FUTUR ARCHAÏQUE
DESIGN CONFRONTS ITS ROOTS

PRESS KIT

Studio Wieki Somers, High Tea Pot, 2003
François Azambourg, *Animal Objet*, 2014. Laminated leather and poxy resin. Alligator skin in one piece, from HCP (Hermès Leather). The animal is wetted, stretched and shaped on an aluminum skeleton. The skin is externally resin coated, the aluminum skeleton is removed and finally the skin is internally resin coated. Azambourg Auto-Edition Collection
PRESS RELEASE

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DESIGN CONFRONT ITS ROOTS

Although its title juxtaposes the future with our human origins, the exhibition Futur archaïque exposes some very contemporary concerns. There is a widely shared idea that the pace of technological developments is accelerating, and that their impact is being increasingly imposed upon us in our everyday personal, professional and social lives. Technical progress is seen as invasive and it arouses a number of anxieties. There is thus an emerging sense of underlying threat, a fear that artificial intelligence could seize power, or even that we, as a world, have lost our bearings.

A sociologist by training, Yves Mirande, the exhibition curator, is a design specialist and journalist. His inspiration for the project came as he noticed a growing tendency for the design world to tackle this feeling. In response, the designers have steered their research in an opposite direction, towards the roots of humanity. They favour organic or raw materials, and forms that flirt with our collective fantasy of the archaic or the primitive. Far from beating a reactionary retreat, however, they have chosen to connect with the very latest contemporary techniques.

They use materials such as animal fleeces, volcanic lava, petrified ceramics, flint, skulls and bones, seeds, natural pigments, carbonised wood, bladders and stomachs, bringing them together with recent technological developments. The knapped flints by Ami Drach & Dov Ganchrow were fitted with 3D-printed sleeves; the wood used in Kaspar Hamacher’s furniture is charred to give it its final shape; grains of wheat are transformed into vessels by Formafantasma while Wieki Somers turns animal skulls into teapots; Julia Lohmann creates lamps from cow stomachs. Some of these creations even require primitive gestures, such as Simon Hasan’s nutcracker, which involves cracking the nuts with a stone.

For Yves Mirande, this movement reveals the desire to reconnect with our roots, which he believes are “pushed around by modernity”, as well as with contemporary life. Futur archaïque presents around sixty objects by international designers that address these issues and reflect this sensation facing the human experience in 21st century society.

DESIGNERS

François Azambourg
Ami Drach & Dov Ganchrow
Antoine Boudin
Atelier Van Lieshout
Nacho Carbonell
Laura Couto Rosado
DWA (Alberto Artesani, Frederik De Wachter & Alessandro Costariol)
ECAL/Miloš Ristin
Formafantasma (Simone Farresin, Andrea Trimarchi)
Robotlab (Matthias Gommel, Martina Haitz, Jan Zappe)
Kaspar Hamacher
Simon Hasan
Studio Flutager&in
Valentin Loellmann
Julia Lohmann
Laura Lynn Jansen & Thomas Vailly
Stéphane Margolis
Peter Marigold
Giulio Parini
Pigeon project (Isabel de Lucena, Lauren Alexander, Florian Conradi, Judith de Leeuw, Vitor Peixoto, Ghalia Srakbi, Marco Ugolini, Judith van der Velden, Dirk Vis, Kamiel Vorwerk)
Maaike Roozenburg
Studio Wieki Somers
Jean-Pierre Tortil
Charles Trevelyan
Unfold (Dries Verbruggen, Claire Warnier) avec
Barnabé Fillion

Research tools used by Laura Lynn Jansen & Thomas Vailly for their project CaCO3 Stoneware, 2014

Kaspar Hamacher, Ausgebrannt, 2010. The designer picked a tree in the woods, cut it down, hollowed it out and burnt the inside of the log for this furniture series.
FUTUR ARCHAÏQUE
BY YVES MIRANDE, EXHIBITION CURATOR

GENESIS
The idea for this exhibition came quite simply from a realisation that was made possible for me through my many travels. Facts that leap out at you when you take the time to look, observe, scrutinise and see. In the community of young designers, we can see that for a decade or so, there has been a quite innovative and specific manner of considering forms, using materials and creating design in general.

