

Chairs Beyond Right & Wrong

This September, R & Company presents “Chairs Beyond Right & Wrong,” an exhibition curated by Raquel Cayre to re-think the chair and its corresponding forms of use and design.

Featuring nearly 50 international artists and designers, the exhibition surveys the chair as a formal object, a product, a structure, a symbol and a material. Participants are invited to explore how these ideas contribute to an expanded notion of the chair as an archetype for creative work, while challenging the categorical divisions that extend between art and design. Some works were newly-produced for the exhibition, while others were curated specifically for their ability to contour away from pre-existing notions of form and function.

The title is a reference to the work of Seth Price, whose interdisciplinary use of diffusion, manipulation and narrative channel into strategies and arrangements found in the exhibition. “All interesting, all interlocking,” the exhibition, like the chair itself is always “something new, something else, something something.”

Taking place on both upper and lower levels of the 64 White Street gallery, “Chairs Beyond Right & Wrong” encompasses a wide spectrum of practices and approaches that reflect the curator’s interest in the exhibition format and the chair’s unique ability to refract its potential meanings. “Chairs no longer gravitate toward a table;” Cayre states, “they take on their own meaning, and, like a game of musical chairs, offer a metaphor for position, arrangement, variation, distribution and recombination.

...A chair is always more than a chair.”

About Raquel Cayre

Raquel Cayre is a furniture advisor, collector and curator based in New York. Last May, she took up the architecture of 79 Greene Street in Soho to challenge models for exhibiting art and design for her Dream House, while curating the popular @ettoreotsass on Instagram. Her work has been featured in Vogue, Architectural Digest, New York Magazine, et al. She is thinking about 397 Chairs.

About R & Company

R & Company represents a distinguished group of historical and contemporary designers whose work is among the most innovative and finely crafted of their time.

Gallery principals Zesty Meyers and Evan Snyderman have garnered international acclaim for their groundbreaking exhibitions and publications and for their commitment to preserving history through their extensive archives, library, and private collection. Consistently, Meyers and Snyderman exhibit an extraordinary acumen for discovering and bringing designers to the forefront of the rapidly escalating design market.

R & Company is currently developing exhibitions and publications on the designers it represents—a diverse program that includes work from North America, South America, Europe, and Asia produced between 1945 and today.

Artists & Designers

Adam McEwen, Al Freeman, Alex Israel, Bunny Rogers, Chris Wolston, Cory Arcangel, Dana Barnes, Daniel Arsham, Darren Bader, Ely Fink and Todd Reime, Ettore Sottsass, Gaetano Pesce, Green River Project LLC, Heji Shin, Jim Lambie, Joanne Tatham & Tom O’Sullivan, Jordan Wolfson, Jorge Pardo, Josh Sperling, Joyce Lin, Katherine Bernhardt, Katie Stout, KAWS and Estudio Campana, Lucy Dodd, Margaret Lee and Emily Sundblad, Mathias Bengtsson, Mario Navarro, Martine Syms, Martino Gamper, Mary Heilmann, Misha Kahn, Nate Lowman, Nicole Wermers, Paola Pivi, Peter Shire, Reginald Sylvester II, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Rob Pruitt, Rogan Gregory, Sam Stewart, Serban Ionescu, Seth Price, The Haas Brothers, Thomas Barger, Tom Burr, Trisha Baga, Urs Fischer, Wade Guyton

The seasons are changing. The shapes of things stretch out to meet corridors, where morning light hits the wall in patterns. Black dots punctuate the arm of chair as I wake up, between the end of Summer and the start of Autumn, to a rustling of paper and wind. A letter.

1. The exhibition begins like a game with a chair and a room.
2. A game is a situation where we know the rules but can’t predict the outcome.

“Chairs Beyond Right & Wrong” is an exhibition organized to re-think the chair and its corresponding forms of use and design. The exhibition will present the chair as both a formal object and a product, a structure and a symbol. Some of the works are newly-produced, while others were curated specifically to consider the chair’s valent meanings and applications in the context of the exhibition.

Starting with the chair, one thinks of..

Form
Function
Work
Integration
Viewership
Hierarchy
Sculpture

But a chair is never reducible to just form or function; it is the material expression of both. To quote a line from Donald Judd, the art of a chair is not its resemblance to art, “but its usefulness and scale as a chair. ...A work of art exists as itself; a chair exists as a chair itself. And the idea of a chair isn’t a chair.”¹

Imagine three objects in a room.

A chair.
A photograph of a chair.
A definition of a chair.

Perhaps all three are chairs, or just stand-ins for one. But isn’t a chair simply a chair?²

The tendency is to ask what a chair is; but what the exhibition hopes to show is how the word “chair” might be used and how the rules that animate the movement from the space of utility to the space of art are made visible.

Chairs no longer gravitate toward a table; they take on their own meaning, and, like a game of musical chairs, offer a metaphor for position, arrangement, variation, distribution and recombination. It’s been said that “an arrangement of chairs [can] be taken as a language.”³ But the chair doesn’t present itself solely as an illustration of a particular idea, it shows how meanings are inseparable from the material used to express them. “Don’t look for the meaning of things,” says Wittgenstein, “look for their use.”⁴

The chair fragments and partitions.
It paces the real with a flow of words.

It does not have a specific place.
It leans away in the wind.

1. Donald Judd. Museum Boymans-Van Beuningen, Museum Villa Stuck. Donald Judd, furniture. Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, 1993. p. 21
2. Joseph Kosuth. One and Three Chairs, 1965. Wood folding chair, mounted photograph of a chair, and mounted photographic enlargement of the dictionary definition of “chair.” Publication excerpt from The Museum of Modern Art, MoMA Highlights, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, revised 2004, originally published 1999, p. 257.
3. Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Wittgenstein’s Lectures*, 1932 - 35, Edited by Alice Ambrose, publ. Blackwell, 1979. The 1932-33 Lecture notes, pp2 - 40 reproduced here.
4. Nicolas Bourriaud quoting Rirkrit Tiravanija. “Public Relations An Interview with Nicolas Bourriaud,” *Artforum*, April 2001