

*Press Release*



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Season XXVIII  
24.11.2023 -17.3.2024

*25 Seasons*  
Pao Hui Kao, Solo Show

Vernissage  
23.11.2023, 18-21.00  
In the presence of the artist

SPAZIO  
— NOBILE

*Contemporary Applied Arts, Design & Photography*

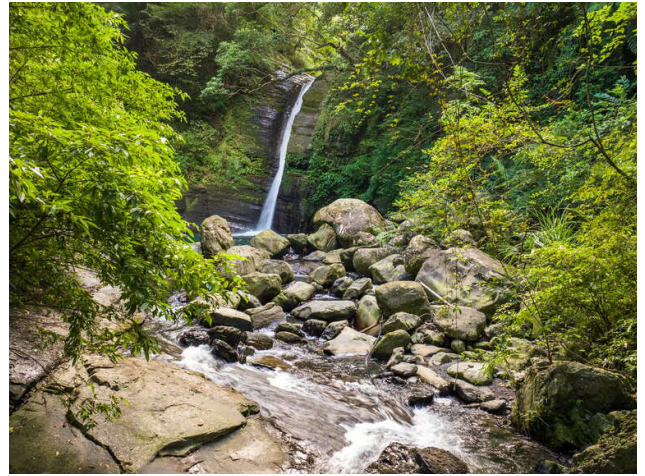
# Pao Hui Kao

## 25 Seasons

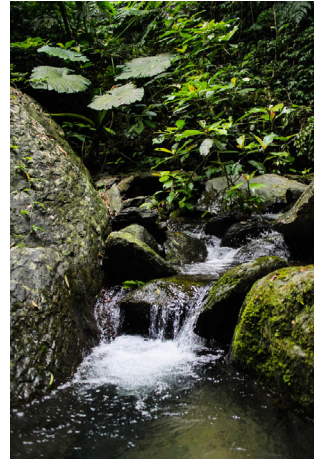
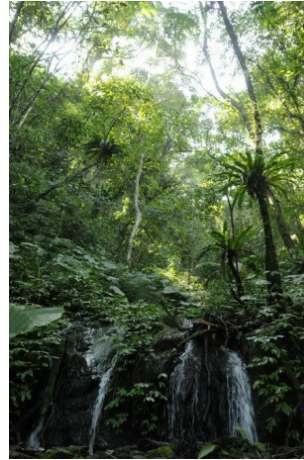
### Landscapes of Paper and Lacquer

The highly innovative creative process of Taiwanese artist and designer Pao Hui Kao follows a slow, repetitive, and meditative rhythm, nourished by her confidence in her craftsmanship and the properties of paper as her preferred material. While each of the steps represents a challenge in itself, the magic of paper unfolds gradually under the thoughtful touch of the creator and is showcased through two collections brought together in her first solo exhibition at Spazio Nobile: *Paper Pleats* and *Lacquer Leaf*. 50 pieces of paper furniture and lacquer paintings, vibrant with colors and light, animate the space of the Brussels art gallery throughout Pao Hui Kao's "25 Seasons."

In the *Paper Pleats* series, beauty emerges from a slow and extended phase of experimentation with tracing paper, rice glue, Urushi lacquer, and colored pigments. For the random *Lacquer Leaf* series, the artist composes her canvas with successive layers of crepe paper hardened with rice glue and Urushi lacquer, a technique she intuitively adopted while learning kintsugi (golden joinery) in Japan. The sophistication of each of her pieces follows the thread of her spirit and her research on materials, their intrinsic strength, and their evolution as functional furniture or contemplative paintings. This dichotomy between mobile and utilitarian objects and works of art, both rooted in a tradition that Pao Hui Kao challenges intuitively every day, lends great power to her creations, responding to both daily needs for lightness and mobility and moments of pause and spirituality. *Paper Pleats* consists of successive layers of tracing paper rolled and adhered with rice glue, forming a honeycomb structure that allows them to be used as furniture. *Paper Pleats Original* preserves the translucency of the paper in a mysterious origami reminiscent of a sea sponge, while *Urushi Paper Pleats* elevates the object by giving it an additional pictorial value, emphasizing its contours with vertical and indeterminate lines, akin to "furniture-landscapes." "The experience of color brings back memories of my childhood, the colors of the jungle and mountains in the Wulai region (New Taipei City) south of Taipei, where waterfalls and hot springs emerge. Alongside school, I also studied Chinese ink drawing from the age of 10, mixing it with other materials like oil in a very creative way. Urushi lacquer is similar to Chinese ink; it allows for creating thickness in successive lines like an imaginary calligraphy. I don't use a brush like in Chinese ink drawing but a paper tool that I specially created to trace the color lines or paint my pieces. The gestation time for the work is very long, especially for the *Lacquer Leafs*, which require weeks or even months for the 25 successive layers of Urushi lacquer and natural pigment to solidify before being spontaneously sanded and left to dry. Depending on the climate, the result will always be different and unpredictable."