It is not, as one might imagine in the 21st century, a via recta towards fully digitised, hyper-technological, hyper-innovative materials, but another voice which attaches great significance to the reappropriation of the simplest forms, the use of easily available, local materials. Pieces of wood, branches, coal and stones. Even viscera for the Water Bladders or flour made from millennial grains of wheat for the Autarchy project by the Italian designer duo Formafantasma.

A sociological view is therefore taken here on what is happening in our society. This perspective enabled me to bring together some 60 pieces for Futur archaïque, which bear witness to the change which is currently happening.

THE EXHIBITION
Through these design pieces, the Futur archaïque exhibition aims to present the link that currently exists between the future and the past, the archaic. Let’s not forget that arkh in ancient Greek means “beginning”. Thus it signifies a return to foundations and to basics. It is not a backward-looking vision but on the contrary, takes a dynamic perspective which no longer cuts itself off from its roots in order to reconnect with them. The exhibition thus highlights how designers create objects that reveal and lay claim to our roots, the same roots that have been given a rough ride by modernity.

The 19th and 20th centuries saw the arrival and then the consecration of design. It started with the industrial revolution and its potential for large-scale manufacturing—like the Thonet bistrot chair, the first to be mass produced—and continued via the Arts & Crafts movement until the post-war design boom. But for all its progress, reason and rationalisation, modernity has over time abandoned by the wayside the intrinsic value of objects, their very essence and a certain form of aura. This has occurred both in the development of working drawings worthy of the Ulm School, of which Roger Tallon said, “If Ulm had continued, we would probably have ended up with a univocal formalisation aiming towards the ‘non-object’, in a complete absence of visibility,” and in a material, formal, etc. one-upmanship. Design has in some way been emptied of its sense or even its senses.

Nowadays, fundamental change is afoot! Instead of taking a negative attitude towards our roots, brushing them aside or...
even denying them, we are forced to admit that creators—artists, architects and above all designers—are working with them to create totally innovative, astounding objects. Such as the Jar by the designer duo Formafantasma made with a cow’s bone. These objects offer an insight into as yet subterranean social desires, but which are emerging in a whole range of fields.

A refreshing exhibition that explores the reappearance of these archaic forms in design, also implicit in this project is a sociological insight into these emerging but essential desires to reconnect with our roots. We can no longer contemplate the future without reconnecting to our roots, which constitute the foundations that support us. Whatever they may be! Those of the history of humanity and those which are closer to home, in our families.

BY NATURE

“Try to be an animal, like children,” declared Erwan Bouroullec during a lecture he made at Vitra in November 2014. This animal side is nothing more than instinct. A child acts in a very spontaneous manner. And it is precisely this natural instinct that man has progressively lost, having rationalised to the extreme in this period of modernity. The time has come to reconnect with it.

Of course “progress” has enabled mankind to create great things—often connected to innovations: rockets, cars, trains, vaccines, etc. Great things perhaps, and probably even, but to the detriment of our animal side, the part of nature that we have striven to curb. When interviewed by the authors of Les Ruptures fertiles¹, Michel Maffesoli stated: “There is an intelligentsia gap. That is to say, those with the power to speak and act: journalists, academics and politicians. This intelligentsia remains fixed in modern values: the social contract, etc. They do not realise that there is another relationship to the earth, the world and others which is in gestation.” It is this relationship to the earth that is questioned in this exhibition. This reappropriation of local elements, in the sense of being alongside us brings out elements of a quite different aesthetic.

This notion of animality and nature therefore leads us to another way of considering our bodies, long forgotten owing to the modern epistemological break which placed the mind on a pedestal to the detriment of the body, which was considered to be dirty and impure with its affects, humours and juices. The jar made from a cow’s bone by Formafantasma however enables us to engage with our body once more by the simple fact of pouring water or wine by holding the jar in one’s arms. What more need be said about Simon Hasan’s nutcracker, where the very action of cracking walnuts, hazelnuts or almonds requires us to raise our arm to operate it with enough force? Even the use of the iPad relies on the human gesture of simply sliding one’s finger lightly on the screen.

Thus these displayed objects form a veritable manifesto for reconsidering what it is to be human, up to and including in design which had all but forgotten—the formal aridity of functionalism is proof of this. For in terms of the future, it is now impossible for us not to reconnect with our succouring roots.

