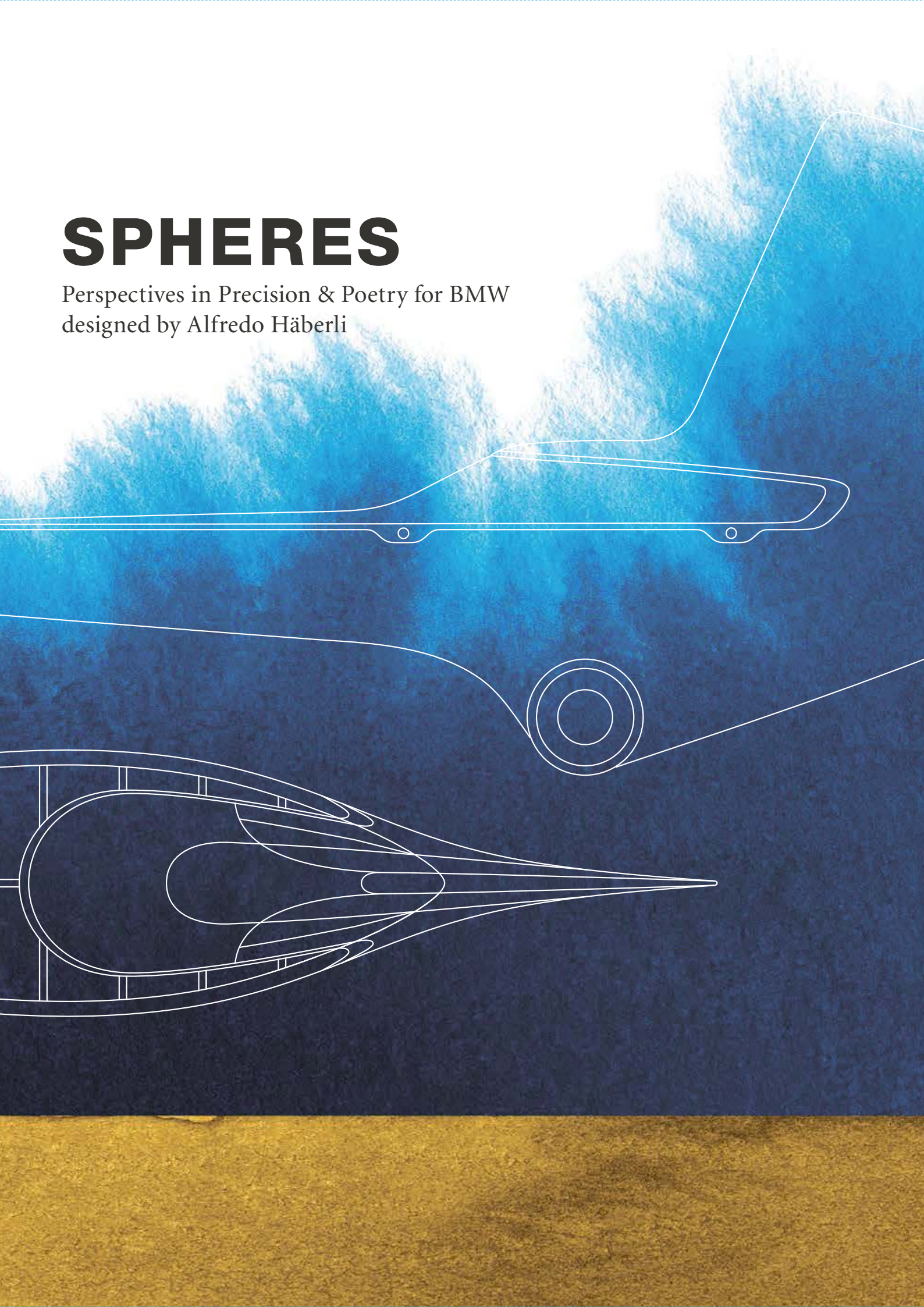


# SPHERES

Perspectives in Precision & Poetry for BMW  
designed by Alfredo Häberli





# **SPHERES**

Perspectives in Precision & Poetry for BMW  
designed by Alfredo Häberli



**When we talk about design culture at BMW Design, we mean a design process that is shaped by interaction and open minds. And because the evolutionary within the corporation itself is just as important to us as looking beyond it, we regularly invite creative professionals from a wide range of disciplines to explore our design philosophy in a different context. We entrusted Swiss designer Alfredo Häberli with anchoring this year's creative collaboration. Our considerations revolved around the key BMW design guideline, namely "Precision and Poetry", the starting point for our look at the values of current and future mobility. As designers at BMW it is crucial to remain aware of the company's origins, but above all we must look to the future. While we specifically address technologies, that make automatically controlled driving smarter and safer, we must also simultaneously make as detailed a picture of the unknown that lies directly ahead and in the distant future.**

**Alfredo Häberli immersed himself in the topics we had chosen and, adopting a highly personal outlook, set out in search of the essential values of mobile life tomorrow. What emerged is a journey to familiar places and imaginary spaces. An installation in which the focus is not on finding a design, but rather on looking analytically at what we would like to surround ourselves with in future. Using fine lines for the specific and rich images for the ineffable, Alfredo sketches an associative world, which lends a new meaning to the luxury of mobility.**

**With this book we would like to provide some insights into the far-reaching debate between visions and reality, which Alfredo Häberli conducted with us and our teams – in the guise of conceptual sketches and visual fragments. The installation visualises the many layers that bear consideration when viewing the future of mobility tomorrow.**

**KARIM HABIB** Head of Design BMW Automobiles

**FANTASTIC PAST TENSE: Since my childhood – that is to say, ever since I can remember – cars have always played a special**



Alfredo with NSU, 1968

**role in my life. We used to live near an autodrome**



Torino IKA Renault "Nürburgring"

**called "Oscar Cabalén". My parents ran a well-known restaurant**



Circuit map of the Cabalén Autodrome wheels

**located right in front of it. Visiting the paddock was**

**a welcome change for us kids. How we loved it: the smell in the**

**air, the engine noise, the colours**



Racing decals

**of the bodywork**

**designs and the decals. Later, when we moved from Argentina to**

**Switzerland, all I took with me were my little Matchbox**



Matchbox BMW 3.0 CSL Superfast

**cars, carefully stored in a shoe box. At school my**



Matchbox Alfa Carabo, no. 75

**best friends were called Beat and Martin, and based on the name**

**Walter by which I was then known, our clan logo**



Beat, Martin and Walter

**BMW emblem. The works**



Mezzadro for Zanotta, 1957

**of Achille Castiglioni and Giorgio**

**Giugiaro were the main reason for my training as a designer. It was**

**only much, much later that I discovered my favourite Matchbox car,**

**the Iso Grifo, had been designed**



Alfredo's Matchbox Iso Grifo, no. 14

**by Giugiaro at the**

**age of 25! Yes, these coincidences – call it fate if you like – could be seen in retrospect as a common thread running through my life. But it was equally down to me actively searching and boldly reaching out for happiness. For example, I was able to put on a small exhibi-**

**tion for the MINI**



Shineshine cap, 2005

**giveaway. A concept for painting**



MINI body painting, 2009

**a MINI body followed,**

**but unfortunately it couldn't be implemented as I was bound to another contract. For Volvo I managed to produce a driveable soap-**

**box**



Pelle soapbox for Volvo, 2005

**car and I spent several years as a cartoonist for Audi**

**Magazine. I was also a member of the judging panel at Schloss Bensberg, alongside Walter de Silva and Giorgio Giugiaro!**



Giugiaro, Häberli, De Silva & Bayley

**At the Villa d'Este I was a guest speaker, and on two occasions I took part in the Mille Miglia as co-driver in a BMW 328 Cabriolet, for**

**which I designed**



AH & AvH at the MM

**the leather jackets. But the incredible high-**

**light of my dreamlike past is this project: Spheres, Perspectives in Precision & Poetry for BMW. It's a dream playing out in reality.**

**FRAGMENTS OF A TASK: The visit of the HQ was an eventful day;**

**the influences infinite, the topics exciting**



BMW 3.0 CSI in a dream colour

**and the**

**BMW Museum**



Mockup in the BMW Museum

**extraordinarily inspiring. As always at**

**the outset of a task, I open myself up to all images, thoughts,**

**ideas, words and materials.**



Pinboard in the studio with a collection of objects

**And so it was with**

**this subject that is so close to my heart. Without spending too**

**much time thinking, I gather ideas in the form of sketches, seek**

**further inspiration**



Bookshelf (fragment)

**in my books, complement it with tar-**

**geted research and in this way acquire knowledge.**



Cover with a BMW 328

**I call**

**this first crucial step "opening". It is an intuitive, subconscious**

**stage when I am open to everything. Afterwards I try to introduce**

**order into this initial phase, to arrange it into groups, bring together**

**common or similar aspects, allow contrasts to clash with each**

**other. This multiplicity takes me in a certain direction**



General idea

**guided by a close scrutiny and rational understanding of a vaguely**

**emerging idea. In the second phase, the means of presentation can**



be sketches and drawings, but also models and possibly the occasional computer rendering. With my design ideas I always try to implement a coherent imagined concept in an unusual way to imbue each project with an individual character.



Models in the studio

**PRECISION & POETRY IN THE FUTURE:** If today we are driving around in a compact yet spacious BMW i3



BMW i3 from 2013

avant-garde BMW i8



BMW i8 from 2013

– which soon we'll hardly even need to steer ourselves – what will cars look like in the future?

What will our mode of transport be? What will true luxury be? How will an elite manifest itself, after we have passed through the 5

1. Visible luxury goods / 2. History of the brand /

phases of luxury? In the course of my search for an idea, a power-

3. Own brand world as a holistic experience / 4. Social and ecological responsibility / 5. Return to yourself or to the real "Facebook"

ful image emerges during the opening and narrowing down phase:

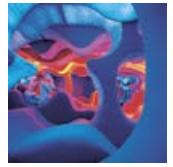
I imagine the vehicle simply gliding along on its own, with great

precision, thanks to satellite guidance. I am moving forward noise-

lessly within a space that become larger because the driver is

surplus to requirements and the front seats have been taken out.

Indeed, the configuration doesn't necessarily have to be forward-oriented. It is a greenhouse suffused with natural light, yet



Panton's psychedelic room

also intimate. It is suitable for working, reading, resting



Body work

ing or even sleeping. It is a fragment of a living room



More comfortable than most furniture

and a studio. Its routes are programmed, but are not



"Continuous Monument", Superstudio, 1969

made of asphalt. They are delineated in a virtual world only visible

to the satellite. I know when I leave my domicile where and when I

will meet somebody. It's my circle of friends and busi-



Playa Paintings by Andres Amador

ness partners who I meet in my real-life "Facebook" – anywhere,

since it is not important where. Like boats that meet on the ocean



Conversation at sea

to have a conversation. The vehicle for this is a capsule

with a greenhouse-like space, the size of a BMW 7 Series.

