

ON SHOW
THE OBJECT IS ABSENT

PERIOD
DURING DDW FROM 11.00 TILL 18.00
19 – 27 OCTOBER 2019

VISITING ADDRESS
TORENALLEE 40-06
5617 BD EINDHOVEN

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WORKSHOPS

Editor's note
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interviews, please contact Angelique Spaninks:
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PRESS RELEASE

THE OBJECT IS ABSENT OPTIMISTIC MANIFESTO FOR LESS MATERIALISTIC DESIGN

“A man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone,” wrote Marie-Kondo Henry Thoreau in Walden. The report of his two-year exercise in simple living appeared in 1854, exactly 165 years ago. During Dutch Design Week 2019, MU is picking up the threads again with The Object is Absent, a trans-medial project that can be experienced and performed as a manifest for less materialistic design.

Theatre, music, film, sports and exhibition in one, *The Object is Absent* is an ever-moving presentation that does not revolve around the object but around the act. Set up as an action against the Action, a designers' statement against cheap profusion by creating value out of thin air, the exhibition adheres to a long and honourable tradition.

Take Seneca the Younger. Nearly two thousand years ago, he wrote: “It is not the man who has too little who is poor, but the one who hankers after more.” It's very unlikely though, that the extremely rich stoic would argue for modesty because he thought the world would ever be so thoroughly disturbed by human action as we witness today.

That makes the present situation so different. Change is happening at an alarming rate – melting poles, warming oceans, burning forests, exponential technological innovation. It is not just the climate zones that are moving: power is shifting too, on a global scale, as well as locally. We urgently need

About MU

MU is an adventurous and curious guide to an international network of creatives who investigate together what art can be. MU places art and design at the heart of everyday life. We always strive to connect art with topical developments in society, from digital culture to urban transformation, without ever losing sight of the artists and designers' capacity for radical rethinking.

MU is located in a former Philips factory at Strijp-S in Eindhoven, The Netherlands.



to create new relations and values between people, and between things and people. With *The Object is Absent*, MU takes a radical step in that direction. Without objects, obviously, but with designers and their attitudes, their ideas, their bodies and their minds.

What better moment than Dutch Design Week for MU to turn away from the square-metre fair stands and give the floor to the people instead. The Object is Absent takes this to its final consequence: the exhibition is entirely about acting design, singing design, dancing design and tasting design.

With this show we take a leap into the unknown, towards an all-compassing new way of being; a more healthy, interesting lifestyle without waste, without inequality. The objects are looking on, from the outside.

Concept, curating and realisation of *The Object is Absent* are in the hands of Alexandre Humbert, Tom Loois, Lucas Maassen and Angelique Spaninks.

Participating designers:

Alexandre Humbert
Alvin Arthur
Andreas Refsgaard
Dorota Gazy & Peter Rombouts
Elise 't Hart & Nils Davidse
Giulia Soldati
Govert Flint
Ivi van Keulen
Louis De Belle
Lucas Maassen
Mark Henning
Mary Caye
Noud Sleumer
Rawad Baaklini
Thom van Rijckevorsel
Vivien Tauchmann
Woody Veneman

And YOU and many, many others.

Overview of the projects that will be presented:

Actions

Don't buy things, do things! Design your skills. That is the core message of the Actions shop. With a little bit of imagination and dexterity, our body can easily be bent and put to use for all kinds of practical goals. It saves us from a lot of stuff.

Andreas Refsgaard

Poems About Things

Also in the Actions: not things but an app that makes poetry about things. Point your camera at an object around you and receive words in return. Sentences, poems, an additional layer of meaning that stimulates free association and lets you experience things in a different way.

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Alexandre Humbert

Object Interviews

Object Interviews is a collection of nineteen one-minute videos featuring design objects in conversation. The series investigates how objects exist on their own, giving us humans an entrance to the rich interior life of the non-human world around us.

Alexandre Humbert & Noud Sleumer

The Object is Absent

A Rietveld chair in a space, remembering how it got there and how it slowly disappears, while in the meantime we learn to see it for what it really is.

Lucas Maassen, Alvin Arthur, Marie Caye, Dorota Gazy

Auto Sêgo

Pronounced as [auto sejo] it sounds like Italian for taking a seat. A bit of training is all it takes for you to engage with the things around you in a different way, to create a healthy and interesting new lifestyle. Look at it as a sport with no boundaries, a form of self-sufficiency. Without waste or use of materials; only your muscles count.

