

Yael Mer

**Guest Professor
Product Design
School of Art and Design, Kassel
2015 / 2016**

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EX- CHANGE OF IDEAS #2

INTRODUCTION

The Product Design course at the School of Art and Design Kassel is highly versatile, covering industrial design, furniture / exhibition design, design of textile products, as well as the theory and practice of design. We consider this broad approach to the field a great strength. Aside from academic and artistic staff, six professorships are assigned to our department. One of these professorships is not held by a permanent candidate, but offered annually to internationally renowned designers.

In order to build up and develop elementary fields, an artistic course of studies needs consistency and reliability. On the other hand, welcoming alternative views from outside offers a helpful and refreshing outlook for both students and teachers. As a result, the course of studies is

open to new fields, many of which are often overlooked during the course of “everyday” teaching. With this concept we can appeal to design personalities from all over the world for temporary teaching positions. This allows us to benefit from their knowledge, especially as they would not ordinarily be interested in a permanent position. And because of the temporary nature of the role, we are able to put the project professorship out for tender internationally and thus enhance the quality of our course of studies in many different areas.

After the initial year with Ineke Hans we were happy to welcome Yael Mer, co-founder of Raw-Edges Design Studio, as the second project professor.

She took over the professorship with great enthusiasm and sublimed the department with her remarkable design

perspective. Both, her teaching commitment and engagement in the design field helped once again to proof and establish the reputation of the Project Professorship at the School of Art and Design Kassel

Her commitment and inspiring attitude made this year to a great experience. We thank her very much for continuing the professorship journey!

Prof. Jakob Gebert with
Prof. Ayzit Bostan,
Prof. Lutz Pankow,
Prof. Martin Schmitz,
Prof. Oliver Vogt

ON YAEEL



After graduating from the Royal College of Art and after not finding 'proper' job elsewhere I've started working together with my partner (in life) Shay Alkalay.

We launch Raw-Edges in 2007 as a place where curiosity would be a prevalent factor in



Endgrain Collection, (2015)

the creation of our designs, a place where we could embark on a continuous

journey of discovery, turning the world upside down and inside out, cracking things open and studying their structure, always striving for surprise, wonder, humour.

Colours, pattern-making and movement form a large part of the DNA of our work. The ideas of energy and provocative illusion are aimed at bringing out the kid in all of us who engage with it, an ongoing battle against boredom perhaps!

Some ideas include pouring expandable foam into folded paper cavities, cooking



Volume (2008)

timber in boiling dyes, and making paper moulds for the production of industrial ceramic tiles.

We met in Jerusalem and moved to London to study at the RCA, where Ron Arad was head of the course at the time. Under the guidance of our tutors Daniel Charney and Rober Feo, we began to experiment with creating new typologies, by thinking how everyday surroundings might be enriched by the products we use and the objects we own.

Something about our approach to design led to valuable collaborations where we develop products, installations and concepts for production companies and brands such as Louis Vuitton, Stella Mc-

Cartney, Airbnb, Moroso, Cappellini, Kvadrat and Mutina. Our products were awarded international awards including Elle Decoration Edida Award, Wallpaper Design Award, IF award, Red Dot Award and nominated few times for Design of the Years at the London Design Museum.



Tape, Mutina (2017)

During the last ten years I had the opportunity to teach and run academic workshops in Bezalel academy of art and design Jerusalem, Domaine de Boisbuchet, FHNW Basel and a fantastic one year visiting professorship at Kassel university.



Herringbones (2016)



Steps, Now Gallery (2017)

YELLOW PAGES

Yael Mer on Wintersemester

For the first semester i chose to try and engage the students with the local craftsmanship around kassel. I was curious to know what sort of makers are typical for the area and thought using Yellow Pages as the 'old school' search engine would assist the students in finding hidden small business and workshops that in today's google era are quite hard to reveal. The students were encouraged to think widely and not to focus on a field that is necessarily associated with design.

The initial brief was to learn the methods, materials and culture of each craftsmanship and after thorough research to apply their new knowledge and to design an object that is new to that craftsmanship; applying techniques of one field to another, for instance designing a very personal corset at the shoemaking workshop. Eventually most of the students (with my blessing) bented the brief to handful of directions but still kept an experimen-

tal approach within their new fields. The chosen craftsmen and workshops included wedding cakes artist, tattoo parlor , furrier, metalsmith, wood turner, sand casting workshop, tailor, upholsterer, butcher, shoemaker, gardener, beekeeper, lab glass blower, advanced architectural wood bending company and even a dental prosthesis company.

