Klara Knack arte MILLON VEILINGHUIS MAISON DE VENTES

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COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE

Jules Wabbes, l'authentique design belge

Le 17 octobre, une exposition unique débutera au Palais des Beaux-Arts. Elle rassemblera une soixantaine de meubles du créateur belge Jules Wabbes. C'est la première fois qu'autant de modèles, prototypes et ébauches de son travail original sont réunis, avec un grand nombre de pièces jamais exposées auparavant et provenant directement de sa maison. Plongez dans l'atmosphère de Mad Men avec cet hommage à l'authentique design belge.

17.10.2012 > 13.01.2013
Palais des Beaux-Arts – Circuit Rue Royale

Jules Wabbes, Furniture Designer

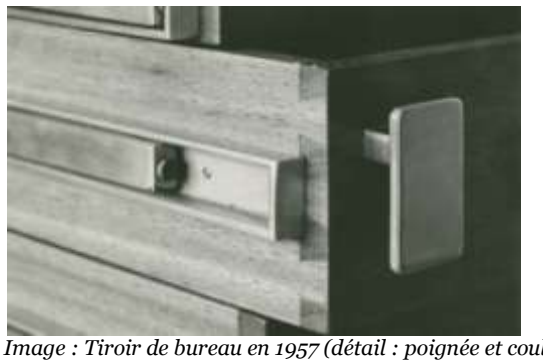

Image : Tiroir de bureau en 1957 (détail : poignée et coulisse métallique). Photo : Serge Vandercam.

Jules Wabbes (1919-1974) est **l'un des plus éminents créateurs belges de meubles de l'après-guerre**. Il est principalement connu pour son **mobilier de bureau**, qui a équipé les locaux de Glaverbel, de la Royale Belge et du Foncolin, mais il a aussi conçu des lampes, du mobilier scolaire et des intérieurs privés complets. Ses œuvres sont solides, épurées et caractérisées par une utilisation sensuelle des matériaux. Jules Wabbes ne dissimulait pas les assemblages de ses meubles, mais les mettait en évidence. Son œuvre se distingue par **un style et un vocabulaire propres,** loin du caractère ludique et *swinguant* de la plupart des meubles des années 50 et 60.

L'exposition offre **pour la première fois un aperçu complet de son travail de designer**, de ses premiers modèles , comme le tabouret Anna David-Marber (1953), au mobilier qu'il a conçu pour les logements d'étudiants de Louvain-la-Neuve (début des années 70). Une attention spéciale est accordée à **l'immeuble Foncolin** (1955-57), qui met particulièrement en valeur l'ingéniosité de Jules Wabbes, ainsi qu'à ses participations successives aux **Triennales de Milan** de 1957 et 1960.

En plus de **photos** et **dessins originaux**, l'exposition rassemblera **principalement des meubles uniques**, dont plusieurs prototypes qui seront dévoilés au public pour la première fois. Une expo passionnante pour les amateurs de design et de meubles vintage, mais aussi pour tous ceux qui veulent humer l'air des *fifities* et des *sixties* ! De nombreuses pièces **quitteront pour la première fois la maison de Jules Wabbes,** dans le Brabant wallon, où vit toujours son épouse. C'est également la première fois qu'autant de meubles originaux seront exposés *ensemble*.

Marie Ferran-Wabbes, fille de Jules Wabbes et historienne de l'art, est **co-commissaire** de l'exposition. Sa contribution rend la sélection exposée très **personnelle**. Avec Iwan Strauven et le scénographe Jurgen Persyn, elle a fouillé le grenier de son ancienne maison et a **littéralement sorti**

plusieurs pièces des oubliettes. Elle a également retrouvé la trace d'autres pièces sur le marché privé. Grâce à leurs **recherches approfondies,** l'exposition dévoilera plusieurs modèles dont on ne savait même pas qu'ils avaient été créés par Wabbes, mais qui ont maintenant été authentifiés. Pour l'expo ainsi que pour le catalogue, **Filip Dujardin** a pris entre autres plusieurs photos de la salle des coffres du siège social de BNP Paribas Fortis.

Autodidacte et perfectionniste

Image : Le Drugstore Louise à Bruxelles en 1963. Photo : Henri Kessels.

Jules Wabbes était **autodidacte** : il a appris le métier de créateur de meubles sur le tas et, en quelque sorte, par nécessité. Après une brève carrière comme photographe, il ouvre en 1943 un **magasin d'antiquités** sur la chaussée de Charleroi, à Bruxelles. Comme certains meubles doivent être restaurés, il ouvre vite un petit atelier, où il apprend les techniques de base de la menuiserie. **Parallèlement aux restaurations, il commence à créer lui-même des meubles et à aménager des intérieurs**. Ses premières commandes sont des projets ponctuels pour des clients de milieux aisés, comme une table pour le ministre Paul de Groote ou l'aménagement de la boutique de haute couture d'Anna David-Marber (1953) sur le boulevard de Waterloo. Ses créations sont le résultat d'une exploration obstinée des techniques du travail du bois et, plus tard, du métal.

