

New: 300 Coloured Vases by Hella Jongerius

On display in the exhibition 'Hella Jongerius - Misfit' (13 November 2010 – 13 February 2011)

This autumn Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is presenting the first Dutch retrospective exhibition of the designer Hella Jongerius. The exhibition is a unique survey of her work and provides an insight into her working method, experiments and innovative products. One of the most recent is a group of three hundred Coloured Vases (series 3), which will be exhibited for the first time in Rotterdam.

The three series of Coloured Vases are experiments in colour, in which an existing vase is used as a 'canvas'. The first two series consisted of forty and forty-two different porcelain vases, partially coated with paint from the industrial colour ranges RAL (2003) and NCS (2007). The third series is currently being produced in close collaboration with the glaze experts at Royal Tichelaar Makkum.

Minerals

Whereas the first two series employed industrial paints, this series uses a combination of a hundred historical mineral recipes and a hundred modern chemical glaze recipes. Jongerius refers to the latter as the 'fast-food' colours of the modern ceramics industry. The mineral recipes contain ingredients such as cadmium (red), iron (brown), selenium (yellow), copper (green), cobalt (blue) and manganese (purple). The historical and modern colours are applied in layers in a variety of patterns resulting in optical blending: a kind of Pointillism on porcelain. The combinations of colours and patterns and experiments with the firing temperature result in new colours. These are not flat like industrial colours but are irregular, layered and lively like the colours we know from paintings.

Jongerius believes that industry has focused too much on quantity and standardisation over the past few decades. Industry has created thousands of colours that are designed to look the same in all circumstances. These colours lack the irregularities that can provide a more beautiful visual experience such as those found in this series of Coloured Vases (series 3).

Imperfection

Hella Jongerius (1963) is one of the most important designers of her generation. In the 1990s she introduced imperfections and individuality into the industrial manufacturing process. Jongerius believes that the quality of craftsmanship is not legible in perfect products but only in the 'misfits' that betray the process and the hand of the maker. Many of her works, such as the Nymphenburg plates and the Frog Table, indicate the potential to contemporary design of historical motifs and repeat decorations.

Misfit

The exhibition Misfit at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen includes industrial products, unique experiments and numerous sketch models. All the objects are arranged by colour because this plays such an important role in Jongerius's work. The combinations of objects, including well-known designs such as B-set, Long Neck & Groove Bottles, Repeat fabrics, the Polder Sofa and IKEA vases, explore the themes inherent in Hella Jongerius's work.

Monograph

To coincide with the exhibition Phaidon Press is publishing the monograph 'Hella Jongerius - Misfit' written by Louise Schouwenberg with contributions by the design critic Alice Rawsthorn and Paola Antonelli, Senior Curator in the Department of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The works illustrated in the publication are also arranged by colour. The book is designed by Irma Boom and is available from the museum shop, along with a special limited edition of 300 copies related to the newest series of Coloured Vases.

The exhibition has been made possible by a contribution from the Ahrend Fonds, administered by the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds. 'Hella Jongerius - Misfit' is part of the official programme of Holland Art Cities 2009-2010.

Note for editors

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