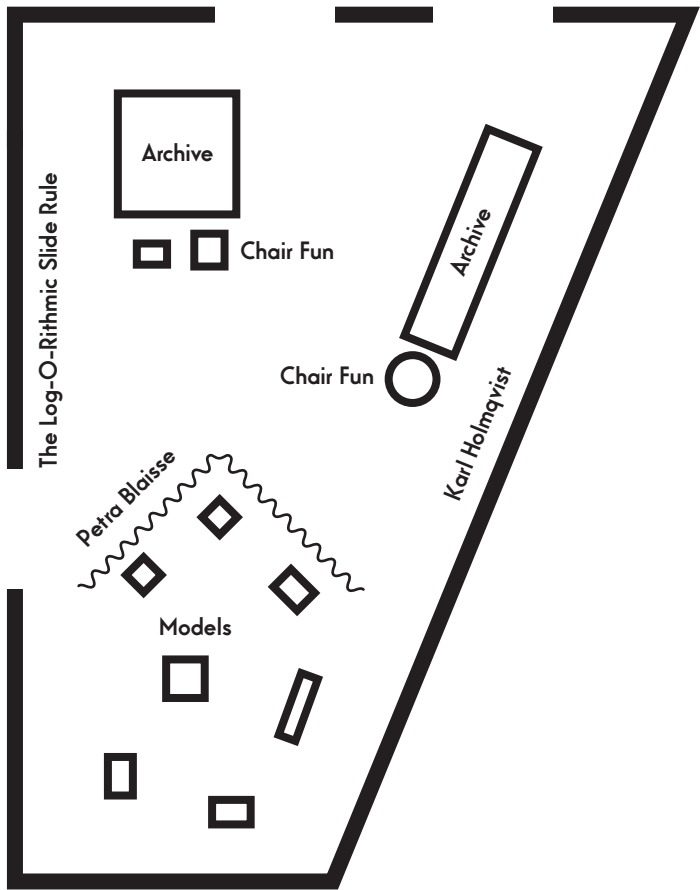




TRIX+ROBERT HAUSSMANN

The Log-O-Rithmic Slide Rule: A Retrospective
14 Jul - 7 Oct 2018

Gallery 1



Chair Fun, 1967/2012

In 1967, the Haussmanns founded their office in Zurich, which became the General Design Institute. That same year marked their first collaboration, for a happening titled 'Chair Fun', where they converted existing chairs into what they described as 'absurd readymades'. *Choco-Chair* seems to melt onto the floor, while a neon stool is too fragile to ever be sat on. The objects are adapted versions of modern design classics: *Maso-Chair* is an Eames chair fitted with spikes, while *Trio* weaves together three Thonet chairs.

The Log-O-Rithmic Slide Rule, 1980

Language has always been central to the Haussmanns' investigations. This experimental design instrument is like a thesaurus of terms, or a DIY algorithm for generating ideas. The original 'concept-slider' comprised two typewritten lists of 100 alphabetised keywords (one of adverbs, the other adjectives), giving a total of 10,000 possible combinations. The Haussmanns call it 'either a critically-ironic game of words or a pseudo-encyclopaedic tool in the war of words'.

Artist interventions

The exhibition is punctuated by several interventions by other artists. In Gallery 1 is a text by the artist and poet Karl Holmqvist, inspired by the Haussmanns' *Log-O-Rithmic Slide Rule* (1980), while a number of their models are circled with a gold curtain designed by the designer Petra Blaisse and Inside/Outside. In Gallery 2 is a series of posters by the artist Liam Gillick, who is interested in the sexual aspects of Modernist design, which tell the story of a stool transforming into a table.

This is the first UK retrospective of the Swiss architects and designers Trix and Robert Haussmann. Their work spans buildings, product design and furniture, as well as textiles, poems and models. Bringing together works from the 1960s to today, the exhibition explores the duo's playful innovations and speculations.

