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Mudam Luxembourg
Musée d'Art Moderne
Grand-Duc Jean

BEYOND THE NEW

HELLA JONGERIUS & LOUISE SCHOUWENBERG
GUEST: ALEXANDRE HUMBERT
12.10.2018 – 13.01.2019

PRESS KIT

Press release (19.10.2018)

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From October 12, 2018 to January 13, 2019

Within the framework of: Design City LX Festival 2018

Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean has invited Hella Jongerius and Louise Schouwenberg from the Netherlands to present the installation *Beyond the New* which questions the discrepancy between our experience of design in daily life and the way in which we apprehend the same objects in a museum context. Originally produced in 2017 for Die Neue Sammlung - The Design Museum in Munich, the exhibition will be housed in the West Gallery on level -1.

The manifesto *Beyond the New - A Search for Ideas in Design*, presented by designer Hella Jongerius and design theorist Louise Schouwenberg in 2015 at the Salone del Mobile design fair in Milan, provocatively raises fundamental questions about Design as: the market continually requires designers to produce eye-catching and well-designed forms of design so how does one spot real innovation that drives true cultural innovation?

When invited to create an in situ installation for Die Neue Sammlung - The Design Museum, they decided to create an extension of the 2015 manifesto. "On the one hand, the museum is the ideal place to appreciate the many cultural meanings that design harbours. Visitors can decide which pieces represent cultural innovation at the time of their design, and which have been able to maintain that significance ever since. On the other hand, one wonders if a museum is able to reveal the discrepancy between design as a cultural artefact and design of a commercial product?" Numerous installations invite visitors to experience how different contexts influence our apprehension of functional things.

For the occasion, Mudam Luxembourg in consultation with the two curators of the exhibition *Beyond the New*, has commissioned the designer Alexandre Humbert to create a film, the starting point of which was a piece in the museum's collection by the Finnish architect and designer Alvar Aalto: *Sanatorium Paimio (One Bedroom Furniture)* (1931-1933). The film *The Door* completes the exhibition and offers a re-reading of archives, subject matter and function by providing a path towards holistic creation whereby objects communicate values to users.



PUBLICATION

BEYOND THE NEW. ON THE AGENCY OF THINGS

The publication *Beyond the New. On the Agency of Things*, by Louise Schouwenberg and Hella Jongerius includes a philosophical essay on the difference between things and objects as well as a hypothetical conversation between Louise Schouwenberg, Hella Jongerius and three voices from design history: Anni Albers, Walter Gropius and Johannes Itten. Graphics by Irma Boom; published by Die Neue Sammlung / Koenig Books Ltd.

Available at Mudam Boutique

40 €

ASSOCIATED PROGRAMME

WORKSHOPS



FORMIDA@MUDAM

Presentation of objects by Centre Formida, a creative recycling centre, and workshops for children to discover sustainable development:

WORKSHOP MUDAMINI: NEW- WITH STEVE GERGES

15.11.2018, 2.30-5pm (9-12 years old)

22.11.2018, 2.30-5pm (6-8 years old)

Audio-visual experiments

Booking: mudam.lu/minibooking, t +352 45 37 85 531

8 €/ person



WORKSHOP ARTFREAK: DRAW IN 3D

28.10.2018, 2-5pm (aged 13 and above)

Three dimensional drawing of objects

Booking: artfreak@mudam.lu, t +352 45 37 85 531

12 €/ person

TOURS

REGULAR GUIDED TOURS

LU – Saturday, 11am

DE – Saturday and Sunday, 3pm

FR – Saturday and Sunday, 4pm

EN – Wednesday, 7pm and Sunday, 11am

Guided tours of the current exhibitions. For individual visitors and small groups (max. 5 people). Free of charge, except for the entrance fee. Duration: 45 min.

No booking required. Information: visites@mudam.lu; t. 453785 531



FAMILY TOURS

07.10 & 16.12.2018, 10am-11am, FR

14.10 & 09.12.2018, 10am-11am, DE

18.11 & 30.12.2018, 10am-11am, LU

25.11 & 23.12.2018, 10am-11am, EN

Free guided family tours of the current exhibitions.

