CURATED BY
Adrian Madlener

TEXT BY
Dan Howarth

ILLUSTRATIONS BY | @JONSTICH
Jon Stich

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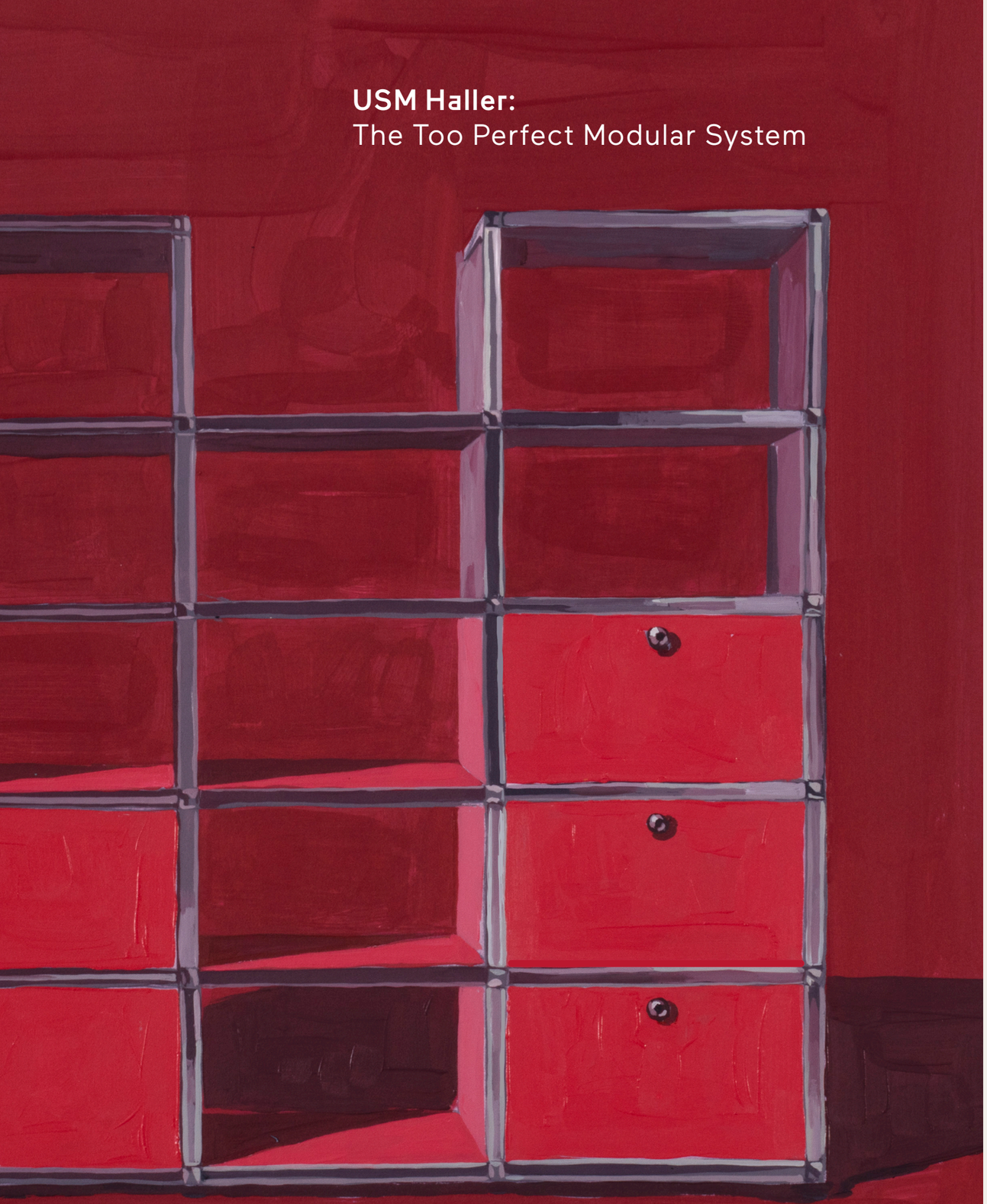


Camaleonda Three-Seater Sofa by Mario Bellini
B&B ITALIA

Objects of Obsession (and Their Contemporary Competition)

Most design classics are classic for a reason. What we now collectively revere as 20th-century furniture and lighting icons became ubiquitous because of their recognizable forms, innovative use of materials, and ability to transform a space. But popularity can also be a curse, and issues of skyrocketing costs tend to follow in-demand pieces. While we will always appreciate these design icons, there are fresher alternatives worth considering to populate your living space. Read on to learn the lore of five furniture pieces that have achieved household-name status and discover other options that could add a bit of surprise to the same square footage instead. No matter what you choose, dig deeper, and never, ever settle for a dupe!