BIOGRAPHY OF YVES MIRANDE

Yves Mirande is a journalist (in charge of the design pages in the Numéro magazine), consultant and exhibition curator specialized in design. As a sociologist, he constantly analyzes the visible social emergences in the field of applied arts, especially design, through the most prospective projects by new talents. He is co-writer of the book *Les ruptures fertiles* that was published in January 2014 (PPUR editions).

Formafantasma, *Charcoal*, 2012. Glass and charcoal. Project in the framework of the retrospective show on Gerrit Rietveld at the Vitra Design Museum (Germany).

Research for the project of limestone petrification of 3D-printed objects by Laura Lynn Jansen & Thomas Vailly.
The futurist author, development director and chief engineer at Google, Ray Kurzweil, predicted “the emergence of real, conscious, artificial intelligence that will be capable of overtaking human intelligence by 2045”¹. In other words, the robot, the machine is threatening to dominate mankind in the not-too-distant future.

Based on this scenario, in their “Singularité” exhibition at the Biennale de Saint-Etienne in 2013 François Burment and David-Louis Lartigaud questioned the future of objects and the role of designers confronted with this evolution: “Is humanity going to be intellectually dominated by its own machines? Should we organise resistance to machines, or aim towards merging ith them in order to achieve a new form of humanity?” We have to admit, it’s a perspective that provides food for thought.

What will this science-fiction scenario look like? As responsible inhabitants of a world whose natural resources are being used up and where the influence of IT is growing, designers are taking a spontaneous interest in the creation of new manufacturing processes, tools and methods that reincorporate the human being, artisanry and nature, yet without turning their backs on available technologies. The purpose of “products” and projects is also back in the hot seat in the light of these existential questions. We have already seen engineers, producers, builders and designers joining forces on an open-source platform to develop and share the DIY plans of 50 basic machines (tractor, cement mixer, slicing machine, etc.), which can be used to develop a low-cost, standard modest civilisation, one that is sustainable but equipped with a certain comfort. Using rudimentary components, this Global Village Construction Set enables machines to be built affordably and in accordance with simple, accessible principles.

Such back-to-basics is reminiscent of René Barjavel’s novel “Ravage”. Mysteriously deprived of electricity, the futurist society he envisaged was entirely destroyed by a massive fire. A handful of men and women survived, but at the price of a return to the law of survival instincts and a savage, brutal way of life, at its most terrifying and sublime. The book summarises all of the complexity of the oxymoron archaic future, which is also central to the projects selected for this exhibition. A conjunction of artisanal and digital techniques, the resurgence of an aesthetic that has apparently been hewn from flint, a recourse to authentic materials and manufacturing processes that simply obey the laws of nature, highlighting the importance of the most basic gestures, etc. All of these themes structure the visit of the exhibition.

Out of a concern to reflect the preoccupations of contemporary society and to highlight how they might influence future developments, our respective institutions are duty bound to echo this movement, where science and poetry, technicity and artisanry, men and machines enter into an uninhibited dialogue.

¹ Laurent Alexandre, Encadrons les neuro-révolutionnaires, at mhttp://www.lemonde.fr/sciences/article/2014/05/05/les-neuro-revolutionnaires

German designer Julia Lohmann used stomachs of cow and sheep to craft these lamps adequately entitled Ruminant Blooms (2004).

Hlutagerðin, Armour and Shield, 2014. The design studio from Iceland took as its inspiration the tea ceremony – very important in Iceland. They boiled the leather to give it greater resistance and stretched it around tea pots, coffe pots and even a computer.
EXHIBITION EVENTS

GUIDED TOURS

Saturday 7 November 2015 at 4 p.m., led by a mudac facilitator
Saturday 12 December 2015 at 4 p.m., led by a mudac facilitator
Saturday 6 February 2016 at 4 p.m., led by a mudac facilitator

In French
Fee: admission to the museum
No reservation

WORKSHOPS : WHEN PREHISTORY MEETS NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Try your hand at laser cutting and pick a beautiful stone to craft a nutcracker inspired by the Darwin Nutcracker by Simon Hasan.