For 6 to 12 years old. Free for children, normal entrance fee for adults.

Booking required: visites@mudam.lu; t +352 45 37 85 531



Q&A

WITH HELLA JONGERIUS AND LOUISE SCHOUWENBERG

For your exhibition 'Beyond the New' at Die Neue Sammlung – The Design Museum, that opened in 2017, you took look at the museum's collection.

HJ: A museum's archive is the backbone of our métier and is integral to the society in which we live. The designer is challenged to strike a careful balance between the known (the archives) and the unknown. Capturing the spirit of the times is important in design, and so is giving that spirit a little push in the right direction – in accordance with the standards you uphold as a designer – and then convincing a company to put it into production. We designers have a responsibility to make industry holistic again – to go beyond innovation for innovation's sake.

LS: At the invitation of die Neue Sammlung, we have contemplated how we might make an exhibition that would reflect on the museum's rich archive of design. In our view, we could only answer this question if we first explored what design is, both in the museum, where objects deserve attention, and outside the museum, where they act as mediators between people and the world we live in. 'Beyond the New' is an installation-based show that takes a deeper look at the meaning and agency of designs and how these can be grasped within the context of a museum, where they are robbed of their use value.

Can you explain the installation for us?

LS: In 2015 we wrote a manifesto, and used bullets to sum up our criticism of the field and our suggestions for improvement. In 2016, at the request of the Serpentine Gallery and La Rinascente department store in Milan, we created a follow-up with 'A Search Behind Appearances.' This time we focussed on the potential of design, instead of the critique of the current state of affairs. The installation testified of the pleasure, the playfulness, and it testified of the multilayeredness in design, which the spectator can 'read' once he knows the criteria for doing so. The exhibition 'Beyond the New' presents 4 of the 6 original installations of 'A Search Behind Appearances.' And apart from them we have created the installation 'Upside Down – Reading the Archive'.

HJ: This new installation most of all revealed something about the gap between the experience of functional things in everyday life and the experience of things within the context of a museum. The cabinets from the museum archive were placed with their backs on the floor and the textile panels, with woven sentences and questions, offer clues for reading their 'life' and 'agency'.

At the MUDAM, the presentation will be slightly different (excluding the collection of cabinets lying horizontally, and including the work of Alexander Humbert); is there anything you'd like to add about how you've approached this exhibition differently?

LS: The main difference, as you write: At the Pinakothek der Moderne cabinets from the museum's collection were lying on the floor, upside down, stressing the fact that within the context of a museum they are robbed of their functionality. The audience can only intuit their usual performance and the life they would have in the daily contexts of users. The fabrics on the wall provoked questions and statements on how to 'read' the objects within a museum context, where they have transformed from 'things' (among other functional things) into isolated 'objects' to be appreciated and analysed. The woven questions and statements don't refer specifically to these particular cabinets, but they refer to the general notion of functional collection pieces within a museum archive, designs within the context of a museum exhibition.

HJ: In the MUDAM, the same fabrics are hanging on the wall and here the questions and statements refer to the collection items of the MUDAM. These items are hidden in the archives and only one of them has more presence in the exhibition, but this time in a totally different way than the cupboards in the Pinakothek.

LS: To make a next step with the exhibition, and create a new perspective on the same themes we address with all the individual installations of *A Search Behind Appearances* and the fabrics with questions and statements, we've decided to include film as a medium to look at things. We have asked filmmaker Alexandre Humbert to choose a piece from MUDAM's collection, in close consultation with us. Together we decided to take the installation *Sanatorium Paimio- Mobilier d'une Chambre*, designed by Alvar and Aino Aalto in the 1930s, as this is such a powerful and meaningful installation. It has many references to the society of that time and many references to the roles designers can play when confronted with heavy problems such as tuberculosis. Can design alleviate the needs of patients? Can design turn things better? And can spectators in a museum, so many years later at a different spot in the world, intuit the roles these items once played in real life?

