

WOULDN'T IT BE NICE...

WISHFUL THINKING IN ART AND DESIGN

INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

Contemporary culture is witnessing one of the most significant shifts of recent times. The old dividing lines between artists and designers appear to be dissolving into one another. Indeed the breadth and range of investigation and inspiration they share is possibly the widest to date. The exhibition 'Wouldn't it be nice...' hopes to present a series of projects emerging from these lines of dissolution, which reflect the current spirit of cultural production internationally.

The commonalities between artists and designers are partly due to the reconsideration by designers of the modern tradition and its utopian hopes for universal, simple and mechanistic solutions. Since then there has been the realization that form can never be neutral. Pioneering design historians such as Reyner Banham and later Dick Hebdige have pointed out that even those most pared down and simple of modernist forms are suffused with cultural meaning. In turn, there has been a concomitant recognition that the consumer / user is a complex cultural, social, political and economic being, and that his or her needs are not purely mechanistic. This represented a loss of faith with the notion of pure function. Indeed, as early as the 1950s Jan Tschichold recognized that the rules he established in his earlier book 'The New Typography' intended to render typography perfectly functional, smacked of fascist authoritarianism. Rather than leading designers to despair, this questioning of the modernist design orthodoxies has rendered them more ambitious.

Recognising that form carries meaning, many designers (working on graphics, fashion and products) have chosen to investigate the messages they create. This shift of parameters has enabled designers to think in terms of a concept. Partly this is related to self-expression, but more importantly it concerns taking responsibility for the broader ramifications of design. The works of the best of today's designers displays self-awareness and, at times, political intent. Above all designers have developed a keen sense of critique, and work within what is best described as a culture of ideas.

If historically artists from Marcel Duchamp and Andy Warhol to Jeff Koons and Heim Steinbach questioned the threshold between art and the everyday, between the work of art and the quotidian object, today's artists are going one step further. The work of this new generation reflects, on the one hand, a pop sentiment of the kind expressed by Warhol when he said: 'the world fascinates me. It's so nice, whatever it is...I accept things. I'm just watching, observing the world'. In line with this, artists today demonstrate a greater interest in other disciplines, such as design per se and how it has penetrated our popular- and our visual culture. Added to this there is also a keen desire to explore the 'situational' and 'relational' aspects of the object, installation and environment making. Such works rely heavily on the designed object and require the direct participation of the public, be it in such seemingly banal tasks as eating, playing pool or learning to make paper flowers; or in resolving quite serious issues such as prostitution and the lack of fuel in African villages.

In this moment of cultural fluidity so-called artistic and design strategies are being explored by each other's counterparts. To further compound matters some practitioners work in collaboration with each other's disciplines, and others simply do not wish to be categorized in any one camp. Over and above any questions of definition, what is shared by these creators is an interest in questioning life, by exploring and experimenting with contemporary culture at all levels.

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WISHFUL THINKING IN ART AND DESIGN

October 26 – December 16 2007

An exhibition part of the AC*DC (Art Contemporain/Design Contemporain) project



A project in collaboration with **Geneva University of Art and Design**
A co-production with the Museum of Design Zurich and the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste.

“Wouldn't It Be Nice... Wishful Thinking in Art and Design” is a major exhibition which addresses the application of wishful thinking in art and design today. It explores the thinking processes and working methods, that fall into the gap between various attitudes, forms of behaviour and creative practices. On the one hand, the dichotomy between activism and acceptance, as well as social concern and social control. On the other hand, the juxtaposition between grand plans and harsh realities, between the benign and the confrontational.

This project conceived by design historian and art historian Emily King and director of the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Katya García-Antón in collaboration with Christian Brändle, Director of the Museum of Design Zurich, will present art and design alongside one another, undifferentiated. As the former barriers between artists and designers – but also graphic designers, stylists and architects – has become uncertain, the breadth and range of investigation and inspiration they share is possibly the widest to date. The exhibition hopes to present a series of projects emerging from these lines of dissolution, which reflect the current spirit of cultural production internationally.