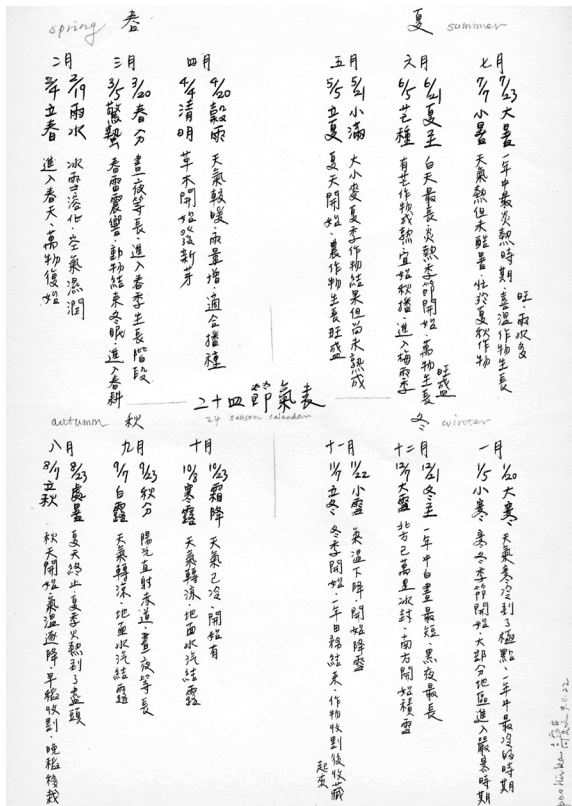
Wulai region, Taiwan



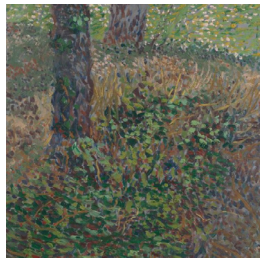
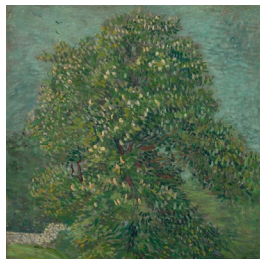
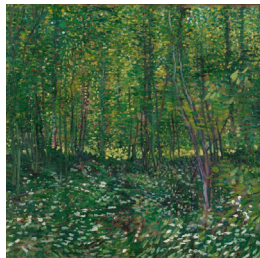
The first version of *Urushi Paper Pleats Black*, which was awarded as a finalist in 2022 by the Loewe Craft Prize of the Loewe Foundation, was followed by new variations in Urushi lacquer and red, green, and blue pigments. Urushi lacquer, extracted from the lacquer tree in Japan, reflects Pao Hui Kao's commitment to using organic and non-polluting materials. Following her residency in Fukushima, Japan in 2019, where Pao learned the techniques of lacquer painting, she became aware of the strong continuity of this craftsmanship passed down through generations. She pondered how to bring this tradition into a more contemporary identity. This gave birth to the random *Lacquer Leaf* series created in different scales, from painted trays to murals, with versatility in both use and display. By projecting her imagination onto these lacquer paintings, she mixes colored pigment powders of black, red, yellow, green, blue, and purple, as well as gold or silver powder.