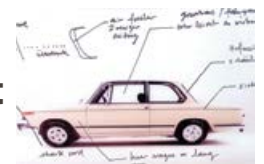


Space Design, 1969

The design is rooted in the BMW DNA. The wraparound swage line,

the forward-tilting shark nose with its bipartite grille, the green-

house with its "Hofmeister kink", the stretched bonnet



Handwritten DNA design guidelines

and the perfect proportions. These building blocks usher the

**concept of Precision & Poetry – emotionally and sculpturally – into a potentially imminent future. This is a vehicle driven by nature: it**

**draws its energy from air and wind, water, sun and temperature,**

**like the**



Jaeger-LeCoultre by Newson

**Atmos clock that runs on temperature fluctuations**

**of one degree. The roof over your head**



Renzo Piano, Tjibaou

**is a treehouse,**

**a prehistoric dwelling, a place to linger, an island where loved ones**

**meet. It is a place of personal revitalisation, whether through art,**

**literature, music or simply savouring the view. A place defined by**

**poetry, where time has its own dimension. The floating of the house**



Single Haus by Front Architects

**and the floating of the vehicle give rise to a new image in**

**our minds while begging the question: “What makes a house a**

**home?” and “How will the luxury of this mode of transport manifest**

**itself?” All that is a breath of Precision & Poetry in the offing and**

**an endeavour to express my experience by aesthetic means.**

**THE DIALOGUE** between Alfredo Häberli and Adrian van Hooydonk, Senior Vice President BMW Group Design: We were the first year to be taught computer-aided design. My first computer, an Apple Macintosh, was an electronic typewriter and useful for trying out typographic ideas. Mobile telephony had just established itself on building sites, with the receiver resting on a brick-sized battery. As it was so heavy it usually was left in the car, but at least it was there. The first few times I visited Italy I would stop off at a service station to call from a kiosks and confirm the time of my meeting – the currency was still Lire. The kiosks only stocked a few magazines, and even less really good ones. Today, there are more media than ever before – and talking to the public about yourself and your design has become part of being a designer. Let's just forget that for a moment and have a personal conversation – just you and I. The journalists have to stay outside.



Alfredo Häberli and Adrian van Hooydonk, leaning against a BMW 328 with the race number 88

**ALFREDO HÄBERLI** Is that ok for you? What do you think?

**ADRIAN VAN HOOYDONK** Let's give it a try.

**AH** Was that it? Normally we talk much more freely with one another!

**AvH** So you want me to play the journalist? Fine. We are in your studio in Zurich and I don't know where to look. Lots of inspiration: objects, models, books, photos, art photographs, sculptures, and cars wherever you look, dotted here and there. More almost than in my studio in Munich. What do these cars mean to you?

**AH** There are memories attached to many of them. There are toys from my childhood, models I was given or bought myself. And photos by artist friends. The hovering car by Beni Bischof is an image he found on the internet and manipulated. The shot by Michel Comte for BMW was taken in the Sauber wind tunnel in Hinwil and was a present from him. The photograph by Beni Bischof was a swap: a chair for photos. Do you have any art in your studio, too?

**AvH** Yes, quite a big painting by Robin Rhode. Instead of using a brush he drove a BMW Z4 through oil paint and quite literally painted his "love of driving" on the canvas. And I have an abstract computer print, a few car models and photos, plus two individually designed motorcycle helmets.



Robin Rhode, "Freude am Fahren" or "An expression of Joy", 2009

**“We deal with technology a lot in our projects, yet a technical detail can also provide inspiration.” AvH**



**AH** I seem to remember that you designed a MINI years ago. Was that a concept car?

**AvH** Yes, it was a design concept car, which was intended to portray the future for MINI as part of the BMW Group. I really enjoyed that project. The final result was presented and naturally driven at high speed by former rally driver Paddy Hopkirk in Monte Carlo.

**AH** My contribution for MINI was modest. As with body painting I wanted to apply paint to the body while the car was moving and then have it run randomly thanks to the wind flow. The more paint you apply, the longer the stroke. The track, the paint, the car were ready. But sadly I had other contractual obligations, so it never got beyond a dream and the illustration, which I still have today.

I think that observing is the most attractive means of thinking. It requires the talent to express what you see. And even tougher: to see what you really see! My collection of items, the objects, the many books of which I know every page, every photo, all provide me with inspiration, are aids and stimulation. How do you come up with ideas?

**AvH** I get inspiration from many different sources. In our projects we deal with technology a lot, yet a technical detail can also provide inspiration. Equally, inspiration can come from a trip, an exhibition or from a completely unexpected area. I agree with you that observing things is a very important part of our work. For example, while being on the road, I watch the back of every vehicle in front of me and play through a wide variety of design versions in my mind. That keeps me alert and I think it's natural for designers to always question things and look for new solutions.

**AH** I admire your work. There are times I would like to be in your situation. Then I realise that supervising five to seven employees is enough for me. I can follow their work very closely. Go from table to table, from project to project. That's exactly how my own professor did it. Perhaps it influenced me too strongly.

**AvH** To be honest: I had never for a moment imagined being in charge of a team of 650 creative professionals, but it didn't happen overnight. I was able to get used to it over a period of years, because you need such a structure in place in order to develop so many complex products.

**AH** I think we still have a similar approach to work despite having different structures.

**AvH** Oh absolutely! I would also add humor, optimism and curiosity. And perhaps a love of working creatively and being in contact with so many interesting people as a result.

**AH** If you were to describe your life and work by way of your most important projects, which would they be?

**AvH** To be honest, that's really difficult. I feel too young to make a "Greatest Hits" album...

**AH** Then let's talk about images. I rely a lot on my visual memory; you can think of it as a kind of pinboard on which



MINI ACV30 Concept, 1997



BMW Concept GINA Light, 2008



Adrian van Hooydonk in action with his 2002ti









First Art Car by Alexander Calder, BMW 3.0 CSL, 1975



Mask for a seat on a skiff

**“I would claim that I don’t have a visible handwriting, but more of an attitude.” AH**

I always stick visual things. The reason for that is surely that I speak several languages, but not a single one perfectly. Even as a child I lived in image worlds similar to what we know today with Pinterest. What about you? Do you draw a lot? Or are you more into theory?

**AvH** Well, I’m certainly a visual person who thinks and speaks in images, but I’m also a collector, not of my own work though, that would just weigh me down, hold me back. And I prefer to feel free and look to the future.

**AH** You go car racing in quite a big way – the whole year round. How does that work? Do you have your own car? Do you look after the mechanical side? And do you then dress like Steve McQueen?

**AvH** (laughs) Much cooler than Steve, of course. No, my racing sport is not that serious, sometimes I take part in old-timer races. And I don’t have the time to tinker with the car myself.

**AH** I’m focusing intensively on slowing down design consumption by consciously not following any trends. I always ask myself why cars age so poorly. I don’t mean the quality of the material, but the design. Can you talk about that? I’m not saying it’s like that in your designs, but generally in the auto industry.

**AvH** It’s true that we attach great importance to producing a design that appears really new when it first comes out, but years later is still considered attractive and is even seen as a classic. Indeed, most models are lovingly cared for by enthusiasts and can still be seen on the roads.

**AvH** Evidently, the objects in your studio have a strong influence on your work. It would interest me to what extent the skiff used in the SPHERES project influenced you.

**AH** It hangs there because for a long time my grandfather had one like it. This one is 50 years old, I bought it for my birthday – because it’s a wonderful example for efficiency, elegance and material optimisation. Maybe these are precisely the aspects that are so important to me in my work. The soul, the appearance and charisma of this object fascinated me so much that I had to have it. However, I spent a long time looking and waiting. But to get back to your question: I wanted to design something as elegant as the skiff. The image of gliding, rowing together with the body’s movement. Having the time and peace of mind to move this way also has something to do with luxury. With the way that I see luxury. So unconsciously or consciously this object has had a great influence on me and this project.

**“I rely a lot on my visual memory; you can think of it as a kind of pinboard on which I always stick visual things.” AH**

**AvH** How do you generally approach a project?

**AH** It always begins with something small: an image, a word, a technology, a material. Maybe prompted by a talk, a query for a job, or a wish someone expresses. I’m not a designer who sits in his little room developing something for himself and then sets about promoting it. I need a telephone call. Personal contact. But it is also the intuition I feel during that first contact that determines whether I take on a project or not. That’s my freedom. And the reason why all my clients have also become friends. That includes you. Though it was just the other way around with us. My decisions are always based on honesty and coherence. To myself and the matter in hand.

**AvH** I wouldn’t have expected you to be any different. I’m delighted that we are doing a further joint project. As you say, the friendship came first. But I believe that precisely for that reason we are objective and professional.

**AH** I would claim that I don’t have a visible handwriting, but more of an attitude. And if I had one, it would be one with few lines and as much expression as possible. Like that of a cartoonist. How would you describe your handwriting? Does it have the DNA of BMW?

**AvH** Like you I work for several brands and that is never possible with just one handwriting. But the design principles and approaches within the group are similar.

**AH** Is an auto designer more of a service provider or an industrial designer? And are we so-called “author designers” more like artists?

**AvH** My understanding of industrial design – and you do that too – is that it must always work and be capable of being produced in series. But there is much more to it: a design should appeal to the observer on an emotional level – like art can.

**AH** Do you think in black-and-white or in colour? What colour does speed have for you?

**AvH** My thoughts are always in colour. Maybe because I’m an optimist. And speed? I would say it’s multi-coloured. For each of our products we not only develop new forms, but always new colours, so that dynamism can be coloured very differently. But perhaps it should be more of a strong colour.

**AH** How important is technology for you?



Holding the model, computer plot in the background



Carbon cabin and hybrid drive platform of the BMW i8







Adrian van Hooydonk and Alfredo Häberli in the BMW Design Studio



Adrian van Hooydonk and his team at the first presentation

**“The most interesting thoughts take shape effortlessly – from head to hand.” AH**

**AvH** I find technology exciting and inspiring. It should never be an end in itself. It’s important that it benefits people.

**AH** What fascinates you about locomotion – about designing automobiles?

**AvH** Essentially, I’m interested in any form of design whatsoever. I find it especially exciting to design moving objects, because the form is always perceived differently through this movement and often appears almost alive.

**AH** Cars have always been associated with speed, setting records and racing. Is that really still contemporary?

**AvH** I believe that at BMW a pioneering spirit and a sense of competition are very deeply rooted and have always provided motivation and excellent achievements. So all of that is normal for me and means our customers get cars that drive increasingly better yet use less fuel.

**AH** When I look at the design for the BMW i8 I think you have succeeded in creating something really extraordinary.

**AvH** The BMW i8 is an absolute dream project for us. With my team I was able to present a fairly radical vision of the future in the guise of a show car, which was then realised in serial production.

**AH** Working for BMW has been a similar experience for me. And I’d like to thank you most warmly for giving me this extraordinary opportunity. Now I’m at the point again where words fail me. But one thing I do know: the image will remain in the minds of those that see it.

**AvH** I agree with you. I think it has become a real Alfredo Häberli and says something about mobility in the future. It’s been a real pleasure contemplating the future with you. Thank you very much for this exchange of ideas!

**THE SPHERE** is the graphic vision of the routes that will connect us in the future. Yet they are no longer the passable paths, roads or highways as we know them, which consist of earth, stones or tarmac. Nor are they routes that simply lead from A to B – they are not linear. Nor are they real. Rather, **THE SPHERE** is a concept of a three-dimensional “Facebook”. A kind of endless loop, which is itself in motion. An abstract skateboarding landscape, seemingly boundless and flat, provides the foundation for making and cultivating social contacts in reality. What does the route look like that a text message describes – from Europe to Asia, for instance? What path does a picture take when it is sent to Africa? What interests me here is the visual image that is created. Like the route formed by an airplane or a bird, but as a three-dimensional graphic.