Alongside this project, some of the students focused on their Free Projects.

ALU BOND



- Foundry -

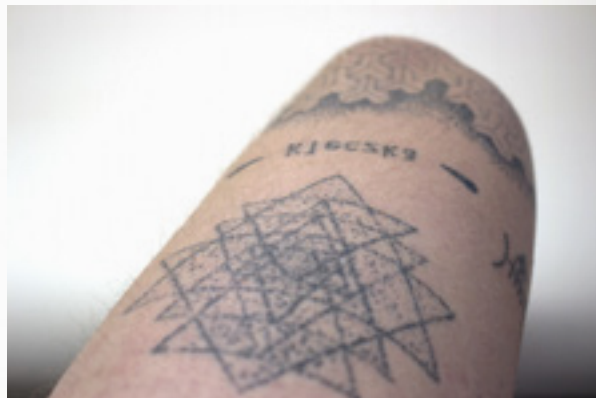
A family of marble trays with aluminium feet and/or handles. Each tray consists of at least two stone sheets which are joined by aluminium castings.

Die-cast aluminium contracts as it cools down. When aluminium is cast into an undercut shape, it results in a clamping effect on which this concept is based. Due to this effect, it is possible to connect two or more sheets of stone or to add functional casted geometry to them. After cutting the contour of the stone with a water jet, the connectors and the add-ons are cast.

It would also be possible to combine this technique with other heat resistant materials such as glass/ceramics.

The objects are inspired by the aluminium sand casting process performed by Metallguss Zeidler.

TATTOOLS



- Tattoo Studio -

The tools meant for hand poking tattoos are inspired by a craft carried on for more than a thousand years. Tattools transfers the history of this craft into today's time.

Experiments with different materials like skin, bones and fruit as well as several tattoo-related experiences in India, Nepal and England led to the outcome of this project.

KONFLIKT KONFEKT



- Cake Manufacturer -

The six sugar confectioneries in eight-legged clay bowls represent our inner enemies; conflicts that we carry with us, neuroses that makes us struggle in our everyday life and leave us baffled by their effects. Konflikt Konfekt gives these enemies a face and a substance - finally making it possible to grab, attack and eat them. The lengthy and uncomfortable eating process offers the opportunity to slowly gain back control and extinguish the enemy once and for all. The process is finished when the core of the problem is found and freed. The inedible piece can then be used as a talisman, a reminder of the battle that is won.

HASSLE



- Furrier -

The title of this project is referring to the hassle with emotions.

Individuals can be controlled and dominated by internally -generated thoughts and emotions – often resulting in a perceived notion of helplessness. Within this project I created three wear-able objects that focus on breaking these self-regulated emotional states. The three pieces are made out of hair and bristle, which are then attached to leather.

The upper vest – covering the shoulders

The headphones – covering the ears

The armlet

Feeling something is not only a physical thing but also an emotional state.

DON'T THINK TWICE



- Upholsterer -

Upholstering is the traditional craft of padding furniture with fabric and soft materials. It is usually seen on chairs, sofas and stools. But as we wish to be comfortable wherever we are, we can now also find a lot of rucksacks being padded. This eases the burden on our backs and shoulders and protects our goods in the inside.

I wanted to augment this similarity between travelling bags and furniture and create a travelling object that holds an upholstery for your body.

POTTO



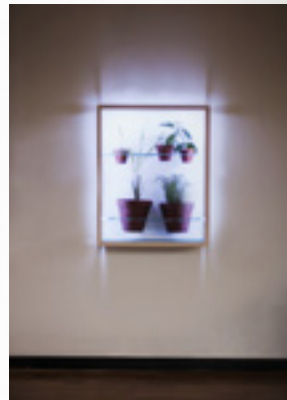
- Glass Workshop -

'Potto' is made out of Schott borosilicate glass, a material resistant to high temperatures including fires and boiling water. The formal shape follows laboratory aesthetics of glass hardware, implemented via its production at a technical glass workshop.

The vessel can be used as a teapot, coffee pot, carafe, water filter or decanter depending on where the screws of the silicone handle are fused into the glass. The handles can be changed or taken off easily without any tools.

