

# No.1 Common

AHEC Presents 'No.1 Common'  
at Material Matters,  
3daysofdesign Copenhagen,  
18–20 June 2025



# ‘No.1 Common’ at Material Matters

## Three designers uncover wood’s natural beauty at 3daysofdesign

Material Matters, 18–20 June 2025



The ‘No.1 Common’ exhibition showcases the potential of ‘cabinet grade’ hardwood as a versatile and desirable design material. Image by Dan Medhurst, courtesy of AHEC.

- Timber and furniture producers across the world label lumber on the basis of knots, characteristics, variations in colour and grain
- No.1 Common is not commonly used in Europe, in favour of clear grades of timber
- The exhibition celebrates a sustainable approach to material selection and to ‘use what nature provides’
- AHEC commissioned new works by designers Andu Masebo, Daniel Schofield and Anna Maria Øfstedal Eng to celebrate the natural variety of timber

On 18–20 June 2025, the exhibition ‘No.1 Common’ opens in Copenhagen to make the case for often-overlooked hardwood qualities and species in design. Three visionary designers are unveiling unique works at the festival’s Material Matters fair, each championing a sustainable approach to material selection: ‘use what nature provides’.



## The beauty of the overlooked

American hardwood forests contain more than twice the volume of standing timber today as 50 years ago. To maximise the potential of this natural resource, we need to rethink how we use timber – learning to appreciate and utilise not just the most ‘pristine’ cuts, which make up only up between 10 and 15% of the tree, but as much of the tree as possible.

Debuting at Material Matters, ‘No.1 Common’ questions what quality means when it comes to natural materials and highlights how sustainable and thoughtful material selection can shape the future of our forests and our world. The exhibition aims to demonstrate the shared power and responsibility that designers, industry leaders, and consumers have in prioritising environmentally conscious decisions, rather than simply following trends that don’t always respect the rhythms and needs of nature.

## What is No.1 Common?

Timber and furniture industries across the world label lumber on the basis of a number of factors – in the U.S., these include the size of the cutting area, the number of knots or other natural characteristics in the surface, and variations in colour and grain. In other words, the grade reflects the percentage of ‘clear wood’ in a board of lumber. Number 1 Common – aka No.1C – hardwood generally comprises a similar amount of clear wood as upper grades but in smaller cuttings. Although this category of timber was originally created as the ‘cabinet grade’, specifically selected to be used in cabinetry, flooring or furniture parts, it is not commonly used in Europe, in favour of clearer grades of timber.

Launching at 3daysofdesign, AHEC’s ‘No.1 Common’ project is an argument for broadening the grade’s usage categories, presenting three visually and texturally unique designs to showcase the potential of No.1C hardwoods as aesthetically rich, high-performance design materials.

The initial inspiration for the project came when AHEC (American Hardwood Export Council), commissioned the English furniture maker Benchmark to explore the potential of No.1C timber. Benchmark conducted hands-on research as the first stage of the project, assessing the technical, aesthetic and practical possibilities of using this grade of timber in furniture. The goal was not only to push technical boundaries but also to explore the benefits of using No.1 Common in terms of labour efficiency and yield.

Following this initial phase, the AHEC team commissioned three designers to develop pieces that highlight the beauty and potential of these sustainable No.1 Common timbers. Their focus is on showcasing both the aesthetic appeal and practical benefits of the material, creating designs that reflect the qualities of Number 1 Common while contributing to a more sustainable future.

# One grade, three designs

## ‘Around Table’ by Andu Masebo

London-based designer Andu Masebo is interested in the things we make, the way we make them and the systems that they become a part of once they are made. He has turned his expertise in ceramics, metal fabrication and carpentry to a number of high-profile projects, retaining a focus on simplicity, accessibility and materiality.

For ‘No.1 Common’, Masebo has designed a dynamic tablescape that transforms over the three days of the festival, facilitating a series of events guided by the act of bringing people together.

In most homes, the dining table is a hub for social interaction. More than just a surface for utensils to rest on, it provides a context for inviting people into spaces, a place to gather around, somewhere for sharing stories and making new ones. This project imagines the table as a centre of gravity and seeks to create moments that bring people towards it.

Made in No.1 Common red oak, the table comprises eight curved segments that are reconfigured in various ways throughout the exhibition. As the surface evolves, it becomes a stage for objects that invite connection – and a canvas for the traces left behind by each event.

Made from No.1 Common brown maple, a set of semi-stackable stools echo the table’s design language, offering maximum adaptability and forming a cohesive family of pieces.

[andumasebo.com](http://andumasebo.com)



Photography by Thom Atkinson



Photography by Dan Medhurst



## **‘Common Room’ by Daniel Schofield**

Based in Copenhagen, British designer Daniel Schofield brings a complementary set of skills from his background in graphic design and carpentry to his practice as a furniture designer. He looks for – and finds – beauty in simplicity, creating highly rational pieces with elegant and enduring charm.

