

Acquisitions

Twentieth-Century Fine and Applied Art

• LUDO VAN HALEM •

I BART VAN DER LECK (Utrecht 1876-1958 Blaricum)

Composition, 1918

Oil on canvas, 52 x 52 cm (with frame 57 x 57 cm)

Signed lower right: *B vd Leck '18*

© c/o Pictoright Amsterdam, 2013

Bart van der Leck's association with De Stijl was short-lived, but his work and views were of disproportionate significance in the development of the new visual idiom that the artists involved in this modern movement were seeking. Theo van Doesburg and Vilmos Huszár, for instance, were greatly impressed by his method of abstracting an image using stripes and blocks of primary colours when they saw his *Mine Triptych* in Museum Kröller in The Hague at the end of 1916. Earlier that year Van der Leck had also become friendly with Piet Mondrian; the friendship sparked an intense exchange of ideas about abstracting and abstraction.

Van der Leck published two articles in the newly founded periodical *De Stijl* in 1917 and 1918, and then went his own way. Highly critical of the role of architects in the magazine and regarding De Stijl first and foremost as a movement for painters, he refused to sign the first manifesto.

The paintings he made in these years are among the most abstract in his oeuvre. The notion that his work was purely abstract in this period is a persistent misunderstanding that arose because at an exhibition in 1919 he described some compositions as 'mathematical images'. But underlying these paintings, too, is a motif derived from reality that Van der Leck 'objectified'.

Van der Leck's point of departure for the square *Composition* of 1918, which the Rijksmuseum recently acquired through a generous gift, cannot as yet be established with certainty. In 1918 Van der Leck painted five numbered and four unnumbered *Compositions*. Most of them are rectangular and quite small. *Composition 1918 no. 5* in the Museum De Fundatie's collection in Zwolle and the Rijksmuseum's slightly smaller *Composition* are exceptions in that they are completely square. The former is known to be an 'objectification' of a preliminary study of a farm and sheep. This motif was reduced still further in the monumental square *Composition 1918-1920* of 1920, now in the collection of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. A similar motif was probably also the starting point for the *Composition* in the Rijksmuseum's collection.

This *Composition* is closely related to the other two square paintings. The 'composition' occurs within an imaginary square plane that is smaller than the canvas. This area is demarcated by long strips and small square blocks, inside which more shapes maintain equilibrium and tension between one another along the diagonals. The centre is always a key factor, marked in the *Composition* by a yellow lozenge. The order in which the three

square paintings were conceived in 1918 is an interesting but as yet unanswered question. What is certain is that the painting in the Stedelijk was the last to be finished. The number of shapes makes *Composition 1918 no. 5* the liveliest, while *Composition 1918-1920* exhibits the 'extreme austerity of image' that Van der Leck strove to achieve. The Rijksmuseum's *Composition*, in turn, brings together the dynamism and the soberness of the other two paintings.

LITERATURE:

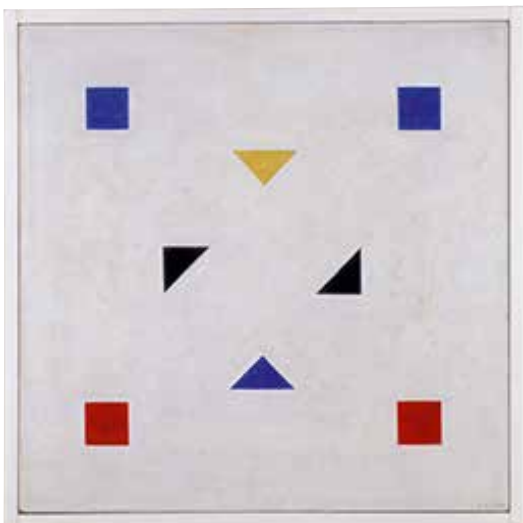
J. van Es, "Composition" (1918) Bart van der Leck', *Jaarboek Haags Gemeentemuseum*, The Hague 1991, pp. 6-13

PROVENANCE:

Bart van der Leck (until 1925); Mr and Mrs H.S. Frenkel (1925-1957); private collection (1957-2013); private gift in memory of Mr H.S. Frenkel, 2013
(inv. no. SK-A-5022).