Family Workshops, ages 6 – 96
Sunday 31 January 2016 from 14.30 to 16.30
Sunday 14 February 2016 from 14.30 to 16.30

Children Workshops, ages 8 – 13
Wednesday 20 January 2016 from 14.30 to 16.30
Saturday 30 January 2016 from 14.30 to 16.30
Saturday 13 February 2016 from 14.30 to 16.30
Wednesday 24 February 2016 from 14.30 to 16.30

Price 10.-
Reservation essential: 021 315 25 30 or inscription@mudac.ch
Places are limited.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Opening  
Tuesday 27 October from 18.00 dès 18h attended by Yves Mirande, Exhibition Curator

Dates and hours  
28 October 2015 – 28 February 2016  
Tuesday-Sunday 11.00-18.00  
Open on every public holiday, Mondays included, except on 25 December and 1 January  
24 and 31 December : 11.00-16.00  
Free admission on the first Saturday of the month

Contact  
mudac – musée de design et d’arts appliqués contemporains  
Place de la Cathédrale 6  
CH-1005 Lausanne  
t +41 315 25 30 / f +41 315 25 39  
www.mudac.ch / info@mudac.ch

Media contact  
Danaé Panchaud, public relations  
t +41 21 315 25 27, danae.panchaud@lausanne.ch

Images  
High-resolution images available here: www.mudac.ch/press  
Login: presse2015 / images2015

The Peddler (2013 ) from Unfold (Dries Verbruggen, Claire Warnier: designers) and Barnabé Fillion (nose) mixes up wood, leather, metal and 3D printing for an olfactive experience.
IMAGES, CAPTIONS & CREDITS


Research tools used by Laura Lynn Jansen & Thomas Vailly for their project CaCO3 Stoneware, 2014
© Floor Knaapen

Research for the project of limestone petrification of 3D-printed objects by Laura Lynn Jansen & Thomas Vailly.
© Floor Knaapen

Milos Ratin, Hreňa, 2013. Whale bone, resin and lacquer. Piece from project The Iceland Whale Bone - ECAL whose objective was to create design objects from found whale bones.
Image © ECAL / Nicolas Genta

Stéphane Margolis, Le chant de la violette, 2013. The designer bargain-hunts Vallauris ceramics from the 60’s and 70’s that he then lets petrify under a waterfall in Auvergne.
Image © David Hugonot Petit

Charles Trevelyan, Circumspect II, 2013. Aluminium, pigments, electrical system
© Courtesy of Carpenters Workshop Gallery - Studio Trevelyan

Studio Formafantasma, Autarchy, 2010. Full set of objects (recipients, broom, etc.) made of flour, agricultural waste, natural limestone and natural dyes (vegetables, roots and spices). Project developed for Rossana Orlandi Gallery Milan in partnership with Poilane.
© Studio Formafantasma

Research for the project of limestone petrification of 3D-printed objects by Laura Lynn Jansen & Thomas Vailly.
© Floor Knaapen
German designer Julia Lohmann used stomachs of cow and sheep to craft these lamps adequately entitled *Ruminant Blooms* (2004). © Julia Lohmann

Hlutagerðin, *Armour and Shield*, 2014. The design studio from Iceland took as its inspiration the tea ceremony – very important in Iceland. They boiled the leather to give it greater resistance and stretched it around tea pots, coffee pots and even a computer. © Hlutagerðin


Nylon, resin, paint. © Atelier Van Lieshout - JW van Kaldenbach


German designer Julia Lohmann used stomachs of cow and sheep to craft these lamps adequately entitled *Ruminant Blooms* (2004). © Julia Lohmann


Hlutagerðin, *Armour and Shield*, 2014. The design studio from Iceland took as its inspiration the tea ceremony – very important in Iceland. They boiled the leather to give it greater resistance and stretched it around tea pots, coffee pots and even a computer. © Hlutagerðin
Project in the framework of the retrospective show on Gerrit Rietveld at the Vitra Design Museum (Germany).
© Studio Formafantasma - Luisa Zanzani

© Simon Hasan

The Peddler (2013) from Unfold (Dries Verbruggen, Claire Warnier: designers) and Barnabé Fillion (nose) mixes up wood, leather, metal and 3D printing for an olfactory experience.
© Unfold

Kaspar Hamacher, Ausgebrannt, 2010. The designer picked a tree in the woods, cut it down, hollowed it out and burnt the inside of the log for this furniture series.
© Atelier Kaspar Hamacher

Alligator skin in one piece, from HCP (Hermès Leather). The animal is wetted, stretched and shaped on an aluminum skeleton. The skin is externally resin coated, the aluminum skeleton is removed and finally the skin is internally resin coated. Azambourg Auto-Edition Collection
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