The concept behind ‘Common Room’ plays on the timber grade’s name while addressing a real need. As demand grows for flexible workspaces that balance productivity, community, and privacy, Schofield’s project asks: can simple, adaptable pieces meet the needs of this new way of working? Can the rich character of No.1 Common enhance wellbeing through a biophilic connection to nature?

Schofield has used No.1 Common cherry wood to create a furniture family comprising a table, bench, stools, and screens of varying heights. With its natural variation – knots, colour shifts, and irregular grain – No.1 Common often requires more work to make it viable for large-scale production. Rather than hiding these characteristics, Schofield has developed a system to embrace them. A simple yet effective approach to joining splits and patching knots maximises the potential of No.1 Common. The butterfly joint, traditionally sharp-edged in handcraft, has been given rounded corners to speed up production and highlight its machine-made nature. This soft triangular form defines the collection’s design language, uniting function with expression.

**[daniel-schofield.com](http://daniel-schofield.com)**



Photography by Thom Atkinson



Photography by Dan Medhurst



# Kontur Series

## by Anna Maria Øfstedal Eng

Furniture and homeware designer Anna Maria Øfstedal Eng embraces the hand of the maker in her creative process, celebrating imperfection as an emblem of honesty and transparency. From her studio in Fjellhamar, Norway, she creates unique sculptural objects in ceramic, wood, stone and metal. She is interested in how contrasts – raw and polished, curved and angular – can spark a dialogue within a design, enhancing its presence both visually and texturally. In 2023, she participated in AHEC’s 3daysofdesign exhibition, ‘Three’.

For ‘No.1 Common’, Øfstedal Eng has designed a cabinet and wall mirror inspired by material experimentation using characterful yellow birch. Her discoveries connect closely to her long-standing inspiration she has found in roots and branches – forms that twist and shape both structure and silhouette.

A key insight from Øfstedal Eng’s collaborative, hands-on experimentation with Benchmark was the discovery of yellow birch’s rich spectrum of colour variations. This led to laminating boards of the same species displaying different tones and grains to create a range of patterns – some bold and graphic, others subtle and soft. A three-layer lamination, with a 20mm core and 8–10mm outer layers, revealed its visual impact when carved along the grain. Patterns emerged, forming Øfstedal Eng’s signature organic silhouettes and showcasing the wood’s natural character.

These sculptural elements contrast with clean, light surfaces used for cabinet fronts, tabletops, seats, and backrests. The dialogue between expressive and simple forms highlights the beauty and versatility of No.1 Common timber, elevating its value through craftsmanship and thoughtful design.

[ofstedaleng.no](https://ofstedaleng.no)