En 1951, Jules Wabbes fonde un bureau d'études et s'associe avec l'architecte **André Jacqmain** afin de pouvoir réaliser **des travaux d'aménagement et d'architecture plus importants.** Ils collaboreront ensemble pendant 10 ans et répondront à l'explosion de la construction de bureaux de l'après-guerre. Ensemble, ils réalisent notamment le Palais de la Science de l'Expo 58, l'aménagement du foyer et de la grande salle du Théâtre national dans la tour Martini à Bruxelles (1958), l'immeuble à appartements Abrahams à Ixelles (1960) et le siège du Fonds colonial des invalidités (FONCOLIN), un projet qui marque la percée de Wabbes et de Jacqmain. Entre-temps, Jules Wabbes s'est également occupé de l'aménagement de la nouvelle flotte de la SABENA.

En 1957, Jules Wabbes fonde sa propre maison de production, **« Mobilier Universel »,** qui lui permet de mettre son **mobilier de bureau** sur le marché belge et européen. La même année, il représente la Belgique à la **Triennale de Milan**, ce qui lui vaut une reconnaissance internationale. Il est ainsi chargé de l'aménagement des ambassades américaines à La Haye, Rabat et Dakar. Jules Wabbes se consacre au perfectionnement de son mobilier de bureau, mais aussi à la conception et au développement de variantes de bibliothèques, canapés, portemanteaux et toute une série d'appliques murales et de lustres, sous la marque **« Général Décoration ».**

Le **perfectionnisme et le souci permanent de la qualité** de Jules Wabbes avaient aussi leur revers : ses créations artisanales allaient **à l'encontre de la production industrielle** qui devait répondre aux exigences commerciales de l'époque. En 1971, Jules Wabbes est **exclu de « Mobilier Universel »**, qui continue de **produire ses meubles**. Jules Wabbes perd ainsi tout pouvoir de contrôle sur ses propres modèles et surtout sur leur exécution, qui laisse souvent à désirer pour des raisons commerciales.

Jules Wabbes continue néanmoins à travailler **jusqu'à son décès prématuré, des suites d'un cancer, en 1974**. Il réalise notamment l'ameublement des **chambres d'étudiants de l'université de Louvain-la-Neuve et du siège de la Général de Banque** (l'actuelle BNP Paribas Fortis), où il travaille aux bureaux de la direction, à la salle des guichets et à la décoration et l'aménagement de la salle des coffres.

Commissaires : Marie Ferran-Wabbes, Iwan Strauven
Scénographie : Jurgen Persijn
Coproduction : BOZAR ARCHITECTURE, A+revue belge d'architecture
Sponsor : Millon & Associés, Sigma Coatings
Soutien : Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, Vlaamse Overheid

TEXTE DU CATALOGUE

J. J. Wabbes, Furniture Designer – Iwan Strauven

The work of Jules Wabbes has a unique position in the Belgian furniture design of the 1950s and 1960s. Aristocratic and modest, it is characterised by a sensual use of materials and a clear, almost architectural tectonics. It developed a line and idiom of its own, averse to the playful and swinging style of many other furniture designs from the post-war period. Of course, that does not mean that the work stands completely on its own, impervious to international trends. Just like other furniture designers active in Belgium during that period, Wabbes was influenced by international models. But in his case everything comes together in a coherent oeuvre, which, combined with an unconditional demand for high quality and perfection—and in spite of the robustness of the design—achieves a refinement that can be qualified as outstanding even in an international context.

To some degree, the singularity of Wabbes' work can be explained by a number of biographical elements[1]. The 1950s, the decade in which the majority of his most famous designs came about, were a very dynamic period for furniture design in Belgium. Not since the 1920s had Belgium seen so many initiatives and new clubs promoting new forms, from social furniture to industrial design, so enthusiastically. Nor indeed have we seen their like since[2]. In the early 1950s furniture manufacturers, designers and the government were convinced that the rejuvenation of domestic production was essential to avoid the local market being flooded with and taken over by design from Sweden and the Netherlands in particular.