A number of these projects will be specially commissioned. Furthermore some of these will have a direct pertinence to the infrastructure of the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève. Among the creators invited to participate : Dexter Sinister (UK/US), Jurgen Bey (NL), Bless (F-D), Dunne&Raby and Michael Anastassiades (UK), Alicia Framis (ES), Martino Gamper (IT/UK), Ryan Gander (UK), Martí Guixé (ES), Tobias Rehberger (D) and Superflex (DK).

A publication will be created on the occasion in collaboration with the London-based design group Graphic Thought Facility.



Sociedad Estatal
para la Acción
Cultural Exterior



ARTISTS

DEXTER SINISTER

Dexter Sinister is the compound name of David Reinfurt and Stuart Bailey. Dexter Sinister recently established a workshop in the basement at 38, Ludlow Street, on the Lower East Side in New York City. The workshop is intended to model a 'Just-In-Time' economy of print production, running counter to the contemporary assembly-line realities of large-scale publishing. This involves avoiding waste by working on-demand, utilizing local cheap machinery, considering alternate distribution strategies, and collapsing distinctions of editing, design, production and distribution into one efficient activity.

In 2000, Stuart Bailey co-founded the arts journal Dot Dot Dot with Peter Bilak. Dexter Sinister will be working on a new issue of this fanzine/journal on the occasion of the exhibition, as observers of the AC*DC project in its entirety and of the different events punctuating it.

Stuart Bailey made a name for himself in the Netherlands for his contributions to art and design as a graphic designer, critic and editor. On an international level, he is better known for the graphics and co-editing with Peter Bilak of Dot Dot Dot, a biannual publication covering the fields of art, music, design, architecture, literature and language. Stuart Bailey will be working on a new issue of this fanzine /journal created in 2000 on the occasion of the exhibition, as observer of the AC DC project in its entirety and of the different events punctuating it.



Dot Dot Dot # 11 Cover
April 2006



Dot Dot Dot # 12 cover
January 2007

JÜRGEN BEY

The designer Jurgen Bey is reputed for his rich and innovative creations and for his involvement in design research and teaching. He became known in the 1990's in the context of the Dutch phenomenon known as Droog Design, before founding the Studio Jurgen Bey whose philosophy is "to consider urban and architectural construction as indissolubly linked to the design of products". For "Wouldn't it be nice ... Wishful thinking in art and design" Jurgen Bey will present several maquettes. Working on a reduced scale enables him to remain on the ideas level, free from the logistical restraints encountered when making a full-size model. In his own words, "if one could work in a model world, reality would never bore us".



Exhibition views « Ontwerpers maken ruimte » (2006)

BLESS

Bless is both an evolutive, collaborative project and a brand, created in 1995 by Desirée Heiss and Ines Kaag, based respectively in Paris and Berlin. Hailed as two of the most creative fashion designers of their generation, they refuse to be pigeonholed, moving easily from fashion to beauty, from interiors to art exhibitions, and working with other brands. Their production, situated between art object and design, functional object and fashion, is always unique and marked by the adaptation of unexpected elements put to use in a totally new way. The 30 collections produced up to the present day show not only a fascination for recycling materials, subverting customary functions and deconstruction, but also an interest in textiles and traditional handicrafts.



Fur Hammock (2004)



Shop 6 - Raw Fitting, Berlin, Germany (2000)

DUNNE + RABY & MICHAEL ANASTASSIADES

Dunne & Raby is a collaborative duo formed in 1992 by the industrial designer Anthony Dunne and the architect Fiona Raby. They have developed an original line of research aiming to create prototypes of “hypothetical objects” which question the beliefs and usages of the contemporary consumer society. They explore in particular the social, psychological and aesthetic dimensions of everyday life in relation to electronic technologies, both through commercial projects and academic work, to stimulate debate. Since 2003, they have developed a project in collaboration with Michael Anastassiades entitled “Designs for Fragile Personalities in Anxious Times” which offers an alternative domestic landscape reflecting our fears in a rational way.



