

Thomas Eggerer and Jochen Klein: IKEA

September 17th - November 2nd, 2025

In 1996 Thomas Eggerer and Jochen Klein collaborated to make the exhibition *IKEA* in the windows of Printed Matter when it was on Wooster St. in SoHo. We have decided to recreate this show in our apartment and revisit how marketing techniques register and appropriate political critique—techniques that in recent years have made massive incursions into our personal time and spaces. Eggerer and Klein's window installation examined how radical design of the 1970s could so easily be co-opted by IKEA to sell the signifiers of progressive values and radical taste to the settling-down protesters of the late 1960s, a gesture that could be compared to the "mallification" of SoHo, the legendary artists' neighborhood. Since then, IKEA's designs have expanded beyond objects and into contexts—an idea rooted in the utopian manifestos of 1970s Italian leftist designers. Nearly every dorm room in America is furnished with IKEA pieces designed not to last, the shopping experience at the IKEA store is so overwhelming it has become a banal cultural punchline, and the company continuously insists it helps spread democracy throughout the world. Today IKEA, along with most retail commercial enterprises, now reaches us through our phones, turning our homes into their online showrooms and our interpersonal communication into their advertisements. Our diverse and unique ways of carving out lives in an increasingly unequal world are studied and repackaged by marketing companies eager to tap into one of the few remaining sources of belief: every day people's un-bought authenticity. The authenticity craze reflects the importance of the interior as a refuge of truth after public communication lost its credibility. However the interior was always an illusion and we cannot hide there anymore.



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