MAURICE ERIC ZACHER – 12 SEM

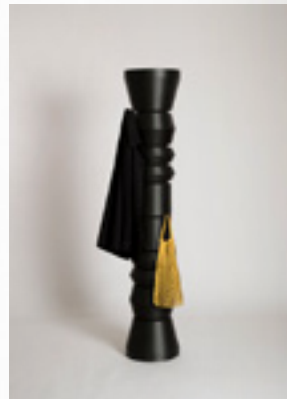
GARTEN



- Interior Gardener -

'Garten' is a light-up exhibition space for plants. The maple wood frames hold several curved wires that can be used to hold common ceramic flowerpots. The LED light brightens the space inside the frames to provide enough light for plants to grow and thrive within a domestic environment. The bottom holds a basin for excess water dripping down from the plants.

COATSTAND



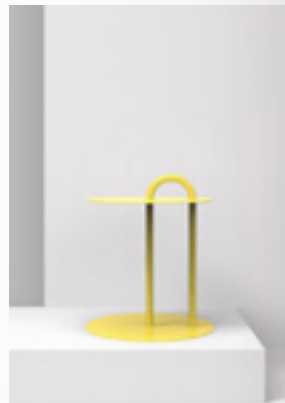
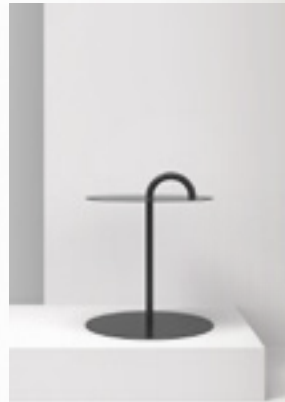
- Woodturner -

'Coatstand' features the aesthetics of rotationally-symmetric wooden objects, suggesting reminiscence of chess figures, pepper mills and balusters.

Other than just acting as an ornament, the tops of the stacked up rotationally molded plastic parts can be equipped with hooks wherever the user might want them. This makes it possible to use the space from the bottom to the top.

MAX MÜLLER – 7 SEM

ABC SIDE TABLE SERIES



- Dental Technician -

The side table series ABC is a combination of ideas I had while working on the 'short briefs'. The time pressure of the briefs motivated me to experiment with numerous different materials and processes. I then decided to focus on these experiments and transform the results into an industrially viable product.

The side tables each consist of a bent tube and two laser cut steel plates. Thanks to the handle, they can be easily carried around and placed both indoor or outdoor.

THE COMB-SHELF



- Beekeeper -

The initial idea of the shelf is that it grows with its contents. It can be attached to the floor, wall or ceiling and have its flat combs be filled to expand. The proportion of the shelf is adjusted to the format of the material to avoid waste.

SMALL SCALE GLULAM TOOL



- Free Project -

Glulam (Glued laminated timber) are thin or small pieces of wood glued together to shape one strong beam. Due to the construction process, the beam can be curved as well as straight.

The 'Small Scale Glulam Tool' unites digital fabrication technology required for the process with craftsmanship.

As a hybrid of these two, the tool itself is entirely digitally planned and featured by a software toolkit which provides a CAD simulation of every project. All the settings of the tool have then to be adjusted by hand, according to the plan provided by the software.

GRANATILES

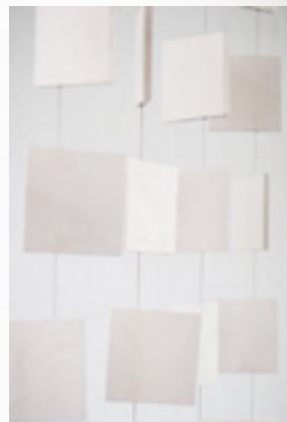
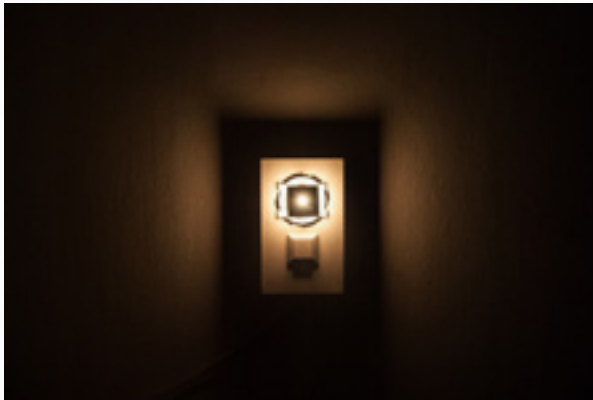


- Free Project -

'Granatiles' is a collection of wall tiles inspired by the shapes of pomegranate seeds.

