

"heroic shelves & simple boxes"

Martin Szekely

Exhibition:
Galerie kreó
November 7th 2009
to December 19th 2009

Opening night:
November 7th 2009
from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Opening hours:
Tuesday to Saturday
from 11:00 a.m. until 7:00
p.m.



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. *heroic shelves* follows on from the shelves show in the Galerie kreó in 2005.

The structure of *the shelves* was built to avoid catching the eye. Once filled, the shelves disappeared in favour of the content, books or other objects.

The *heroic shelves* use even less elements.

The gap between the horizontal tables that was essential to the structure of *the shelves* no longer exists. What remains is a structure made of flat surfaces that cross at 90 degree angles.

The horizontal shelves and the vertical sides are made from aluminium honeycomb four millimetres thick and of two layers of anodized aluminium "skin" one millimetre thick which makes a composite material in sandwich form that totals six millimetres.

The horizontal and vertical elements are held together with a cross-shaped aluminium profile that is industrially extruded and anodized.

Once assembled and glued at each intersection, this cross-shaped profile maintains the *heroic shelves* straight and strong.

The triangular profile and uneven shelving gave a charming, attractive sort of musical image to *the shelves*.

That has all disappeared with the *heroic shelves*. Vertical lines cross over horizontal lines.

The design is radical but it is also the realisation of a builder's dream.

. *simple boxes* reminds us once again that all furniture is, to some extent, made up of boxes.

For example, a table or a stool are boxes that have had parts replaced, a wardrobe is a perfect box, and so on.

simple boxes are made up of waxed, calibrated cork panels made up of compressed cork particles.

The project was built around these panels: two cupboards with sliding doors and drawers, a chest of drawers, a coffee table and a table-top on metal legs.

Each panel is in the right place and the thickness is determined according to its function and structural limitations. The visible indentations on the surfaces

correspond to the dimensional edges of each panel.

Cork absorbs physical shocks and sound. It is an insulating material. It is light, soft to the touch and waterproof.

The cork provides a protective covering for the simple boxes: it protects the contents from the elements.

Portuguese fishermen used to make little pieces of furniture and objects from cork to take on their boats as they were safe from falls and water.

Simple boxes of an economic nature.

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- 1 - Heroic shelf «H7L2»
- 2 - Heroic shelf «H3L4»
- 3 - Heroic shelf «H4L3»
- 4 - Desk/Table «Cork»
- 5 - Box «Cork»
- 6 - Desk and Box «Cork»
- 7 - Storage 2 levels «Cork»
- 8 - Storage 3 levels «Cork»
- 9 - «Cork» detail
- 10 - Low storage «Cork»
- 11 - Low table «Cork»



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Cork

Cork is a material with such unique characteristics that it seems to have been designed by nature for the sole benefit of builders.

In the beginning, oak trees developed a protective layer from fire: an inflammable bark that enabled the tree to survive forest fires: cork.

The bark is removed entirely up to the height of a man. Then, slowly but surely, the cork grows back and, after about ten years, the tree's precious coating is removed yet again.

It has been used since the dawn of time.

It is light, waterproof, it floats, doesn't burn. But cork has only recently come to occupy an important place in construction.

It has been used as a floor covering for decades thanks to its resistance to wear and tear.

It is made up of a multitude of tiny air bubbles which makes it perfect to use as insulation.

The soft structure of cork is incredibly detailed: there are forty million bubbles per square centimetre, invisible to the naked eye.

The walls of these micro-cavities (bubbles) are elastic and very solid. This elasticity enables work to resist without dilating when compressed and, as a result to recover its original shape. So it is not marked or scratched by furniture.

The very fine and flexible structure of cork cells provide the main qualities needed for sound proofing. It is chemically neutral, odourless, gives off no damaging substance and needs no artificial protection. Nevertheless it has unlimited longevity as it doesn't flake or tarnish, it resists ultraviolet rays and the worst of the elements, rodents, termites and insects.

It is also mould-resistant to the extent that it is considered to be rot-resistant.

Its resistance to humidity is unique; it is a very waterproof material.

It is also resistant to hydrocarbons and most solvents which enables it to be cleaned without risk.

It insulates against heat, sound and hydraulics but also electricity, as it does not conduct electricity and is static-resistant.

It is a safe material, even more so when one takes into account its resistance to fire. It is totally fire-resistant and doesn't give off any toxic fumes or elements that are always possible at high temperatures.

It can be recycled which is preferable to destruction as it is environmentally-friendly.

Ecologically, cork gets full marks.