BART VAN DER LECK,
Composition 1918
no. 5, 1918.
Oil on canvas,
70 x 70 cm.
Heino/Wijhe and
Zwolle, Museum
De Fundatie.
© c/o Pictoright
Amsterdam, 2013.



BART VAN DER LECK,
Composition 1918-1920,
1920.
Oil on canvas,
100.5 x 100.5 cm.
Amsterdam,
Stedelijk Museum.
© c/o Pictoright
Amsterdam, 2013.



- 2 WILLEM HENDRIK GISPEN (Amsterdam 1890-1981 The Hague);
 manufactured by Gispens's Fabriek voor Metaalbewerking NV, Rotterdam/Culemborg
Giso no. 23, 1926 (design), c. 1930-36 (manufactured)
 Chromed brass, glass, electrical wiring, h. 95 x Ø 50 cm
 © Estate of Willem Hendrik Gispens

Shortly after their introduction the *GISO no. 23* and other lamps in the same series became the 'image' of the *GISO* brand of lamps made by Gispens's Fabriek voor Metaalbewerking N.V. The lamp was designed in 1926 and appeared in the company's first sales catalogue in 1927. The basis of the design was a globe of patented *GISO* glass above which was mounted a dish-shaped metal reflector. The lamp was available in two sizes as a fixed or adjustable pendant lamp, or as a ceiling lamp. Initially the pendant lamps were made of black bronzed copper,

but around 1930 the company switched to high-gloss chrome.

In 1927 W.H. Gispens had the opportunity to show his *GISO* lamps at *Die Wohnung*, an exhibition in Stuttgart staged by the Deutsche Werkbund. After that he regarded these lamps as his international visiting card. Gispens used a photograph of the *GISO no. 27* (the adjustable model) and a view of it from below, taken by the Rotterdam photographer Jan Kamman, for a poster that had been designed entirely according to the rules of the New Typography – powerful sans-serif letters in an asymmetrical composition in which bright colours (red, black and white) caught the eye.

The poster literally turned the lamp into a *logo*, an icon of the Modernist products that Gispens made. Not every *GISO* lamp had this potential. The lamp was different from the others because of the beautiful contrast between the soft, domed reflective dish and the pure white globe. The reflections in the material make the lamp a vibrant object even by day, while at night it evokes associations with a luminous heavenly body. Here form and function make a happy marriage.

The model was available for a long time, but there is virtually no documentation of its use in interiors. There are very few surviving examples. The lamp that the Rijksmuseum acquired almost certainly came from the interior of a shop, office or workshop of the lingerie firm of Spruyt van Rietschoten in Amsterdam.

LITERATURE:

- Giso-Lampen*, cat. Rotterdam (Gispens's fabriek voor metaalbewerking) 1927, no. 23
 A. Koch, *Industrieel ontwerper W.H. Gispens (1890-1981). Een modern eclecticus*, Rotterdam 1988, pp. 48-52
 A. Koch, *W.H. Gispens Serieproducten 1923-1960*, Rotterdam 2005, p. 39
 H. Behrens, *Gispens in Rotterdam. Nieuwe verbeelding van het Moderne*, Rotterdam 2006, p. 51
 A. Koch and S. van Schaik, *Gispens, s.l.* [Zwolle] 2011, p. 11 (fig.)

PROVENANCE:

- Kunsthandel De Andere Tijd, Kampen; purchase, 2011
 (inv. no. BK-2011-57).



W.H. GISPEN (design),
 JAN KAMMAN (photography)
 AND KÜHN & ZOON (printers),
GISO Lamps Poster, 1928.
 Lithograph, 990 x 710 mm.
 Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum.
 © c/o Pictoright Amsterdam, 2013.