Initiatives were taken in various cities at the time that would lead some years later to the creation of a full-blown social furniture movement. In Ghent a number of furniture manufacturers created a joint quality label called Het Gentse Meubel (Ghent furniture) in 1952. Three years later, the Nationale Salons voor Modern Sociaal Meubel (National modern social furniture shows) were organised in the same city, mainly at the initiative of passionate local architect and art historian Adelbert Van de Walle. The Institute for Industrial Design was established in Liège in 1956, the first official recognition of the economic importance of industrial design. But the movement that would spread across the whole of Belgium in the mid 1950s was initiated in Brussels, where Formes Nouvelles was formed in the spring of 1950. Driven by the enthusiasm of its members, who included Marcel Baugniet, Willy Van Der Meeren and Eric Lemesre, the huge impetus Formes Nouvelles gave to the rejuvenation of Belgian furniture design in the 1950s must be acknowledged.

Jules Wabbes' designs were rarely if ever included in the numerous exhibitions, model apartments and shows initiated or inspired by Formes Nouvelles. Certainly in the early years his work developed along a completely separate path from this movement for modern, affordable furniture in Belgium. Unlike the majority of young designers who found success in those years—Willy Van Der Meeren, Emiel Veranneman, Pieter De Bruyne, Jos De Mey, Christophe Gevers—he was not a formally trained architect or interior designer and he was not on the payroll of a family furniture company. He learned the craft of furniture design by designing furniture, out of sheer necessity. After a short stint as a photographer, in 1943 he opened an antiques shop with Louise Carrey on Chaussée de Charleroi in Brussels. He was then 24 years of age. Jules Wabbes got to know Louise in the amateur theatre company Les Comédiens Routiers, where he worked as a jack of all trades. Louise, who was married to French painter Georges Carrey, had a wide circle of influential friends. She looked after the shop while Wabbes went looking for things to sell. Some of the furniture was in need of restoration, so he soon opened a small workshop where he learned the basic techniques of woodworking. Alongside

[1] For a detailed biography of Jules Wabbes, see M. Ferran-Wabbes, Jules Wabbes 1919–1974. Architecte d'intérieur, La Renaissance du Livre/Dexia, Tournai/Brussels, 2002.
[2] See M. De Kooning and I. Strauven, 'Het fifties-meubel in België', in M. De Kooning, F. Floré and I. Strauven (eds.), Alfred Hendrickx en het fifties-meubel in België, Stedelijke Musea Mechelen, Mechelen, 2000.

restoration work he also started designing furniture. It was a process of trial and error, as illustrated by an anecdote about the table he designed in the late 1940s for Paul De Groote, an acquaintance of Louise Carrey and a federal minister at the time. Due to the way the solid wooden tabletop was anchored in the metal base, the table started to creak and became less stable not long after delivery. The anecdote is not unimportant, since the experience encouraged Wabbes to design solid wooden furniture in latticework. This became his trademark in the latter half of the 1950s and continues to be seen as an essential part of his signature style to this day.

Of course, the absence of his work at Formes Nouvelles exhibitions and the National modern social furniture shows in Ghent was also due to the kind of commission he initially received. These were one-off designs for wealthy customers, such as the design of the De Groote apartment in the Résidence Palace (1949) and Anna David-Marber's haute-couture boutique on Boulevard de Waterloo (1953). These were precise, custom-made designs that were clearly not conceived to be produced on an industrial scale. The doctrinaire modernistic theory forming on which the work and engagement of several mainly La Cambre-trained architects and interior architects were based was unexplored territory for Wabbes. His designs sprang from his own personal exploration of woodworking and, later, metalworking techniques.

In the 1950s Belgian furniture design and subsequently also industrial design was given a major boost by the work of a number of young architects (Willy Van Der Meeren, Lucien Engels, Charles Vandenhove and Lucien Kroll) for whom modern furniture flowed naturally from the architectural commission. What applied to furniture design in general also applied to Jules Wabbes' career, albeit in the personal sphere. After establishing himself with a design studio on Rue de la Pépinière in the heart of Brussels, in 1951 he associated with André Jacqmain, a young architect who had graduated from the Brussels Academy and got in with the circles around the Brussels Cobra group at Ateliers du Marais, including Olivier Strebelle and Pierre Alechinsky. Wabbes had been looking for some time for an architectural partner to set down his designs systematically and to enable him to accept large-scale interior design and architecture commissions when Olivier Strebelle and Jean Verbruggen brought him into contact with André Jacqmain.

The house that Wabbes rented on Rue de la Pépinière developed into a hearth of activity as the 1950s wore on. Louise Carrey continued to run the shop on the ground floor, alongside the design studio set up by Wabbes and Jacqmain. Wabbes lived on the upper floors and a metalworking shop was set up in the lower ground floor, run by the talented Antoine Callebaut. The early years of the partnership between Wabbes and Jacqmain were particularly intense and stimulating. The duo worked on all commissions together, regardless of whether they were interior design or architecture projects. The intuitive ingenuity and unconditional demand for high quality of Jules Wabbes were mirrored in the young André Jacqmain's ambition and talent for drawing. Mixed with Louise Carrey and her influential circle of friends, it quickly became a successful formula, which produced not only architecture included in the retrospectives of post-war construction in Belgium, but also a line of office furniture that has seldom been matched since, even internationally.

