

Press Release

MAK DESIGN SALON #02
STUDIO FORMAFANTASMA. The Stranger Within
Contemporary Design Intervention at the MAK Branch
Geymüllerschloß

Press Preview	Tuesday, 10 September 2013, 6 p.m.
Opening	Tuesday, 10 September 2013, 7 p.m.
Exhibition Venue	MAK Branch Geymüllerschloß Pötzleinsdorferstraße 102, 1180 Vienna
Exhibition Dates	14 September–1 December 2013
Opening Hours	Every Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Opening Hours during VIENNA DESIGN WEEK (27 Sep–6 Oct 2013)	Fri, 27 September and Fri, 4 October, 2–6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.

Society's ambivalent stances toward the "foreign" or "strange" are the theme that Studio Formafantasma (Simone Farresin, *1983 and Andrea Trimarchi, *1980) have chosen for their presentation *The Stranger Within*, to be held as *MAK DESIGN SALON #02*. For the second time, this series of MAK exhibitions will open up the Empire and Biedermeier atmosphere of the MAK Branch Geymüllerschloß, to statements of contemporary design. In dialog with the stately home's historical substance, *The Stranger Within* introduces a total of seven interventions in space that deal with the paradox phenomena of yearning for distant places and Biedermeier-era coziness or homeliness that one can experience at the Geymüllerschloß.

Formafantasma's experimental object series react subtly to the fascination with the "exotic" that is reflected in the Geymüllerschloß's architecture. Indian and Arabian stylistic quotations in the façade ornamentation and the villa's interior tell of that period's predilection for the cultures of the Orient. "In a globalized world where the concept of the 'exotic' is losing its meaning, we invite the audience to take a closer look and, in questing after inspiration for the design of the present and the future, to turn their gazes both inward and back towards the past," say the designers.

The central work *The Stranger Within, Nodus Rug* (2013) is a rug designed specifically for the Geymüllerschloß's Blue Salon in collaboration with the Italian producer Nodus. This piece, derived from the texture and coloration of the surrounding interior spaces, is reminiscent of an oversized mask and functions as a mystical metaphor of the foreign. Stood upright in the middle of the Salon, the



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rug acts like a totem around which the other exhibits distribute themselves through the villa's adjoining rooms. This textile work was made as a reference to the Jewish family of textile manufacturer Isidor Mautner, which owned the villa from 1888 to 1938 and was then forced to flee the country after the National Socialists took power. The combination of this rug with objects made of inflated or hardened pig's bladders, such as the *Bladder Chandelier* (2013), evoke associations with folkloric Carnival traditions.

Mechanisms of colonial power structures and of present-day migration policy are addressed by the series of objects entitled *Moulding Tradition* (2009). Starting from Arabian-African influences on European ceramics production, Studio Formafantasma makes reference to present-day migration flows from Africa to islands such as Lampedusa and reflects on themes such as national identity and racism. In a reference to a traditional Sicilian genre of ceramics known as *teste di moro*, buoy-shaped vessels bear portraits of refugees.

The work series *Botanica* (2011) and *Craftica* (2012), which underwent further development for this MAK exhibition, deal with innovative material developments and their application. At the Geymüllerschloss, these works—developed from animal or plant waste materials—find their counterparts in a bouquet of artificial flowers made entirely of butterfly wings from c. 1840. “Just as the Biedermeier era's exploration of nature was accompanied by the Industrial Revolution, the present era of digital modernity is accompanied by the search for alternative raw materials and production techniques as well as a new sensuousness inherent in the products themselves. Studio Formafantasma views itself as a materials laboratory of a new industrial era,” says Thomas Geisler, exhibition curator and collection curator of the MAK Design Collection.

This *MAK DESIGN SALON* will also include Simone Farresin and Andrea Trimarchi's first-ever presentation of their prototype for the drinking set *Alphabet*, developed in collaboration with Viennese glassware manufacturer J. &L. Lobmeyr. This set will go into production next year as a special edition of J. &L. Lobmeyr to celebrate the MAK's 150-year jubilee.

Following London designer Michael Anastassiades's intervention *Time & Again* (12 May–25 November 2012), *The Stranger Within* will be the second *MAK DESIGN SALON* presentation. This exhibition by Studio Formafantasma enjoys the generous support of the Viennese auction house Dorotheum. Loan works have been provided by lenders including the Textile Museum in Tilburg and Gallery Libby Sellers in London.

STUDIO FORMAFANTASMA

Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin began working together while studying for their bachelor's degrees in graphic design and illustration. It was later on, while in the master's program at Design Academy Eindhoven (from which they graduated in July of 2009), that the two Italian designers became interested in product design. At their Studio Formafantasma, situated in Eindhoven, they deal with the relationship between tradition and local cultures, with the role of design in arts and crafts, and with the meaning of objects as cultural conduits. Their works have been shown in several international exhibitions and have received several international awards, and are also owned by several important collections—now including that of the MAK. In 2012, the duo won the souvenir competition “European Home Run” held by the Vienna Tourist Board. Their winning work, a card game developed in collaboration with the card factory Ferd. Piatnik & Söhne, can be purchased at the MAK Design Shop.

MAK Branch Geymüllerschloß

The Geymüllerschloß in Pötzleinsdorf was erected as a “summer retreat” sometime after 1808 at the behest of the Viennese merchant and banker Johann Jakob Geymüller (1760–1834). Alongside the permanent exhibit of 160 distinctive old Viennese clocks from the collection of Franz Sobek, Empire and Biedermeier-era furnishings from the MAK Furniture Collection represent the villa's most important points of interest. No other publicly accessible building in Austria reflects the specific lifestyle and zeitgeist of the “Vormärz” period with a comparable degree of authenticity. And this past is brought into dialog with the present by the sculptural ensemble *Der Vater weist dem Kind den Weg* [*Father Showing the Child the Way*] by Hubert Schmalix (1996) and James Turrell's skyspace *The other Horizon* (1998/2004), located in the park adjoining the main building.

Press materials and images are available for download at MAK.at/press.

Press Fact Sheet

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Curator	Thomas Geisler, curator, MAK Design Collection
Supporting Program	Sunday, 29 September 2013, 11:00 a.m. Matinee as part of VIENNA DESIGN WEEK (27 September–6 October 2013) Designers Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin of Studio Formafantasma, London gallerist Libby Sellers and design critic Alice Rawsthorn (International Herald Tribune et al.) will talk with Thomas Geisler, curator, MAK Design Collection. Open to a limited number of participants Information and registration: T +43 1 711 36-231, marketing@MAK.at
Design Tours	Sundays, 22 Sep, 20 Oct, 10 Nov, 1 Dec 2013, 3 p.m. with Thomas Geisler, curator, MAK Design Collection
MAK Admission	€ 7.90 / reduced € 5.50 / family ticket € 11 / free admission for children and teens up to 19
MAK Press and PR	Judith Anna Schwarz-Jungmann (head) Sandra Hell-Ghignone Veronika Träger Lara Steinhäuber T +43 1 711 36-233, 229, 212 presse@MAK.at, MAK.at Vienna, 10 September 2013