During Milan Design Week 2019, renowned artist Matthew Day Jackson will present a highly distinctive collection of furniture, in collaboration with Finnish contemporary design company Made by Choice and the original inventors of high-pressure laminate, Formica Group.

The collection, titled Kolho, after the Finnish town that first inspired Jackson, will comprise a series of dining tables and chairs juxtaposed with a series of the artist’s well-known, exquisite flower paintings. For the table and chairs, Jackson has designed his own Formica® surface that replicates, to scale, the surface of the moon. He has created the paintings using lead, scorched wood and Formica® laminate, evoking Jan Breughel the Elder and Younger’s genre-defining floral works from the 16th and 17th centuries, made during a time of Dutch prosperity, colonial expansion and exploitation. Presented with the artist’s gallery, Hauser & Wirth, the paintings provide a backdrop and foundation for the viewer to engage with the deeper meanings of the Kolho collection.

Kolho was born from serendipitous circumstances when Jackson visited Finland in 2018 in preparation for a show at the Serlachius Museums (opening May 2019). While there, Jackson was interested in seeing the Formica® factory located in Kolho. The laminate material is of special significance to the artist, as a memory of the tabletops and kitchen cabinets of his childhood, and as a material central to his artistic practice (featured in the paintings on view). During this visit, he realized that the town
had greater connections to the themes of space and mechanics in his work. Kolho was the birthplace of James Vehko (aka Jalmari Vehkomäki), an emigrant to the USA and designer of the first Ford Motor Company all-metal automobile body, after the Model A. Vehko’s son, also from Kolho, became head of Chrysler’s Space division.

The trip to Kolho quickly led to logical collaboration between Formica Group and Jackson. Those familiar with Jackson’s artistic practice will see this collaboration as inevitable – not just for his long history using Formica® laminate, but also because of the multi-media, immersive nature of his artwork and interest in community engagement. Together they developed bespoke steel press plates to create a textured laminate at 80 microns in depth that is a scale representation of the surface of the far side of the moon. This texture is derived from images taken from NASA’s Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter in 2009, launched in honor of the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 landing. Kolho’s debut will coincide with the 50th Anniversary of this landing.

Jackson’s interest in the moon landing features widely in his artwork, and speaks to ideas about colonization and human ambition, at whatever cost. The connection between a tabletop and the surface of the moon is a poetic one, relating our everyday needs to our wildest dreams becoming real. As Jackson puts it:

“As we explore the world and universe around us, we are peering deeper into our own reflection. We seek not the world outside, but rather, proof of our own existence. And as we search further, we delve deeper into the terrain of our collective selves.”

Serendipity prevailed yet further when Jackson met Niclas Ahlstrom, a relative of Maire Gullichsen (Ahlstrom) founder of Artek with Alvar Aalto. His family company Ahlstrom (pulp and paper www.ahlstrom.com) also owned the littala and Karhula glass factories giving him a remarkable design pedigree. Now with his own contemporary furniture company, Ahlstrom agreed that he and Jackson
should create a collection of furniture that would also utilise the Formica® laminate design Jackson developed from the nearby plant – and so Kolho was born.

Jackson sculpted prototypes while in residence at Hauser & Wirth in Somerset in the fall of 2018. These are currently on display in his exhibition Pathetic Fallacy at Hauser & Wirth Somerset, his sixth solo exhibition with the gallery.

In Milan, Made by Choice, Formica Group and Jackson will present four different tables and chairs in different geometries meditating on the conventions of the rectangle in the creation of what Jackson calls “the stage of the table”. The furniture will also come in a full spectrum of colours. Please note that the photographs of the furniture in this release are of the prototypes.

Kolho will be a permanent part of the Made by Choice collection available to purchase from www.madebychoice.com. Prices start at 899 euros.

PRESS CONTACT

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Made by Choice will present Kolho during Salone del Mobile:

Address:
Via Maroncelli 7, 20154 Milan

Opening Dates:
Tuesday 9th April – Sunday 14th April

Opening Times:
10:00 – 19:00

Press Preview:
Monday 8th April
10:00 – 17:00

Matthew Day Jackson

Matthew Day Jackson is an American artist whose multifaceted practice encompasses sculpture, painting, collage, photography, drawing, video, performance and installation. Born in Panorama City, California, in 1974 and currently living and working on in Brooklyn, NY and Wilson, WY. His work grapples with big ideas such as the evolution of human thought, the fatal attraction of the frontier and the faith that man places in technological advancement. In particular, his work addresses the myth of the American Dream, exploring the forces of creation, growth, transcendence, and death through visions of its failed utopia.

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Made by Choice

Made by Choice is an award-winning design house, establishing a global brand for the 21st century. The vision of Made by Choice is based on the added value of collective creation while promoting sustainable Nordic values through authentic design. Committed to producing durable, bold and innovative designs at reasonable prices, MbC combines contemporary woodworking methods and modern technology. Its products are developed and manufactured at its own factory in south-western Finland by some of the best craftsmen in the world. Inspired by heritage and Nordic urban lifestyle, Made by Choice was founded by Lasse Laine, Sebastian Jansson and Niclas Ahlström to create a distinctive, value-driven brand and a new design heritage. Made by Choice collaborates with leading designers and ambitious interior architects on site-specific projects to create new urban spaces.

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Formica Group

Formica Group globally leads the industry in the design, manufacture and distribution of innovative surfacing products for commercial and residential applications. Formica® laminate is the ‘original’, with over 100 years of design and product innovation and manufacturing experience. Durable, easy to clean and resistant to impact, heat and scratches, Formica® laminate requires minimal maintenance.

Formica Group (www.Formica.com) is a global group of companies operating worldwide. In Europe Formica Group has plants in the UK, North Shields and Newton Aycliffe; Spain, Valencia; and Finland, Kolho.

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