One of the first larger commissions was the design of a home for Aimé Declerq on Avenue Wellington in Uccle. Inspired by the Unesco headquarters project in Paris of Marcel Breuer, Bernard Zehrfuss and Pier Luigi Nervi, Jacqmain and Wabbes designed a star-shaped volume with three short legs. The central section of the staircase spanned two floors, and in order to solve the lighting problem Wabbes designed the *nid d'abeilles* light fitting with honeycomb pattern, which covered the light source as much as possible from the top and the bottom to ensure it did not have a disruptive influence from any position in the hall. The light fittings with honeycomb pattern developed into one of Wabbes' established interior design lines. Specific furniture designs and accessories often came about in connection with a specific architectural commission. That was certainly true of the design of Anna David-Marber's haute-couture boutique. Wabbes and Jacqmain created a display window by supporting the façade on a huge steel joist, while a wooden beam structure gave rhythm to the space

behind it. For the boutique, Wabbes designed a prototype of a stool with legs pivoted at a 45° angle to the lower-lying padded seat. The legs, which were made from contrasting woods glued together, betrayed Wabbes' predilection for marquetry and tradition, which he always managed to reconcile with a modest, modern design. Ultimately, the design was felt to be too modern by the client, who opted for a more conventional variant with turned legs.

It would take too much time to detail all the architectural projects brought to fruition during the ten-year partnership with Jacqmain. In addition to a series of villas—including Olivier Strebelle's home—they designed a fountain and the Palais de la Science at Expo 58 (1957–1958), the foyer and the great auditorium of the Théâtre National at the base of the Martini Tower in Brussels (1958), and the Abrahams apartment complex in Ixelles (1960). The breakthrough commission for both Jacqmain's architectural practice and Wabbes' furniture designs was the Fonds Colonial des Invalidités (Foncolin) headquarters.

As so often the case, Wabbes and Jacqmain owed the commission to Louise Carrey. The Carreys were friends with Foncolin director Fernand Waleffe, who had previously ordered a piece of office furniture from Wabbes. The office building had to be built on a plot on the corner of Rue Montoyer and Rue du Commerce in the Brussels Leopold Quarter. Since the cornice height of the buildings differed on either side of the plot, they approached the project as two separate volumes, with five and seven stories respectively, connected only by a windowed bridge. The two volumes were given a traditional composition with base, corpus and emphatic cornice. As such they were reminiscent of the composition of a Florentine palazzo, highly striking at a time when post-war modernism reigned in Belgium. But the building's reputation was first and foremost founded on the ingenuity of the technical construction. It was the first building in Brussels to integrate the principle of prefabricated concrete façade elements, which were developed by engineer Robert Degroodt. On the other hand, the whole building owed its conception to the elementary sizes imposed by prefab elements and could be put together like Meccano pieces. Just like Wabbes' furniture designs, the expression of the building coincides with the constructive logic. Instead of being disguised, the simple connections are in fact shown off, which is precisely the strength of the designs built on Rue de la Pépinière in the 1950s.

For the interior design of the offices, Wabbes developed a line of furniture following the same modular logic and clear composition: a solid wooden tabletop in glued latticework (wenge or mutenye) was simply placed on a steel base, which also bore one or two chests of drawers. All structural elements were shown off in all simplicity in this articulated design: the split steel legs of the base, the nickel-plated metal guides of the drawers, even the cylindrical lock, which was simply placed on one of the legs. Depending on the employee's grade or position, the desk could be enlarged to double its size or complemented with a similar separate phone stand. For executives, it could also be finished with a long and impressive boomerang-shaped top.

For the conference tables, Wabbes designed a steel leg again composed of split chromium- plated steel slats, which gave the heavy base a certain air of refinement. The casketshaped solid wooden tabletop was composed of narrow glued slats. For the boardroom on the top floor of the building he designed a lectern, which referred back to one his earliest designs, the Gérard Philipe table. In both designs the wooden connections give expression to the tabletop, which is borne, along with the drawers underneath, by the two chromiumplated steel legs.

The design, construction and interior of the Foncolin building took four years to complete and led to the expansion of the firm run by Wabbes and Jacqmain, leading them to hire two new architects: Victor Mulpas in 1955 and the young Jacques Boccard a year later. The new scale meant that Wabbes was no longer able to produce all the furniture personally in his existing workshops, so he signed a contract with Creyel to reproduce the designs. With the proceeds, in 1957 he founded his own production house, Mobilier Universel, with Louise Carrey and Gustave Creyelman.

