

Joseph Dirand

On the Four Seasons in Miami,
the upcoming Rizzoli book, his
amazing new apartment and meeting the love of his life.

DANIEL MAGNUSSEN — I know you recently moved to a new apartment in the 7th arrondissement. JOSEPH DIRAND — Yes, I decided to take this step, because I met the love of my life. She was the director of Monsieur Bleu — we met, she was married but got divorced. We started to live in the apartment that you visited last summer, but it was too small because she also has a daughter. So I found this amazing apartment and I recreated every millimeter: the floor, the doors, the frames, the walls, the windows, the fireplace: everything I did from scratch. We did it very quickly in only three months because it was urgent. All the best companies I work with did an amazing job to make it happen and the apartment is crazy to live in. For me it's the perfection of home, it's not too big and the proportions of the rooms are perfect. It's located on rue de Bellechasse, close to Musée d'Orsay. It's a 17th century building with windows that go from the floor to the ceiling, so the windows are super tall — something like 4.2 meters.

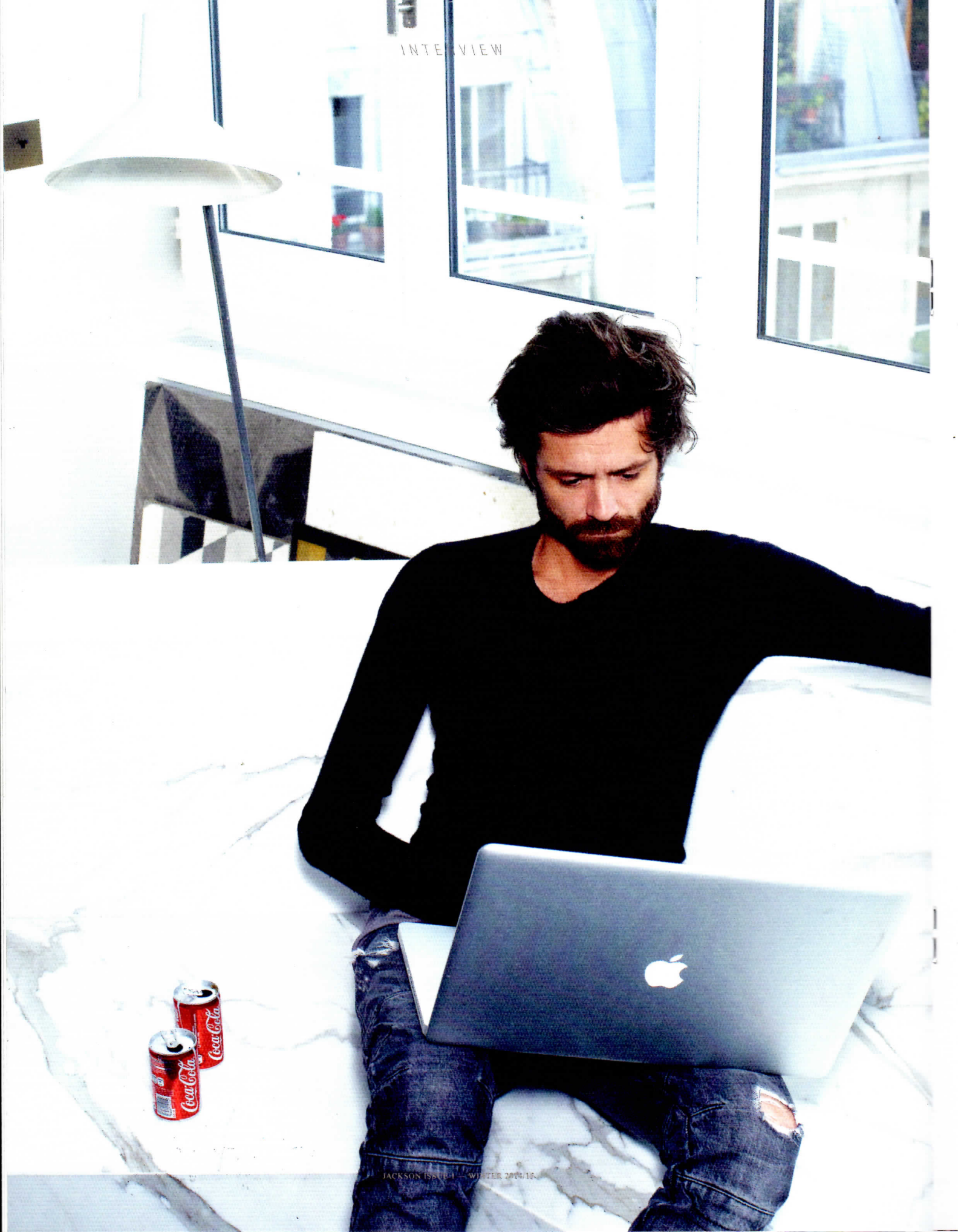
DM — Is there any particular piece of furniture or art that you feel is missing? JD — The thing is that I never really have this type of desire. I think it's your brain that protects yourself from this kind of frustration. If I desire something and I can afford it, I'll buy it. There is of course millions of art pieces that I would love to have at home, but I don't even pay attention to that. If I'm not obsessed about a piece I don't really need it. The last piece that I bought was a painting from Thomas Houseago — a black and white painting with a big skull that you see in my living room. This is an amazing painting, I love this one. For the first time all the pieces that I bought over so many years have come together in my apartment. For example a coffee table from Ron Arad, Le Corbusier cube stool and a painting by Jacob Kassay. In my former apartment this painting was very discreet and did not really exist. Today in this apartment, it's like boom. There are both classic and more experimental things and they finally fit the place so well. DM — *I also love*