Hide Away Furniture Type 01 (2005)
in collaboration with Michael Anastassiades



Priscila Huggable Atomic Mushroom, from the Designs for Fragile Personalities in Anxious Times Project (2004), in collaboration with Michael Anastassiades

ALICIA FRAMIS

Alicia Framis combines the cultures of northern and southern Europe in projects revealing the architectonic and social components of the contemporary city. For example her work on the “Atopic Villa” deals particularly with solitude and coexistence, differences and coincidences in a constructive way, searching for a new space and social order enriched by the diversity of the individuals and situations produced by the urban culture. Another multiform project entitled Anti-dog is a commentary on the increasing aggression observable in large cities, and endured particularly by women in and out of the home. The couture line of clothing she has created aims to protect them in an illusory way : the clothes are inspired by designs of famous couturiers but are tailored in a material used by dog-handlers for their own safety.



China Five Stars (2007)



China Five Stars (2007)



China Five Stars (2007)

MARTINO GAMPER

Martino Gamper focuses on creating situations that include materials, techniques, individuals and spaces, and which favour meetings and discussion. His interest in the psycho-social aspects of furniture is translated especially by a love of corners and un-wanted objects which he uses to create a disparate family of objects, site-specific installations and special events. For “Wouldn't it be nice ...”, Martino Gamper will set up a workshop in the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, to produce design objects in response to the real needs of employees and visitors. The workshop will be open for a month before the exhibition and during its first week, and the objects created will be displayed for the remainder of the exhibition before starting a new functional life within the Centre.



100 chairs in 100 days project



Exhibition To Let (2006)



Amalgam Double Chair (2003)



Sit together bench



Booksnake Shelf (2002)



Berlino Bench (2006)
(avec Rainer Spehl)

RYAN GANDER

Ryan Gander was born in 1976 in Chester. He studied in Manchester, then in Maastricht and in Amsterdam. The conceptual rigor and the visual simplicity that he uses permit him to stimulate the narrative potential of each of us by giving us enigmatic clues to stories that are sometimes fictive, sometimes true. Thanks to his childlike imagination, the artist tries to rehabilitate the utopian hopes of “lost” modernist projects. As such, he reconsiders urban planning, World Fairs or Bauhaus design. Between the installations, publicity, music, discourse and literature his work incites dialogue; makes the familiar strange, and vice versa. He has recently exhibited at The Artists Space of New York, the Turin Triennale in the Castello di Rivoli, at the Laboratoires d’Aubervilliers, as well as in the context of the Tate Triennial 2006: “New British Art is at Tate Britain”, London.



Bauhaus revisited (2003)



Rietveld Reconstruction- Rose, Aged 8 (2005)

MARTI GUIXÉ

Marti Guixé has called himself an ex-designer since 2001, as design for him means abdicating to the economy ; he aims instead to subject the market to laws which he makes and breaks himself, in a continual search for new product systems and proposals capable of opening up the user's field of experience. Attempting to be and to think in a contemporary way, he works notably on bringing design into the realm of the living, hybridizing such different areas as anthropology, typography, gastronomy and performance.



Museum Guixé



Hibye (2001)



Plant-me pets (2004)

TOBIAS REHBERGER

Tobias Rehberger considers his art as a form of action involving spaces and the individuals which inhabit them. His work uses the translation, transposition and interpretation of references from the worlds of art, architecture, design and everyday life as tools to examine the relationship between sculpture and communal living, to create a utopia illustrating his desires and representations.



Olafur Eliasson



Sharon Lockardt



Thaddeus Strode



Mother 81% (2002)

SUPERFLEX

The Superflex collective, Björnsterne Christiansen, Jacob Fenger and Rasmus Nielsen have developed projects linked to economic forces, democratic production conditions and self-organization. Their study of alternative energy production methods in Brazil, Europe and Thailand has enabled them to update and question the existing economic structures using what they define as tools. These theoretical, economic and aesthetic proposals invite people to participate actively in the development of experimental models, whose realizations are multiple and whose trans-formations are encouraged by use and by the improve-ments effected by both users and experts. The Bio-gas project (1997), for example, required the help of engineers to refine a simple, economical and safe energy system through the productive use of a natural biological process : bio-gas ; the aim being to bring to certain populations the mass production of a cheap and easily-transportable device for treating bio-gas.