A unit of seven irregular hexagons can be assembled into a symmetric polygon. Each unit can be individually placed next to the other, rotated by 60° , resulting in a non-repetitive pattern.

SCHATTENSEITE



- Free Project -

'Schattenseite' is a space installation that consists of a frame holding several tiles and a lighting object.

The framework is illuminated by a lamp which casts a shadow on the wall resulting in a temporary mural. Not only is the visibility of the pattern limited to the presence of light, it can also change its appearance by moving the loose tiles into a new position.

CHARLOTTE ENDERS – 7 SEM

CASTAÑUELAS



- Free Project -

The project started out with a general interest in rubber and rubber related material. Eventually I came across Ebonite - a couchuc based hard rubber which feels similar to hardwood. I decided to manually mill castanets out of ebonite, consisting of two concave shells joined together with a string. They are held in the hand and clapped against each other to obtain rhythmic patterns or rattling sounds depending on the clapping frequency.

JACKE WIE HOSE



- Free Project -

This one-piece garment disregards the rules of traditional tailoring and offers multidimensional ways of being worn. The appearance of the garment is strongly influenced by the wearer. Both the body shape of the wearer and the ability to vary the way which it is worn are strong creative elements of the product, demonstrating its unique character.

KATJA LONZECK – 5 SEM

SHORT



BRIEFS

In the course of the project work, a lot of side issues triggered the group's curiosity. We decided to follow these interests and started little excursus which led to several short briefs. It was extremely interesting to take advantage of this side journeys and learn more about influences or find new inspirations. During the two semesters, we discovered Kassel and London through a souvenir task (Kassel and London souvenir brief), we confronted us with history and uncomfortable experiences (bunker brief), we challenged our design skills in a ready-made object (ready-made brief), we created a patterned cube simply through materials (cube brief), we observed our coloured world by means of colour charts (colour brief).

Yael Mer

READY-MADE BRIEF



DARIUS ZALZADEH — 9 SEM

The short brief seemed a good opportunity to quickly create a prototype made out of objects that could be found lying around or found in the trash. The aim was to combine these unrelated things by putting them together to create a new meaning.

The combined objects are an easel, a watering can and some rubber bands.

LONDON SOUVENIR BRIEF

The labyrinth game contains an uncountable amount of balls randomly running through the streets of London vanishing into one of many holes in the road.

The souvenir is dedicated to London's traffic, the restless and often intimidating frenzy that I experienced while on the trip to the city.



CORINNA SEEGER — 12 SEM

BUNKER BRIEF

The remote-controlled toy tank shoots colourful candy instead of plastic ammunition.



KASSEL SOUVENIR BRIEF



The 'Patron Of Roadworks' is a combination of a pylon and Kassel's distinctive monument, the Herkules statue. It refers to the enormous amount of construction zones prior to documenta.

BUNKER BRIEF

A protection from the worst case scenario. This ring and bracelet set seem like everyday objects at first, but the bracelet holds a nozzle that can be opened by pushing the ring, releasing pepper spray to deter threats. Unlike regular pepper spray, this device cannot fall out of your hands and due to the hidden button it is safe from self-inflicted accidents.

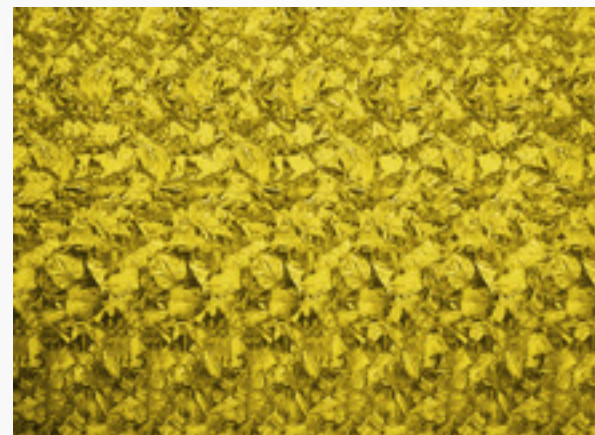
GESINA GLODECK – 7 SEM



BUNKER BRIEF

Words and their codes consisting of different combinations of sounds, letters or words can be a potential hidden place. The combination of these words, written or spoken can either make sense to the recipient or leave him with little, wrong or no information depending on his knowledge of a certain code. The collection of the stereograms reflects the complexity of this circumstance.