Despite the many initiatives in Belgium during the 1950s to promote modern furniture, Wabbes' production long remained private and confidential. It was, after all, often office furniture in tropical woods for a well-off clientele. That all suddenly changed after Belgium's participation in the Milan Triennale in 1957, which garnered him international recognition. It need be no surprise then that even the well-informed art critic Léon-Louis Sosset spoke of a "real discovery" in 1958.[3] In Milan, alongside the line of office furniture he developed for Foncolin, Wabbes presented his Gérard Philipe table and a series of bookcases composed of a sturdy base in black steel topped by a wooden element in glued slats of solid timber.

But the 1957 Milan Triennale was not Wabbes' first brush with the international design world. As a consequence of Louise Carrey's Parisian connections he was a frequent visitor to the French capital, and in 1954 he travelled to Milan with Jacqmain to see that edition of the Triennale. In the mid 1950s Wabbes was also commissioned by the Belgian national airline Sabena to design the interior of their new fleet of planes. The commission gave him the opportunity to travel to the United States and build up a network. He came into contact with Philip Johnson and the designer Edward Wormley of the Dunbar furniture company.

These contacts help explain why Wabbes is one of the few Belgian furniture designers who was greatly influenced by American design. Whereas Scandinavian and Italian designers were setting the benchmark for many Belgians in the 1950s, Wabbes was much more oriented towards what was happening on the other side of the Atlantic. As a self-made man, he took the American way of doing business to heart. This is notably visible in his sensitivity for branding his own name and company. To give his Flemish name a more international twist, from the mid 1950s he always signed his designs J.J. Wabbes—he initially tried the French-sounding Wabbès and even Waps—and after deciding to market his office furniture in Belgium and Europe, the name he chose for the company he formed with Louise Carrey and Gustave Creyelman was the overblown Mobilier Universel.

The office furniture he produced at Mobilier Universel was a big success. It made Jules Wabbes' name as one of the few Belgian designers capable of providing a successful alternative to the familiar international models, which were marketed by Knoll and others in Europe. He used his talents as a businessman to respond to the international ambitions of Brussels and the boom of office construction in the post-war era. In addition to the Foncolin building, he was responsible for furnishing the offices of Glaverbel, Crédit Communal (now Belfius) on Boulevard du Jardin Botanique, Royale Belge, and the headquarters of D'Ieteren in Ixelles. He leveraged the contacts he had established in the United States to win a contract for the interior design of the US embassies in The Hague, Rabat and Dakar.

As a result of Mobilier Universel's ever-growing order book and Jacqmain's wish to develop his career as an architect on his own two feet, the partners ended their working relationship in 1960. From that moment until his premature death in 1974 Wabbes devoted himself to perfecting his office furniture as well as designing and developing variants of bookcases, sofas, hat stands and a whole series of wall-mounted lamps and chandeliers. He set up a second company—Générale Décoration—to produce these accessories under licence in 1969. In the showrooms of Mobilier Universel on Boulevard du Régent in Brussels, Wabbes' furniture and accessories were on sale to the general public, alongside or in combination with a precise selection of other objects, such as Velca's Italian office furniture, Kaufeld's German sofas and Merivaara's Finnish chairs. In turn, Edward Wormley's designs (Dunbar) were produced and distributed by Mobilier Universel under exclusive licence for Europe.

Like many Belgian and even international furniture designers of that era, Jules Wabbes' designs are related to international models that were successful at the time. His coatrack, for instance, which he designed for the Foncolin building, follows a similar approach with wooden latticework and slidable

[3] L.-L. Sosset, 'J. Wabbes. Nos créateurs de mobiliers', in Guide Intérieur Gids, no. 482, 1958, p. 5. Project

hooks as the design by Le Corbusier in the early 1950s. And there are similarities between the playful school furniture that won Wabbes a prize at the Milan Triennale in 1960 and the famous designs in plywood by the Finnish architect Alvaar Aalto. The latter also made candelabras and light fittings, which are similar to Jules Wabbes' designs in terms of composition. The parallels with the office furniture Knoll marketed in Europe have been pointed out above. That Wabbes harboured a certain admiration for the work of his main competitors is shown in his *table à grille* (slatted table), which has a glass top wedged in the same way as in Florence Knoll's T-angle table. And the table he designed in 1962 for Drugstore Louise seems to be a response to Eero Saarinen's famous Tulip table from 1956. But lesser-known designers also seem to have been important reference points. The base of the pk9 tulip chair that won the Dane Poul Kjaerholm the grand prix at the 1960 Milan Triennale—where Wabbes also won a prize—is related to the lamp prototype that Wabbes designed—probably at a later date—but never produced and that seems to lead the way towards the sculptural bronze leg of his tulip tables from the 1960s.