Free Beer Kit (version 3.0) (2005)



Biogas project, Arken, Museum of Modern Art, 1997



Biogas lamp, Chaing Mai, Thailand 2002

GRAPHIC THOUGHT FACILITY

Graphic Thought Facility is graphic design consultancy working for public and private clients on national and international projects.

They produce both print and three-dimensional graphics for publishing, marketing, press, exhibition, events, product development and brand applications.

Graphic Thought Facility was set up in London in 1990 and its directors are Paul Neale, Andy Stevens and Huw Morgan.



Identity, signage and Designer of the Year exhibitions graphics - Design Museum

BIOGRAPHIES

Stuart Bailey UK/USA

Graphiste, vit et travaille à New York et Los Angeles. Diplômé de l'University of Reading et de Hogeschool voor de kunsten Arnhem (Pays-Bas), enseignant à la Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam.

Expositions récentes : Love/Hate list, De Appel gallery 2002 | Perl Grey NAI gallery, Rotterdam museum night, 2003 | Tourette's II W139 gallery, Amsterdam, 2003 | ZenDada music lecture Cubitt gallery, London, 2004 | The Boys' Room Marres, Maastricht, 2005

www.dextersinister.org

Jürgen Bey, NL

Designer, vit et travaille à Rotterdam. Diplômé de la Design Academy, Eindhoven.

Expositions récentes : Contrasts and Contradictions. Chapter 1 : CROSSOVERS - Beyond Art & Design, Contrasts Gallery, Shanghai, 2006 | D-day le design aujourd'hui, Centre Pompidou, 2005 | Nu Binnen, NAI Dutch Architecture Institute, Rotterdam, 2005 | Simply Droog 10+1, Mudac, Lausanne, 2005.

Bibliographie (sélection) : D-day le design aujourd'hui, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2005 | Bright Minds, Beautiful Ideas Parallel Thoughts In Different Times : Bruno Munari, Charles & Ray Eames, Marti Guixe And Jurgen Bey, Ed Annink and Ineke Schwartz, 2004 | Simply Droog, 10 + 1 Years of Creating Innovation and Discussion, Droog, Amsterdam, 2004.

www.jurgenbey.nl

Bless D/F

Desiree Heiss, 1971 (AT) Designer, créatrice de mode. Vit et travaille à Paris. Diplômée de l'University des arts appliqués de Vienne

Ines Kaag, 1970 (D). Designer, créatrice de mode. Vit et travaille à Berlin. Diplômée de l'Université des arts et du design d'Hanovre. Vienne.

Expositions récentes : BLESS N°00 - N°29 Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 2006 | Fashionation, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 2005 | MODE, Hillside terrace, Tokyo, 2005 | Manifesta 4, European Biennial of Contemporary Art 2002 | Elysian Fields Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2000 | ZAC 99 Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris 1999.

Bibliographie (sélection) : Bless. Celebrating 10 years of Themelessness, Sternberg Press, 2006.

www.bless-service.de

Anthony Dunne

(Dunne&Raby), UK

Designer et chercheur en design. Vit et travaille à Londres. Directeur du département Design Interactions au Royal College de Londres. Partenaire de Fiona Raby formant le groupe Dunne & Raby.

Expositions récentes : D. Day, Le design Aujourd'hui, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2005 | Circus of the Fantastic, Summer Fete, Victoria & Albert Museum, Londres, 2003 | Weeds, Aliens and Other Stories (with Michael Anastassiades), Victoria & Albert Museum, Londres, 2003

Compass Table (v2), Tropotypes, Milan Furniture Fair, Milan, 2002 | Comfort Zone, Hortus Conclusus, Witte de With, Rotterdam, 2001 | Placebo, 20c Study Gallery, Victoria & Albert Museum, Londres, 2001 | Park Interactives, La Ville, le Jardin, la Memoire, Academie de France, Villa Médicis, Rome, 2000 | This appliance must be earthed, Royal College of Art, Londres, 1999.