LS: Of the real installation, only one lamp is present in the exhibition, but Alexandre's film is shown within a frame that is based on the proportions of the original door and within the film all individual items of *Sanatorium Paimio- Mobilier d'une Chambre* are viewed in different intensities, corresponding to the presumed mental conditions of the patients who lived for short while between the pieces.

HJ: In the Pinakothek the upside down cupboards evoked questions on their status and the life they would have led within a functional context. In the MUDAM the installation of the Aalto's comes to life via an imaginative film. The fabrics with woven words add to both installations food for thought for the spectators.

So the textile panels reference the critical aspects of your 2015 manifest. Why did you choose textile as a medium?

HJ: If we would have placed the sentences on the wall, their messages would have appeared as truths and final answers. By weaving them into fabrics we show something of the slow and gradual, searching process, which characterizes how we continue to search for answers.

LS: The tentative questions and statements woven into the fabrics represent our search for the essence of design. The viewer's eyes kind of follow the yarns' movements. The viewer can become aware of the time lapse needed to search for answers, and can also become aware that answers can change in the course of the thinking process, take different directions, other outcomes.

HJ: Another thing is the variation of voices. The weavings are all based on the same ground structure but by cutting the threads in different ways, different outcomes unfold.

And there is an accompanying publication to go along with the exhibition

LS: Indeed, *'Beyond the New. On the Agency of Things'* is about objects and things and the intriguing relationship between the two. We've investigated on a philosophical level what design means within the various contexts in which designers operate. And we've searched for examples from art and design. Art installations often use functional objects to contextualize something or to say something about human interactions with the world. In those installations one can detect much truth about the agency of things, which can then be used within the design process.

HJ: The exhibition is a parallel narrative, dealing with the same topics as the book, but this time with a focus on visual expression.

LS: Included in the book is also a hypothetical conversation with some designers from the past, Walter Gropius, Anni Albers and Johannes Itten.

HJ: To include the fictive voices of these masters from the past, enabled us to speak about the original ideals in design, and how things have changed ever since. Moreover it enabled an intensive talk about my engagement with colour research, the field Johannes Itten was an expert in, and textile research, in which Anni Albers excelled. These people are important predecessors of mine, from whom I still draw much inspiration.

What are your main goals with this exhibition?

LS: Design is closely interwoven with people's daily lives and with society as a whole. That's why a design exhibition doesn't display solely objects, but also constructed and idealized realities – idealized lifestyles.

HJ: We hope to reach a larger audience and open their eyes for the multilayeredness of the objects they may take for granted in daily life. Make them look at things in a different way and ask questions about the reasons for collecting these objects in the first place. What was innovative about them when they were designed and chosen to become part of the collection of the museum?

This isn't your first collaboration, is it?

LS: We met in 1997, at the EKWC, the European Ceramics Workplace. I was still a sculptor at that time, while studying philosophy, and Hella had worked some time after graduating from Design Academy Eindhoven. We became friends and we soon discovered an easiness in discussing our work.

HJ: It seemed like a natural process that Louise started to write on my work.

LS: We started out by saying: 'Hella makes the things, Louise finds the words to describe them.' But gradually it became clear that it was much more. Our intensive talks on design had an influence on both of our practices, on Hella's design practice and on my writing and teaching practice. In 2015 we decided to create a Manifesto that would carry both our names. After the Manifesto 'A Search Behind Appearances' (2016) ensued, and now, in 2017, 'Beyond the New'. They are related and have evolved after each other.

Could you describe how your two individual approaches, the theoretical versus the practical, come together?

LS: For the design process it's important to, every now and then, stand still and analyse what you've been doing, draw conclusions, then make new steps. For the writing and teaching it's paramount to be aware of how ideas work out in the design process. Thinking should never take place within the head alone, but must be tested time and again by the intuitive insights of practitioners. Our minds tend to stay within the circumference of the familiar, of existing conventions. To break out of this circle and gain new insights, we need an approach that, by its very nature, brings surprises and errors, which then ask for new answers.

