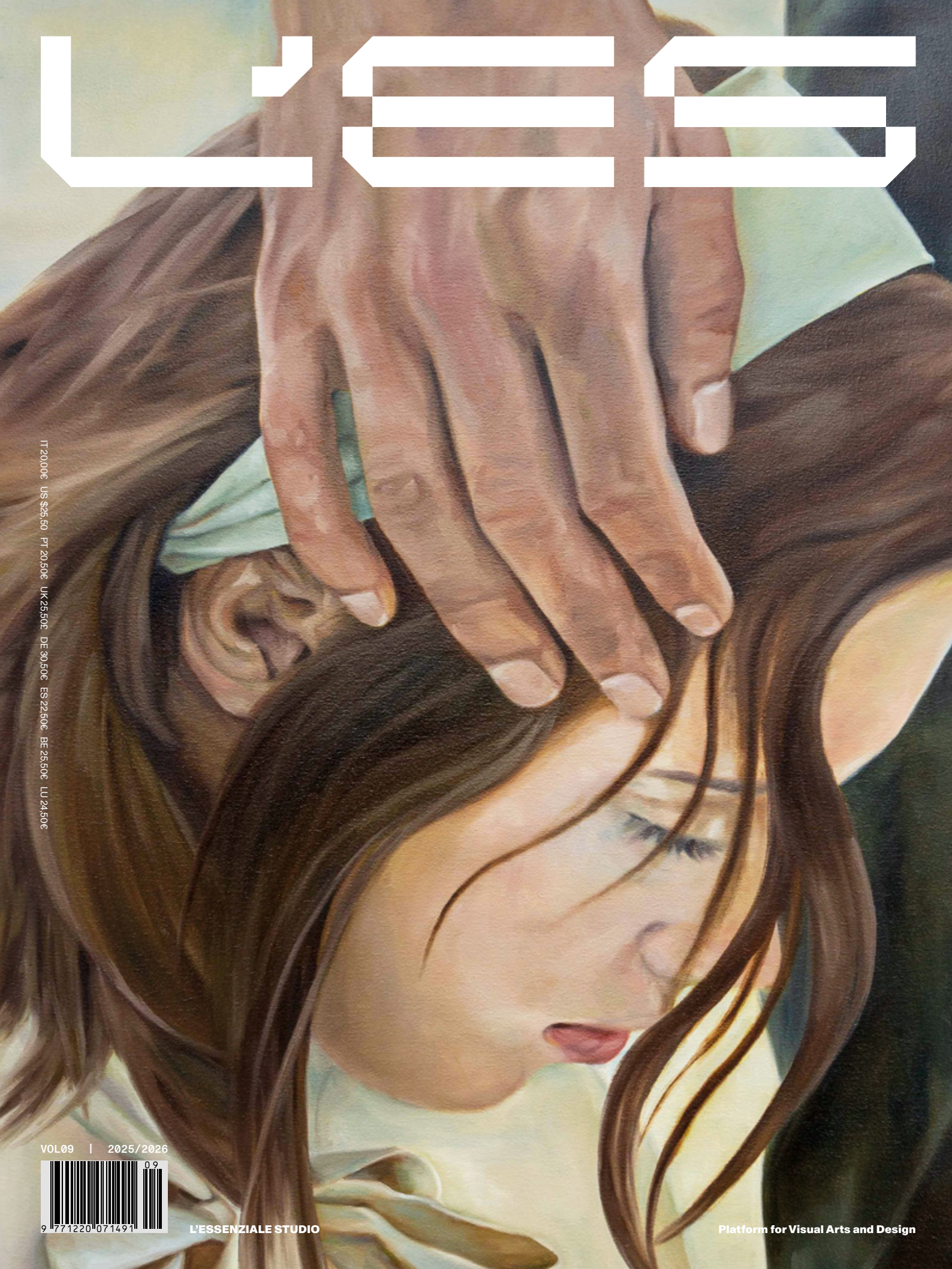


# L'ESSENZIALE



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L'ESSENZIALE STUDIO

Platform for Visual Arts and Design

# CAMPEGGI IN CONVERSATION WITH JESSICA FINOTTO

## THE STRUCTURE IN THREE ACTS

An archetype returns: the Safari Chair, carrying the nomadic memory of quick assemblies and improvised camps. Born for exploration, it holds the poetry of impermanence. In Mehari, that gesture moves again, finding calm within the home.

