

M57

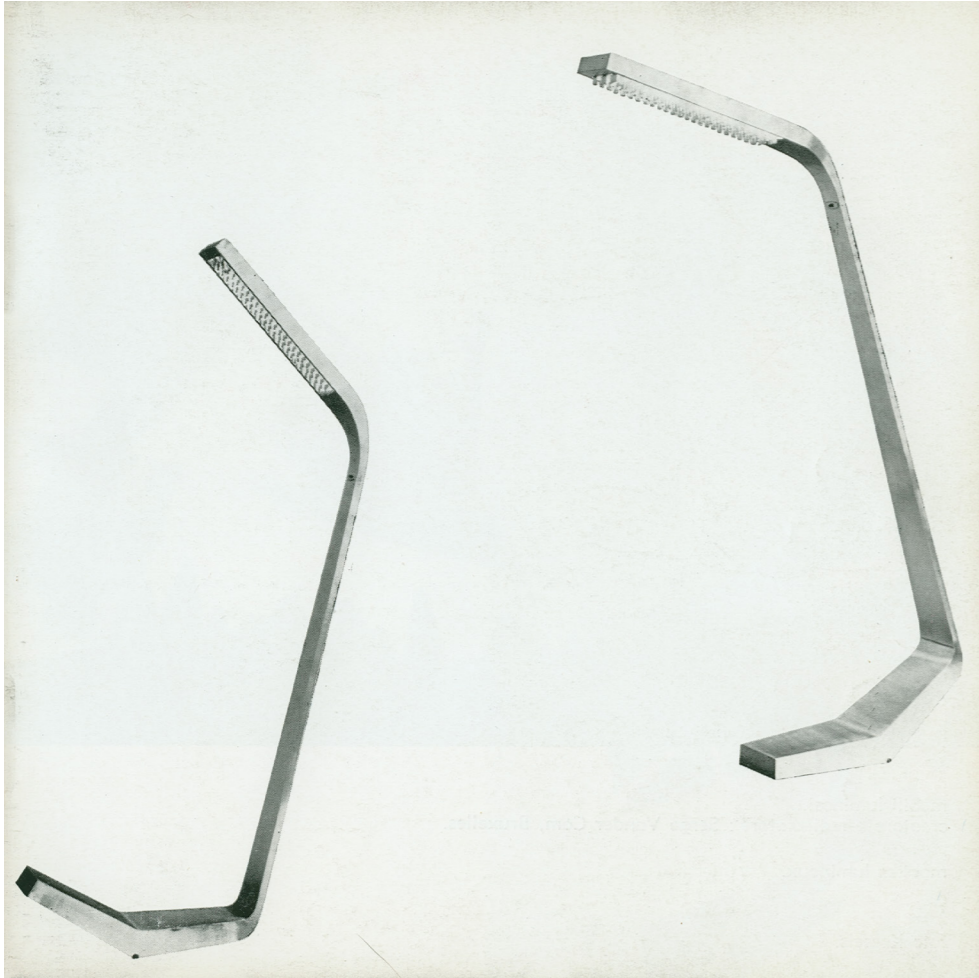
The M57 lamp, simply referred to in the past by Jules Wabbes as the “Double-position lighting device”, which had been exhibited at the XI Triennale in Milan in 1957, had disappeared. Despite its spectacular dimensions, the beauty of its design, the light filtered by fins that varied depending on the position of the foot, this exceptional model had never been commercialised. In the year 2024, thanks to technological advancements, the M57 will finally be produced in limited edition on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Jules Wabbes’ disappearance.



Jules Wabbes

GENERALDECORATION





Lamp, tables, and slatted bookcases in the Belgian section of the XI Triennale in Milan arranged by Lucien Kroll and Charles Vandenhove. Photo: Gian Sinigaglia, Milan, photographic archives of the Triennale di Milano

Double-position lamp, seen in both positions. Extract from the catalogue of the Belgian section "XI Triennale di Milano. Sezione Belga". Photo: Serge Vandercam







CELEBRATING 50 YEARS SINCE THE PASSING OF JULES WABBES

Jules Wabbes is a Belgian designer with an internationally renowned career. Born in Brussels in 1919, he was initially a photographer and antiques dealer before becoming an interior architect and creating his own furniture and objects. He first participated in the Triennale di Milano in 1957, where he won a silver medal for his slatted furniture system and lamp. In 1958, he was involved in the Expo with various projects, earning a gold medal at the Triennale in 1960.

His participation in various fairs gained recognition among specialists and increased his success with a clientele ranging from institutions to individuals: the U.S. Department of State, Science Policy Building, Euratom, and the "Installé" house in Antwerp, and Cuisinier's apartment in Brussels, to name a few.

Jules Wabbes is known for his timeless simple forms, the quality of his materials-wood and metal-and the meticulous attention to detail in the fabrication of his objects. His work was shown during a retrospective in 2012 at the Palais des Beaux-Arts (Bozar) in Brussels.