HJ: The experimental making process is an especially good way of surprising yourself. It's serendipity at work. In a hands-on process you are always confronted with unexpected results. When that happens you have to rely on your instincts.

LS: But there's something else. Thinking hands aren't enough by themselves for a good analysis of the position you want your work to have in the wider context. Hannah Arendt wrote about reflection as a temporary withdrawal from the world. I think the best creative process is an alternation of intuitive thinking – with your hands – with profound reflection.

HJ: I have learned a lot about those two ways of thinking by talking with Louise about the wider context of my designs: the intellectual oxygen, the misfits, the imagination... I'm often lost for words. My quest is for the wider story that lies hidden in my experiments. Louise stimulates my brain!

LS: And Hella feeds my brain! She has always provided a reality check for my broodings.

How important is research in this reflective process that the two of you engage in?

HJ: As a designer, I feel a responsibility to act like a filter between industry and consumers. That's why it is important for me to investigate for instance the contemporary potential of textiles and colours. That research consists of the hands-on working and experimenting within my studio, but it also consists of analysing what comes out of these experiments and analysing what I see around me in the world. I want to get a better grip on the larger picture, the implications of my designs, the larger story in which design becomes meaningful. Research on all levels provides the necessary body of knowledge and it provides the oxygen to know how to continue a process.

LS: As a theorist and as a lecturer and head of the master program Contextual Design at Design Academy Eindhoven I need to constantly renew my knowledge and turn my own thinking upside down. Question the given, question what seemed like a truth yesterday, then try adventurous leaps into the future. Going hind and forth between a theoretical research, critical observations and learning from practitioners is paramount.

So would you both say that through this collaboration you have found a workable way of grasping the manifold meanings of design?

LS: So far our collaboration has absolutely been very fruitful to understand the field and to understand new developments. We trust each other's opinions and dare to be bold with each other if we don't agree. We're good in demanding from each other good arguments to back up our stories and visions. That's important. We're not simply having civilized talks, we often have heated debates from which both of us learn.

HJ: Our talks have helped to get a better understanding of how design relates to people and the contexts in which they operate. Designs are foremost the things we surround ourselves with in daily life, where we often barely notice them. Apart from the roles they play in everyday life, design also operates in other areas. It has a strong link to the market, which dictates foremost novelty for the sake of novelty.

LS: As a result the market produces stylistic variations, which scream for attention, but are hardly ever testimonies of true cultural innovation. Consumerism has distracted us from what is perhaps the most essential aspect of design: the subtle balancing act between presence and absence.

HJ: And then there's the reality of design being a cultural artefact, of which museum archives testify. A museum contains our cultural legacy. The collected things were considered by the experts as innovative and thus worth the while to keep them for the next generations.

LS: In real life, things are both present and absent. In a museum, they are emphatically present, not as the mediators that they are in real life but as phenomena to be inspected and studied, whereas a commercial context only calls attention to the visual appeal of a design. A museum presentation might clarify something of the importance of context in how we experience things, either in real life, within a commercial fair or put on a pedestal in the white cube space of the museum.

PRESS IMAGES



Hella Jongerius and Louise Schouwenberg
A Search Behind Appearances – ¿how to entertain a vivid dialogue with the archive?, 2016
© Photo: Labadie Van Tour



Top:

Hella Jongerius and
Louise Schouwenberg
*A Search Behind Appearances –
¿why design for a world of plenty?, 2016*
© Photo: Labadie Van Tour

Bottom:

