

**Audrey Large
/ Théophile Blandet**

Design in Metamorphosis

June 23 – August 13, 2023

**Opening:
Thursday June 22, 2023
6 pm**

**Curated by
Barbara Brondi
& Marco Rainò**



Audrey Large & Théophile Blandet, *Abstract Strategy - Chess Game*, 2019. Photo by Gert Jan van Rooji

**Centre
d'Art
Contemporain
Genève**

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The Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève is pleased to present *Design in Metamorphosis*, the first institutional exhibition of the innovative work of Audrey Large and Théophile Blandet in Switzerland.

With it, the Centre extends the themes of its major group show, *Chrysalis: The Butterfly Dream*—which explores all facets of metamorphosis through an exhibition, performances, screenings and special events—to the sphere of experimental contemporary design.

The designs of Audrey Large and Théophile Blandet carry the spores of our material culture and of a society in constant transformation. They are prime derivatives of a future that projects itself onto the present, creating a fluid language that—paradoxically—combines polar opposites: intangible and tangible, one-off and reproduceable, artisanal and industrial. Large and Blandet both pursue a design process marked by radical interest in experimentation, and both view the zeitgeist through a lens of alteration, mutation, and change. Their objects show design as an effective tool for representing and manifesting the transitory.

With their striking aesthetic presence and illusionistic use of color, Audrey Large's works challenge the reliability of vision and our sense of the tangible. They are presences of astounding originality that seem poised between analog substance and digital impermanence, a quality that transforms them into avatars charged with symbolic power, sensible and critical objects that raise questions about our current criteria for defining and distinguishing what is “real” from what is “virtual”; these works erode and blur this dichotomy until it becomes wholly irrelevant.

Théophile Blandet's works are difficult to classify. Both ordinary and extraordinary, alien and sometimes equivocal, his devices can be interpreted on more than one level—object-discourses that give rise to spurious narratives, hovering between fiction and non-fiction. Dreamlike and disorienting, these are one-of-a-kind pieces crafted with supreme skillful; they turn conventional standards of functionality upside-down, as chimeric presences with a hybrid appearance and startling capacity for transformation.

This exhibition unveils a sequence of expressive, chrysalis-like bodies. The ensuing dialogue between the works of Large and Blandet prompts reflection on the concept of identity and the potential semantic drift of the word “metamorphosis.”

Design in Metamorphosis is curated by Barbara Brondi & Marco Rainò.

Annual partners

Biographies

Audrey Large (b. 1994, Bordeaux, France) currently lives and works in Rotterdam. She graduated from MA Social Design at Design Academy Eindhoven in 2017. Her works set off a dizzying calling into question of the authenticity of the vision and perception of what is considered tangible and therefore real, positioning herself in contemporary design territory with strong points of contact with visual art and material manipulation practices derived from digital cinema, image theory and three-dimensional printing techniques.

Designer-in-Residence at the Jan Van Eyck Academy in Maastricht in 2019-2020, she won the Dutch Designer Award in the Young Designer category in 2021.

Her work has been exhibited as part of group shows at major international museums, such as the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (which also acquired one of her works in its permanent collection), the Design Museum in London, the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, and the Nxt Museum in Amsterdam.

Her works *MetaCup*, *Metabowl #1* and *Metabowl #2* have become part of the collection of Centre national des arts plastiques (Cnap) in France. She works with Milan's Nilufar Gallery, who dedicated her a solo exhibition in 2021. She is among the co-founders of Morph collective, a multifaceted working group that since 2018 expresses itself by creating built environments, immersive installations and exhibition concepts.

Théophile Blandet (b. 1993, Strasbourg, France) currently lives and works in Rotterdam. He graduated from MA Contextual Design at Design Academy Eindhoven in 2017. His works are summary devices that combine the antithetical logics of lucid engineering precision with those of the amateur, validating themselves as discourse-objects that have what it takes to stimulate spurious narratives, caught between fiction and non-fiction.

Always marked by deep research into materials, its expressiveness is revealed by an original practice that combines high craftsmanship with production techniques derived from the most sophisticated industrial processing.

Winner in 2017 of the *Kick That Ass Award* – Marteen Baas, he has exhibited in group shows at the Design Museum Den Bosch in s-Hertogenbosch as well as in major fairs such as Design Miami and FIAC in Paris; his work has also been hosted in exhibitions at the K11 Art Foundation in Guangzhou and FRAC Ile-de-France, while he has been featured in solo shows at Galerie Fons Welters in Amsterdam and Functional Art Gallery in Berlin.

His WFC chair became part of the collection of Le Centre national des arts plastiques (Cnap) in France. He is among the co-founders of the Morph collective, a multifaceted working group that since 2018 expresses itself by creating built environments, immersive installations and exhibition concepts.

Barbara Brondi and Marco Rainò (both born in Turin, Italy in 1970) are architects, designers and independent curators who live and work in Turin. They are interested in experimentation through their planning practice, theoretical research and critical thinking about architecture, contemporary design and graphics.

In 2002 they established BRH+, a firm devoted to design characterized by a comprehensive approach, derived from the concept of architectural practice open to the convergence of disciplines.

Promoters of numerous exhibitions and authors of several publishing projects, they are interested in a critical investigation that aims to intercept the new forms of expressive sensitivity related to the practice of contemporary design thinking; in this experimental direction, they stand out as initiators and curators of the IN Residence program, an innovative talent scouting and educational-training project that consists of many initiatives.

Their projects are featured in numerous international magazines. Marco Rainò is also Artistic Director and Strategic Director of the Interior Design Department of the IAAD Academy (Istituto d'Arte Applicata e Design) in Turin and Bologna.

Press kit

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