The creator died prematurely at the age of 54 in 1974 while completing projects for the Générale de Banque (now known as "BNP Paribas Fortis") and student housing at the new University of Louvain-la-Neuve. 2024 marks his anniversary year, as we celebrate 50 years since his passing with the release of a new lamp whose prototype had vanished.

CAROLINE & VINCENT COLET

In 2014, when Vincent Colet, a cabinetmaker and antiques dealer, showed interest in the company General Decoration-Jules Wabbes' original company-, the family knew they had found the ideal person to continue producing Jules Wabbes' creations. Vincent Colet was familiar with the objects created by Jules Wabbes, as he had been friends with the family since childhood and had disassembled these objects for restoration.

Assisted by his wife Caroline, a graduate of a design school (College of Art and Design, CAD, in Brussels) with a career as a set decorator in cinema, the Wabbes family had found the perfect team.

Today, the company GENERAL DECORATION produces 70 objects-lamps, coat racks, door pull handles, ashtrays, fire accessories, and some furniture such as the wooden table and trestle table. However, General Decoration's catalogue has expanded to include objects previously published by Mobilier Universel-Jules Wabbes' previous company.

The company only works with local artisans. Everything is manufactured and assembled in Belgium, making the current editions rare, numbered, and signed.

M57 LAMP

The lamp, named "M57" by Caroline and Vincent and standing for "Milan 1957", was created to be exhibited at the XI Triennale in Milan in the Belgian section dedicated to industrial aesthetics.

The decoration and layout of the Belgian section were entrusted to architects Lucien Kroll and Charles Vandenhove. The Belgian section was adjacent to those of Japan and Austria, presenting a variety of objects: rifles, milking machines, ceramics by Pierre Caille and Antoine de Vinck, vases from Val-Saint-Lambert, and Olivier Strebelle's horse Bayard. Jules Wabbes exhibited three tables, three bookshelves, a desk, and a lamp. The furniture was part of what he called his "slatted furniture system". His creations, bath furniture and the lamp, were awarded a silver medal by an international jury.

The lamp, known at the time simply as the "Double-position lighting device", was only known through photographs, notably those by CoBra artist Serge Vandercam, who illustrated a small catalogue of the Belgian section.

The lamp that had been exhibited in Milan had disappeared. Despite its spectacular dimensions, the beauty of its design, and the light filtered by fins that varied depending on the position of the foot, the lamp had never been commercialised because it had a technical problem-it heated up. A technical problem challenging to resolve with incandescent bulbs.

During the retrospective exhibition at Bozar in 2012, a photograph of Jules Wabbes presenting his lamp at the Triennale had been chosen as the poster to promote the event. Would the lamp be found during this media frenzy? Unfortunately, no-the double-position lighting device did not reappear.

Another mystery surrounded this lamp. What material was it made of? In an article by Léon-Louis Sosset published in 1958, the caption of the photo indicates: "Lamp in stainless steel with a double position (direct and indirect lighting)." This error was perpetuated in subsequent publications.

However, it is much more likely that the lamp was made of a copper alloy (brass) like the early lamps created by Jules Wabbes.

Many unknowns for this lamp-no plans, no precise descriptions, only a few vintage photographs. But thanks to the synergy, will, and passion of several people, and also the evolution of technology, the M57 has come to life in brushed brass with nickel-plated brass fins and LED bulbs that do not heat up, yet emit a warm light.

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1. *Nos créateurs de mobilier. J. Wabbes, in Guide Intérieur Gids, 7th year, n°482, jan. 1958, p. 4.*

Portrait of Jules Wabbes in front of the double-position lamp in the Belgian section at the XI Triennale in Milan in 1957. Photo: Publifoto, Milan. Photographic archives of the Triennale di Milano









THE M57 PROJECT

The reconstruction of the M57 Lamp designed for the Triennale in Milan in 1957 comes to life through a few vintage photographs, which served as the starting point for creating a 3D model, developing detailed technical plans, and producing a life-size replica of the original lamp.

The primary objective of this ambitious project was to faithfully transcribe the 2D and 3D plans of the prototype lamp designed by Jules Wabbes. General Decoration undertook this task in several stages.

To create a 3D model, General Decoration embarked on a meticulous process. They took measurements of the lamp using digital tools, basing their analysis on three vintage photographs.

By using Jules Wabbes' size as it appeared in these photographs as a reference, they managed to reproduce the dimensions of the object. This approach led to the creation of comprehensive technical plans, including all essential annotations to guide the prototyping phase.

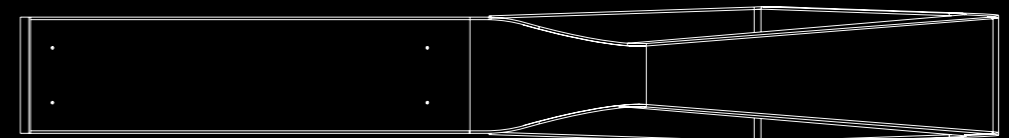
This process ensured that the 3D model closely resembled the original, capturing the essence of Jules Wabbes' design. The quest for reproduction continued with the creation of an initial wooden model.

