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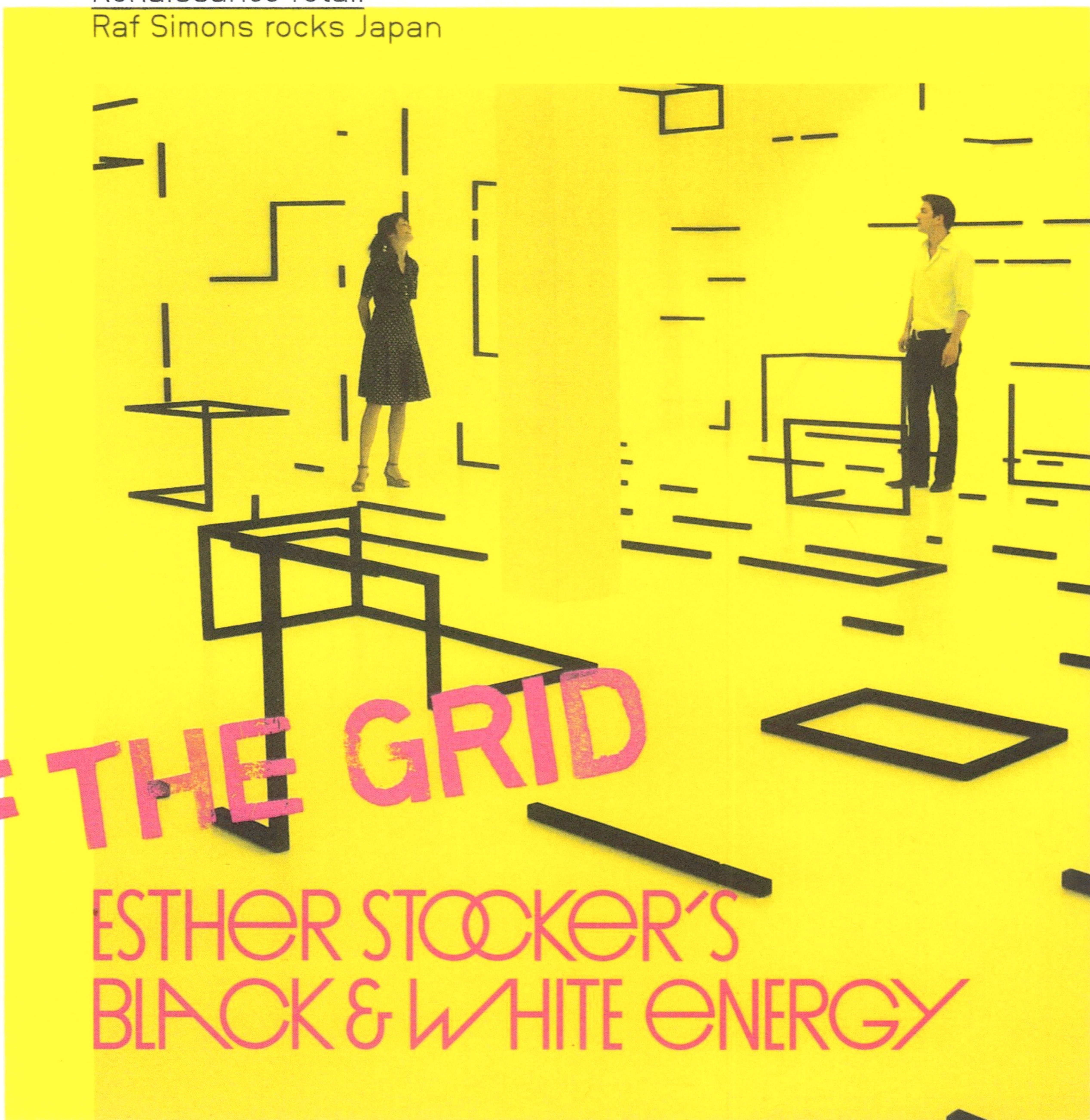
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Marigold Blooms

By applying the laws of geometry to natural and man-made materials, Peter Marigold strives for a balance between chaos and order.