Alvin Arthur

We Link In Motion

To dance forever, together. To Alvin Arthur the moving figure, the dancing body, is the essence of everything. It is pure form. It is the connecting link, the relation that makes us human among humans.

Lucas Maassen & Vivien Tauchmann + DAE masters social design

Body Architecture

How can we build spaces, not with stones or building materials but with our bodies? And how do we shape meaningful social spaces this way? Spaces we like to be in, or spaces we want to break out of. And how do they differ in experience and feeling from the spaces that we know and that surround us every day?

Rawad Baaklini

I Found A Recorder in My Fridge

If all the objects have to stay outside, while there are only people inside, what do we see? How do you talk about it, what do you tell and how do you know if your story is correct? Maybe you will never know, maybe it doesn't matter. Maybe it actually opens up the space we need in order to leave behind the things we have. This audio tour guide might help.

Louis de Belle

Disappearing objects

For years he collected secret instruments used by illusionists, resulting in a collection of tools for making objects disappear. Small mysterious artefacts – always fitting in a magician's hand – that often have features of something familiar to us: our own body. Recognisable and anthropomorphic, but fitted with clever functional springs and hinges.

Govert Flint

Motion Study: Sweat

Energy is elementary for physical movement. Movement demands effort and produces sweat. How this works exactly and what it looks like, is being investigated by Govert Flint in one of the Motion Studies he developed especially for *The Object is Absent*.

Dorota Gazy & Peter Rombouts

Dance Dialogues

With *Dance Dialogues*, Dorota Gazy and Peter Rombouts make complex organisational and societal questions tangible and visible by using movement. Because thinking alone is not enough. What happens in a court of justice, in a school full of very different students and in a family home where it is no longer safe?

Elise t Hart & Nils Davidse

Keuken

Words help us come to terms with the world around us. Saying the word 'kitchen' immediately calls forth an image – no matter how different this image might be for each of us, the essence of what a kitchen is, or could be, is clear. For *The Object is Absent*, Elise t Hart and Nils Davidse created a kitchen in words and sounds. What thoughts and associations, what smells and desires would they evoke?

Mark Henning

Normaal space

A handshake is more than a greeting. It says so much, if not everything, about who we are and where we stand – literally too; about how we see ourselves and the other, about social relations and feelings, about power and physicality. Mark Henning has been investigating the social expectations of the handshake for years, and during *The Object is Absent*, he will be conducting an experimental research; at the entrance, every day.

Thom van Rijckevorsel

What I need to know

Two hands holding something. A hollow space, something green, each other... They are moving, kneading, turning around each other, endlessly.

Noud Sleumer

De-Design Demos

Is it possible to *de*-design design? Of course it is! Very practically, by taking things apart. But any deconstruction also has material implications and philosophical layers. At all of these levels, Noud Sleumer is a *de*-maker. He leads us into the systematic *de*-design of everyday things, unfolding his knowledge of this issue along the way.

Giulia Soldati

Contatto Experience

Contatto Experience is a culinary approach that emphasises the sensorial experience of food preparation and consumption. *Contatto Experience* removes all unnecessary objects that create a distance between food and the body, such as cutlery, plates and some kitchen utensils. Focus is on the hand instead, extending taste to the realm of touch.

Vivien Tauchmann

Self as Other Trainings

Vivien Tauchmann engages critically with mind-numbing production lines mainly operated by low-wage labourers, often in distant lands. Starting from instructions that demonstrate in detail the endless repetitive movements from five such production lines (in retail, cocoa production, textile industry, phone making and work in a greenhouse), she tries to stimulate empathy for the often unseen other.

The Living Room

A photo studio like an endless white space. Not the objects take centre stage here but their makers. It is their portrait that will be taken while they impersonate their own work, their thinking, the being from which things originate.

Woody Veneman

The Anthem

For years, the singing chair created an international furore. He played in a sitcom, performed in clubs, at festivals and fairs. But today the chair no longer sings, his voice found back its body. For MU, Woody Veneman will now compose an anthem to the absence of things. A true singalong.

Ivi van Keulen

Sanding Time

How to let an iconic item like a wooden chair disappear slowly and seemingly without purpose by sanding it down completely by hand.

The Object is Absent can be seen and experienced from 11.00 till 18.00 every day, from 19 – 27 October, at MU. The entrance can be found at the Leidingstraat side of the Gerard Building

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