Davide Biancucci reimagines it as movement before object, a chair that folds instead of dismantling, tracing a quiet dance of opening and closure. The mechanism becomes choreography, restoring grace to everyday life. Ash wood and canvas define a tactile grammar, while the armchair, loveseat, and pouf compose a small lexicon of intimacy and lightness. Colour becomes identity: from natural white to green, from deep red to black, Mehari speaks in atmospheres more than tones.

In dialogue with Campeggi, it renews a lineage of play and transformability with quiet poise, where sustainability means endurance and affection. Between metamorphosis and memory, Mehari inhabits the threshold where lightness becomes presence, a bond between designer, object, and time. I imagine it in Casa-Giardino Nivola, Long Island, the open-air home by B. Rudofsky and C. Nivola (1950). That place shares the same spirit of simplicity and experimentation, an architecture where living and making merge into one continuous gesture.

## ARCHETYPES SET IN MOTION

**JESSICA FINOTTO:** The Safari Chair belongs to a military imagination of rapid dismantling and sudden movement. Mehari inherits that nomadic spirit but translates it into a domestic and lighter gesture. How did you manage to make that historical archetype converse with the slower, more reflective rhythm of contemporary living?

**DAVIDE BIANCUCCI:** The starting point was precisely to take an object born out of military needs, designed to be assembled and disassembled dry, moved from place to place, and transpose it into the home. In a domestic setting, there is no need for such immediacy, so we asked ourselves: could we reinterpret that feature while preserving its nomadic soul? That is where foldability came in. Instead of dismantling, the chair opens and closes. Mehari merges two typologies: the Safari Chair and the director's chair. The first has fabric armrests, the second introduces motion. It is a dialogue between two archetypes, an object that preserves the memory of the field yet becomes a daily gesture.

## THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF ROTATION

**JF:** In the movement that opens, closes, or suspends the chair, one perceives a kind of choreography, a minimal gesture that becomes performance. Was this a mechanical invention or a way of giving everyday life a quasi-ritual dimension?

**DB:** At first, it was purely technical, but through the dialogue with Guglielmo and Campeggi that movement became a language. The company has a deep history with transformability, and that led me to think about how to make the mechanism more expressive. Even something as simple as colouring the hanging strap turned the act into something poetic. It is a simple motion, yet it tells a story. It makes it, in every sense, a Campeggi object.

## MATERIALS THAT BREATHE

**JF:** Treated ash, washable canvas, durable fabrics: Mehari seems to live between nature and technique. What guided your choice of materials?

**DB:** We never really considered alternatives. The very nature of the object demanded wood and canvas. It made no sense, neither for the project nor for the brand, to distort that typology. Light ash and natural canvas evoke a sense of simplicity and continuity with the original archetype. We tested different colours and finishes, but the natural version remains my favourite. It breathes authenticity, remains faithful to its genealogy, yet feels unmistakably contemporary.

## A LEXICON OF AFFINITIES

**JF:** Armchair, loveseat, pouf: three voices in the same lexicon. How do you imagine their dialogue within the home, and what shared atmosphere do they create?

**DB:** Mehari can live both indoors and outdoors, but I prefer to imagine it inside, near a sofa or in a reading corner. It is an object one grows attached to: you open it, close it, hang it. The loveseat



Mehari, 2025. Designed by Davide Biancucci. Photo: Gaia Anselmi Tamburini.

and pouf came later, through conversations with Campeggi. The loveseat shares the same frame but with a wider seat, while the pouf completes the composition. Together they form a coherent, light, and convivial family.