ISABELLA ARTADI – 5 SEM



READY-MADE BRIEF

You can think of 'Prush' as a very precious padding brush. It offers its user a self-pleasuring experience.

The brush has no bristles to comb hair, but is instead equipped with fur. This way it could be used as a padding instrument. It is up to the user to decide how to use it though.



JOHANNA HOFFMANN — 9 SEM

READY-MADE BRIEF

Cleaning pail and mop can be an aesthetic nuisance. This one though, can be turned upside down to shine a light.



JULIAN HERDEN — 7 SEM

READY-MADE BRIEF

Different types of clothes are usually designed for certain parts of our body. Trying to transform garments for the top into something worn on the bottom and the other way around while making sure both versions have the right amount of holes for head and arms and legs was the challenge of this experiment. A combination of a jeans and a turtleneck pullover was the outcome of these efforts.

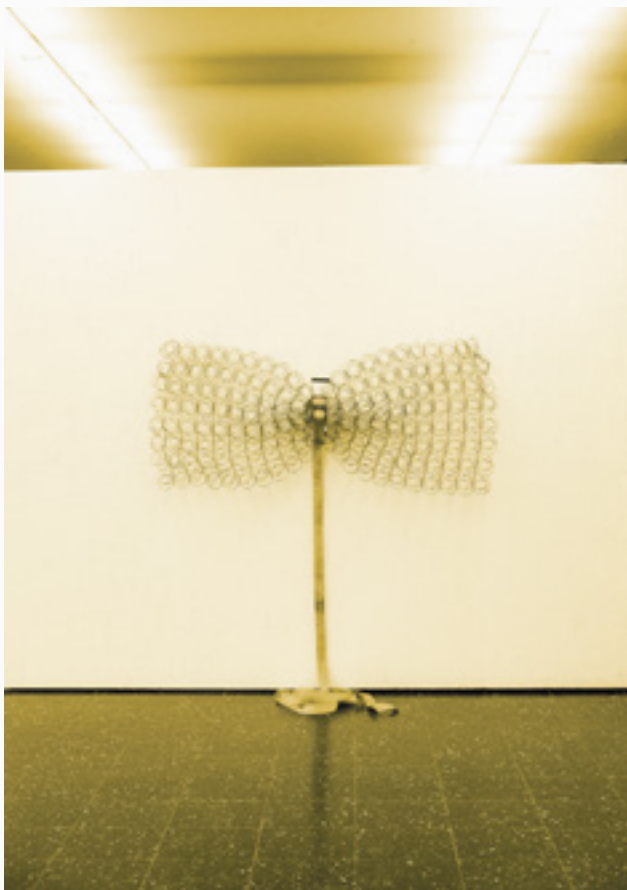


KASSEL SOUVENIR BRIEF



'7000 Oaks' is an art installation by Joseph Beuys that he initiated in 1982 at documenta 7 in Kassel. 7000 oak trees, all accompanied by a basalt stone, were planted in the city over several years. My souvenir is an offshoot of one of these oaks, held in a piece of soil that resembles the shape of a basalt stone. Beuys' work can be extended by planting this little oak somewhere outside.

READY-MADE BRIEF



MAX ESCHENBACH — 9 SEM

This readymade object consists of the core of an old pocketed spring mattress and a tension strap. The inspiration for this object was a childhood memory of having to wear formal clothes like suits and bow ties at a young age. Since the social conventions of dress codes are hard to be understood as a child, they can evoke quite a constricted feeling. Here, this feeling is represented by the spring being constrained by a tension strap.

READY-MADE BRIEF

A 19 foot-long broom.



MAXIMILIAN MÜLLER — 7 SEM

READY-MADE BRIEF

A dishwashing brush, the perfect gift.