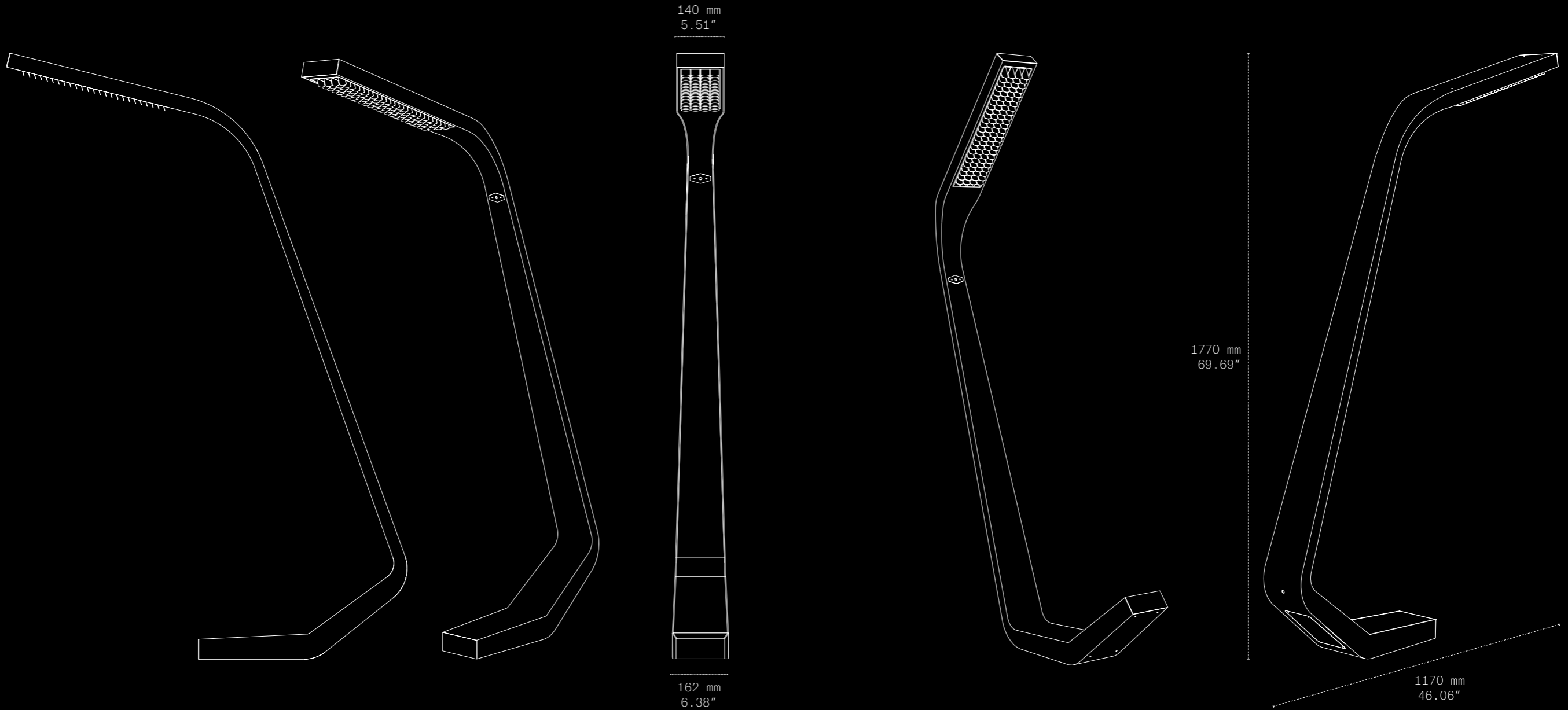
The purpose of this model was to confront the 3D model with tangible reality, providing an opportunity to further refine measurements and details. This iterative process led to the creation of a second prototype, which embodied Jules Wabbes' vision even more faithfully.

To achieve this, the technical plans were adjusted empirically, specifically adapting them to the artisanal manufacturing method.

The empirical approach allowed for reconciling the precision of the technical plans with the realities and artisanal skills necessary for lamp production.

This collaboration between the expertise of Gaston Golstein from Duplex Studio and the skills of Cedric Leurquin from Zed Ateliers played a crucial role in the realisation of the re-edition.





TECHNICAL SPECS

NAME M57
 ORIGINAL DESIGN 1957
 MATERIAL Brushed brass with
 nickel-plated brass fins

DIMENSIONS
 (D) 1170 × (L) 162 × (H) 1770 [mm]
 (D) 46.06 × (L) 6.38 × (H) 69.69 ["]
 WEIGHT 36 kg / 79,36 lbs

LIGHT

Flex strip Led
 50 watt
 6240 Lumen

LIMITED
 NUMBERED
 EDITION

Jules Wabbes
 GENERALDECORATION

GENERAL DECORATION

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