Pao Hui Kao also adapts the kintsugi technique to create floating lines in her polished and repolished lacquer landscapes, allowing new shades and iridescent sources of shadow and light to emerge. These fine threads of gold or silver, used in Japan for the repair of ceramics, become a visible sign for the artist to connect multiple sections of her tableau, like a line of ennoblement in her grand landscapes, curved paintings into which the gaze plunges and loses itself endlessly in a chromatic and vibrational field that could be likened to auras or the seven chakras (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, gold, and white). This relationship between the material objects of *Paper Pleats* and the immaterial world of *Lacquer Leafs* creates a strong and sensitive dialogue between earth and cosmos, between the real and palpable world and the beyond.

By anchoring this exhibition in the theme of the 24 Seasons or the lunisolar calendar that comes from Asian countries, Pao Hui Kao opens the way to rediscovering this cycle of nature, adding her 25th season: this circular rhythm corresponds to astronomical phenomena such as eclipses and solstices. Pao's palette starts from black and progresses to green, then orange, followed by red, purple, and blue before returning to black. The colors intermingle and follow the changing climate, the variations in dryness and humidity throughout the autumn, winter, spring, and summer. Pao makes perceptible the cadence of the seasons that follow almost imperceptibly every two weeks. The grand tableau of her "25 Seasons" becomes a source of beauty, contemplation, and impermanence. This meticulous observation of nature well expresses the centrality of time in the artist's practice, as she handles Urushi lacquer with full awareness of her environment, the climate, and the ever-changing landscapes. "Using the paintings of Dutch painter Van Gogh as a reference, the chromatic research intensifies as I paint my trays for the "25 Seasons" over the months. I studied Van Gogh by categorizing his works by season, allowing me to observe the evolution of colors in his paintings through his landscapes. The palette of the Dutch painter, the country where I have settled, was also strongly influenced by Japonism. Thus, I complete my cycle of seasons by bridging two cultures to which I feel I belong."



Pao Hui Kao's Lumsolar Calendar



Vincent van Gogh's paintings

Pao Hui Kao's unique and unexpected aesthetics boldly combine paper and lacquer, opening a new chapter in contemporary applied arts. It surprises and reveals all its subtleties and finesse of creation in this first exhibition at Spazio Nobile. After a closer look, it is a unique universe that she unveils, with a multitude of details that come to life and take shape under the amazed gaze: the infinite variations of lacquer and the honeycomb structures of her furniture subtly play with light and transcend the material to become landscapes. Lise Coirier



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## Pao Hui Kao (TW)

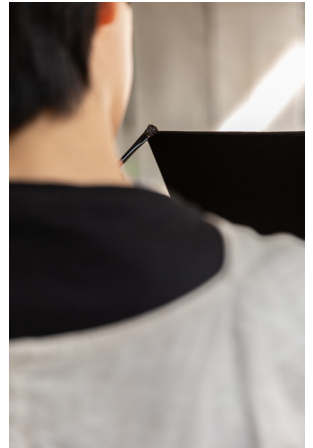
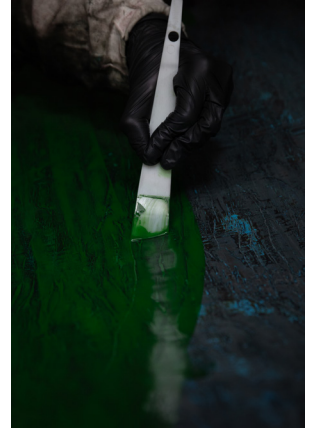
Artist, Designer