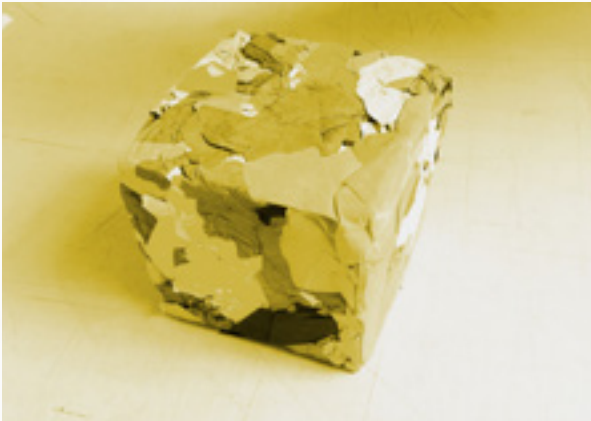
BUNKER BRIEF

This self defense weapon first appears to be an everyday object, but the end of the spoon's handle is carved and meant to be broken into a sharp tip in case of danger.



CUBE BRIEF

The pattern on the surface of the cube is dominated by overlapping pieces of coloured paper that were pressed into a cube mould to obtain its shape. It was intended that the design shows the way the cube was made.



LEA LÜDTKE – 6 SEM

CUBE BRIEF

DIEGO SANZ – 7 SEM



The idea was to take a clean, predefined form and manipulate it in order to get a more creative result. The neat-looking white polystyrene cube was sprayed on with different colours, developing it into something with a rather rough appearance.

CUBE BRIEF

The cube gets its shape through repetition of an element within a certain space. The compressed white plastic cup casts shadows that define the pattern of the cube, giving it a look that is both regular and irregular.



NATALIE WITULLA — 6 SEM

COLOUR BRIEF

THERESA HERRMANN — 6 SEM



The range of colours were all extracted from the photo above. The variety is more complex than our eyes lead us to believe, so it is important to pay close attention and be sensitive when it comes to colours.

COLOURS & PATTERNS



Yael Mer on Summersemester

In my studio we have the tendency to use quite intensively colours and patterns. The usage of colours does not manifest itself as the outer layer of our designs, but we tend to think about it as an integral aspect of our designs. Similarly, we see patterns as a structural significance rather than an additional ornamental element.

I wanted the students to think and look at colours and patterns as the fundamental core of their projects as a way of thinking and making, and to develop first their experimental approach toward the subject and from there, after establishing a good understanding of their colours and patterns technic to continue and to develop it into an object.

In order for each student to develop her/his own methods they explored and experimented different ways that in the end were their unique language,

for instance; sawdust and woodchips colourfully dyed and shaped with organic material into organic shapes, a revolving splashing machine that leaves geometric objects with an evidence of its speed, a flat pack furniture with the colorful infographic instruction silk printed on top of it celebrating the 'dry' beauty of design instruction and a delicate painting technique that exposes fine layers of hidden colours applied into simple stationery collection.

AURA



The 'Aura' series subtly plays with the interaction of colours and textures. The palpable structures on the surface constantly hide and show their range of colours, depending on the angle where they are viewed from.

DANCING LINES



„Dancing lines“ is an interactive room divider. Each of the wooden poles can be manually rotated to change the pattern. The play of light and shadow and interaction with the changeable pattern invite the user to constantly discover something new about the object.



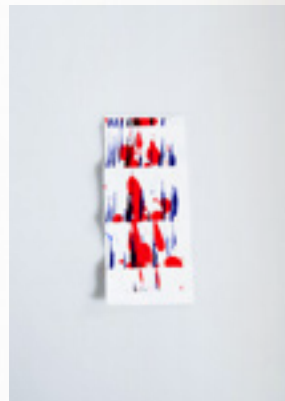
THERESA HERRMANN – 6 SEM

STUHLPROBE



'Stuhlprobe' is a collection of objects hand-kneaded from a dough made out of wood chips, cornstarch and water. The collection consists of a chair, an optical instrument, and several drop-shaped ornaments hanging from the ceiling. The project started out with a rather intuitive approach by just experimenting with the material. The objects themselves seem to reflect both the non-linear way of their creation and the happiness that resulted from this search for meaning and purpose. People are invited to use 'Stuhlprobe' as a relief while being on their own search of meaning, purpose and happiness and take strength from this reflection.