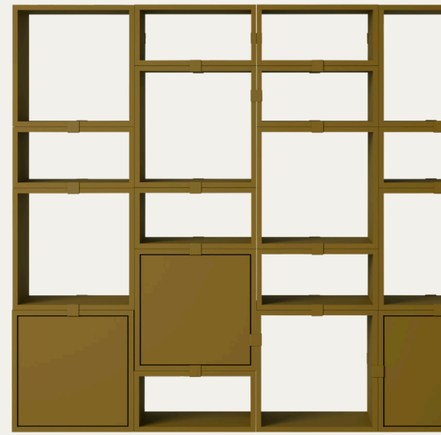
USM Haller:
The Too Perfect Modular System





Haller (EW1)
USM

Stacked Storage System
MUUTO

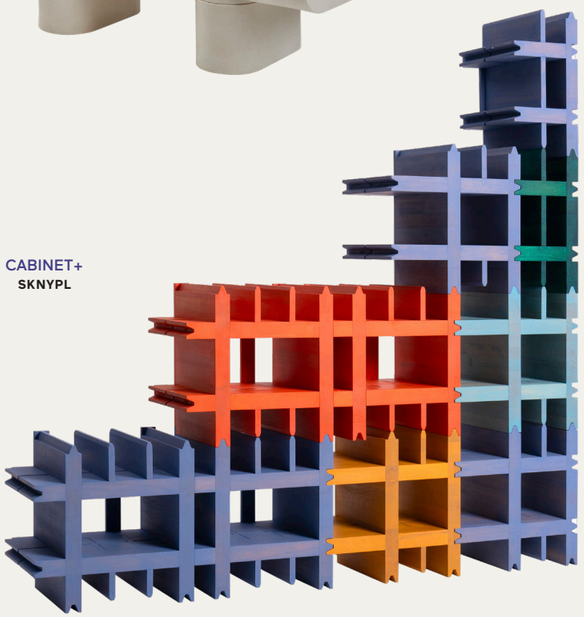




Spaghetti Shelf System
FREDERIK FIALIN



Modular Ceramics by Rino Claessens
GALERIE SCÈNE OUVERTE



CABINET+
SKNYPL

PHOTOS: COURTESY COMPANIES AND DESIGNERS

In 1961, Swiss architect Fritz Haller was hired to design the headquarters for USM, which was then a heritage metal company in sleepy Münsingen, Switzerland. Together with Paul Schärer Jr., he decided that they needed a reconfigurable furniture system to align with the modernist building's interiors. The result was so attractive that the company pivoted to producing the USM Haller for the global market—and a new identity was born for the then 80-year-old manufacturer.

Decades after its initial release, the USM Haller system still strikes an impressive balance between aesthetics and functionality. "This is a tough one to beat," says San Francisco–based interior designer Michael Hilal. "It really is a perfect modular system in every way." Given its customization potential, the system can be put to use in almost any context, from the office to the bedroom, so "it can be a real 'Who is she?!' moment," Hilal says. Though he notes that "the price keeps creeping up," potentially due to current unpredictable tariffs.

For a more playful take that is somehow even more flexible than the Haller system, the CABINET+ collection by UK and Georgian studio SKNYPL is composed of a stained birch coffee table, shelf, and two stools, which can be stacked and reconfigured into a large cabinet. Meanwhile, Netherlands-based designer Rino Claessens's Modular Ceramics offer a sculptural alternative. His cross, T-shape, corner and straight modules are all fired separately in the ceramic kiln, then bolted together from the inside to be combined into striking compositions.