#### THE GRAMMAR OF COLOUR

**JF:** From natural white to green, from deep red to black structure, a palette that becomes narrative. Is colour here surface, atmosphere, or identity?

**DB:** Identity, definitely. Colour here is not ornament; it is a balance between technical precision and restraint. The black screws and profiles form a precise drawing. Green and red evoke the outdoors, natural canvas stands for simplicity, black frames it all. It is a quiet object, not one that shouts, but one that lasts. Those who understand it will not abandon it after five years.

#### A DOMESTIC RITE

**JF:** Hanging a chair on the wall is both order and ritual, suspending the object, letting it breathe. Were you interested in exploring this subtle threshold between function and poetry in everyday life?

**DB:** Absolutely. I love the idea that furniture can offer a small daily ritual. Hanging Mehari is not just about freeing space; it is about declaring a gesture. The coloured strap makes that act visible, almost like a sign. Function becomes language.

#### THE GENEALOGY OF PLAY

**JF:** Campeggi has long intertwined transformability and play, discipline and lightness. How does Mehari enter that genealogy while also pushing it forward?

**DB:** The common thread in all our projects is transformation, which is always, in some way, a playful act. With Mehari, we found a new balance, an object that moves yet remains elegant, transformable without being eccentric. It is a dialogue between rigour and freedom. At Campeggi there is no such thing as a "Campeggi-style" product; every designer brings their own method, and identity emerges from that relationship.

#### THE GRACE OF ENDURANCE

**JF:** "Sustainability" risks becoming an abstract word. In Mehari, it feels tangible. What does it mean for you to create a sustainable object without stripping it of grace?

**GUGLIELMO CAMPEGGI:** It is an overused term, but for me, sustainability is about purpose. If an object has meaning, if it answers a real need, then it is sustainable. I do not chase novelty; I look for sense. Mehari was born from a concrete need: adaptable furniture for increasingly smaller homes. It is sustainable because it lasts, because those who choose it do not throw it away. The problem, often, is cultural; we replace things because we fail to see their value.

#### METAMORPHOSES YET TO COME

**JF:** Every project can either remain a complete icon or open up to transformation. What about Mehari?

**DB:** Time will tell. I no longer believe in icons. We live in a noisy era, with billions of products released every year. What matters is that the gesture remains pure. If one day it evolves, it should do so without losing its simplicity.

#### CULTURAL ECHOES

**JF:** Mehari is furniture, but also citation. What references accompanied its design process?

**DB:** Mainly typological ones: the Safari Chair, the director's chair, the campaign chair. I have collected these objects for years. I bought my first Safari Chair ten years ago and began studying their genealogy. Mehari emerged naturally, as if it had been waiting within that story all along.

#### LIGHTNESS AS A FORM OF BREATH

**JF:** Lightness not as fragility, but as a spatial condition, not occupying but allowing. How important is it for you that an object inhabits space without weighing it down?

**DB:** It is a demanding mission. I always work by subtraction until I reach what I call "rightness." It is not minimalism; it is balance. I try to reduce until the object no longer imposes itself but coexists with the space. Mehari should breathe with the home, not dominate it.

#### AN INTIMATE STATEMENT

**JF:** Beyond its industrial life, what does Mehari represent for you personally?

**DB:** It marked my debut at the Salone del Mobile, but also a meaningful encounter with a company that truly engages with designers. It expresses my identity and idea of design: sober, mobile, honest. It is an object that mirrors me, and one that has made me genuinely happy.





*Mehari*, 2025. Designed by Davide Biancucci. Photo: Luca A. Caizzi



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*SOFT FOLD*, 2025. Curated by Davide Biancucci. Photo: Filippo G. Moscati.



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