- 3 GERRIT THOMAS RIETVELD (Utrecht 1888-1964 Utrecht);
made by Gerard van de Groenekan, Utrecht
Beugel (Bow) Chair, 1927
Fibreboard, iron, 85 x 50 x 85 cm
© c/o Pictoright Amsterdam, 2013

'Witty Rietveld makes chairs from round iron tubes and hard cardboard,' wrote the critic A.H. Jansen in a review of the *Tentoonstelling van Architectuur, Schilderkunst & Beeldhouwkunst A.S.B.*, an exhibition of architecture, painting and sculpture staged in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam from 4 February to 1 March 1928. Jansen's tongue-in-cheek remark referred to the '*Beugel (Bow) Chair*, a design that had only just been completed. An upright model for the dining room had been shown in November 1927 at *Het Kunstlooze Gebruiksvoorwerp*, an exhibition organized by W.H. Gispen in the Rotterdamsche Kring. Now an easy chair based on the same design principle was being presented in the Stedelijk. Later that year the '*Beugel*' made its international debut at the exhibition *Der Stuhl* in Stuttgart. The design was well-received by the press.

Rietveld's design was an original contribution to the tempestuous development of tubular metal furniture in the 1920s. The structure was as daring as it was innovative: a round iron bar bent into two loops formed 'bows' linked solely by a shell made of fibreboard – 'hard cardboard' as Jansen called it. Rietveld experimented with this material in an endeavour to make a chair 'in one piece'.

Rietveld also used laminated wood for the chair seats and he replaced the solid iron rod with hollow tubing. In 1931 the modern furniture shop, Metz & Co, added three variations of this lighter version to its range. As a result, the '*Beugel Chair*' was Rietveld's first design that could boast of a larger production volume.

The '*Beugel Chair*' purchased by the Rijksmuseum is one of the very first examples that Rietveld made in 1927 with his regular furniture maker Gerard van de Groenekan. The chair was used primarily for exhibitions like the *A.S.B.* After Rietveld's death, Van de Groenekan sold the chair to the architect and Rietveld expert Gerrit Oorthuys.

LITERATURE:

- A.H. Jansen, 'De Groep A.S.B.', *Maandblad voor Beeldende Kunsten* 5 (1928), no. 4, pp. 124-25 (fig. p. 124)
J. van Geest et al., *Metalen Buisstoelen 1925-1940*, exh. cat. Delft (Stedelijk Museum Het Prinsenhof)/Haarlem (De Hallen) 1975, p. 35, cat. no. 116
O. Máčel, *2100 Metal Tubular Chairs: A Typology*, Rotterdam 2006, p. 133, cat. no. IV-C-II

PROVENANCE:

- Gerard van de Groenekan (until c. 1970?); Gerrit Oorthuys; purchased with the support of the BankGiro Loterij, 2012 (inv. no. BK-2012-13).



Furniture by
Gerrit Rietveld at
the *Tentoonstelling
van Architectuur,
Schilderkunst &
Beeldhouwkunst
A.S.B.* in the Stedelijk
Museum, Amsterdam,
1928.
Photograph from
*Maandblad voor
Beeldende Kunsten* 5
(1928), no. 4, p. 124.



- 4 WILLEM HENDRIK GISPEN (Amsterdam 1890-1981 The Hague);
 manufactured by Gispens's Fabriek voor Metaalbewerking NV, Rotterdam
Sideboard no. 706, 1933-34
 Mahogany, plywood, chromium-plated steel and brass, 95 x 126 x 31 cm
 © Estate of Willem Hendrik Gispens

On 7 October 1933 an exhibition of Gispens furniture for bedrooms, dining rooms, sitting rooms and studies opened in the Koninklijke Tentoonstellingszaal Kleykamp in The Hague. The firm had caused a sensation with revolutionary interior designs for projects like the Van Nelle factory in Rotterdam and the Town Hall in Hilversum. This presentation, however, was a carefully-orchestrated attempt to focus attention on the use of modern tubular furniture in a more domestic environment. The furniture was arranged on Moroccan rugs; the furnishing fabrics were made by 't Paapje mill and the tables were laid with linen by Van Dissel and glasswork by Muller. Japanese prints hung on the walls, and flowers tastefully arranged in vases by A.D. Copier ensured a finishing touch of modern domesticity.

