

Kunsthalle Wien

Ineke Hans Was ist Loos? 28/9 – 12/11 2017

Press conference: Wednesday September 27, 2017, 10 am

Opening: Wednesday September 27, 2017, 7 pm

Was ist Loos? presents designer Ineke Hans' first institutional solo exhibition in Austria. The title is a pun that plays on the German phrase for 'What's going on?' and the name of architect Adolf Loos. The design objects and furniture designs by the Dutch Hans have been created in response to specific spatial, functional and interactive needs. Foldable chairs, multifunctional (monochrome) tables, graphic patterns, unusual materials as well as playful shapes and colors – Ineke Hans' designs are better known for their contemporary and humorous approach to the challenges of contemporary living spaces and workplaces than for any type of characteristic style.

The title of the exhibition openly asks what is happening in contemporary design while merging this question with reference to the stylistically influential Austrian architect and critic Adolf Loos. One reason why Loos' thinking significantly influenced the development of modern architecture and furniture design is due to the fact that he was publicly outspoken about concerns affecting his era. Often employing exaggeration as a strategy to highlight his thoughts, Loos critiqued the existing economic and social conditions and, in doing so, placed demands on design that were to usher in a radical new epoch.

In the exhibition *Was ist Loos?*, Ineke Hans examines the status quo of international design, exploring its relationship to issues in current affairs and our own daily lives. She thereby attributes a certain socio-political responsibility to designers: They need to consider contemporary problems in their own work.

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Was ist Loos? seeks to present more recent works by Ineke Hans in relationship to three central concerns that all address global developments. The works explore production techniques, the increasing use of digitalization, and the increasing scarcity of resources and housing. Two design objects developed specifically for the exhibition serve as examples of the latter: a chair made jointly with Gebrüder Thonet Vienna, and a design for a table that is available through an online platform.

Famous for its bentwood furniture in the 19th century, the Thonet firm has always collaborated with important Austrian artists, architects and craftspeople, such as Otto Wagner, Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser. Adolf Loos and Thonet collaborated on a design that was to become an icon – the coffee house chair for the Café Museum located across the street from Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz. Hans, interested in conventional as well as innovative production techniques, is also fascinated by the regional characteristics informing the history of design. These three elements are reflected in her design for the new chair. She takes Thonet's bentwood technique and combines it with the concept of handy, stackable chairs that can be used for conferences and events. As a *Kunsthalle Wien Chair*, the chair remains connected to its place of origin.

Instant Desk is Ineke Hans' response to the influence of digital technologies and global networking on furniture production. As a digital file, the design can be retrieved worldwide via the Opendesk online platform and manufactured locally by cooperating producers. While the platform gives designers new ways to globally distribute their designs, it also promotes the local production facilities that manufacture the designs.

In addition to her new works, Ineke Hans also presents a selection of existing furniture pieces and objects which show or respond to changing social conditions in the design industry, more specifically, in design production and development. The area *Making and Making Sense* addresses production methods that range from the traditional making of objects to industrial processing and innovative manufacturing techniques. Ineke Hans explores the question of *what* is made, *why* it is made, and, above all, *how* the object is made. A frequent effect of mass production is the resultant loss of knowledge about traditional production techniques and materials. However, such knowledge could be resurrected in the contemporary context and used again in a way that creates meaning. For Ineke Hans, it's about taking a meaningful and socially engaged approach to exploring available production techniques that transcend the fundamental issues of function and style.

Dealing with the Digital focuses on the increasing digitalization of the world we live in. This not only pertains to our everyday life, which is characterized by the omnipresence of social networking and the Internet. It also applies to the possibilities offered by technological innovation as well as to the online distribution and marketing of ideas and preliminary designs. In a postindustrial society, the availability of meta-theoretical knowledge has become more important and can now be shared on the Internet more easily than ever before. Cooperation and exchange gain new significance. At the same time, the fact that people are always available has also led to a shift in the work-life balance. A lifestyle characterized by mobility and flexibility changes the way we relate to consumer goods. Today, what's usually decisive is whether something is multifunctional or a hybrid.

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Less focuses on the scarcity of resources – with regard to naturally occurring resources that are used as initial production material, as well as housing resources. Climate- and environment-related development requires the integration of ecologically sound production processes and sustainable use practices. The focus is on recycling and reducing waste. Urbanization contributes to the dense consolidation of urban areas and leads to a decrease of available space for housing. Such a reduction in quantity of available space switches the focus to other aspects – like the quality and appropriation of public space for use as community space. Unlike modern architecture with its monofunctional building style, contemporary design is all about hybrid objects and spaces that can be used collectively. Since functional objects and furnishings give structure to our lives, work, and public spaces, they can play an active role when it comes to shaping social situations.

These three concerns are closely interrelated and demonstrate the challenges faced by design today. Ineke Hans creates designs that are a reaction to societal needs and develops functional objects with a social dimension. The exhibition *Was ist Loos?* presents objects that can be interpreted as design solutions created to address the needs and demands of today's society.

Ineke Hans was born in 1966 and lives and works in London. She studied product design and furniture design in Arnhem and London. In 1998, she founded her first design studio in Arnhem, Netherlands. In 2015, she founded her studio/salon in London, where, together with other people involved in the field of design, from designers, theoreticians, manufacturers, curators, and retailers, she explores the future of design as well as the changing position of the designer.

Curator: Juliane Bischoff

Publication

A publication will be released in conjunction with the exhibition. It features contributions by Bart Lootsma, architecture professor at Innsbruck University; Deyan Sudjic, director of London's Design Museum as well as Oliver Stratford, editor-in-chief of London-based *Disegno* magazine, and others. The publication is designed by Dutch graphic designer Irma Boom.

Events within the framework of Vienna Design Week

Thu 28/9, 6 pm

Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz

Ineke Hans' Pragmaticism. A discussion between Ineke Hans, Bart Lootsma, and Oliver Stratford

Fri 29/9, 7 pm

Kunsthalle Wien Museumsquartier

Design and living together. How design reveals ideas about the way we live, who we are, what we value. With an introduction by Deyan Sudjic, followed by a discussion with Ineke Hans, Lilli Hollein, and Nicolaus Schafhausen

Press release

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