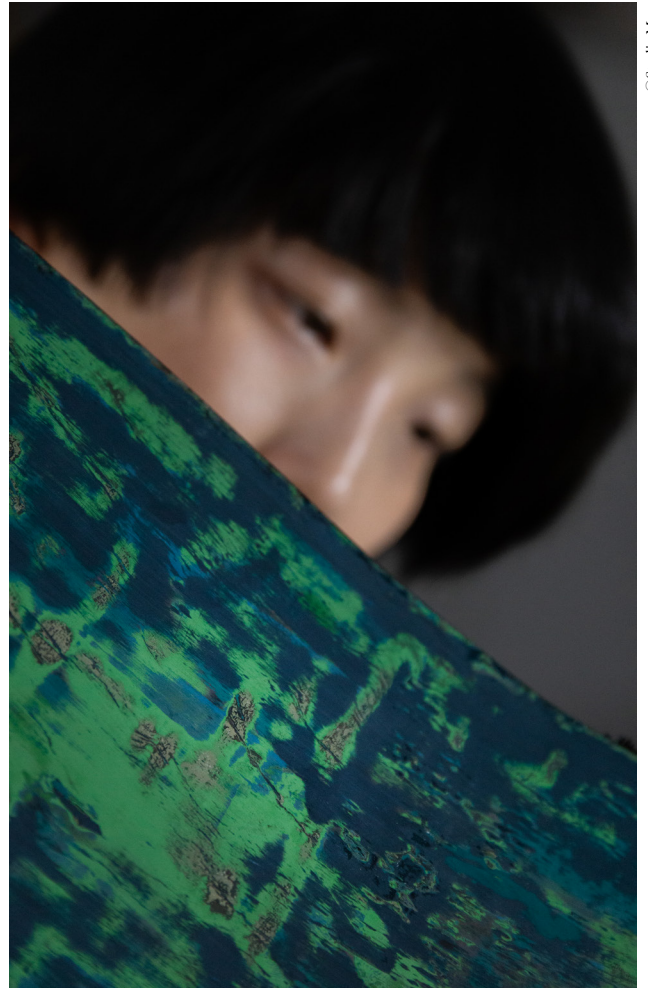
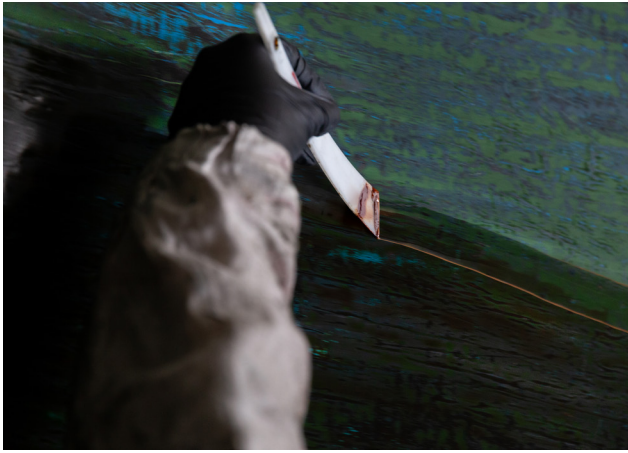
Pao Hui Kao studied Industrial Design at Huaan University in Taipei. After gaining four years of experience as an industrial designer, she pursued a Master's program at the Design Academy Eindhoven, from which she obtained her Master of Arts degree in 2016. Her work reflects significant influences from innovative materials, traditional craftsmanship, social issues, and ecological concerns. Through the creation of objects, sculptures, and installations, her work emphasizes the transformation of ordinary materials and surroundings into extraordinary aesthetics. Pao Hui Kao's projects merge the forces of nature with human artifacts. Her studio serves as a platform for ongoing research in experimental design, imbuing man-made sculptural forms and installations with deeper meaning through their interaction with nature and its elements. This

process of development enables Pao Hui to weave a narrative where the natural and the artificial converge to shape landscapes for the mind to explore the philosophical quandaries that confront the human condition.

In 2020, Pao Hui Kao created two collections for Spazio Nobile: *Paper Pleats* and *Lacquer Leaf*, in which she explores the symbiosis of both organic and mineral elements using tracing paper, crepe paper, rice glue, Urushi lacquer, color pigments, and kintsugi. Pao Hui Kao was also a finalist for the LOEWE Craft Prize in 2022. Her creations have entered private and institutional collections in recent years, including the POC Foundation, Boghossian Foundation, Rothschild Collection, among others. Spazio Nobile has been representing Pao Hui Kao since 2019.