Completely new designs also made their debut at the exhibition, among them a number of sideboards designed specifically for the home. Even though they appeared to fit in naturally with the existing and tried-and-tested range, this experimental furniture was a daring first attempt by W.H. Gispens to market a modular furniture system. Two identical braces of chrome-plated steel were connected by a board (a construction principle reminiscent of Rietveld's *'Beugel' Chair*) and a structure of two, three or four wooden cupboards

in different configurations was placed on this support, which could vary in length. Chrome-plated flap hinges and visible dovetail joints were subtle structural details within an abstract composition of planes and lines.

Six models were offered in the 1934 furniture catalogue with prices on request. But sales must have been negligible; the sideboards had already disappeared from the catalogue a year later. The sideboard in the Rijksmuseum's collection, one of the two known surviving examples – the other being in the collection of the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (inv. no. AB17857) – is an extremely rare testimony to a Modernist experiment. It was not until decades later that modular furniture for the home really became fashionable.

LITERATURE:

- A. Koch, *W.H. Gispens Serieproducten 1923-1960*, Rotterdam 2005, pp. 102-03
 A. Koch and S. van Schaik, *Gispens, s.l.* [Zwolle] 2011, p. 34 (fig.)

PROVENANCE:

- Kunsthandel De Andere Tijd, Kampen; purchase, 2011
 (inv. no. BK-2011-56).



Exhibition of Gispens furniture in the Koninklijke Tentoonstellingszaal Kleykamp in The Hague, 1933, *Sideboard no. 706* on the left. Photo: The New Institute, Rotterdam.



5 CONSTANT (C.A. Nieuwenhuijs, Amsterdam 1920-2005 Utrecht)

Space Circus, 1956-61

Iron wire, 69 x 59 x 59 cm

© c/o Pictoright Amsterdam, 2013

The original concept of Constant's *Space Circus* was entirely different from what the current title of this sculpture might suggest. At the time it was described as *A Design for a Monument in Museumplein in Amsterdam*. The celebration of Rembrandt Year in 1956 may have prompted it, because when Constant began this model he was on a committee of the Liga Nieuw Beelden, an artists' collective that was to prepare the 'decoration' of Amsterdam in that jubilee year.

As an artist he had a new 'art of construction' in mind, which would have to be 'at once lyrical in its means and social in its very nature'. Technical developments made far freer forms of construction possible and as a result architects and artists would be able to restore the poetry in the urban environment. The *Monument* was intended as just such a poetic element in the city, a spatial drawing that was to be built several metres high, as we can see in a photomontage by the photographer Jan Versnel (1924-2007).

Although Constant had actually worked on such a monumental scale at the *E55* reconstruction exhibition in Rotterdam the year before, this time it did not go beyond the design stage. Soon, though, another dimension almost literally opened up. In 1957 Constant and the American photographer and film maker Hy Hirsch (1911-1961) started work on a film about his constructions, which were billed in the title credits as *Space Sculptures*.

In the experimental abstract film *Gyromorphosis*, which was premiered in 1958, Constant's constructions gyrate to the rhythm of jazz music and are illuminated by different coloured lights, seemingly weightless in space like abstract celestial bodies. The *Space Circus* itself cannot be discerned in this complex cosmic ballet, but it is possible to identify various fan and half-moon-shaped parts that he did not solder to it until 1961, as if they were modules linked to a space station. Since then the *Design for a Monument in Museumplein in Amsterdam* has always been known by the title *Space Circus*.