Sometimes the concept of this image seems vague to me, at other times very real, and then again sharp, vivid and clear. Could ways be organic touching circles? Would cities rise from a large, horizontal expanse like mountain tops rise out of a sea of fog, a familiar sight to all of us? Perhaps it is a mountain that stands out, or an enormous forest, an island paradise, a city. What if this surface of motion were located on the lower level, with a residential space above it? What kind of image would it produce? **THE SPHERE** searches for a different kind of image for the surface on which **THE VESSEL** glides. It is not made of clouds, not of seawater, and not of air. And neither is it made of plastic, as in the superb interpretation of the sea in Federico Fellini’s movie “E la nave va”.



Yves Klein, “Le Saut dans le vide”, 1960



Film still “E la nave va” by Federico Fellini, 1983



Flight patterns data from the US FAA



**“We will be glad to be on the road, will consciously choose our routes and enjoy ourselves.” KH**



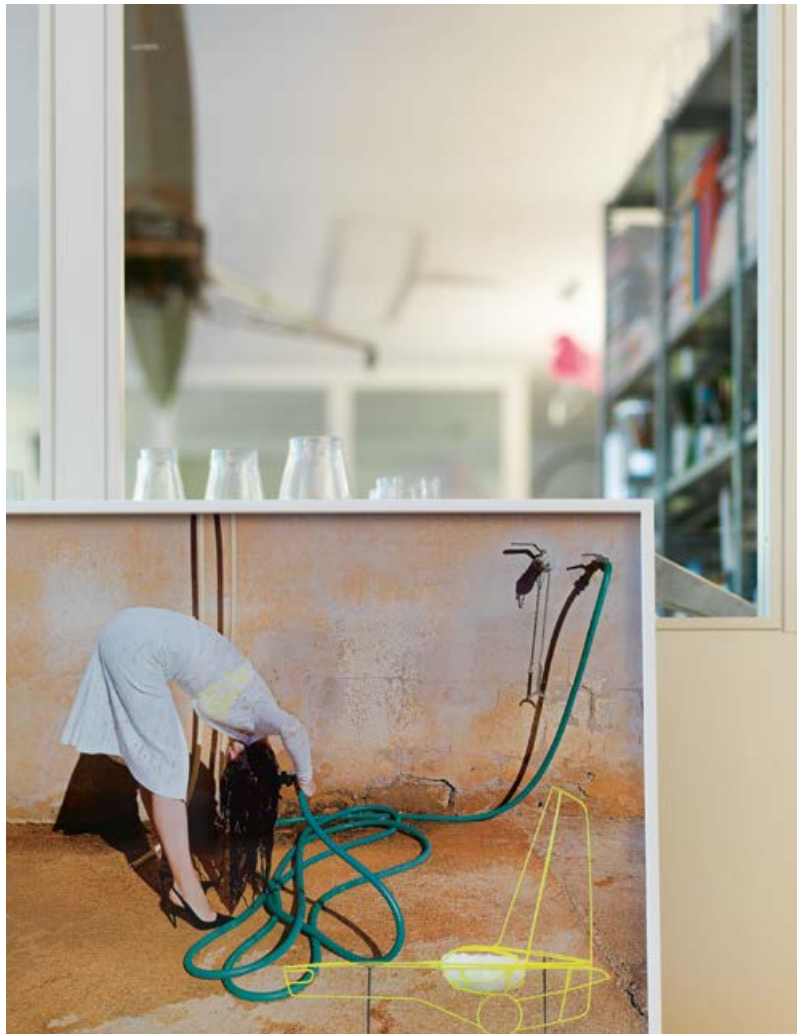
Constructed and natural surfaces on the flight ZRH-MUC



Routes will not be linear. Playa Paintings "Substructures" by Andres Amador



Endless loop as a three-dimensional highway?



A photograph by Viviane Sassen. I was interested in the curve of the hose as possible inspiration for the line of a road





pacific  
coast  
highway



9 years of living a home  
in the swiss-land

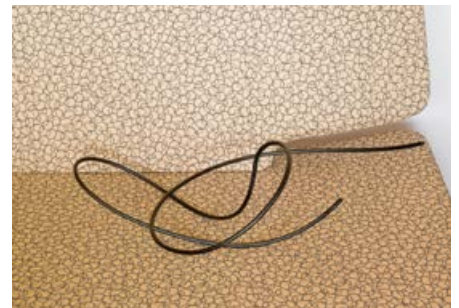


**“The entire research feels like  
memories of the future.” AH**



**The Sphere is Alfredo Häberli's personal take on future mobility, which with its traces and tracks conveys a sense of light-heartedness in a carefree world. Unimpeded by outside restrictions, we will be glad to be on the road, will consciously choose our routes and enjoy ourselves. Enjoy the pleasure of mobility. And observe the choreography of dynamics. Perhaps it takes the form of intertwined routes that merge into seemingly endless areas. Or perhaps it completely eludes visual depiction. We don't know what the roads of the future will look like – but we can use our imagination to fill the wide expanse of possible options that opens up. That is the mission we as automobile designers take on when we dedicate ourselves to the future of mobility. The path is the new goal.**

**KARIM HABIB** Head of Design BMW Automobiles



A mobile by Lukas Hofkunst on the "Sofa TT" for Alias – upholstered with "Nadir" for Kvadrat



Lanes in space



Traces and tracks on a stone landscape, Bruno Munari

**THE DWELL** is the protective home, a place of refuge. Surrounded by personal treasures, the domicile provides warmth and security. It is a place of calm, somewhere to recharge your batteries – perhaps without a virtual connection. Like a hangar or studio it hovers suspended in the air, and is only joined to THE VESSEL as a docking station for rest and recuperation. THE DWELL conveys that truly ancient feeling of a tree house, a mountain hut or boat house. Something solitary, on its own, the visualisation of a safe cocoon. Here, time appears endless – time out. Naturally, the focus is firmly on the “ego”, the inner self, the soul and is the main topic in this cocoon. THE DWELL is also the place where the family is at home. And for me it is the search for a three-dimensional answer to the question of what constitutes a home.

Of course, THE DWELL must also be conceived in context. I wonder what the city of the future will look like, who will design and define the living spaces in it. But in this phase of the project I am more concerned with the abstract idea. I like to ask myself questions without having to find answers immediately. Even if there is an endless succession of questions and just as many answers. And it is really only about your own four walls.



"What is the inner soul of a house?" installation at Tate Modern by Do Ho Suh, 2003/2010



"The home as a memory of sculptures", Constantin Brancusi



Model of the Suspended House, Paul Nelson, 1937

A sculptural sketch for a new artwork to be hung at home.





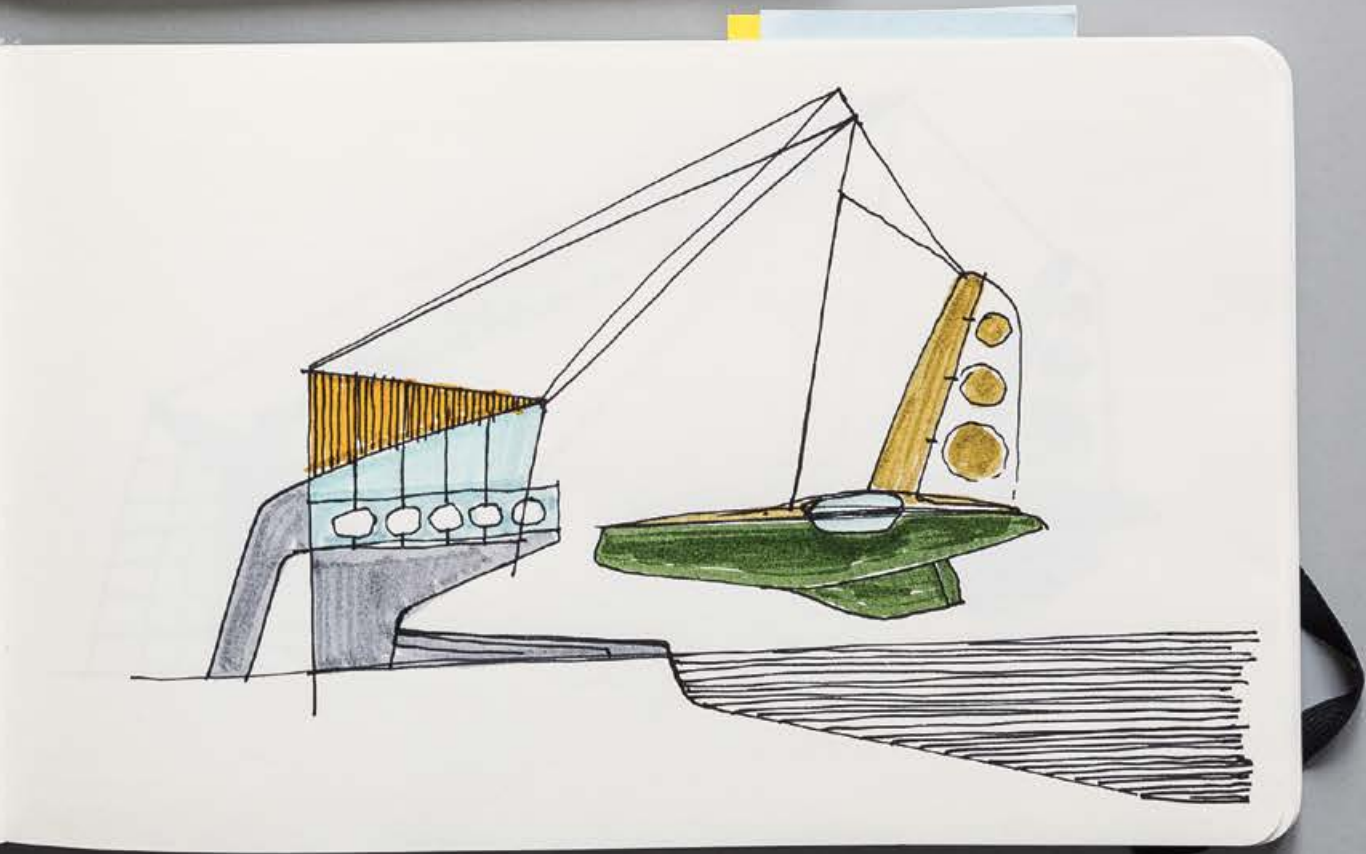
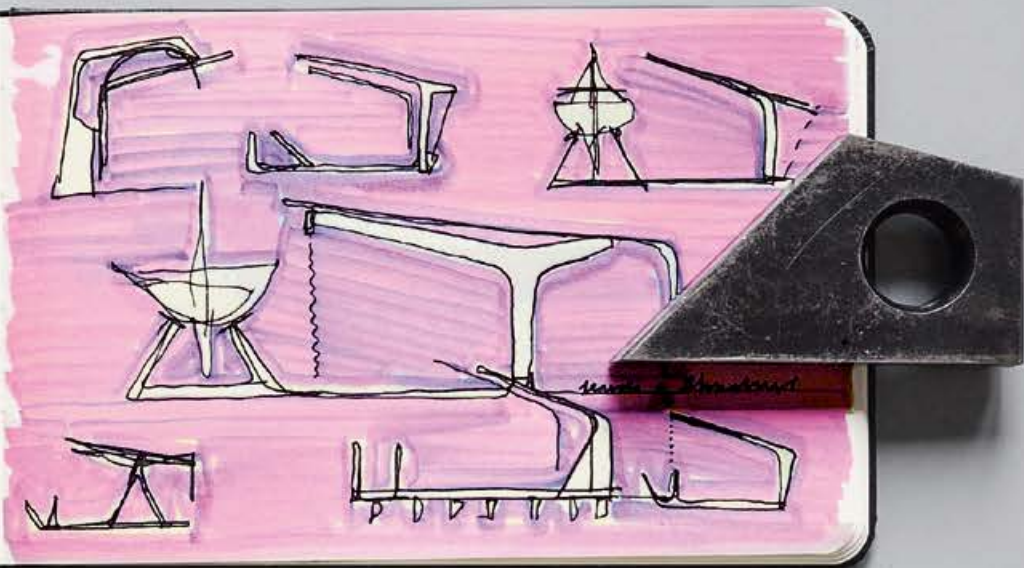
Handwritten notes in German, partially obscured by a faint pencil sketch of a ship's hull. The text is written in black ink and appears to be a list or description of items.

die besten Ideen  
schon vor 100 Jahren  
hatte

Handwritten notes in German, including a faint pencil sketch of a person standing next to a large rectangular object, possibly a piece of equipment or a structure. The text is written in black ink.

die besten Ideen  
schon vor 100 Jahren  
hatte

**“It is the search for a three-dimensional answer to the question of what constitutes a home.” AH**









"Suspended House" with attic floor



THE DWELL as a floating retreat

**“It visualises a feeling  
we all know, but find difficult  
to put into words.”** MS



Sailing, flying, floating in the future of mobility?



