmegen, he draws inspiration from the town's strong Roman heritage, as well as his upbringing: his father is an architect, and he grew up on construction sites. This early exposure to building materials and methods now informs his practice, where he uses rebar to "draw" forms, later transforming them into sculptural cement pieces shaped entirely by hand. "I felt he was in a new phase of his career," Karlova says. Known for supporting designers who defy familiar tropes, she saw this as the perfect moment to collaborate. In Van der Ven's case, representation does not mark an arrival, but a continuation – proof that even after twenty years, an artist can still surprise with their evolution, and yes, still bend the rules.

miakarlova.com



Jordan van der Ven and his sculptural practice captured, from metal frame skeleton to the finished design.