

Press Release

APPLIED ARTS. NOW

PATRICK RAMPELOTTO. Adventures in Foam

A cooperation of the MAK and the University of Applied Arts

Press Preview	Tuesday, 24 January 2012, 10.30 a.m. Speaking on the exhibition and cooperation: Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, Director MAK Gerald Bast, Rector University of Applied Arts Marlies Wirth, curator MAK In the presence of Patrick Rampelotto
Opening	Tuesday, 24 January 2012, 7 p.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK Study Collection Furniture MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Term	25 January – 6 May 2012
Opening Hours	Tue 10 a.m.–10 p.m., Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Free admission on Tuesdays 6–10 p.m.

It is with an experimental exhibition project by designer Patrick Rampelotto that the MAK and the University of Applied Arts Vienna launch their new and wide-reaching cooperation APPLIED ARTS. NOW. In *Adventures in Foam*, Rampelotto uses an unusual material—polypropylene foam—to explore new forms and design strategies. The idea around which he orients his work is akin to Claude Lévi-Strauss's concept of "bricolage"—a non-predetermined process including possible deviations via which he ends up arriving at highly complex results: lampshades, seating surfaces, vessels and even sculptures which, in *Adventures in Foam*, he juxtaposes with some of his own previously developed design objects.

Patrick Rampelotto's works are clever, refined and multilayered; they do not impose, but rather challenge their viewers' curiosity and ability to perceive subtle messages and idiosyncrasies. In contrast to design products, which only fulfill a function via their actual use, Rampelotto's objects refrain from forcing any sort of interaction; they much rather invite, offer. In *Adventures of Foam*, as well, Rampelotto leaves open space for associations and inspiration without intending to create a market-ready final product.

Rampelotto hit upon the polypropylene foam used in his most recent works in early 2010: it is produced using a special machine which was developed and patented as a pilot unit to produce new kinds of sandwich components for the machine and vehicle industries by Hammerschmid Maschinenbau GmbH, located near Linz. This material has to be heated to a temperature of 140°C and then processed within seconds, since it quickly solidifies and assumes a stable shape as it cools off. It is the only known synthetic material which is both foamable and translucent. Hammerschmid agreed to give the young

designer access to both the machine and their technicians. Rampelotto, joined by his colleague Fritz Pernkopf, subsequently developed the prototypes for the stool *pilot* with a seating surface made of 3D polypropylene in a sandwich-construction, which will be presented at this year's Milan Furniture Fair and produced in series by Belgian label Quinze & Milan.

Rampelotto has taken *Adventures in Foam* as an opportunity to experiment with polypropylene foam in a way that is artistically free and unburdened by considerations of product utility. Rampelotto speaks of a type of "sketching," on the basis of which a product can then be developed further. He thinks that a lampshade conceived for this exhibition, for example, has potential to be produced in series, although manual production would entail each object's still being a unique piece.

Many works by Rampelotto, who rejects any strict separation of disciplines, oscillate between design product and art object. Born in Sterzing, Italy in 1978, Rampelotto first studied jurisprudence before eventually transferring to the University of Applied Arts Vienna. While studying industrial design there (2000–2006), he explored the materials of glass, silicone and felt in connection with production methods both traditional and high-tech.

He takes significant inspiration for his mode of working from the writings of French anthropologist and ethnologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. In Strauss's publication *The Savage Mind* (*La pensée sauvage*, 1962), Rampelotto came across the idea of "bricolage," which denotes a spontaneous or "do-it-yourself"-approach and is occasionally used as a derogatory expression, which he continues—after having worked for the design company EOOS and completed numerous freelance design and exhibition projects—to cite as an important impulse for his thinking. Much like in Lévi-Strauss's "bricolage," Rampelotto pursues a design strategy in which it is possible to give oneself over to experimental acts which have no purpose per se and can lead to new ideas and possible approaches to solutions precisely because of their immediacy and the impossibility of predetermining their outcomes.

Rampelotto will accompany the exhibition *Adventures in Foam* with a filmic work, underlaid with original quotations from *The Savage Mind*, which will focus on the design process itself and cast a glance behind the scenes of the exhibited objects' production.

APPLIED ARTS. NOW

The exhibition series APPLIED ARTS. NOW is intended to create a platform for contemporary forms of applied art and thus provide greater visibility for particularly interesting artistic stances originated by graduates of the University of Applied Arts Vienna who live and work in Austria. In parallel with this series, the events *Creativity Looks for Policy* and *Creativity Looks for Business*, part of the mutually conducted discussion series *Practice. applied*

will provide an opportunity for students, in particular, to ask questions relating to real-life practice.

“The MAK will be intensifying its efforts to promote younger generations of creative individuals. To this end, the University of Applied Arts is an obvious first stop. In addition to sharing a mutual history, the MAK and the University also concur in their view of the applied arts as a source of important potentials for advancing the positive transformation of our society. Together, we can become a central and open forum on Stubenring to further develop that international discourse which Vienna once again needs more of, identifying and using new ways to interlink various artistic disciplines,” says MAK Director Christoph Thun-Hohenstein of this cooperation’s relevance.

The exhibition series APPLIED ARTS. NOW is planned to include three exhibitions a year. *PATRICK RAMPELOTTO. Adventures in Foam* will be followed by *STIEFEL KRAMER ARCHITECTURE* (23 May – 16 September 2012) and *TALIA Y SEBASTIAN* (3 October 2012 – 6 January 2013). The discussion series *Practice. applied* will see its first events take place in the autumn of 2012.

Images relating to the exhibition *PATRICK RAMPELOTTO. Adventures in Foam*, as well as a statement by University of Applied Arts Vienna Rector Gerald Bast can be downloaded at MAK.at/presse.

Press Data Sheet

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Curator	Marlies Wirth
MAK Admission	€ 9.90 with MAK guide / € 7.90 / reduced: € 5.50
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Vienna, 18 January 2012