# Lacquer Leaf Collection

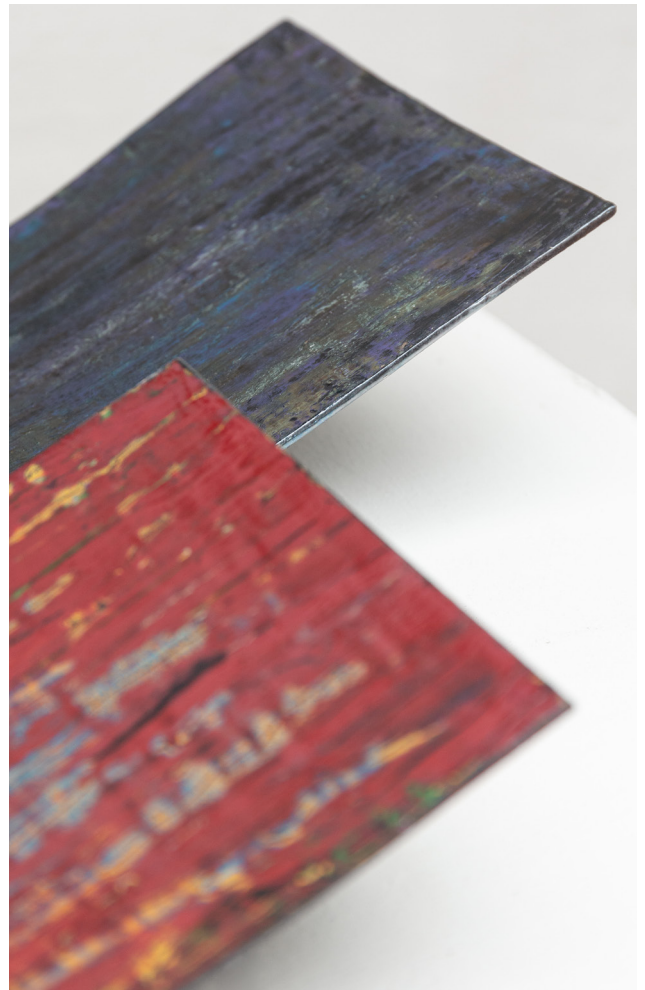






# 25 Seasons Lacquer Leafs







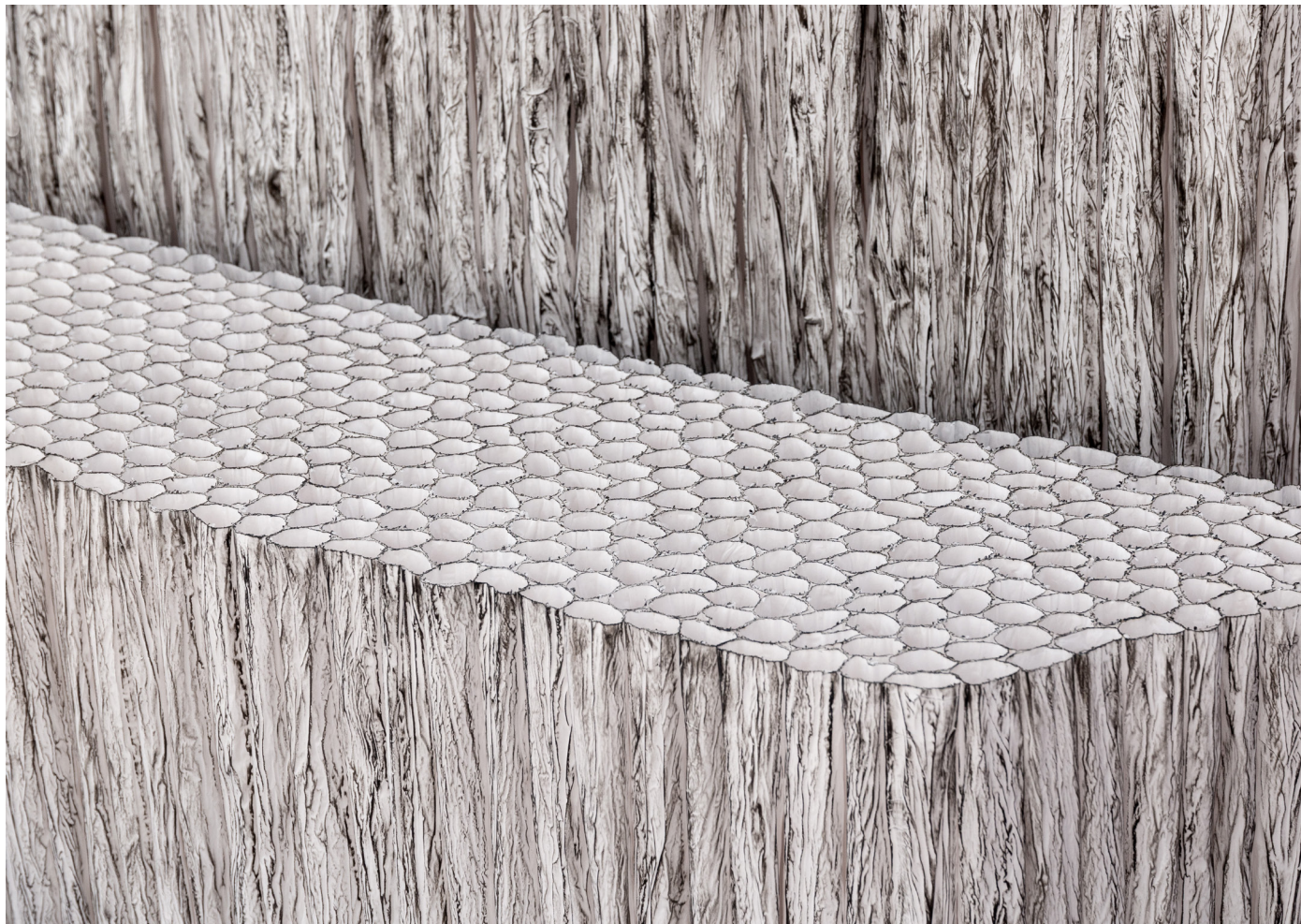
# *Urushi Paper Pleats Collection*



©StudioMass

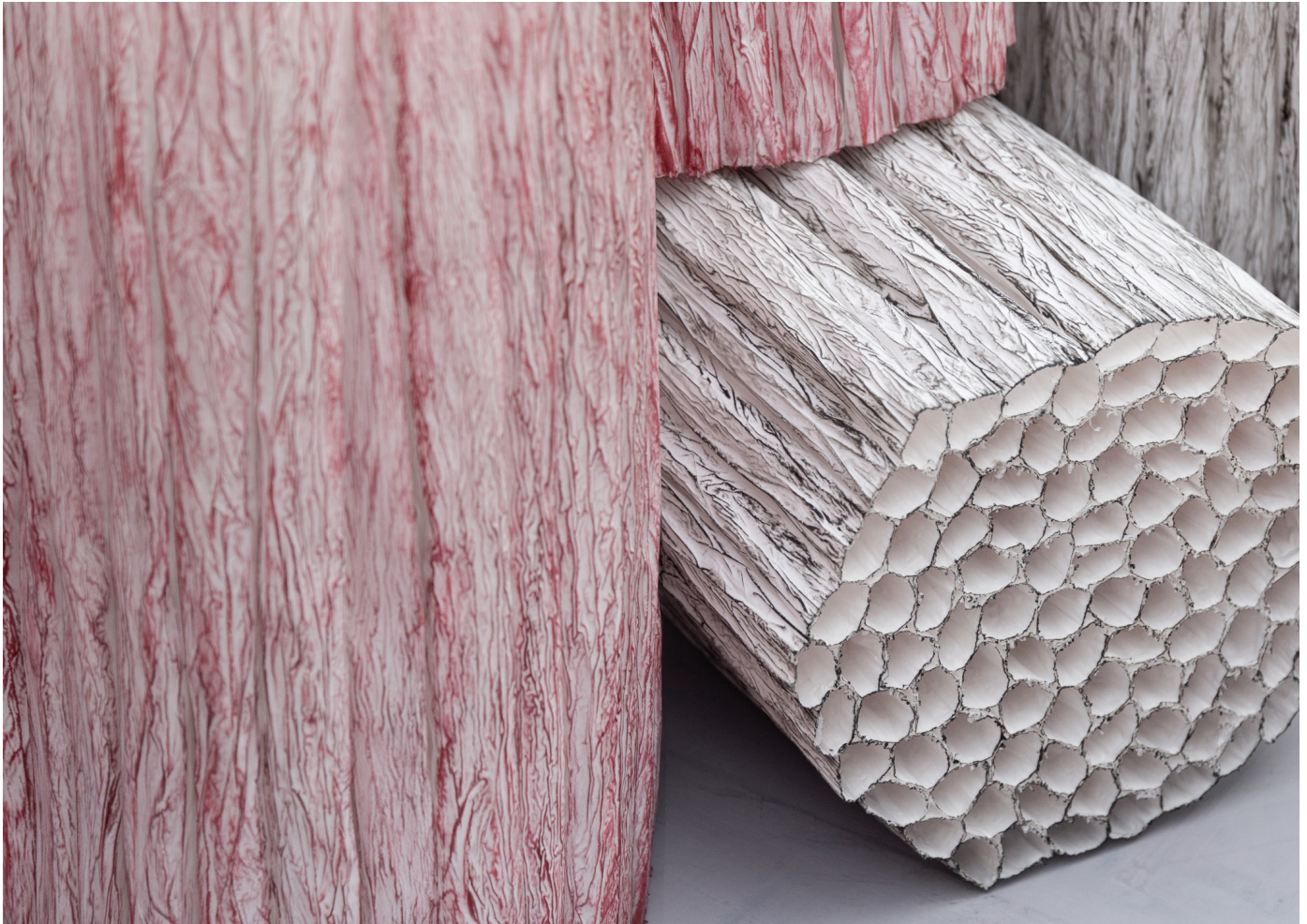


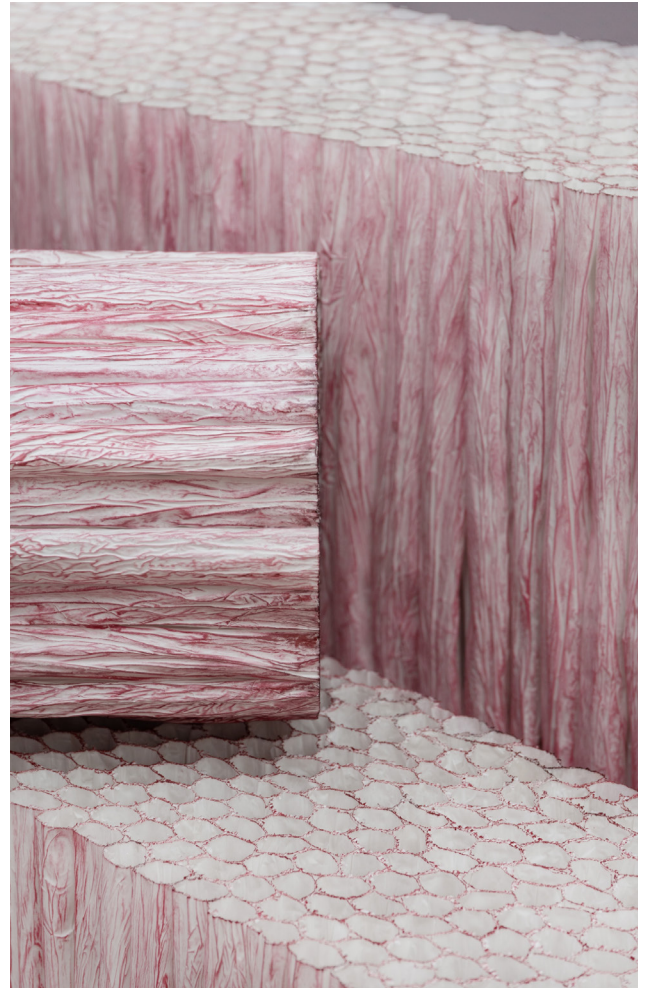










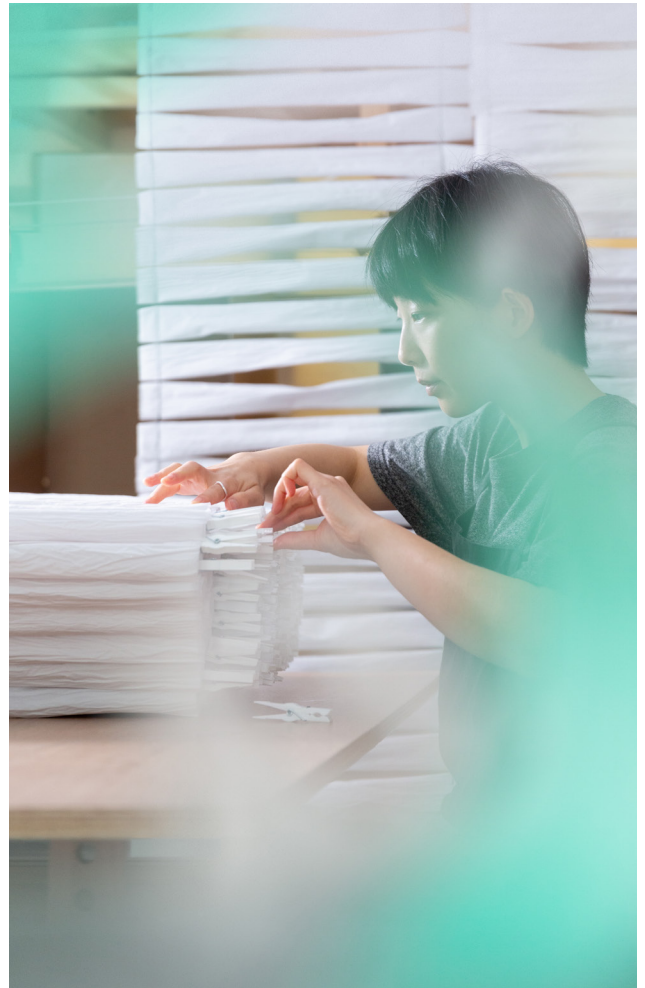








# *Original Paper Pleats Collection*









*Info*

Season XXVIII

*25 Seasons*

Pao Hui Kao, Solo Show

24.11.2023 - 17.3.2024

Vernissage

23.11.2023 - 18-21.00

In the presence of the artist

Sunday Brunches

26.11.2023

17.3.2024



*Save the date*

Ceramic Art Brussels

Tour & Taxis

Group Show

25-28.1.2024

NOMAD St Moritz

Hotel Eden

Group Show

22 - 25.2.2024

Spazio Nobile Gallery

Åsa Jungnelius, Solo Show

22.3 - 16.6.2024