OPPOSITE PAGE AND THROUGHOUT: photography Gustav Hallmer
— text Daniel Magnussen

JOSEPH DIRAND



INTERVIEW



the red ashtray. JD — Yeah it's from Sterling Ruby. DM — *Do you use it a lot?* JD — Actually I just quit smoking and I'm super happy about it. I just turned 40 and it was now or never. DM — *We did this picture of you at the office next to the 'Le Dirand' bike. Is it still at the development stage or will it be put into production?* JD — No, I mean it was just like a fun thing. It was a nice project but it's an utopia because I don't have time to take care of that. It will stay at the development stage and be kind of a prototype of a dream. DM — *Did you have any direct design references – like 80s race bikes from the Tour de France?* JD — Yes, definitely. It was something I started a long time ago. I was doing a lot of sports when I was young and I was also very interested in how to make things. I was biking with my father in the Pyrenees and I was riding this kind of 80s Tour de France race bike with him — I found this kind of bike very old school. So I turned 'Le Dirand' into what is almost like a city bike but with the same wheels, the same technology and weight of a race bike. DM — *I remember last time we spoke you talked about making 5 different 'Le Dirand' models and show them as an art exhibition?* JD — Yeah, it's just that it will take a lot of time to produce. But maybe I'll do it someday, because it's a fun idea. Sometimes it's difficult to choose between projects and to refuse working with people. But we can't do everything – basically we have one or two requests per day. So it's about finding the things that will push you, bring you to new experiences, new challenges and inspirations and not be bored of what you do. It's interesting to surprise yourself. I don't want to know what will be my work in ten years, but I definitely believe that it will not be the

same as today. All the experiences teach me a little more and a little more. What I already learned is there, and now I need to learn more. DM — *Which work are you spending the most time on at the moment?* JD — I'm working on a really interesting project that has already occupied us a lot. It's the new Four Seasons in Miami. This is a massive project for us, the biggest we have ever worked on — it's like working on ten projects at the same time. I'm designing the entire interior including the restaurant. Richard Meier is doing the massive rebuilding of the small existing building which used to be a private club called the Surf Club. It will include one big building and four small "sugar cubes". There is a 300m long beach with the hotel, so there is an amazing view. For me it's so clear what Miami is in history, flavor, color and sexiness. But when you go to Miami it's very hard to find a place that really translates this flavor. So for me it's very exciting to bring a little bit of Miami to Miami. DM — *You have done so many projects now. Have you had any book offers?* JD — Yes, I'm actually now working on a book project with Rizzoli. It took me a very long time to find the right angle because I didn't want it to be just a catalogue of my projects. My brother (Adrien Dirand) and I ended up with the idea of making a photography book instead of a classic architecture book. It means that there's much more freedom in terms of the images and angle. We decided to make something more like a family story. I think this is a much more interesting way to talk about my work and inspirations since the reason I'm an architect is because of my father and his influence.

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