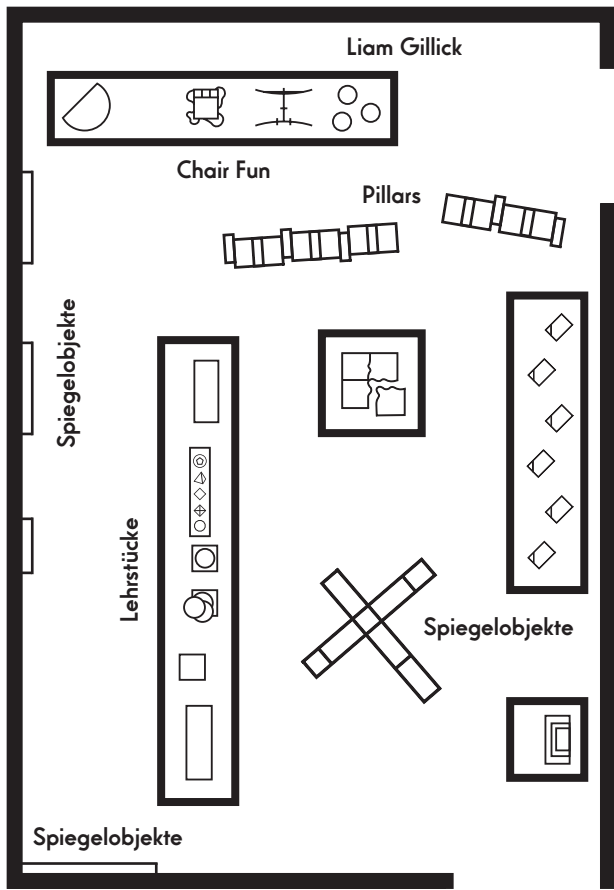
The Haussmanns deal in what they have called 'disturbed reality'. They embrace irony and ambiguity, artifice and illusion. Often turning to historical models, they blend pop culture with traditional techniques borrowed from the 16th century, such as *trompe l'oeil* painting. The duo has realised some 650 projects across Europe, from Zurich's railway station to interiors for bars and fashion boutiques.

In the Haussmanns' work, furniture morphs or malfunctions, becoming enigmatic and hybrid. This exhibition brings together early pieces, such as modified chairs from the 1960s, with maquettes, fragmented columns, elements from shop displays and mirrored objects. The Haussmanns have described mirrors as a kind of 'virtual reality', saying: 'with a mirror, you can destroy the real, enlarge it, change it'.

At Nottingham Contemporary, the exhibition design has been conceived by Caruso St John Architects (architects of our RIBA Award-winning building). The presentation also includes several interventions, by artists Liam Gillick and Karl Holmqvist, and designer Petra Blaisse.

The exhibition is curated by Fredi Fischli and Niels Olsen (gta exhibitions, ETH Zurich), with a contribution from Sabine Sträuli (gta archives, ETH Zurich). It is designed and supported by Caruso St John Architects, and is a collaboration with KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin and with the Institute of History and Theory of Architecture (gta), ETH Zurich.

Gallery 2



Lehrstücke (Didactic Pieces), 1977–ongoing

The Haussmanns have coined the term 'Critical Mannerism' to describe their work. This approach is exemplified in their *Lehrstücke*, or 'Didactic Pieces'. Each of these works is a kind of manifesto or intellectual model, demonstrating a particular motto. For example, one upends the Modernist view that 'form follows function', arguing instead that, 'function follows form'. Elsewhere, form is 'disturbed' by ornament or else malfunctions completely, as a chair merges with a musical instrument.

Spiegelobjekte (Mirrored-Objects), 1979–ongoing

The Haussmanns have described mirrors as a kind of 'virtual reality', saying: 'with a mirror, you can destroy the real, enlarge it, change it'. Their mirrored objects take a variety of different forms – some are knotted, another illustrates classical single-point perspective. *Hommage à Braccelli* (2011) is dedicated to a 17th-century Italian artist named Giovanni Battista Braccelli, who drew people made up of objects and once produced an alphabet out of human forms.

Pillars, from the Weinberg Men's Store, Zurich 1980

In 1980, the Haussmanns designed a menswear store for Weinberg in Zurich, influenced in part by Giorgio de Chirico's surrealist paintings of mannequins and neoclassical plazas. While the store was dismantled last year, a series of wooden pillars, decorated with *trompe l'oeil* painting, were kept, and are displayed here.

Related Events

Wed 5 Sep, 2pm	Curators' Walkthrough
With Fredi Fischli and Niels Olsen	
Tue 4 Sep, 6.30–8.30pm	Thu 4 Oct, 6.30–8.30pm
Critical Mannerism Today	Conversation with Adam Caruso

Exhibition Walkthroughs

Wed 8 Aug, 6pm	Ana Souto, School of Architecture Design and the Built Environment, Nottingham Trent University
Wed 3 Oct, 6pm	Marisela Mendoza, School of Architecture Design and the Built Environment, Nottingham Trent University

Free entry.

Book online, by phone, or at our reception.
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