Vernissage 21.3.2024

PAD Paris

Les Tuileries

Group Show

3-7.4.2024

*Contact*

Spazio Nobile

Contemporary

Applied Arts, Design &

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Me - sa / wo - za / Wed

- Sat, 11.00-18.00 & sur

rendez-vous / op afspraak /

by appointment

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When art historians Lise Coirier and Gian Giuseppe Simeone opened Spazio Nobile in 2016 in the lively and cosmopolitan Brugmann Square area of Brussels, they combined their passions for design and art history, establishing a scholarly dialogue between contemporary applied arts, design and photography. With no boundaries between disciplines, visual arts dialogue with fine arts. Having assembled a collection of unique pieces, limited editions and installations that are both experimental and artistic, with a particular sensitivity for all things related to nature and minerality, the gallery organises five exhibitions and events each year in art and heritage venues (Maison Louis Carré, Yvelines, France, arch. Alvar Aalto; Ancienne Nonciature, Grand Sablon; Lempertz (former Leroy Frères gallery), Brussels, etc). Spazio Nobile also participates in Belgian and international fairs such as Art Brussels, Luxembourg Art Week, Art on Paper, Collectible Design Fair, PAD Paris and PAD London, Design Miami/Basel, NÔMAD Capri / Saint Moritz, Unique Design Shanghai, etc. The gallery celebrates its 7th anniversary in 2023 and represents some twenty emerging and internationally renowned artists and designers, while promoting excellent craftsmanship and the cultures of East and West. Spazio Nobile also publishes TLMag True Living of Art & Design, created by Lise Coirier in 2008; through this bi-annual art and design magazine, available in print and online, the gallery shares its selection and its artistic and cultural commitment to collectible art and design. Spazio Nobile has been awarded the Homo Faber label of excellence and continues to explore its international project *Glass is Tomorrow*. In 2020, Spazio Nobile opened Spazio Nobile Studiolo, a permanent exhibition space, opposite the main gallery which is located on the beautiful floor of a 1920s house and the founders have extended the gallery experience to their villa in Tervuren, Spazio Nobile At Home.

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