Bibliographie (sélection) : D. Day, Le design Aujourd'hui, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2005 | Design Noir : The secret Life of Electronic Objects, Birkhäuser, Londres, 2001 | Project #26765 - Flirt : Flexible Information and Recreation for Mobile Users, RCACRD Research, Londres, 2000 | Hertzian Tales : Electronic Products, Aesthetic Experience and Critical Design, RCA CRD Research, Londres, 1999.

www.dunneandraby.co.uk

Alicia Framis, E

Artiste, vit et travaille à Barcelone.

Expositions récentes : Alicia Framis, Pyo Gallery, Seoul, 2007 | CHINA ***** , Zenda Museum, Shanghai, 2007 | After the News, BankART1929, Yokohama, 2007 | Big City Lab, Art Forum Berlin, 2007 | Shanghai Duolun, Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai, 2006 | Alicia Framis, Secret Strike, Mireille Mosler Ltd, New York, 2006 | Partages, Capc, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, 2006 | Dresscode, Historisches und Voelkerkundemuseum, St. Gallen, 2006 | Secret Strike, Tate Modern et Art Unlimited, Art 38 Basel, 2006 | Anti_dog, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2002 et Musée d'Art contemporain de Barcelone, 2000 | The dreamkeeper, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1999.

Bibliographie (sélection) : Alicia Framis, New ways of making demonstrations 2004 | Alicia Framis, Artimo, Amsterdam, 2003.

Ryan Gander, UK

Artiste, Vit et travaille à Londres, Diplômé de la Jan van Eyck Akademie, Maastricht et de la Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, Amsterdam // Expositions récentes : *Short cut through the trees* Mumok Vienne 2007 // *The last work* Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam 2007 // *Home Sweet Home Module 1* CCC Tour 2006 // *Globos Sonda* Musac - Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León 2005 // Tate Triennial 2006 - New British Art Londres // Publications récentes : *In a Language You Don't Understand*, i3 Publications, 2002

Graphic Thought Facility, GB

Agence de consultants en graphisme basée à Londres.

Projets récents : Design Museum, Designer of the Year 2005 | Design Museum Marc Newson graphisme de l'exposition 2004 | 54th Canergie International, Catalogue, identité et graphisme de l'exposition pour le Carnegie Museum 2004 | Frieze Art Fair 2004 Catalogue | Victoria & Albert Museum Art Deco graphisme de l'exposition 2003 | Design Museum The Peter Saville Show graphisme de l'exposition.
www.graphicthoughtfacility.com

Martí Guixé, ES

Designer et conseiller en stratégie de marque. Vit et travaille à Barcelone. Diplômé en design d'intérieur à l'Elisava de Barcelone et en design industriel à l'Ecole Polytechnique de Milan.

Expositions récentes : Ex-designer, the label Galeria H2O Barcelone 2007 | Food Furniture Marti Guixé, 10 years of food design Saporiti Italia Milan 2007 | Designing Critical Design Z33 Hasselt 2007 | V.O.L.S Vic, Associació per les Arts Contemporànies, Vic Barcelone 2006 | Too Manta Very Lustre Spazio Lima Milan, 2005 | Museum Guixé Magasin3 projects Stockholm 2005 | Martí Guixé : libre de contexte MUDAC Lausanne 2003.

Bibliographie (sélection) : Toy weapons Corraini Editore 2005 | Martí Guixé : libre de contexte MUDAC Lausanne 2003 | Bright Minds, Beautiful Ideas Parallel Thoughts In Different Times : Bruno Munari, Charles & Ray Eames, Marti Guixe And Jurgen Bey, Ed Annink and Ineke Schwartz, 2004.
www.guixe.com

Fiona Raby

(Dunne&Raby), UK

Architecte et chercheur en design. Vit et travaille à Londres. Diplômée de la Birmingham School of Architecture et du Royal College of Art. Tutrice au Royal College of Art. Partenaire de Anthony Dunne formant le groupe Dunne & Raby.