But the affinities are not important in themselves. More interesting is seeing how he made these references his own and integrated them into an extensive oeuvre that is unparalleled in terms of coherence and perfectionism in the Belgian design landscape of the 1950s and 1960s. This coherence is related to Wabbes' personal signature: incorporating luxurious, sensual materials in a timeless design, with the design again and again characterised by a clear constructive composition and the tones of the wood and metal attachments giving his metaphorically and indeed literally weighty furniture a sophisticated aristocratic appearance. However, that Wabbes' intention was not only to create a luxurious appearance but also to produce pieces that could defy time is shown by his choice of solid wood, while competitors like Knoll, for instance, chose to build their furniture in Multiply and finish them with veneer. Independent of commercial considerations, he made designs that were expected to try for perfection in terms of both constructive composition and use of materials. Nothing is hidden, everything can and should be seen. Because of this finish, his creations can be placed free-standing in the space, like tactical sculptures, with the same attention and precision given to the execution of back and front, top and bottom, including the selection of the wooden slats and their arrangement in the finished product.

Wabbes' perfectionism and unconditional demand for high quality would also lead to tragedy in his career. The increasing tension between the design based on craftsmanship and the industrial product that had to meet the commercial demands of the moment led to him being gradually excluded from the day-to-day running and strategic decisions of Mobilier Universel by the company's management. Paradoxically, from the mid 1960s this increasingly forced him to use the services of his main competitor, Kunstwerkstede De Coene in Kortrijk, for his own interior designs. In 1971 he was actually ousted from Mobilier Universel completely. The company continued to quietly churn out his designs before being taken over by Bergwood. Wabbes thus lost any control over his own designs, and particularly how they were made, which was often far from ideal due to the commercial interests at stake.

In the lesser-known furniture production of his final years, Wabbes seems to renege completely on the 1960s glamour of Mobilier Universel's golden years. By experimenting with 'cheap' materials such as Benelex and Multiply and by accepting commissions for a different target audience, as was the case with the design of the student rooms for the Université Catholique de Louvain, he even adopted the preoccupations on which the social furniture movement was founded in the early 1950s. Steel and bronze were banished from his designs and it looked as if he envisaged a 'warmer' approach. Or maybe not completely? In 1971, shortly before his premature death at the age of 54, Wabbes was awarded the interior design contract for the head office of Générale de Banque (now BNP Paribas Fortis) in the centre of Brussels. As well as the complete design of the director's offices, the interior of the main hall accommodating the counters and the furnishings of the lift hall, he was also given responsibility for furnishing and designing the safe room, a commission that was perfect for him. Suddenly, Wabbes is back in top form. With a sophisticated design he manages to bring the principles of monumental

architecture (architects: Hugo Van Kuyck, Pierre Guillissen, Christian Housiaux and Jacques Boccard) to the most protected public area in the building. The dark grey granites of the walls, the stately safe-deposit boxes with bronze knobs and the gold-coloured scaly ceiling give the space an exceptionally ceremonious drama. Jules Wabbes himself referred to the abundant furnishing and monumentality of Egyptian temples, and it is indeed as if one were penetrating the sanctum sanctorum. As with his best designs, for the last time sensuality of materials is here harmonised with historical references, a clear structural composition, and a modest and controlled design.

BIOGRAPHIES

Commissaires de l'expo

Marie Ferran-Wabbes (°Uccle, 1963) est la fille du designer Jules Wabbes et de Marie Paquay-Wabbes (auteur de livres pour enfants). Marie Ferran-Wabbes à étudié l'archéologie et l'histoire de l'art à l'UCL. Elle vit à Paris depuis vingt ans.
En 1991, Marie Ferran-Wabbes a travaillé sur le catalogue ainsi que sur le montage d'une exposition sur le peintre Carrey (1902-1953) au Centre d'Art Nicolas de Staël à Braine-l'Alleud et au Provinciaal Museum voor Moderne Kunst (PPMK) à Ostende (*Georges Carrey. Au-delà de la figuration. Het figuratieve voorbij*). En 1994, elle a publié un dictionnaire illustré des peintres flamands du XVIIe siècle en trois volumes, en collaboration avec Jan De Maere. Marie Ferran-Wabbes a aussi écrit des guides de voyage sur Istanbul (1997) et Paris (2010) et en 2006, elle a publié son premier roman, *Terrasse*, aux éditions du Seuil.
Au début des années '90, Marie Ferran-Wabbes commence à travailler sur l'œuvre de son père : elle consulte des archives et procède à des interviews. Elle autofinance ses recherches qui finissent par aboutir à la première monographie sur Jules Wabbes publiée en 2002, *Jules Wabbes (1919-1974). Architecte d'intérieur*. En 2010, Borgerhoff & Lamberigts publient une version revue et augmentée de cette monographie.