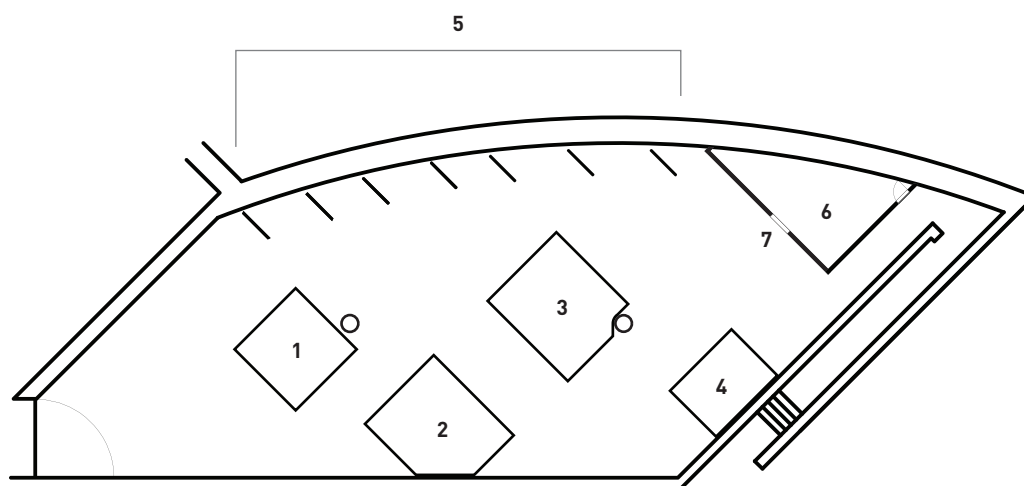
Hella Jongerius and
Louise Schouwenberg
*A Search Behind Appearances –
innovation requires serendipity!, 2016*
© Photo: Labadie Van Tour



EXHIBITED WORKS

LEVEL -1, WEST GALLERY

- 1 - Hella Jongerius and Louise Schouwenberg
A Search Behind Appearances – ¿why design for a world of plenty?, 2016
- 2 - Hella Jongerius and Louise Schouwenberg
A Search Behind Appearances – ¿has the full potential of design been exploited?, 2016
- 3 - Hella Jongerius and Louise Schouwenberg
A Search Behind Appearances – ¿innovation requires serendipity!, 2016
- 4 - Hella Jongerius and Louise Schouwenberg
A Search Behind Appearances – ¿how to entertain a vivid dialogue with the archive?, 2016
- 5 - Hella Jongerius and Louise Schouwenberg
Reading the Archive, 2017
- 6 - Alexandre Humbert
The Door, 2018
4' 52"
Director of Photography: Pierre-Alexandre Gaudru
Music Composer: Arnaud Pujol
Commission Mudam Luxembourg
Video featuring Alvar and Aino Aalto, *Sanatorium Paimio (bedroom furniture)*, 1931-1933,
from Collection Mudam Luxembourg
- 7 - Alvar and Aino Aalto
Wall lamp from *Sanatorium Paimio (bedroom furniture)*, 1931-1933
Collection Mudam Luxembourg
Acquisition 2002



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HELLA JONGERIUS & LOUISE SCHOUWENBERG

GUEST: ALEXANDRE HUMBERT

From October 12, 2018 to January 13, 2019

Curators: Hella Jongerius, Louise Schouwenberg

Within the framework of: Design City LX Festival 2018

With the support of: Bilia-Emond



Bilia-Emond

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

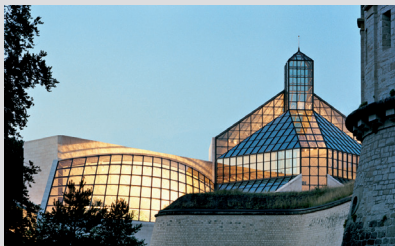
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MUDAM LUXEMBOURG

Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean opened in 2006 in a purpose-built building designed by the renowned Sino-American architect Ieoh Ming Pei and located in the Park Dräi Eechelen, overlooking the historic city of Luxembourg. Through its collection, exhibitions, programmes and partnerships, Mudam Luxembourg aims to advance its mission to present the most relevant art of our times.

MUDAM LUXEMBOURG – MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE GRAND-DUC JEAN

thanks all the donors and the sponsors, and particularly



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