The road of the future? "Continuous Monument" by Superstudio, 1969

**The Dwell is a place for retreat conceived by Alfredo Häberli. A space that gives us the safety we need. And satisfies our deeply-rooted longing for a sanctuary where we can find refuge. Where we can go to escape the fast-paced world surrounding us and simply unwind, finding the freedom to recharge our batteries, recuperate or reflect on things. We can share this space or experience it alone. Alfredo Häberli always places the emphasis on the individual. And it is for this individual that he seeks to create a space for concentration and contemplation. Consequently, the round customisable seating area that is The Dwell appeals to our innermost desire for peace, relaxation and having a breather. And it visualises a feeling we all know, but find difficult to put into words.**

**MARTINA STARKE** Head of Color & Trim Design BMW Automobiles



Alfredo Häberli in conversation with Martina Starke



**THE COUCH** tends to be the soul of the house. It is the centre for interaction and exchange with those close to us. In a broader sense, it is not simply immobile but rather always the centre of life: integrated into THE VESSEL. The starting point and inspiration behind it was the idea that in the near future (or perhaps in the somewhat more distant future) we would no longer have to sit behind the wheel ourselves. Meaning we would be able to remove the front seats of sedans, because we mostly travel alone or with just one passenger. Plus chauffeurs will no longer be needed. Granting travellers more freedom, more independence, making their travel more individual. Time on the road no longer comes with the pressure of being lost time but is now free time that can be used to read or work, communicate or sleep. Having rounds of discussions with friends is just as conceivable as silently watching the landscape from a panorama window. Individual seats pointing forward make space for an upholstery area with a wide range of ergonomic properties. THE COUCH is a sculptural combination of chair, sofa and bed. This raises the question of what a vehicle would look like if we designed it from the inside to the outside.



Bruno Munari seeking comfort in an uncomfortable chair



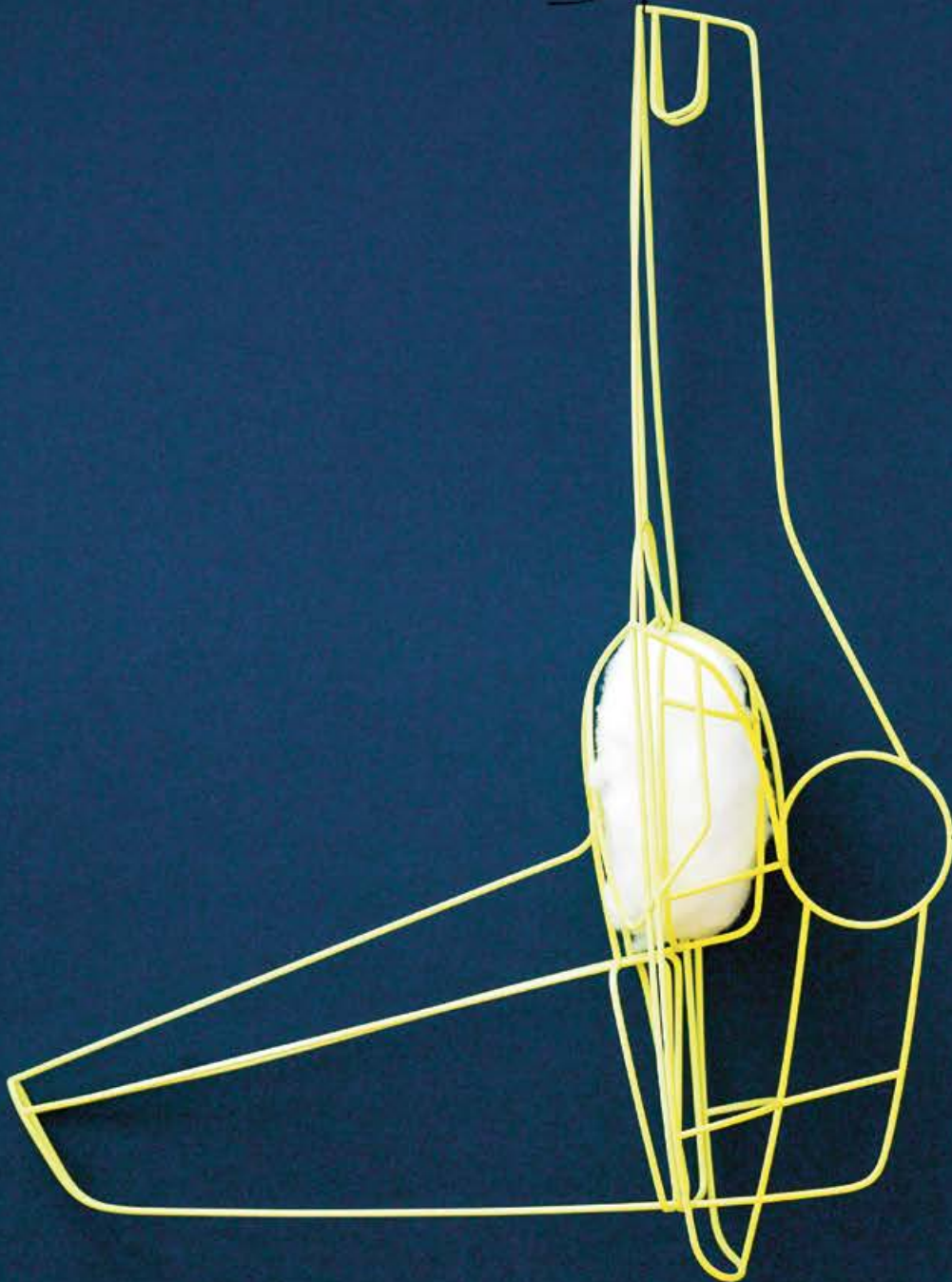
What could the matching body look like?

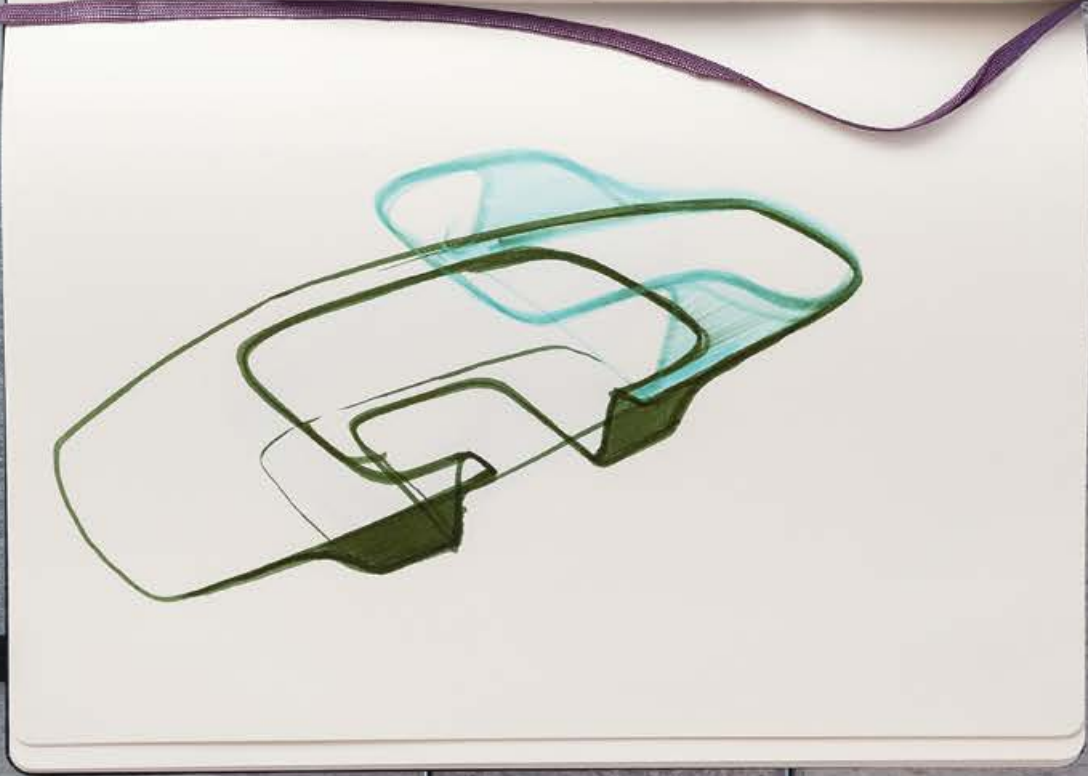
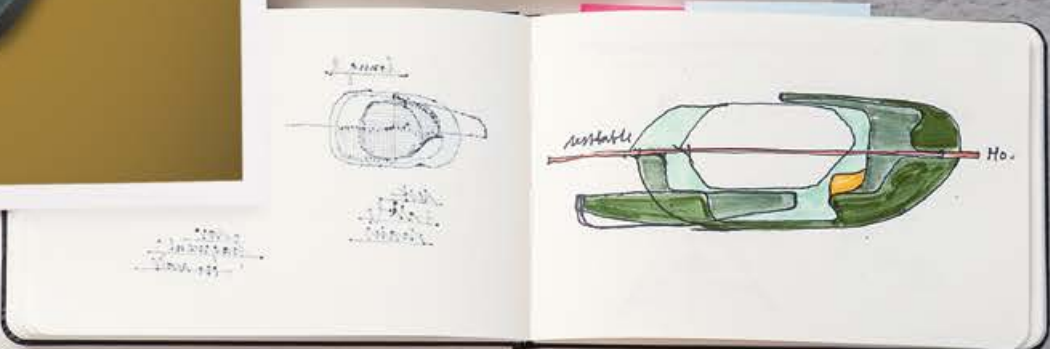
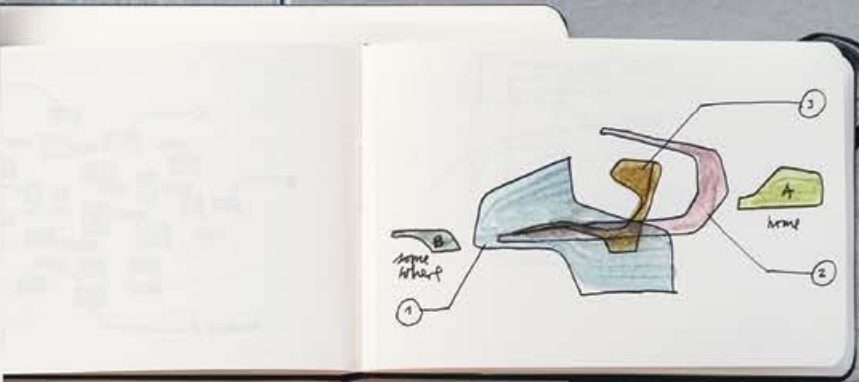