LITERATURE:

- Constant*, Paris 1959, unpagéd (fig.)
 H. van Haaren, 'Signalement van Constant', *Museumjournaal* 10 (1965), no. 5, p. 119 (fig. d)
 J.L. Locher (ed.), *Constant New Babylon*, exh. cat. The Hague (Haags Gemeentemuseum) 1974, p. 76 (fig. 3)
 M. Ragon, *Constant*, exh. cat. Paris (Galerie Daniel Gervis) 1974 (fig.)
 J.-C. Lambert, *Constant. Les trois espaces*, Paris 1992, p. 77 (fig. 52)
 J. van Geest, 'De vrije kunst van het construeren. Een tafelontwerp van Constant', *Jong Holland* 12 (1996), no. 2, pp. 4-11 (fig. 8)
 J.-C. Lambert, *Constant. New Babylon. Art et Utopie*, Paris 1997, p. 117
 M. Wigley, *Constant's New Babylon: The Hyper-Architecture of Desire*, Rotterdam 1998, p. 45 (fig. 9)
 M. Fréchuret et al., *Constant. Une rétrospective*, exh. cat. Antibes (Musée Picasso) 2001, p. 47 (fig. 4)
 M. Hummelink, *Après nous la liberté. Constant en de artistieke avant-garde in de jaren 1946-1960*, Amsterdam 2002, pp. 272, 274 (fig. 130)
 T. van der Horst, *Constant, de late periode. Tegen de stroom in naar essentie. Une peinture nouvelle*, Nijmegen 2008, pp. 82-83 (fig. 94), p. 89 (fig. 102)

PROVENANCE:

Estate of the artist; purchased with the support of the Bank Giro Loterij, 2012

(inv. no. BK-2012-65).





< JAN VERSNEL,
*Photomontage of
Constant's Space
Circus in Museum-
plein, c. 1956.*
Gelatin silver print,
365 x 304 mm.
Private collection.
Photo:
© Jan Versnel/MAI.

- 6 ANDRIES DIRK COPIER (Leerdam 1901-1991 Wassenaar);
possibly made by Hannes den Hartog for Royal Leerdam
Bottle Vase, 1958
Glass, h. 45 cm
Signed and marked on the base: *A.D. Copier CB1*
© Estate of Andries Dirk Copier

The large bottle vase the Rijksmuseum acquired as a gift in 2011 is the first in the series of unique works made by A.D. Copier, the creative director of Royal Leerdam, in preparation for the world exhibition in Brussels (*Expo 58*) and shortly afterwards for the *Glass 1959* exhibition in the Corning Museum of Glass in the United States. They are fluidly shaped objects with an emphatic asymmetry and an overlay in one or two colours.

One characteristic of these bottle vases made in 1958 is the indentation on the shoulder of the vase, which does not entirely coincide with the overlay. That aspect was completely accidental and came about as a result of a mistake made by the glass-maker Hannes den Hartog. It would seem that the dent appeared in the wrong place when the vacuum was created, but Copier was pleasantly surprised by the result and decided to exploit this happy accident to the full. The curves and the slipped colour provided an exciting and sensual spectacle with changing perspectives.

A large blue vase (marked CB7) was given a prominent place in the Dutch glass industry's official exhibit at *Expo 58*. This striking object went on to the Corning exhibition and was later acquired by Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam.

The vase now in the Rijksmuseum's collection was also on display at *Expo 58*, but was not part of the official glass section. Instead it featured in the 'ideal flat' that Gerrit Rietveld had furnished in the Dutch Pavilion and, together with wallpaper with a pattern of antlers that served as the background, provided an attractive organic counterpart to the austere design.

But the vase proved not to be an indispensable part of the layout. Later it was moved to the much-criticized textiles section, where it stood – totally out of place – among the mannequins. History does not record who was responsible for that. It is quite conceivable that C.A. Doets, general director of the Leerdam glass factories, whose estate donated the vase, then took pity on this orphaned showpiece.

LITERATURE:

- A. Koch (ed.), *Dichtbij klopt het hart der wereld. Nederland op de Expo 58*, Schiedam 2008, p. 54 (fig. 2.16), p. 56 (fig. 2.19), p. 71 (fig. 3.4), p. 104 (fig. 4.21)
J. Temminck and L. Geurtz, *Copier compleet. Het oeuvre van A.D. Copier 1901-1991*, Rotterdam 2011, p. 135

PROVENANCE:

- Gift of the heirs of C.A. Doets, Director of Crystal Leerdam (1950-65), 2011
(inv. no. BK-2011-30).



