

MODIFICATIONS 2010

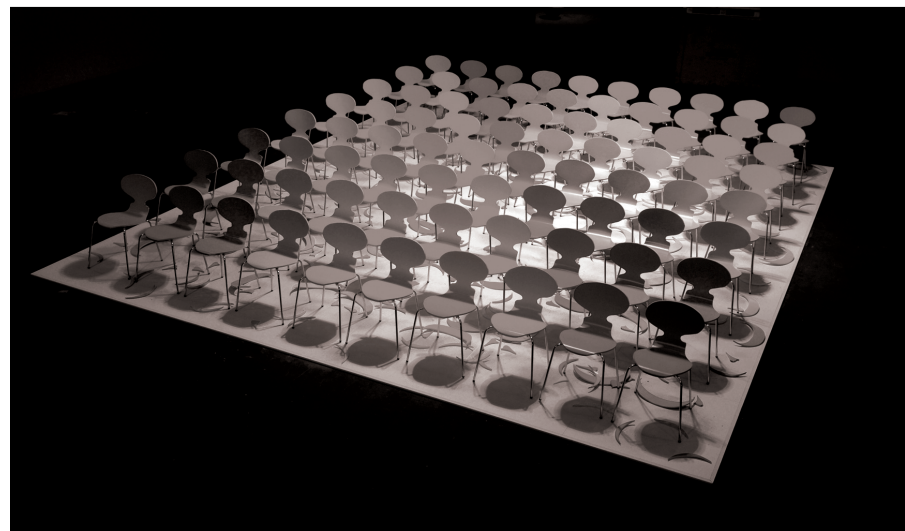
In 2010 the Aarhus Art Building takes the first step in the implementation of a whole new strategy, where each year the exhibition program will be planned on the basis of an overall theme. The chosen theme must be challenging and topical and lend a voice to central issues in the world of art right now. In 2010 the theme is *Modifications*.

Modifications is a reference to the Danish artist Asger Jorn's exhibition of the same name in Paris 50 years ago, where he presented a series of kitsch-paintings on top of which he had painted his own additions. With the exhibition Jorn attempted to once and for all dispel the notion of art as something sublime and autonomous. The members of the international artist group Situationist International, which Jorn along with the French theorist Guy Debord had founded a few years earlier, held a firm belief in the revolutionary potential of the artistic process. Art was seen as a possible way out of the meaningless and empty pseudo-society that the members of the group referred to as the 'Society of the Spectacle'. Although the group

ended up dissolving itself rather than art as such, contemporary art in many ways still stands on a similar bastion: between destruction and construction – or between partial displacement and pure action, one might also say. This state of the art, so to speak, within contemporary art, plus its historical source, forms the basis for the theme *Modifications*. It is the intention of the 2010 exhibition program to shed new light on the issue and to raise the question of whether art presents a way out of the all-encompassing grip of the Society of the Spectacle. A question that is just as relevant today as it was 50 years ago.

DESTROY DESIGN

28. AUGUST - 31. OCTOBER 2010



In *Destroy Design* fluid boundaries arise between art and design. The works in the exhibition create links between the utility aspect of design objects and the originality of the work of art. Everyday objects like tables, beds and lamps are treated, commented on and re-created so that questions arise about our relationship with design, everyday objects and art.

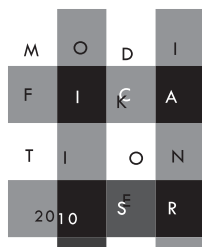
The works have been created by internationally recognized artists, designers and architects.

The exhibition is being presented in collaboration with FRAC (Fonds Regional d'Art Contemporain), Nord-Pas de Calais, in France. Since 1983 FRAC has collected over 1500 works that represent the crossfield between art and design. The collection includes installation works, photographs and video works created by international artists, designers and architects over the last 40 years. With the collection FRAC wants to turn the focus on our relationship with the culture of objects and consumption,

and with the unique, sometimes elevated status of works of art in society.

In the perspective of art history such treatment of the unique status of the work of art is not new. At the beginning of the twentieth century the avant-garde movement criticized the unique position of art in bourgeois society for being strictly for the initiated and for being a closed system. The avant-garde questioned the concept of art and wanted to burst out of the traditional framework of art. In the same way *Destroy Design* wants to break down the framework of art and design to create new ways of understanding the object culture of modern society.

The title of the exhibition, *Destroy Design*, refers to the way the works transform, model or, in the direct meaning of the title, destroy the object with the aim of opening up new angles on the everyday things that many of the works represent.