Stand, sit, lie on an object. "Sacco" from 1968



Ring of communication, "Kindermöbel" by Ginbände, 1991





**The Couch is a synonym for a lively meeting point, a hub of activity. The antithesis of The Dwell, it is a place to go and spend some time. Yet above all it is a platform for meeting up with friends, family, and strangers too. Offering the opportunity to share experiences, knowledge, and joy. Not tied to a specific setting, The Couch is basically everywhere at home: where we feel at home, in a public space or by the roadside, or in a vehicle. It is the place where communication comes about. Where the focus is on encounters and conversations. And virtual networks can be experienced in real life. While we move effortlessly from A to B, the time spent with another person gains a new quality in this space within a space. Alfredo Häberli locates it somewhere between object, furniture and sculpture, as an open invitation to engage in a good conversation.**

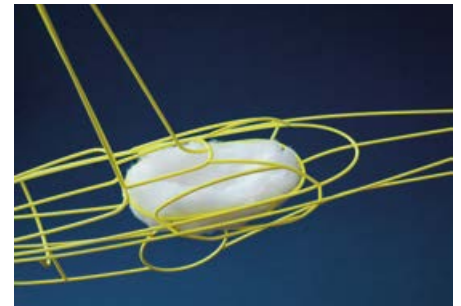
**MARTINA STARKE** Head of Color & Trim Design BMW Automobiles



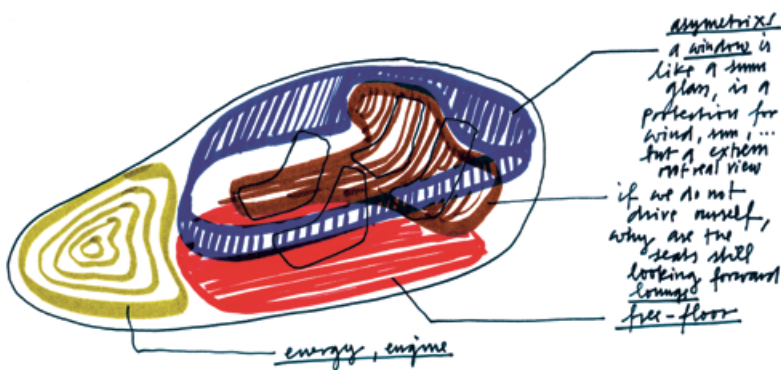
Alfredo Häberli and Martina Starke viewing the sketched ideas



Designing from the inside out



"Drawing in Space" with interior



Floor, window, ceiling – and above all else, a comfy upholstered seat make up the basic elements of the interior



"Take a Line for a Walk" with a hardtop in front of shelf "Pattern" for Quodes



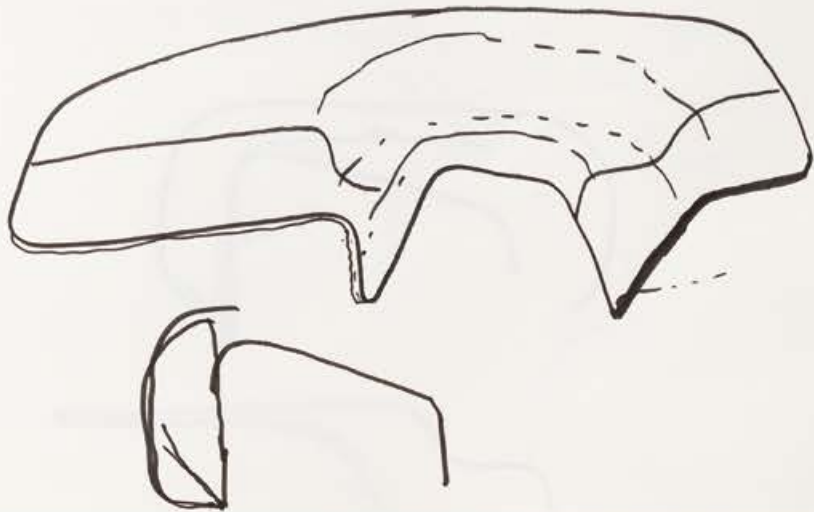
"DS 110" for de Sede – natural leather inside, fabric "Nadir" on the outside

**"The Couch is the place where communication comes about."** MS



The abstraction of the interior as carbon shell  
The extreme softness of the upholstery needs further elaboration





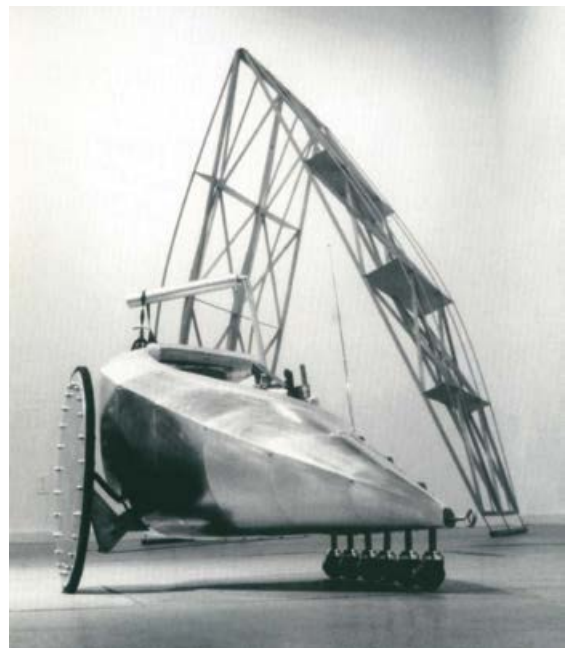
TAKE A SAGGE FOR A SEAT



**THE VESSEL** is the protective covering and chassis for THE COUCH. Not a car, nor a boat, nor an airplane – it is best described as a dynamic home. Silently and emission-free, it accompanies users to their real-life social contacts. What will the car of the future look like? Small for short distances, large for longer ones? What should it be able to do, what features will it have? And what will it look like? Will transportation still be my own personal property in the future? The things that are really valuable for me are in THE DWELL. Nothing else belongs to me; those items are in temporary personal use only. My vision is about designing a sculptural abstraction of a vehicle, derived from a limousine's luxurious gliding, adapted to the future. This is juxtaposed with the re-interpretation of the BMW flagship vehicle as a tangible, real-world backdrop. References to a clear commitment to the brand's DNA and unambiguous stylistic features. Without any reticence, and freely interpreted, they are part of the design process. Gliding as the experience of a "cruising" car, and likewise the sail boat driven by the wind or indeed the glider are recurring images in the design process. Not only as inspiration, but also as archetype of the genre. Finally, the individual associative fragments are merged into an innovative object, whose essence cannot be rationally explained, nor does it seek to be. As a means of description language has its limits because words can only vaguely describe what has not yet been designed. Accordingly, in its real dimension and high precision, THE VESSEL suggests the broad field of a poetic vision. Only that.



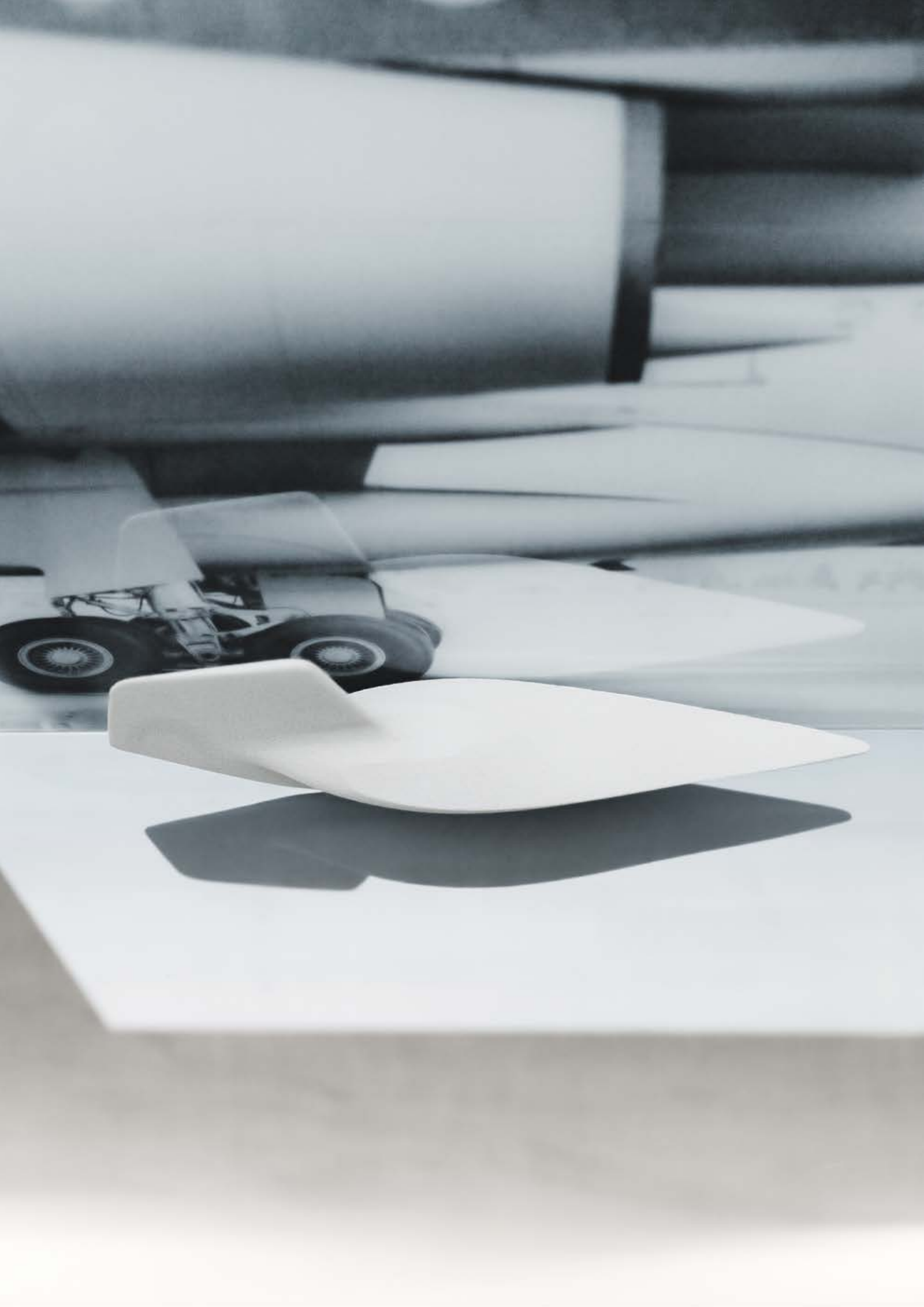
Man bike fin as one, "Rondine" by Gilera, 1937



