

Utilizing commercial and industrial products in his works, Chadwick Rantanen considers these items as public proposals for an intended use. The exploration of these proposals manifests in specific products through an intersectional map of context, aesthetics, and function. A product's common use and its ability to be used otherwise form a call and response. Thus, when embedded in a sculpture the product's original purpose is extended, while remaining functionally intact, albeit in a slightly disturbed manner. Rantanen has created sculptures, installations, and site-specific interventions with neon tubes, tennis balls, plastic buckets, cups, and cuckoo clocks, among other things, which often evoke a shift in one's perception of a space or context.

In his exhibition *Ward* at the Vienna Secession, Rantanen will present a new body of work that derives from his interest in designs for healthcare facilities and how these environments are engineered to create a specific physical as well as aesthetic experience. A wallpaper mural serves as a backdrop for sculptural objects that hang from the ceiling or are placed on the floor. The wallpaper grew out of the artist's exploration of murals commonly found in healthcare centers and clinics, which are composed using an informally standardized repertoire of themes, figures, forms, and colors. While Rantanen has removed all figures from numerous templates, he has applied and morphed their essential forms and colors in order to create his own, multilayered pattern. This distills the neutral and pleasant atmosphere the standard wallpapers are meant to exude and aestheticizes its armatures and methods of construction.

In front of this clean, computer-generated imagery that covers two walls, handmade sculptural objects dangle from the ceiling. Skeletons made of wood and metal wire resemble a natural structure, like that of a leaf. Pieces of very thin film in a variety of colors and patterns are draped over the structures. These "skins" are antimicrobial coatings, which are applied to fabrics used in healthcare and usually remain imperceptible. They function as a kind of two-way barrier to protect persons from germs and to make hospital furniture more durable and aesthetically pleasing. For his sculptures, Rantanen extracted the protective layer from rolls of new fabric, peeling it off like a layer of skin. It retains some of the fabric's pattern, effectively like a reversed transfer printing. Due to the applied method of manual peeling, the "skins" are partially ripped and torn—considered in isolation, they attest to disintegration and decay. These elements make *Ward* an environment that blends the dystopian and the comforting.

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