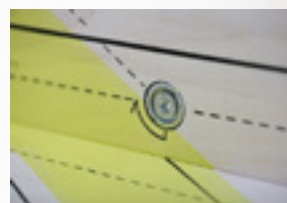
RPM / RPM BOWLS



The basic idea of the ,rpm` (rotational pattern machine) is to create a pattern by splashing paint over rotating objects. Objects such as ceramic bowls can be placed on a rod inside the box and then be brought into rotation by using the attached screwdriver as an engine.

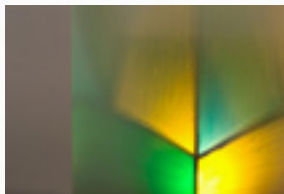
The pattern is influenced by the viscosity of the paint; rotational speed; direction of rotation; and the form of the object itself. Some of the parameters that influence the patterns can be controlled whilst others are left to chance.

INSTRUKT / KONSTRUKT



The 'Instrukt/Konstrukt' series uses a pattern on the surface of the furniture to provide a building instruction on how to self-assemble its individual parts. Everything from the instructing lines, numbers and stripes to the constructive elements and the procedure of assembling is thoughtfully considered by the designer and meant to be a prominent part of the design. The assembly pattern can be applied to different shapes. In this case a chair and a wall shelf confidently display their colourful and decorative building instruction.

NAMATI



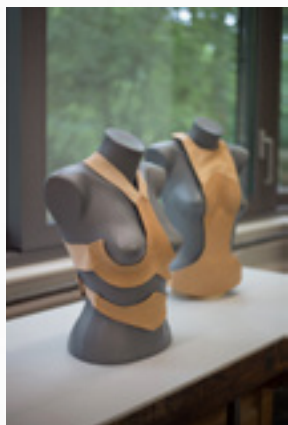
The light that illuminates 'Namati' from the inside casts a geometric Arabic-inspired pattern on its inner walls. When switched on, the colourful shapes shine through the milky glass resulting in a subtle yet eye-catching play of light.

2015 /
16

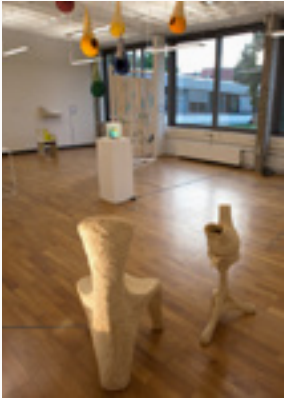


Big Ben, London

RUNDGANG EXHIBITION YELLOW PAGES



RUNDGANG EXHIBITION COLOURS & PATTERNS



LONDON EXCURSION



Visit to Studio Rolf Sachs



Visit to Studio Rolf Sachs



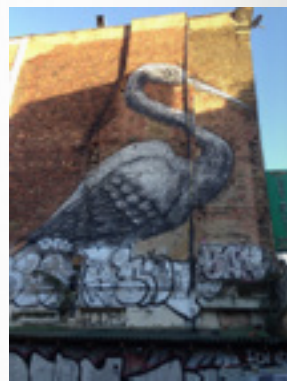
Ai Weiwei exhibition at Royal Academy of Arts



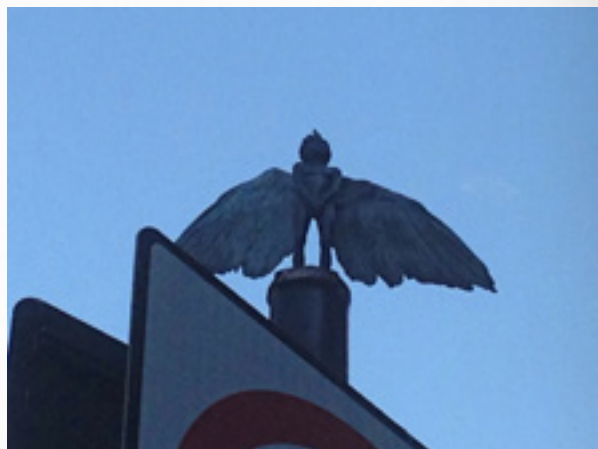
Ai Weiwei exhibition at Royal Academy of Arts



Street Art Tour



Street Art Tour



Street Art Tour



Opendesk studio visit



Visit to the Royal College of Art

This catalogue is a publication of the University of Kassel to conclude the guest professorship of Yael Mer during the academic year 2015 / 2016. It is digitally published and is the second in a series of guest professor-catalogues for the Product Design Course of the School of Art and Design Kassel. At a later date, this digital material will come together and be available as a printed version.

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