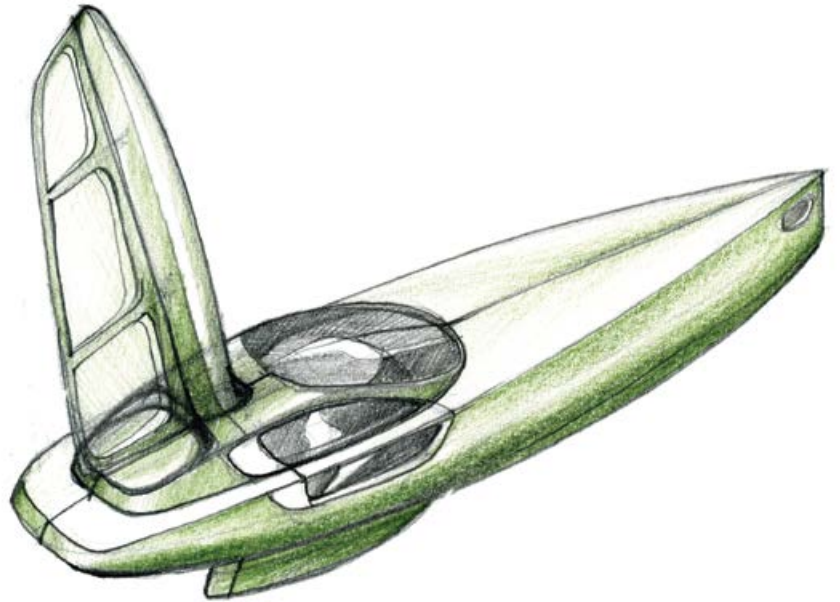
"A child's stroller and its garage" by Kaplan/Krueger/Scholz: It has touched my heart since I first saw it



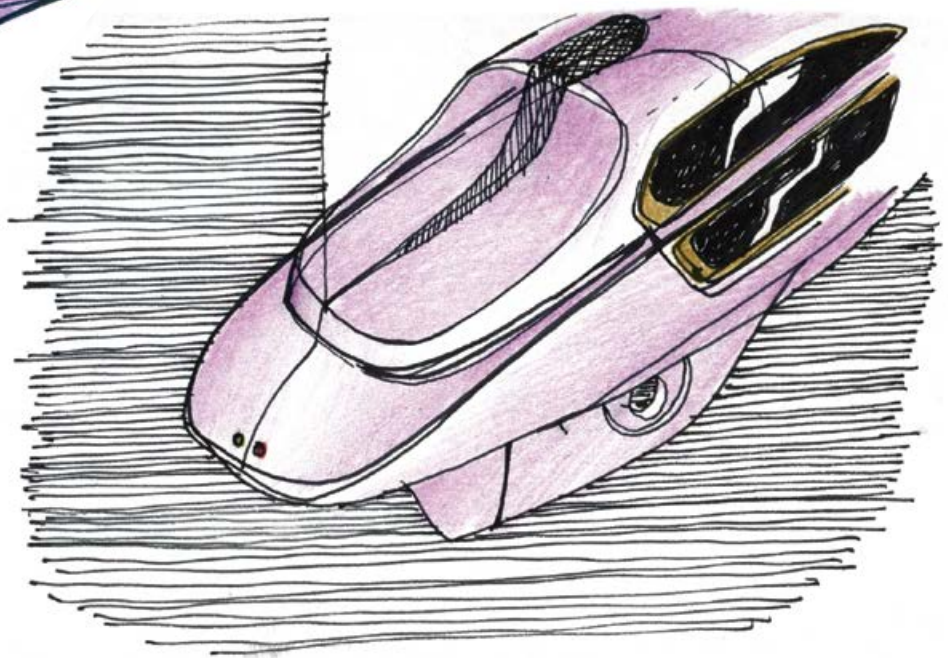
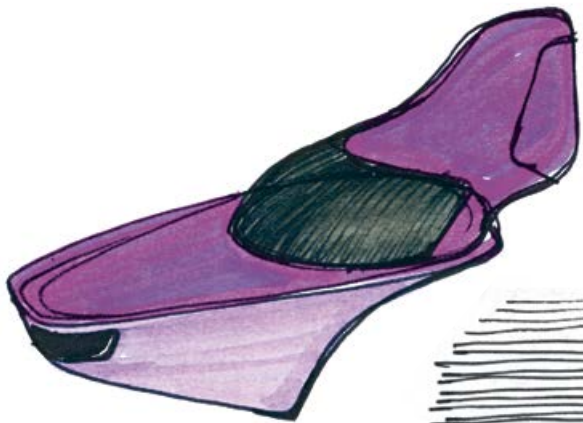
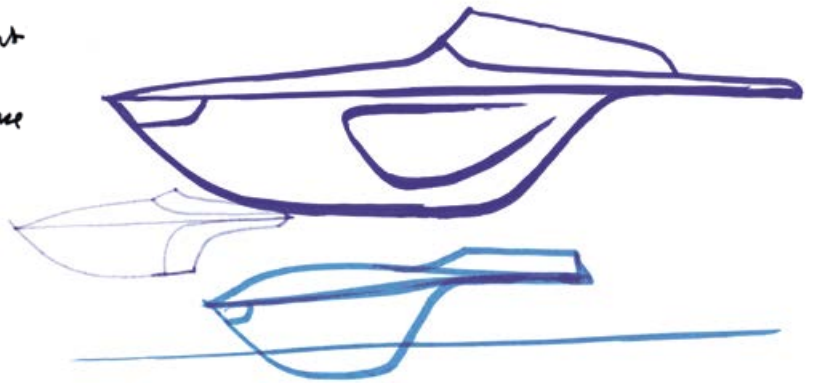
New power for new task. "Femmina d'aeroplano", collage by Bruno Munari, 1932

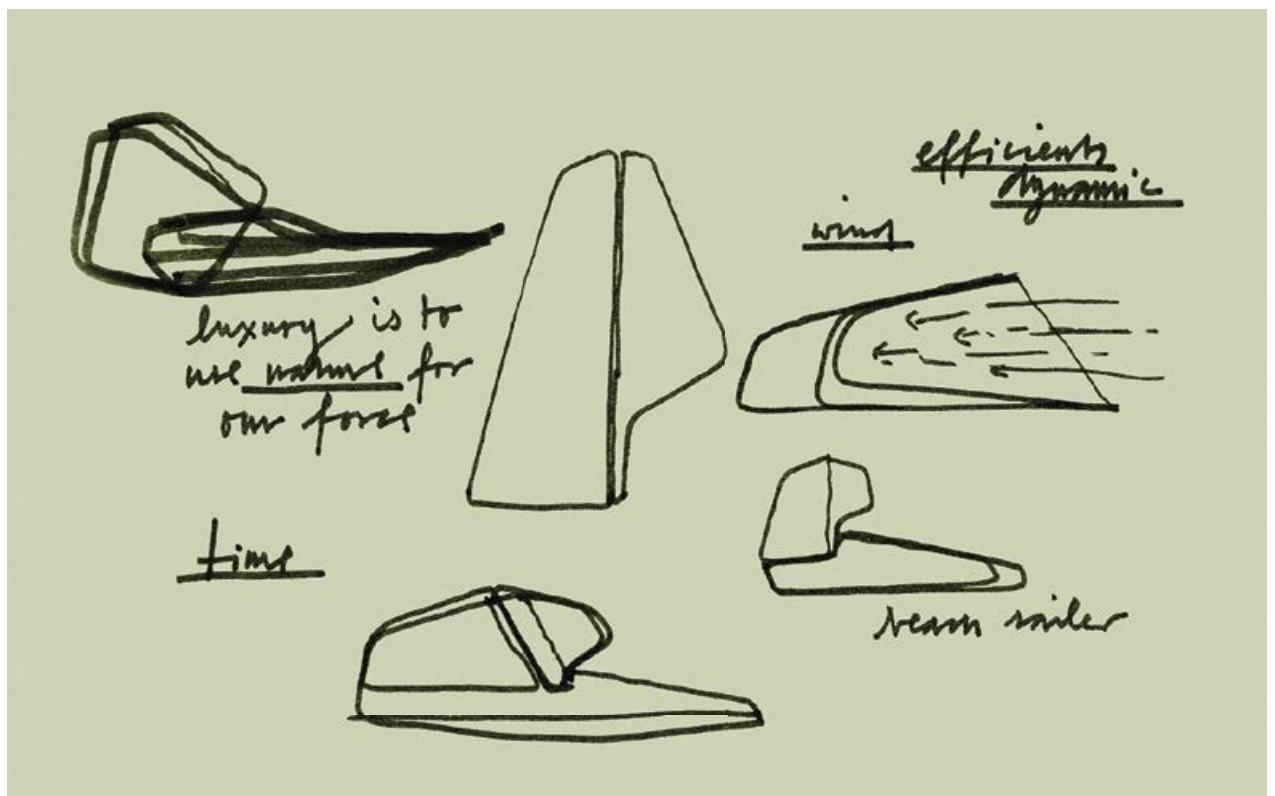
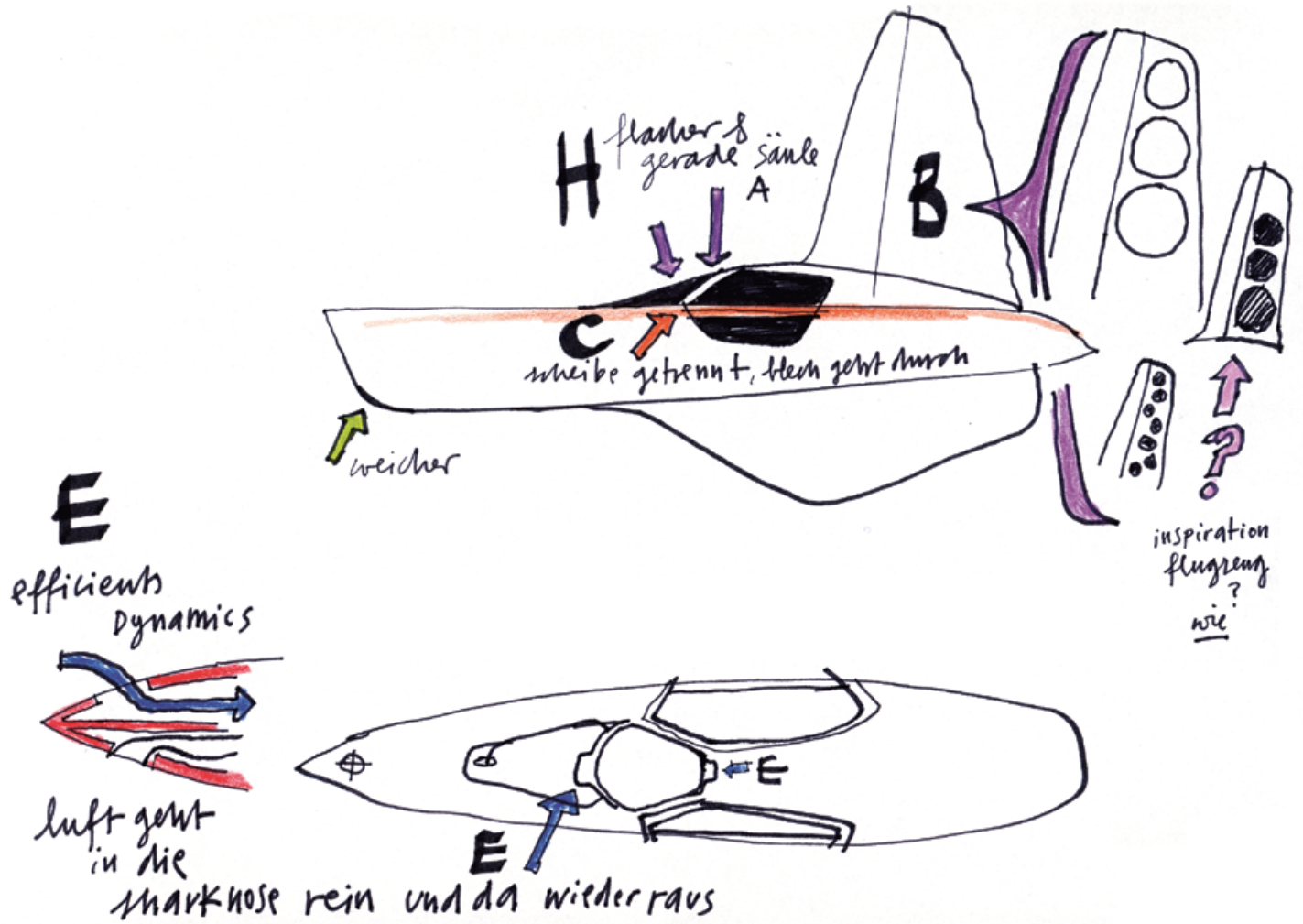