Iwan Strauven (°Bruxelles, 1974) est ingénieur civil-architecte diplômé de l'Université de Gand. Depuis 2006, il coordonne BOZAR ARCHITECTURE. En parallèle, il est chargé de cours à la Faculté d'architecture de l'ULB, où il enseigne le projet architectural et l'histoire de l'urbanisme. Il a enrichi la programmation de BOZAR ARCHITECTURE avec des expositions, la série NICHE consacrée à la jeune architecture belge et un cycle de conférences internationales. La programmation est axée sur la problématique urbanistique bruxelloise et les expositions d'œuvres d'architectes belges. Iwan Strauven est co-curateur d'une série d'expositions. Il a publié une monographie sur les frères Bourgeois, un livre sur Alfred Hardy ainsi que différents articles dans des revues belges et internationales d'architecture. Il prépare actuellement un doctorat à l'UGent et à l'ULB sur l'œuvre de l'architecte moderniste Victor Bourgeois.

Scénographie

Jurgen Persijn a étudié le cinéma/vidéo à la Hogeschool Sint-Lukas, à Bruxelles. En 1996, il réalise, en collaboration avec Bruno De Meulder (K.U.Leuven) et Marie-Françoise Plissart, l'exposition/publication « Martini Martini » (sur le centre Rogier à Bruxelles aujourd'hui démoli), ce qui lui donne l'envie de se pencher sur l'esthétique. Autodidacte, il travaille aujourd'hui comme concepteur graphique et s'est spécialisé dans les livres d'art et d'architecture. Au fil des ans, il a travaillé entre autres pour Lannoo, Ludion, Yves Gevaert, Argos, BOZAR, A Prior Magazine, SUN publishers, la Communauté flamande (Arts et patrimoine), BAM (Institut des arts graphiques, audiovisuels et médias) Rosas/P.A.R.T.S., Generali Foundation (Vienna), NAi publishers, ASP editions, la Vlaamse Vereniging voor Ruimte en Planning, Vlaams Bouwmeester, Damaged Goods, daad (Berlin)... Son travail a été à plusieurs reprises récompensé par le prix Plantin-Moretus/ De Best Vormgegeven Boeken.

Auteur de *Wabbes and the Milan Triennales: Representing the Belgian Nation* (texte du catalogue)

Fredie Floré enseigne l' «Histoire et la théorie de l'aménagement intérieur et du design » à l'Université de Gand (faculté d'architecture & urbanisme). Elle est également chargée de cours en histoire de l'architecture et du design à la Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Elle se consacre essentiellement à la recherche sur l'histoire du discours sur l'habitat, l'architecture, l'intérieur et l'esthétique au cours de la deuxième moitié du XXe siècle. Elle étudie actuellement l'impact des grands fabricants de meubles comme Knoll International sur l'image de l'architecture moderne et sur l'importance des Triennales de Milan en tant que plateformes de débat sur l'architecture moderne et l'esthétique. Elle a co-rédigé trois ouvrages et a également publié de nombreux articles et chapitres sur l'architecture de l'habitat et l'esthétique des années 1950 en Belgique dans des livres et revues belges et étrangères, notamment *The Journal of Architecture*, *Architectural History*, *Journal of Design History* et *De Witte Raaf*. Fredie Floré participe régulièrement à l'organisation d'expositions sur l'architecture et l'esthétique.

INFORMATIONS PRATIQUES

Jules Wabbes, Furniture Designer

Dates
17.10.2012 > 13.01.2013
Conférence de presse : 16.10 à 11h – Vernissage : 16.10 à 18h30

Lieu
Palais des Beaux-Arts – Circuit Rue Royale
Rue Ravenstein 23
1000 Bruxelles

Heures d'ouverture
Mardi > Dimanche, 10:00 > 18:00
Jeudi, 10:00 > 21:00
Fermé le lundi

Tickets
€ 8,00 – 6,00 – 4,00
€ 14,00 Ticket combiné Constant Permeke + Jules Wabbes
€ 15,00 Ticket combiné Constant Permeke + Jules Wabbes + Charif Benhelima

Réductions
Art Gent (30.11 > 4.12.2012) est un nouveau salon de l'art de grande qualité qui comprend 4 zones différentes avec Young, B.ART, Lineart et Vintage&Design et qui veut offrir une expérience de visite unique. Sur présentation de votre billet *Art Gent*, profitez d'une réduction de 25% sur votre entrée pour l'exposition *Jules Wabbes. Furniture Designer*. Sur présentation de votre billet *Jules Wabbes*, profitez d'une réduction de 50% sur votre entrée pour *Art Gent*. ** Réduction valable le temps de la durée de l'exposition. Non cumulable avec d'autres réductions. www.artgent.be