Words Femke de Wild

Photos courtesy of Peter Marigold

Born into a family of artists, Peter Marigold (1974) studied art and sculpture at Central St. Martins before attending the Royal College of Art to learn the ins and outs of product design. Next stop was the theatre, where he built sets and props and designed costumes; followed by the establishment of Okay Studio, together with several good friends—'We are a collective of individuals'—in an old piano factory in London. The work he's done there unites the best of the various worlds that converge to shape Peter Marigold.

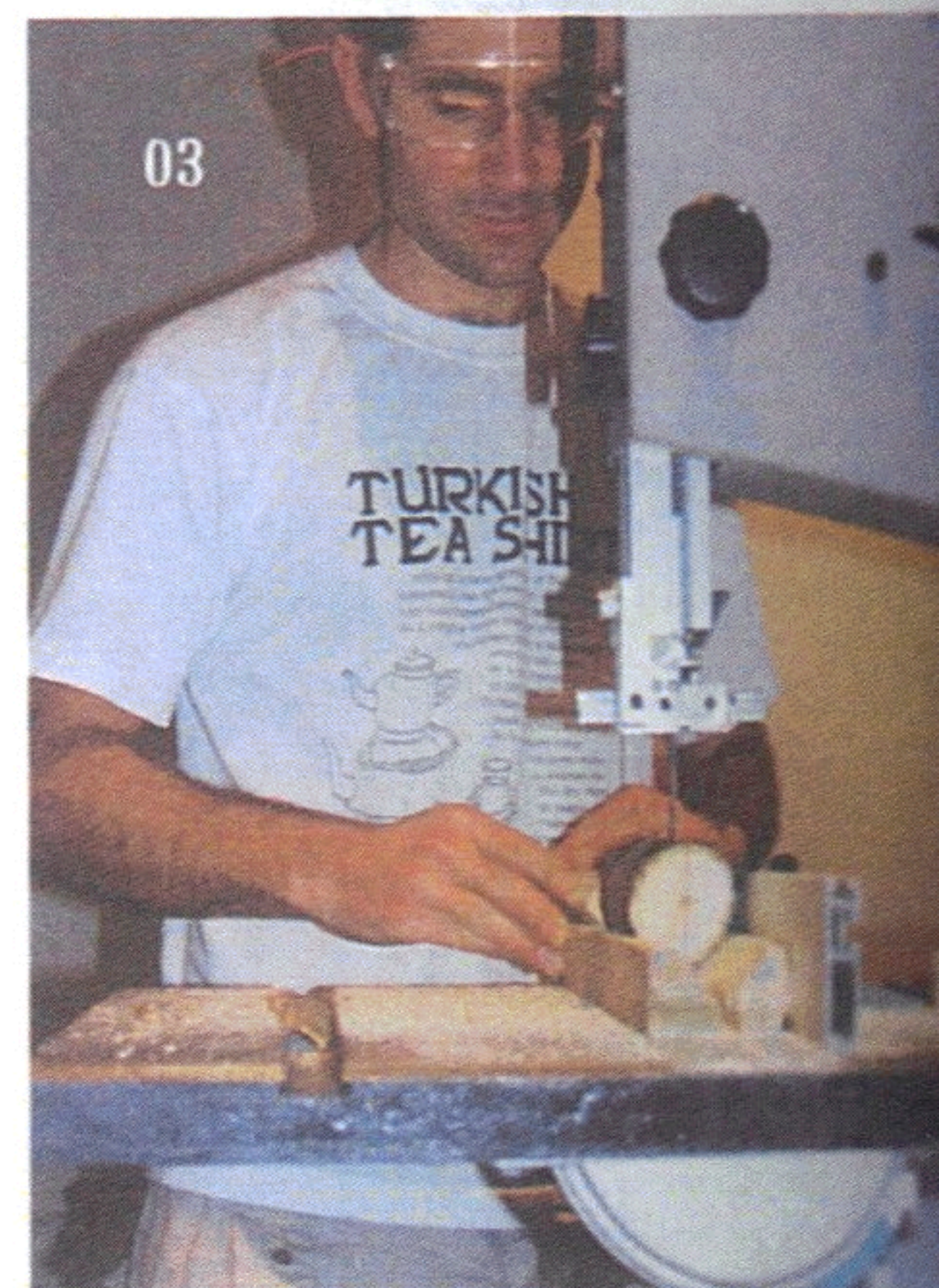


Why did you move from sculpture to product design?

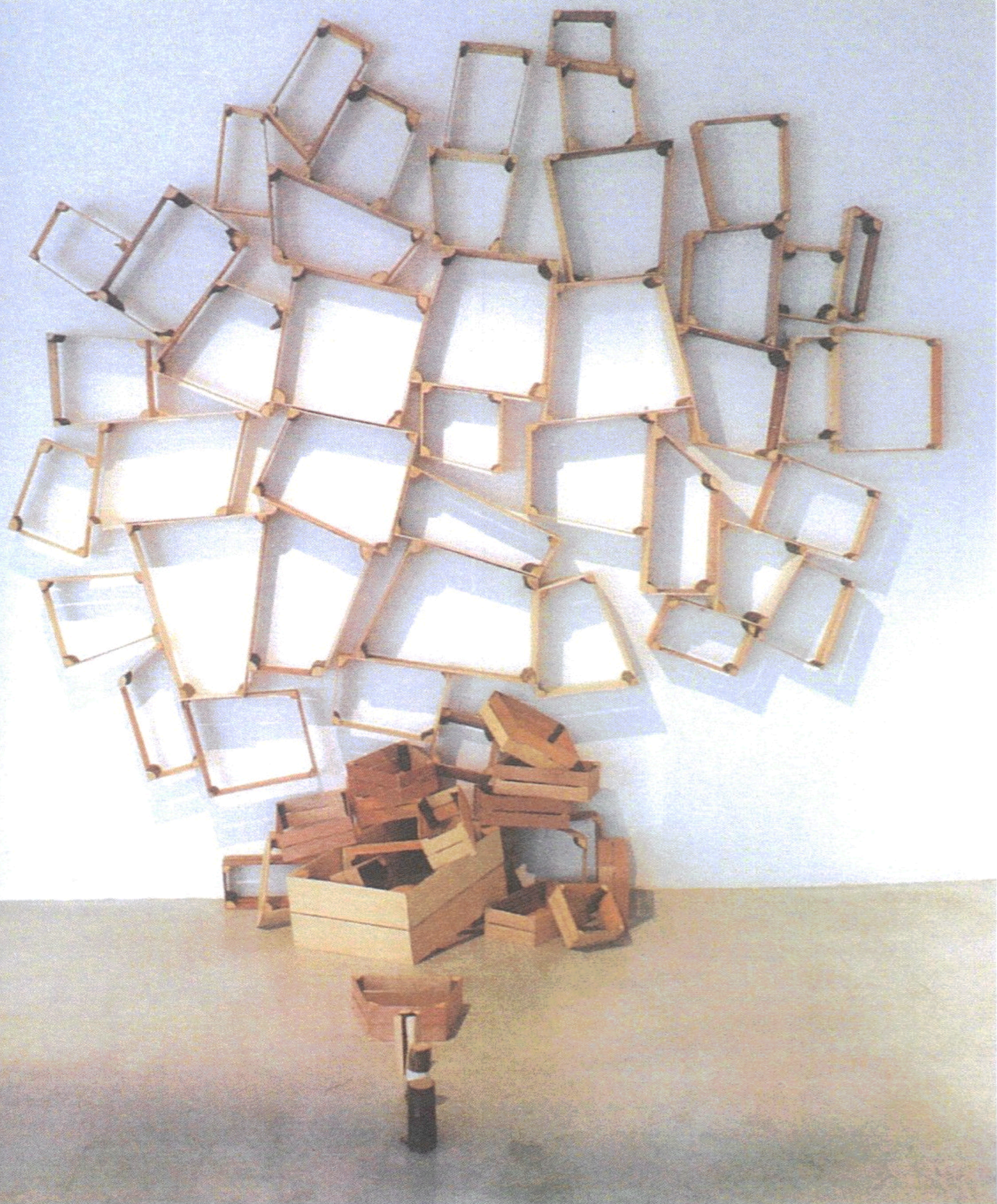
I became very disillusioned with art. I saw hundreds of art exhibitions and only the very best are good; the rest are awful. The feeling that art was absolutely useless to anyone wore me down a bit. I became much more interested in functional objects.