**“My vision is about designing a sculptural abstraction of a vehicle, derived from a limousine’s luxurious gliding, adapted to the future.” AH**



*in front  
cut-  
line  
surface*





**“I am floating into the unknown with this project, and feel happy about that.” AH**



Roman Signer's launch into space "Start", 2014



Asymmetrical shoelast with pencil lines



Future means of transportation? Work by ETH Zurich



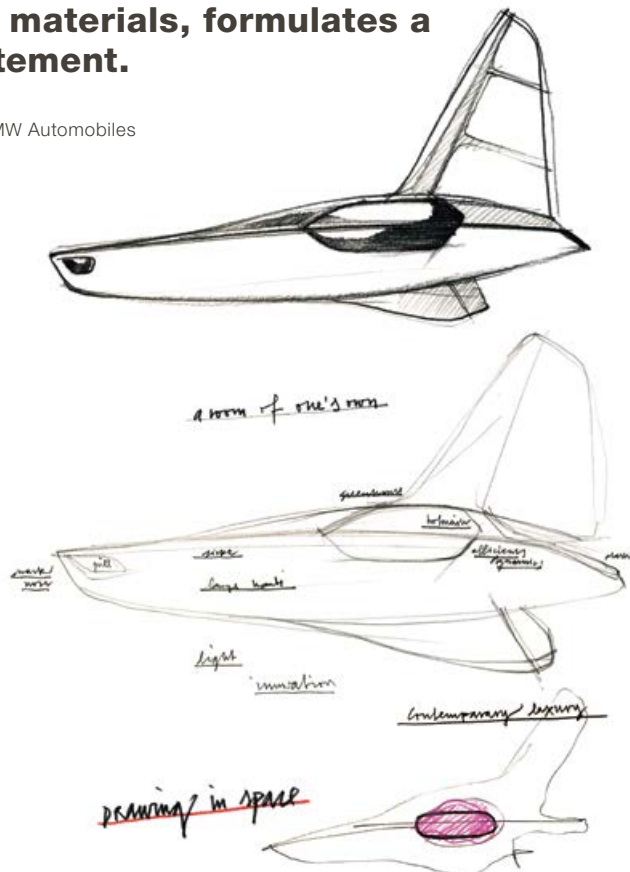
**“A personal vision that flirts  
with the key values of future  
automobile design.” KH**





**The Vessel moves between the worlds. As a mobile creature, a hybrid of automobile, boat and aircraft, whose morphed body is difficult to define clearly, it hovers in space and glides into a new age. Alfredo Häberli rose to the challenge of the core task of designing a vehicle, and came up with something that cites shapes that are familiar to us, while simultaneously cancelling them completely. His personal vision flirts with racetracks, film worlds and outer space, before finally finding a design with a retro-futuristic appearance that seeks to capture the key values of future automobile design in a single object. In the process, Alfredo touches on the BMW Design with its long-standing icons, and without limiting himself to technological specifications, let alone specific materials, formulates a poetic macro-statement.**

**KARIM HABIB** Head of Design BMW Automobiles



Windshield as a transparent hood and doors made of glass



Karim Habib and Alfredo Häberli in the studio



Manuela Rammelmeier sanding THE VESSEL



Theo Gschwind, Senior Designer, conducting a "sculptural inquiry"



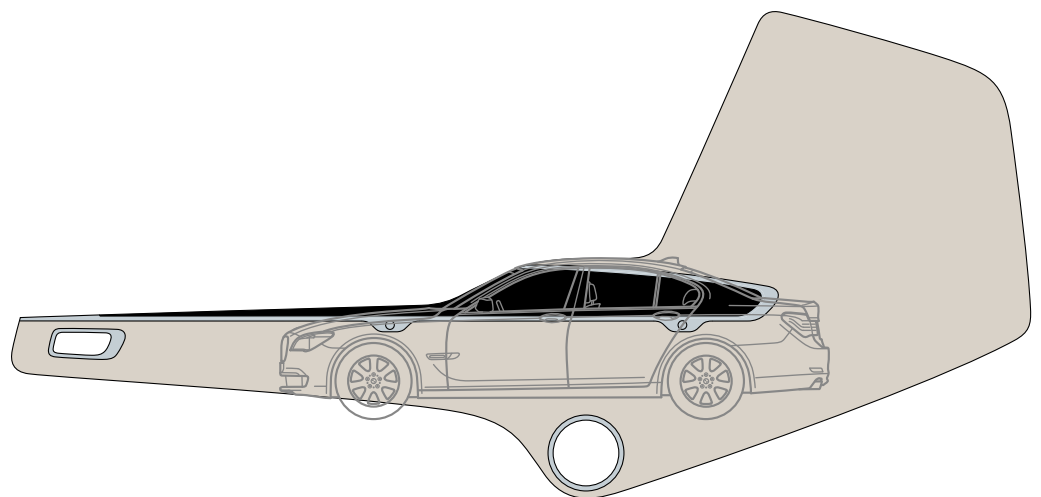
**“Each sketch, each model is a key element of the search for the shape of an elegant means of transport for the near future.” AH**



The bright color reveals all. The surface model on a scale of 1:3 being sprayed



Working on the surface model, BMW plant Landshut



The BMW 7 Series so-called "Greenhouse" was the yardstick for THE VESSEL's interior

**“Tape drawing is maybe one of the most important aspects in car design. It is a good way to evaluate proportions.” KH**



Working on the surface model



Oliver Heilmer working with tape



A precise eye is what counts for the scale

THE VESSEL superimposed with the BMW 7 Series. Karim Habib and Alfredo Häberli are looking for line tension.

The wall wasn't big enough. Plot to a scale of 1:2. The goal: Maximum expression using only a few lines.





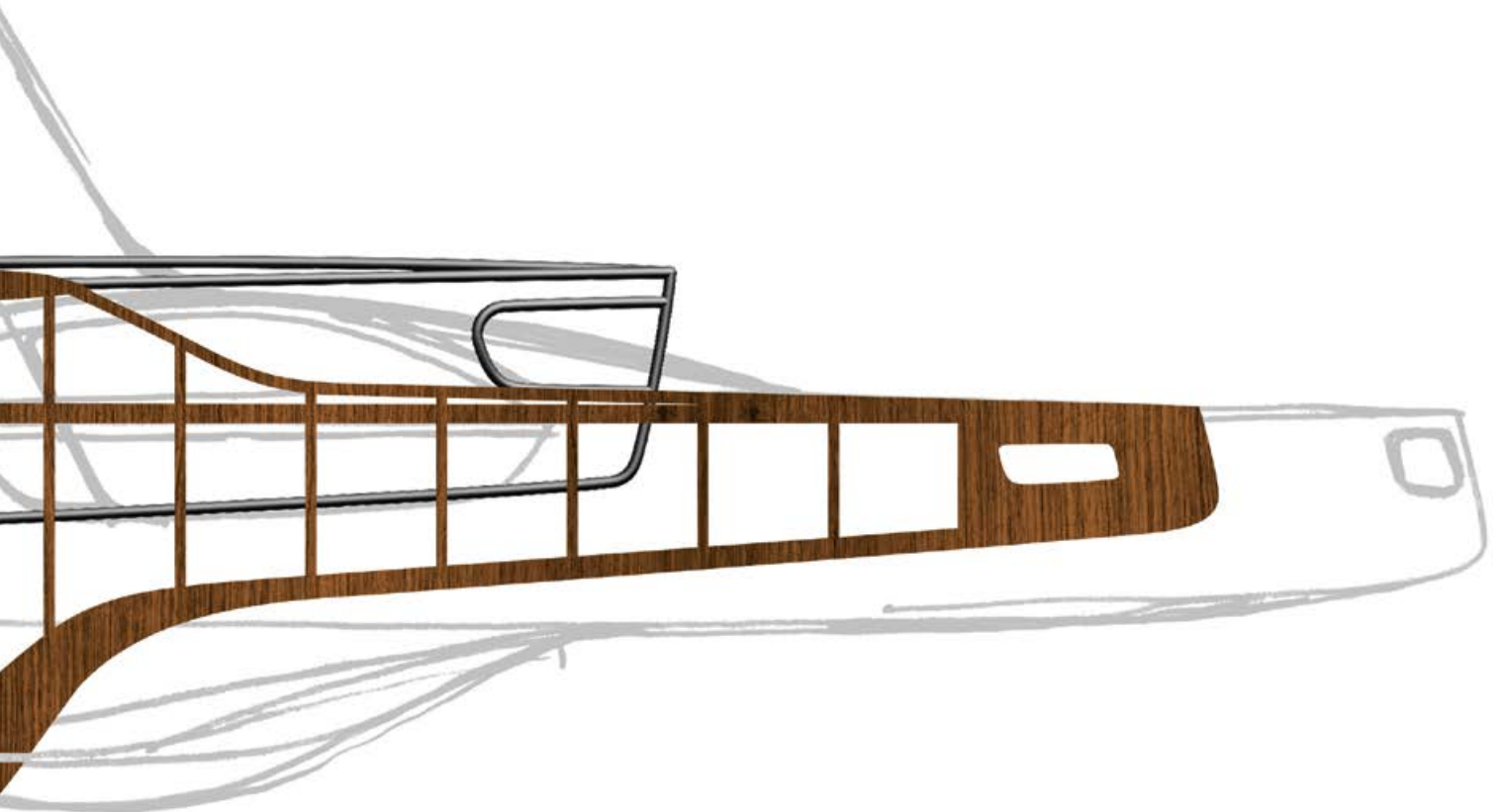
**“In a way I have just switched the medium, but it is the same sensibility I have always worked with.” AH**



View from the interior at the front of the vehicle



The mahogany frame model in its full size (10 metres long and 4.5 metres high) during the construction phase