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HALL A

In Hall A you will find Superflex's colourful installation *Copy Right (Colored Version)* from 2007, where 80 recognizable wooden chairs are placed in straight rows beside one another. At first glance the chairs look like Arne Jacobsen's iconic chair "The Ant". But if you look closer at them, they reveal something quite different. The chairs are made from cheap copies that have been cut to the shape of the Ant. The lumps of wood and the sawdust expose the process and thus the attempt to create an original from a copy. The installation challenges the authenticity of the design object and prompts debate on copyright and product protection. At the same time the work raises issues of the value of the design icons and the social status they enjoy in a modern life. Using cheap copies negates the social status, and the work leaves us with questions about the power relations that govern both design and art objects – questions that were also raised by Marcel Duchamp in 1917 with the exhibition of the famous urinal work *Fountain*.

Superflex is a Danish artists' group which has worked since 1993 with alternative art projects related to among other things social and economic conditions.

HALL C

British Liam Gillick is behind one of the works in Hall C. *Think Tank Think Tank* from 1999 consists of two aluminium frames clad with orange and red plastic sides. The elements make it something in between an installation, a minimalist sculpture and an architectural construction. According to the artist the work is a "social sculpture" which sets up a space for dialogue and communication. The title refers to the 'think tank' phenomenon, which deals with and discusses a particular field or topic and develops ideas. In the light of the title the work can be seen as a symbolic think tank in which dialogue and discussions can arise.



THE ROTUNDA

The Swiss artist Sylvie Fleury's total installation *Bedroom Ensemble (Homage à Claes Oldenburg)* from 1997 fills the space in the Rotunda with a plush, furry, feminine bedroom interior. With this work Fleury has created a reference to the Swedish-born Dada artist Claes Oldenburg's work *Bedroom Ensemble* from 1963. Oldenburg's work is a copy of a Californian motel room where the furniture has been given animal-patterned upholstery. Fleury has adopted Oldenburg's strategy and given the interior synthetic orange fur that alludes to the fashions of the sixties, when Oldenburg's work was created. Fleury likes to mix different genres in her works – the codes of the fashion world are mixed with references to the history of art and recognizable things from everyday life and the consumer society. The works exist in a crossfield of different worlds, often served up with a good helping of humour and irreverence.

THE LOWER FLOOR

The exhibition continues on the lower floor, where the works are placed thematically in small zones. Here we find a number of variations on chairs and seating that have either been changed, destroyed

or staged in unusual situations. Philippe Ramette's *Le suicide des objets: Le fauteuil* (The suicide of the objects: the armchair) from 2001. Suspended in the middle of the room is an example of a chair staged in a highly unfamiliar situation.

Other works in the exhibition are furniture which, through alternative executions and choices of material, offer new angles on our traditional view of furnishings.

In the corner opposite the down staircase we see the French artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's orange spatial installation *Et la chambre orange* from 1992. The work consists of a room interior whose mood is determined by the orange colour and dim lighting. The bed is unmade, and this evokes the idea or sense of the presence of an occupant. Gonzalez-Foerster has created a space where one can easily be caught up in its tense atmosphere and colour-saturated expression.

French Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec have created the work *Lit Clos* (1999), something in between a bed and a room. The work represents a modern lifestyle where we move from place to place, like a nomad who has the whole world as his home. With the bed it is unnecessary to create a complete bedroom, since it is already itself a room that can shut the outside world out.

The Bouroullec brothers are also behind the work *Etagères polystyrène Brick Design* also displayed in The lower floor.



The exhibition is curated by Karin Hindsbo, director of Århus Kunstbygning, and Hilde Teerlinck, director of FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais.

Works by:

John M. Armleder (CH), Atelier Van Lieshout (NL), Ralph Ball (GB) & Maxine Naylor (GB), Bless (FR), Erwan & Ronan Bouroullec (FR), Plamen Dejanov & Svetlana Heger (AUT), Sam Durant (US), Didier Fiuza Faustino (PO), Sylvie Fleury (CH), Front Design (SE), Piero Gatti/Cesare Paolini/Franco Teodoro (IT), Piero Gilardi (IT), Liam Gillick (GB), Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster (FR), Martí Guixé (SP), Zaha Hadid (IR/GB), François Hers (BE), Jim Isermann (US), Donald Judd (US), Charles Kaisin (BE), Scott King (GB), Antonia Low (DE), Gaetano Pesce (IT), Radi Designers/Gilles a Vincent Turin (FR), Philippe Ramette (FR), Tejo Remy (NL), Denis Santachiara (IT), Markus Sixay (DE), Florian Slotawa (DW), Superflex (DK), Maarten Van Severen (BE), Barbara Visser (NL), Christopher Wool (US), Andrea Zittel (US).