Expositions récentes : D. Day, Le design Aujourd'hui, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2005 | Circus of the Fantastic, Summer Fete, Victoria & Albert Museum, Londres, 2003 | Weeds, Aliens and Other Stories (with Michael Anastassiades), Victoria & Albert Museum, Londres, 2003 | Compass Table (v2), Troppotypes, Milan Furniture Fair, Milan, 2002 | Comfort Zone, Hortus Conclusus, Witte de With, Rotterdam, 2001 | Placebo, 20c Study Gallery, Victoria & Albert Museum, Londres, 2001 | Park Interactives, La Ville, le Jardin, la Memoire, Academie de France, Villa Médicis, Rome, 2000 | This appliance must be earthed, Royal College of Art, Londres, 1999.

Bibliographie (sélection) : D. Day, Le design Aujourd'hui, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2005 | Design Noir : The secret Life of Electronic Objects, Birkhäuser, Londres, 2001 | Project #26765 - Flirt : Flexible Information and Recreation for Mobile Users, RCACRD Research, Londres, 2000 | Hertzian Tales : Electronic Products, Aesthetic Experience and Critical Design, RCA CRD Research, Londres, 1999.

www.dunneandraby.co.uk

Tobias Rehberger, D

Artiste, vit et travaille à Frankfort.

Expositions récentes : Faster ! Bigger ! Better !, ZKM, Karlsruhe, 2007 | Tobias Rehberger : On Otto, Fondazione Prada, Milan, 2007 | Tobias Rehberger : I die every day, Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, 2006 | Patria o Muerte, Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Mein, 2006 | Private Matters, Whitechapel, Londres, 2004 | Main Interiors, Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, Anvers, 2003 | Night Shift, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2002 | Whenever you need me, westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster, 2001 | Dusk, galeria Gio Marconi, Milan, 2000.

Bibliographie (sélection) : Iwona Blazwick, Tobias Rehberger : Private Matters, JRP Editions, Zurich, 2005
Florian Matzner, Tobias Rehberger : 005 – 000, Hatje Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern, 2001.

David Reinfurt (Dexter Sinister), US

David Reinfurt est graphiste indépendant, vit et travaille à New York. Diplômé de l'université de Caroline du Nord ainsi que de l'université de Yale (1999). Il dirige O-R-G, un studio de création graphique qui travaille sur une vaste gamme de médias au service d'institutions culturelles et pédagogiques.

Travaux récents : « 3D City » catalogue de l'exposition itinérante des architectes hollandais MVRDV | The urban Forest Project, banderole, ville de New York, 2006 |

www.o-r-g.com/

www.dextersinister.org

Superflex, DAN

Groupe d'artistes depuis 1993, vivent et travaillent à Copenhague. Issus de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts de Copenhague.

Expositions : Copy Right - 1301PE, Los Angeles, 2007 | Free Beer and Counter-Game Strategies, Jack Haley Gallery, San Francisco 2006 | Supershowl was paid to go there, Kunsthalle Basel, 2005 | Supercopy / Occasionally free | Open market, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 2004 | Rirkrit Tirvanija & Superflex, Social pudding, GFZK, Leipzig 2003 | The kitchen magazine station, Kunstverein Wolfsburg, 2001 | Superchannel, Artspace 1% - Copenhagem, 1999 | Superflex Biogas in Africa, Accès Local, Paris, 1998.

Bibliographie (sélection) : Will Bradley, Mika Hannula, Cristina Ricupero, et Superflex, Self-organisation / Counter-economic Strategies, Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2006 | TOOLS, Walther König, Cologne, 2003 | Supermanual – The incomplete guide to the superchannel, FACT, Liverpool, 2000 | Three public projects, Blekinge Lansmuseum and Statens Konst Råd, Sweden, 1999.

www.superflex.net/