Press Release

Making Sense of Things
30 April to 15 August 2027
Villa Hügel, Essen

CVs of the designers

Nathalie Du Pasquier

(born 1957) is a French artist and designer who has lived in Milan since 1979. In 1981, she co-founded the Memphis design group. Her numerous designs for decorative surfaces, including fabrics, carpets, furniture and plastic laminates, played a decisive role in shaping the distinctive aesthetic of the Memphis movement. Despite her success as a designer, painting has been her primary artistic medium since 1987. Her body of work encompasses paintings, sculptures, drawings, models, constructions, carpets, books and ceramics. In her ongoing research, Du Pasquier explores the boundaries between representation and abstraction, materiality and conception, reality and imagination, and between two- and three-dimensional forms. Her works have been exhibited worldwide in galleries and institutions, including the PACE Gallery and the Camden Arts Centre in London, the Kunsthalle Lissabon and the Kunsthalle Wien. Alongside her artistic practice, she continues to design textiles and collaborate with international companies.

Formafantasma

The Italian design studio Formafantasma was founded in 2009 by Andrea Trimarchi (born 1983) and Simone Farresin (born 1980). Their work is based on a holistic approach to materials, technologies, social structures and ecological contexts. The studio's aim is to foster a deeper understanding of our natural and built environments and to use design to spark new perspectives and processes of change. In their studios in Milan and Rotterdam, they work in the fields of product design, spatial and exhibition design as well as strategic planning and design consultancy.

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Whether working on commissions for companies or on self-initiated projects, their practice is characterised by intensive research, conceptual clarity and a precise examination of context and manufacturing processes. The link between commercial projects and independent research shapes their entire body of work. Formafantasma explores the role of industrial production and questions its impact on the environment, society and the future of design.

Konstantin Grcic

(born 1965) initially trained as a carpenter at the John Makepeace School for Craftsmen in Wood, before studying design at the Royal College of Art in London. Since founding his own studio in 1991, he has been designing furniture, products and lighting for leading international design firms. Today, Konstantin Grcic Design, based in Berlin, works across a range of fields – from industrial design projects and limited editions to exhibition design and collaborations with cultural institutions, architecture and fashion. In 2025, he founded the label 25KG, under which he develops and produces his own products. Many of his products have won international design awards, including the Compasso d'Oro and the German Design Award in Gold. His works are held in the permanent collections of major museums worldwide, including the MoMA in New York, the Centre Pompidou in Paris and Die Neue Sammlung in Munich. In 2009, Grcic was appointed an Honorary Royal Designer for Industry by the Royal Society of Arts in the UK. From 2020 to 2024, he was a professor at the Hamburg University of Fine Arts and has been an honorary professor there ever since. He is also a member of the Akademie der Künste Berlin and the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts.

Chris Kabel

(born 1975) studied at the Design Academy Eindhoven and lives and works in Rotterdam. Alongside his work for companies and institutions, he has taught product design at Hongik University in Seoul, the Royal

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Academy in The Hague, HfG Karlsruhe, as well as on the Master's programme in Industrial Design at ECAL in Lausanne and at the Design Academy Eindhoven. Chris Kabel combines a fascination with materials and natural phenomena with a sensitive and analytical approach to design. His work encompasses furniture, objects and architectural elements, which often arise from an intense observation of material properties and usage contexts. For Kabel, context and relevance take precedence over short-term trends. His designs derive their aesthetic from an intuitive and poetic engagement with function, material and environment. His works are held in numerous collections, including the MoMA in New York, the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the MAD in Bordeaux and the Hangaram Design Museum in Seoul.

Jonathan Muecke

(born 1983) initially trained as an architect and worked at the Swiss architectural practice Herzog & de Meuron before obtaining an MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art and setting up his own practice. In 2011, Muecke made his debut with a solo exhibition at the Volume Gallery in Chicago. The objects designed by Jonathan Muecke follow an internal logic determined by material, light, space and interaction with people. In his studio in Minneapolis, he continually explores fundamental types of furniture such as chairs, tables and benches, using experimentation to distil them down to their essential characteristics. Muecke frequently works with a single material, such as wood, aluminium or carbon fibre. By varying scales and proportions, he explores the relationship between object, body and space. His works are held in numerous museum collections, including the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Vitra Design Museum.

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Julie Richoz

(born 1990) is a Swiss-French designer. After graduating from ECAL / University of Art and Design Lausanne in 2012, she worked as a project assistant for Pierre Charpin from 2013 to 2015. She subsequently founded her own studio in Paris. Her work evolves with curiosity and sensitivity from an intense engagement with objects, materials and manufacturing processes. Her creative spectrum ranges from objects to furniture and lighting, right through to textiles. She sees no contradiction between bespoke pieces and industrial production, but rather a continuous connection. At the heart of her work lie craftsmanship, precision and the properties of the materials used. Richoz has been a designer-in-residence at CIRVA (Centre International de Recherche sur le Verre et les Arts Plastiques) in Marseille, at the Cité de la Céramique in Sèvres and at Casa Wabi in Mexico. She has received numerous awards, including the Grand Prix at the Design Parade, the Swiss Design Awards and the Bourse Leenaards. Since 2017, she has been teaching industrial design at ECAL Lausanne.

Mats Theselius

(born 1956) studied furniture and interior design at Konstfack in Stockholm. He was a professor at the School of Design and Crafts at the University of Gothenburg and has been a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Arts since 2011. Mats Theselius works at the intersection of art and design. His extensive body of work encompasses furniture, architecture, interior design, landscape design, exhibitions, stage sets, installations, books, film and music. His works arise from a long-standing exploration of materials, forms and cultural references. In doing so, he combines functional design with artistic research and develops objects that straddle the line between everyday objects and autonomous works of art. Theselius' work is represented in numerous international collections, including the National Museum in Stockholm, the Röhsska Museum in Gothenburg, the Malmö Museum, the Designmuseum Danmark in Copenhagen, the State Art Collection of Russia in Moscow, the Museum

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of Applied Arts in Cologne and the Museum of Arts and Design in New York.

Muller Van Severen

The Belgian artist and designer duo Muller Van Severen was founded in spring 2011 by Fien Muller (born 1978) and Hannes Van Severen (born 1979). Their work straddles the fields of sculpture, architecture and functional design. Inspired by diverse disciplines and cultural influences, they develop ideas that transcend traditional boundaries. Their works are characterised by minimalist, sculptural forms that often resemble miniature architecture. They explore contrasts such as presence and absence, interior and exterior space, or femininity and masculinity. They favour durable materials such as wood, metal or plastic, which they combine in surprising ways. Muller Van Severen designs both their own collections – which are produced by manufacturers and craftspeople – and designs for international companies. Their works form part of numerous public collections, including the Vitra Design Museum (GER), the Centre Pompidou (FRA), Le Grand-Hornu (BEL), the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (FRA) and the Design Museum Gent (BEL).

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