Does your experience in theatre influence the way you work?

The work I make now still has a theatrical quality. In theatre scenography, you tend to look at things from one direction, from the perspective of the audience. My pieces are still best seen from one particular angle. I kind of use objects for the performance of life. The Make/Shift shelving that started my career after college was about imagining a situation involving people and imagining how they could use shelves between columns. Each of my projects answers a specific question.



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01 *Octave Series (2007)* is a set of seven one-offs created for Gallery Libby Sellers in London. A single branch is split into four pieces that become the posts of a freestanding shelving unit.

02 Thinly sliced eucalyptus logs on a rough oak frame form the basis of Marigold's *Thin Slice cabinet (2008)*. Courtesy of Gallery Libby Sellers.

03 Peter Marigold splitting wood at Design Miami 2007.

04 Marigold's interest in classic furniture is sometimes represented in objects he creates with found or industrial materials. Shown here is *Neurotic Box Legs (2007)*.

05 *Split Boxes* were introduced at Design Miami, December 2007.

06 *Tilt II* is an extension of Marigold's *Split series*, which follows the principle that the inverted angles of a split form will always total 360°

In what way?

I tend to look at the geometry and the forms that emerge from materials. For *Split Boxes*, I divided one piece of wood into four parts. I tried to make very accurate parts with perfect 90° angles. After making a mistake, I used the wood anyway—the pieces could still be made into a box. The total of the four angles is always 360°, which shows the unity inherent in the material. This is a very profound phenomenon. The times in my life when I'm most creative often occur when I'm experiencing a moment of desperation. Panic and confusion can lead to unique solutions. I'm interested in hybrids between accidents and design.

Why is that?

Accidents make it possible to produce or discover designs that aren't influenced by styles or trends. When something strange happens in the workshop, I try to respond—to use it to my advantage. Life constantly demonstrates both the conflict and the balance between chaos and order. If the two can exist at the same time and in the same place, they represent the nature of the human mind.

Your work seems to be more about crafts than about product design.

I want my designs to look as though they've been made and not like things that just popped out of the computer. I'm not interested in products that look like models; I want them to have a sense of reality. That's why I like private commissions; I enjoy the direct approach. I have something currently in production that's doing very well, but it's disconnected from me. It was designed on a computer, and mould-makers are involved. It's out of my hands. You discover things only when you actually work with materials. My approach is to work in the third dimension from the start—to ignore the sketchbook and the computer.

You seem to prefer certain materials, especially wood.

I find many of my materials in the streets nearby. I live next to one of the biggest parks in London, and I travel through it every day. Even as a little kid, I had boxes filled with bits of metal, bits of plastic, things I found in my neighbourhood. I have a huge obsession for flea markets. When I was making props, I used old metal, old projectors, rubbish. I'm fascinated by things you can't buy, 'uncommodities', the rarest of the rare.

www.petermarigold.com

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