



MAK

Press Release

MAK FASHION Lab #02
SCIENTIFIC SKIN feat. Bare Conductive
in collaboration with Fabio Antinori + Alicja Pytlewska

Opening	Tuesday, 29 October 2013, 7 p.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK DESIGN SPACE MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Dates	30 October 2013–12 January 2014
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.

In its continuation of the *MAK FASHION Lab* series, the MAK DESIGN SPACE will once again serve as an experimental field and test lab for intelligent textiles and new technologies. *SCIENTIFIC SKIN feat. Bare Conductive*, the second intervention curated by Sabine Seymour, fashion technologist, and Thomas Geisler, curator of the MAK Design Collection, will provide insights into pioneering design developments that have to do with the scientific and technological manipulation of the skin and its visionary employment as a synthetic expansion of the body. “Technologies enhance the cognitive characteristics of our human epidermis and of textiles as a second skin, which can be extended through the use of sensor and actuator technologies,” says the guest curator on the present state of research.

In order to provide the exhibition’s visitors with an experience of such developments, which can occasionally seem quite abstract, the London design and development laboratory Bare Conductive was invited to team up with artists and designers from its circle to develop a large-scale intervention on the topic of “Scientific Skin.” Their resulting collaboration with Fabio Antinori and Alicja Pytlewska has produced the installation *Contours* consisting of interactive tapestries that react to motion in their immediate vicinity and can simultaneously be read as a metaphor of how a “second skin” can be brought to life by means of technology. The core components of these printed tapestries are sensors, so-called bare conductive touch boards, which are attached to a non-woven substrate.

A mere movement of one’s hand over such a tapestry’s surface, which is covered with an electrically charged paint, is enough to trip off the sensors as they react to changes in electric capacity. The reactions of a constantly running sound collage suggestive of a typical medical setting serve to complete the feedback loop and at the same time imply the relationship between science and the body.



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In their creation of these giant tapestries' outward appearance, the design team took its inspiration from the geometric and abstract design principles of Wiener Werkstätte artists such as Mathilde Flögl, Josef Hoffmann, Maria Strauss-Likarz, and Dagobert Peche. In doing so, the team has combined the conductive paint developed by Bare Conductive with traditional silkscreen printing processes. The ornamentation thus produced turns the printed tapestries into giant sensors that react to the signals of their environment.

To complement the main installation *Contours*, video works will provide insight into how scientists and artists are currently dealing with the theme of this second *MAK FASHION Lab*. While the conceptual video works *Skin Sucka* (2011) by Studio XO and the video *Swallowable Parfum* (2011) by Lucy McRae pose the questions of whether or not we want to change or even completely reprogram the biological characteristics of our human skin, the works *Future Farm* (2007) by Michael Burton and both *Expanded Self* (2012) and *Metabodies* (2013) by Sonja Bäumel show artistic realizations of microbiological research done on the human body.

The works of designer Amy Congdon, including *Quanticare* (2012), invite one on an excursion into “synthetic biology,” a term that, according to scientific historian Luis Campos, was only coined following the 20th century's conclusion. The way in which this new branch of science is understood today has been strongly influenced by amorphous computing, which integrates the fields of artificial life, computer science, and biocomputing. The Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL) at MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) was then one of the first research institutions worldwide to deal more closely with the complex technological implications of synthetic biology. “Even just a decade ago, epidermal electronics that can be applied directly to the skin were said to be an impossibility, but today these are being realized in research laboratories worldwide and are showing immense potential that includes medical monitoring of the human body via sensors,” says Seymour by way of explaining the significance of interdisciplinary research with regard to the development of intelligent materials, which will be discussed on the MAK blog fashion.MAK.at to accompany and expand upon the exhibition.

The in part artistic and hypothetical video works, based on high-tech and scientific research, will be juxtaposed with handmade material experiments by the avant-garde fashion designer Carol Christian Poell, of whose work the MAK Collection is home to a Special Archive. The presented lookbooks and object photographs of clothing and accessories made of animal skins transparently tanned or colored with bull's blood attest to the designer's continuous analysis of the “skin” theme in his collections.

A chance to deal intensively with the theme of the *MAK FASHION Lab #02* will be offered by the *departure/MAK d>lab.07* workshop *The Body as Actuator* with Sabine Seymour and Bare Conductive's Matt Johnson (30 October 2013, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.), which will be organized as part of the series *design> new strategies*, a cooperative project of the MAK and *departure* – The Creative Agency of the City of Vienna. Participation is free of charge but limited to a maximum of 20 individuals. Registration is possible until 23 October 2013 at d-lab@departure.at.

Sabine Seymour is a fashion technologist and head of the Fashionable Technology Lab at Parsons The New School for Design in New York and co-chair of the Rockefeller Foundation-sponsored project Computational Fashion at the Eyebeam Art+Technology Center in New York. She is also a guest professor at Aalto University in Helsinki and Chief Creative Officer of her own company Moondial in New York and Austria.
moondial.com

Matt Johnson is a techno designer and co-founder of the design studio **Bare Conductive** in London. The focus of his work lies in the development and production of electrically conductive materials. He is the inventor of Bare Paint, the first non-toxic conductive paint, which is ideal for both prototyping and experimentation and learning with electronics.
bareconductive.com

Fabio Lattanzi Antinori's work deals with the individual and the group from a social, historical and cultural perspective, with an emphasis on systems of the corporate world, postmodern society and mass culture and a special interest in the role of data.
fabiolattanziantinori.com

Alicja Pytlewska lives as a designer and book illustrator in London and works in a multitude of disciplines on the fringes of art, design and technology. She is a graduate of the Royal College of Art and has a special interest in user interfaces.
studioala.me

Press photos are available for download at MAK.at/press.

Press Data Sheet

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Guest Curator	Sabine Seymour
Curator	Thomas Geisler, Curator, MAK Design Collection
Scientific Advisor:	Barbara Karl, Curator, MAK Textiles and Carpets Collection, Heidemarie Caltik, Curator, MAK Design-Info-Pool Collection and Special Archive Design Pioneers
MAK Admission	€ 7.90 / reduced: € 5.50 / family ticket: € 11 / free admission for children and teens up to 19
<i>departure</i> /MAK d>lab.07	Wednesday, 30 October 2013, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. <i>The Body as Actuator</i> Workshop with Matt Johnson/Bare Conductive and Sabine Seymour (in English) MAK DESIGN SPACE / MAK Columned Main Hall
Supporting Program	Wednesday, 30 October 2013, 5 p.m. Artists' and Curators' talk with Matt Johnson/Bare Conductive, Fabio Antinori, Alicja Pytlewska and Sabine Seymour, Guest Curator (in English) MAK DESIGN SPACE
	Thursday, 21 November 2013, 5 p.m. Curator's guided tour with Thomas Geisler, Curator, MAK Design Collection



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