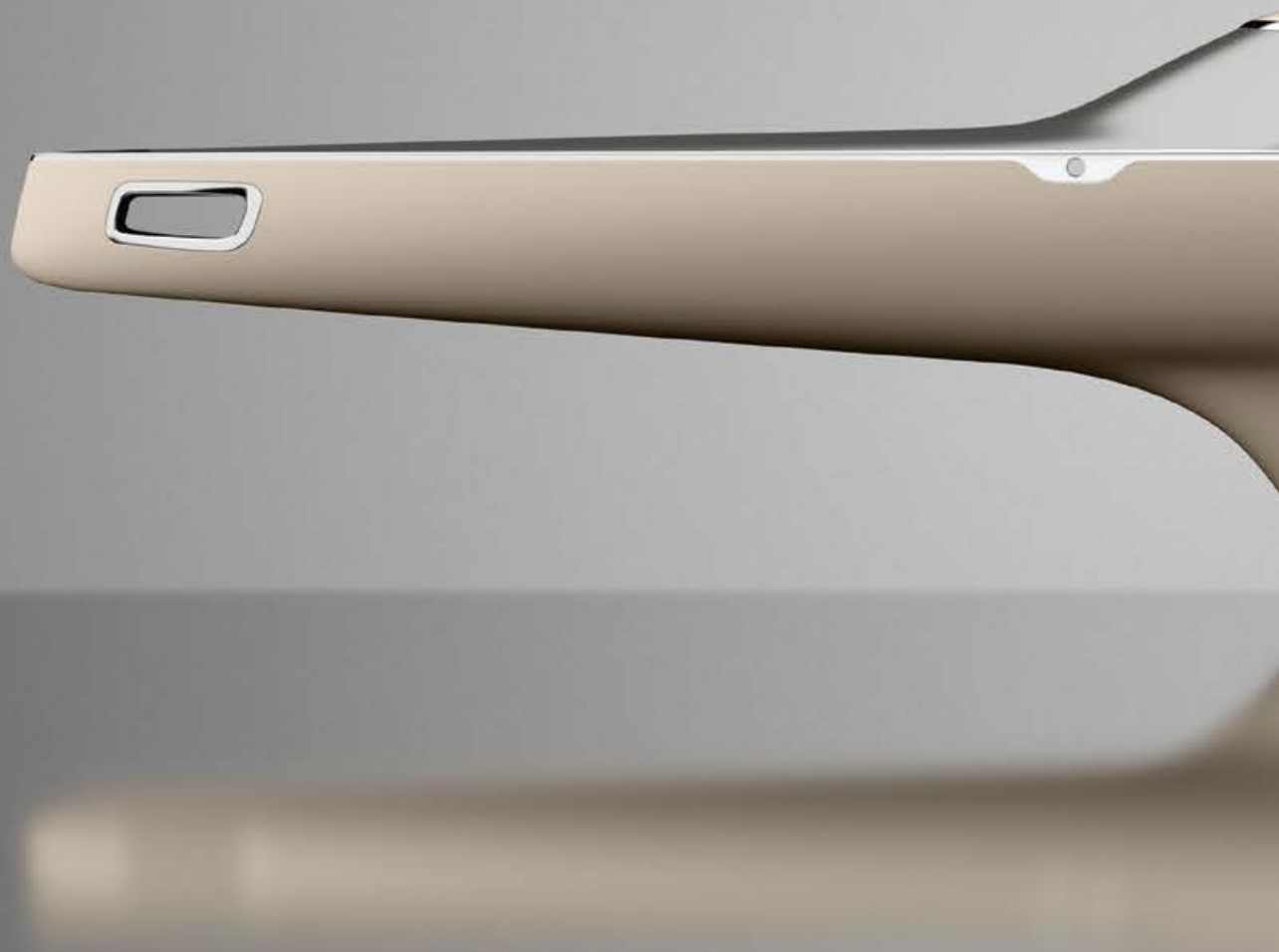


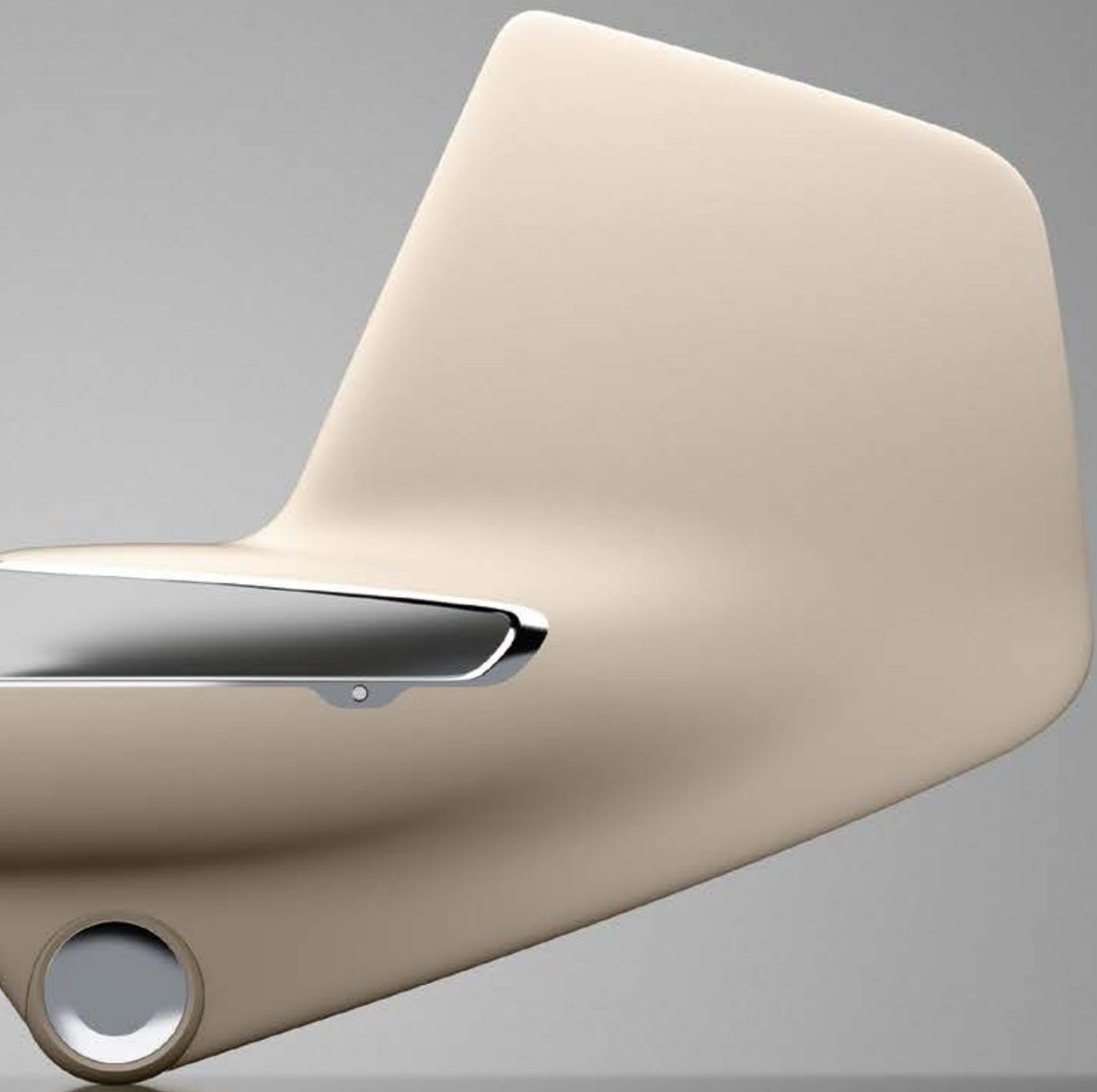
**“The Vessel is a suggestion with the broad range of a poetic vision.” AH**



The model of the frame, typical of ship-building, or aircraft or even car building – in a new, avant-garde look

**“Silence, space and time  
together are maximum luxury  
for me.” AH**





**“Words can only vaguely describe what has not yet been designed.” AH**



The sculptural abstraction of a vehicle driven by nature





**Our collaboration with Alfredo Häberli was a really intensive exploration of mobile life, travel, and future living. It goes far beyond product design as such and puts the emphasis on values and feelings. In future, we will consider silence, space and time as luxuries. Thanks to Alfredo's highly personal take on the future we were able to address it from a different perspective. And although we didn't seek them consciously we encountered many a childhood memory as a flashback: Mine were of the ink paintings I created, huts I constructed of wood covered in sheets and canopies – and the gentle, curving tracks my footmarks left in the snow. Poetic images as these we need to combine with future mobility. This is the task we set ourselves as automobile designers. With the awareness that perhaps more than ever the conflicting elements of material properties and atmosphere, precision and poetry require new design parameters. As such, from my perspective Alfredo Häberli's installation is above all a search for an adequate language, for new forms of expressing encounter and movement.**

**MARTINA STARKE** Head of Color & Trim Design BMW Automobiles

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**Mezzadro** 1957  
Courtesy: Zanotta spa, Nova Milanese, Italy

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**Chair models** in Alfredo Häberli's studio  
Photo: Isabel Truniger, Zurich, Switzerland

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Verner Panton **Visiona 2** 1970  
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**Yoga – Human Bridge** Totally Flexible  
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Front Architects **Single Haus** 2007  
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Yves Klein **Le Saut dans le vide**  
5, rue Gentil-Bernard, Fontenay-aux-Roses,  
Octobre 1960  
Action artistique d'Yves Klein  
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Aaron Koblin **Flight Patterns** 2005  
Data from the United States Federal Aviation  
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Josef Staub **Plastik King** 1992  
Stiftung für Eisenplastik, Sammlung Dr. Hans  
Koenig, Zollikon, Switzerland  
Courtesy: Fredi Staub, Baden, Switzerland

Andres Amador **Substructures** Playa Paintings  
San Francisco, USA  
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Bruno Munari **Sassi**  
Published in: "Da lontano era un'isola"  
(From afar it was an island), Corraini Edizioni  
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Do Ho Suh **Staircase-III** 2003/2010  
Translucent nylon and stainless steel tubes,  
dimensions variable  
Installation in the Tate Modern  
Photo: unknown source  
Property: Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York

Brancusi Constantin (1876 – 1957)  
**Colonne sans fin I** vers 1925  
Localisation: Paris, Centre Pompidou – Musée  
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industrielle  
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Paul Nelson **Model of the Suspended House**  
Ex.: L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui  
no. 316 / avril 1998, p. 62  
Groupe Expansion, Paris, France

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Bruno Munari **Ricerca di una comodità in  
una poltrona scomoda** (Seeking comfort in an  
uncomfortable chair), Corraini Edizioni  
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Chair **Take a Line for a Walk** Moroso 2003  
By and in collaboration with Alfredo Häberli  
Photo: Günter Parth, Vienna, Austria

Ginbände **Kindermöbel** for Anthologie  
Quartett 1991  
Photo: Joachim Rensing, Frankfurt, Germany  
Courtesy: Uwe Fischer and Michael V. Jakubowski

Piero Gatti, Cesare Paolini and Franco Teodoro  
**Sacco** 1968  
Courtesy: Zanotta spa, Nova Milanese, Italy

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Gilera **Rondine** su pista 1937  
Courtesy: Gilera / OFRAG Vertriebsgesellschaft,  
Lupfig, Switzerland

Bruno Munari **Ci ponemmo dunque in cerca di  
una femmina d'aeroplano** 1932  
Exhibition catalog: Aeropittura futurista –  
aeropittori futuristi, Modena 1985, Italy  
Ex.: "Far vedere l'aria – Die Luft sichtbar machen"  
(Making the air visible), Lars Müller Publishers  
Editors: Claude Lichtenstein and Alfredo Häberli  
ISBN 3 906700 94 1

Ken Kaplan, Ted Krueger, Christopher Scholz  
**Crib-Batic** 1986  
Ex.: Pamphlet Architecture no. 12, Building;  
Machines, p. 36, ISBN 0 910413 40 1  
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Roman Signer **Start** 2014  
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ETH Zurich **PAC-Car II**  
Courtesy: Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule  
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## **COLOPHON**

### **SPHERES**

Perspectives in Precision & Poetry for BMW designed by Alfredo Häberli  
Published by BMW AG

**CONCEPT & CREATIVE DIRECTION** Alfredo Häberli

**GRAPHIC CONCEPT & DESIGN OF BOOKLET AND INVITATION**  
Stefanie Häberli

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