Sur présentation de votre billet *Interieur 2012* (20.10 > 28.10.2012), profitez d'une réduction de 25% sur votre entrée pour *Jules Wabbes*. Sur présentation de votre billet *Jules Wabbes*, profitez d'une réduction de 20% sur votre entrée pour *Interieur*. www.interieur.be

Catalogue
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MILLON
MAISON DE VENTES AUX ENCHERES

MILLON BRUXELLES : RENDEZ-VOUS DES COLLECTIONNEURS DE JULES WABBES

La Maison de vente Millon Bruxelles est partenaire de l'exposition *Jules Wabbes, furniture designer* qui s'ouvrira le 17 octobre au Palais des Beaux-arts de Bruxelles. Une volonté d'intégrer l'art belge dans sa programmation et d'en assurer la promotion. Une première vente *Design, un art de vivre* proposera le 13 novembre des luminaires et autres pièces de Jules Wabbes. Cette nouvelle collaboration permettra de fournir aux collectionneurs des certificats d'authenticité basés sur les archives de la famille. Un signal qui devrait rassurer les collectionneurs face à une œuvre qui, a fait l'objet d'éditions peu scrupuleuses après la mort de l'artiste.

Une cote en progression constante

Ce sont quelques 300 pièces de mobilier Jules Wabbes qui ont animé le marché au cours de ces 15 dernières années. Initialement présentes chez les antiquaires, son œuvre est depuis 2007 coutumière des salles de vente et a connu une véritable explosion tant en Belgique qu'à Paris. Pour exemple, une bibliothèque avec système d'éclairage incorporé vendue à 44 000 euros, une table de salle à manger vendue à 34 000 euros, un bureau pièce unique plateau à pan coupé vendue à 38000 euros, un bureau Gérard Philippe vendu 31 000 euros,…
Une tendance qui sera désormais renforcée par les documents d'authentification délivrés par la Maison de vente Millon Bruxelles avec le concours de Marie Wabbes. La famille possède en effet des documents, des dessins et des descriptions de tout ce qui a été fabriqué. Consciente de la rareté des plus belles pièces, Marie Wabbes entend documenter chaque certificat. *Il est très important de pouvoir retracer l'origine des pièces,* confie-t-elle.
Les collectionneurs pourront en bénéficier à l'occasion des prochaines ventes organisées par le département design de la Maison Millon (la première en novembre, la seconde au printemps).

Informations pratiques

DESIGN UN ART DE VIVRE
Exposition du jeudi 8 au 11-12-13 novembre de 11h à 18h
Vente les lundi 12 et mardi 13 novembre à 14h15
Au FORUM du Grand Sablon
Bodenbroek 8A - 1 000 Bruxelles _ Tel : +32 471 96 18 35
Toutes personnes qui voudraient faire authentifier ou estimer les pièces Wabbes peuvent consulter la Maison Millon Bruxelles.

5 Méplats, forme carrée, aluminium . Dimensions : 14, 2 x 17 x 19,5 cm

Contenu de la vente

Série de 10 appliques en aluminium (petit modèle) originaires de la Générale de Banque réalisée dans les années 70.
Estimation : 2000 – 2500 euros la paire.

La vente comprendra également des oeuvres du peintre, sculpteur et décorateur italien **Piero Fornasetti** (1913-1988), de deux principaux représentant du mouvement moderne : les architectes allemand **Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe** 1886-1969) et suisse, **Le Corbusier** (1887-1965) et du designer autodidacte français **Jean Prouvé** (1901-1984).

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Jules Wabbes Editions 2010

Design Vlaanderen Galerie
rue de la Chancellerie 19, 1000 Bruxelles

16/11/2012 - 13/01/2013

En complément de l'exposition « Jules Wabbes Furniture Designer » au BOZAR, Jules Wabbes Editions 2010 a demandé aux entreprises suivantes de concevoir une version contemporaine des meubles, des luminaires ou encore des textiles de l'artiste : Angelo Trading, BULO, Serax, Souveraine, Vervloet et Wever & Ducré.

Un véritable espace de vie est créé dans la galerie Design Vlaanderen grâce aux créations de Jules Wabbes, l'accent étant mis sur les détails de la finition et la beauté fonctionnelle de chaque objet. Les efforts consentis par les entreprises pour garantir une qualité irréprochable, notamment par la présentation du processus de production, seront également mis à l'honneur.

Partenaires Angelo Trading | BULO | Serax | Souveraine | Vervloet| Wever & Ducré.
Art direction van JULES WABBES EDITIONS 2010 / Luc VINCENT
Curateur de l'exposition Giovanna MASSONI

à l'occasion de l'exposition « Jules Wabbes Furniture Designer » à BOZAR (17 octobre – 13 janvier 2013).