Photography by Thom Atkinson



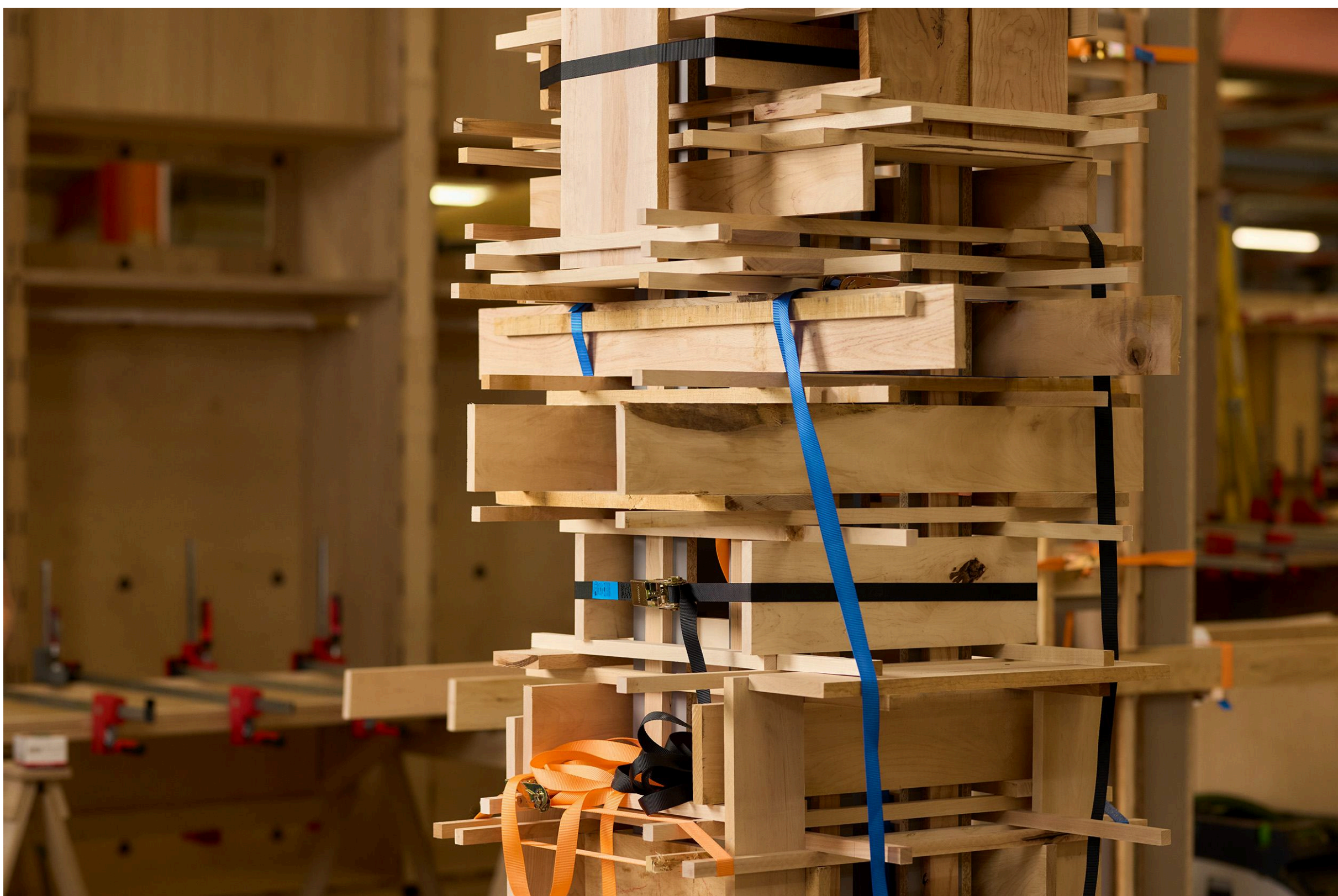
Photography by Dan Medhurst



# Nothing wasted

Designed by KUF Studios, the multidisciplinary practice of Danish designer Kia Utzon-Frank, the exhibition has been built using offcuts from the production of the pieces on display – thereby demonstrating the amount of material typically discarded in furniture-making – and is designed to be disassembled and reused with minimal intervention in future design projects.

The exhibition space draws inspiration from timberyards, forests, and workshops, environments where raw material, process, and function coexist. Using stacking methods used in timber drying, visual markers from the yard such as ratchet straps and crayon marks, and structures that echo the simplicity of tools and jigs, the setting invites visitors to wander, explore, and reflect.



Photography by Thom Atkinson



# Notes for editors

For more information about the designs, the designers, AHEC or the No.1 Common project, contact [ahec@zetteler.co.uk](mailto:ahec@zetteler.co.uk).

## **No.1 Common**

A project by AHEC

## **Location**

Ground floor, Gammel Dok, Strandgade 27B, 1401 København

## **Exhibition design**

KUF Studios ([kufstudios.com](http://kufstudios.com))

All pieces are made exclusively from No.1 Common grade hardwood, sourced sustainably from naturally regenerating forests — including cherry, maple, red oak and yellow birch.

With thanks to Bingaman & Son Lumber, MacDonald & Owen, Northland Forest Products and Duffield Timber for their timber donation. No.1 Common brand identity and design by **Justified Studio**

## **Related Events**

Making Things in Common – The conversation

Wednesday 17 June, 3pm

As part of ‘No.1 Common’, this informal talk brings together the participating designers and partners for a conversation about shared values, material choices and collaborative making. The discussion will reflect on the process behind the exhibition and the importance of embracing the full potential of natural materials. Moderated by Grant Gibson, the session will offer space for questions and reflections from those attending.

Making Things in Common - The workshop\*

Thursday 19 June, 11am

Join designers Andu Masebo and Kia Utzon-Frank on Thursday 19 June at 11 am at the ‘No. 1 Common’ exhibition in the Gammel Dok building for a hands-on workshop. Using hardwood offcuts from the exhibition, participants will be teamed up to collaboratively design and create unique lighting pieces, which will become part of the exhibition. This event celebrates sustainable design and the creative possibilities of making things in common.

\*Registration required, please register your attendance [here](#)



**AHEC (American Hardwood Export Council)**

For more than three decades, the American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) has been the global face of the U.S. timber industry, championing the performance, sustainability and aesthetic potential of American hardwoods worldwide. As the leading international hardwood trade association for North America, AHEC operates a non-profit programme representing thousands of businesses engaged in the production and export of timber – ranging from small family-run sawmills to major flooring manufacturers. Established to unite this wide-ranging spectrum of companies with a single global voice, AHEC has successfully built an internationally recognised brand, marketing more than 20 commercially available hardwood species and increasing demand around the world.

[americanhardwood.org](http://americanhardwood.org)  
[@ahec\\_europe](#)

**Benchmark**

A powerhouse of craft, Benchmark is one of the UK's leading furniture-makers. Founded by Terence Conran and Sean Sutcliffe in 1984, the company has a mission to create furniture that contributes to human health and wellbeing, using natural, sustainable and non-toxic materials. With workshops in Berkshire and Dorset, Benchmark works with many of the world's leading architects and designers on commercial and residential projects. From forest to finished piece, Benchmark is positioned as a leader in sustainable enterprise. Its approach marries forward-thinking design with exemplary levels of craftsmanship and creativity, producing furniture that exudes natural warmth and soul.

[benchmarkfurniture.com](http://benchmarkfurniture.com)  
[@madebybenchmark](#)