Gerrit Rietveld's 'ideal flat' at the Dutch Pavilion of *Expo 58*, with furniture by Friso Kramer and Gerrit Rietveld.
Photo:
© Jan Versnel/MAI.



7 SHINKICHI TAJIRI (Los Angeles 1923-2009 Baarlo)

Made in USA, 1964

Brass, h. 180 cm

© Estate of Shinkichi Tajiri

The title of this sculpture should be taken literally – Shinkichi Tajiri made the work in 1964 during a stay in the United States, where he worked for a year as a visiting professor at the Minneapolis School of Art (now the Minneapolis College of Art and Design). The theme of the work is closely connected to his personal history and the time when it was made.

In early 1942 he was one of the 120,000 Americans with Japanese backgrounds who were incarcerated in an internment camp without trial. A way out was offered by joining the US Army's 442nd Regimental Combat Team formed especially for these Japanese-Americans. In 1944 Tajiri was wounded in the battle for the Italian town of Castellina and awarded the Purple Heart. Even as a decorated war hero, however, he continued to feel like a 'displaced person'. After the Second World War anti-Japanese sentiments in the United States were so strong that Tajiri sought exile in Europe and began studying sculpture in Paris. There he met a Dutchwoman, Ferdi Jansen, and in 1956 the couple went to live in the Netherlands permanently.

The temporary return to the land of his birth was accompanied by mixed feelings. In August 1964 the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War escalated when President Lyndon B. Johnson received Congress's approval to defend South Vietnam with all possible military resources. In practice this came down to wholesale war against North Vietnam without a declaration of war. This dubious climate of military aggression in the name of freedom must have reawakened Tajiri's painful memories of the Second World War. In the foundry of the Minneapolis School of Art he made a series of small sculptures in which the theme of warfare is manifest. The series was rounded off with the magnum opus *Made in USA* – a man-sized war machine with insect-like legs and a cockscomb featuring a rudimentary American flag. It is the image of violence made in the USA, a compelling and inescapable intervention from another world.

LITERATURE:

- W. Brattinga-Kooy (introduction), *Tajiri|beelden 1960-1967*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Stedelijk Museum) 1967, cat. no. 24 (fig.)
 H. Bavelaar, 'Snelheid, geweld en erotiek. Hoofdtrema's in het werk van de beeldhouwer Shinkichi Tajiri', *Beelding. Maandblad voor kunsten* 2 (1988-89), nos. 9-10, pp. 4-7 (fig.)
 H. Bavelaar and E. Barents, *Shinkichi Tajiri, beeldhouwer|sculptor*, s.l. [The Hague] 1990, pp. 68-69 (fig. 58)
 F. Strauven, *Aldo van Eyck: The Shape of Relativity*, Amsterdam 1998, p. 509 (fig.)
 V. Ligtelijn, *Aldo van Eyck. Werken*, Bussum 1999, p. 149 (fig.)
 A. Stufkens et al., *Shinkichi Tajiri. Snelheid, erotiek en geweld*, exh. cat. Nijmegen (Museum Het Valkhof) 2003, vol. 1, p. 60 (fig. b), p. 93 (cat. no. 217); vol. 2, p. 114 (fig.), p. 153 (cat. no. 217)
 F. van der Schoor et al., *Shinkichi Tajiri Machine No. 2*, Nijmegen 2008, p. 14 (fig.)

PROVENANCE:

- Estate of the artist; purchased with the support of PON Holdings B.V., 2012
 (inv. no. BK-2012-9).



8 AD DEKKERS (Nieuwpoort 1938-1974 Gorinchem)

Variation on Circles IV, 1965-67

Polyester, polyurethane lacquer, Ø 120 x 10.5 cm

Signed on the verso: Ad. DEKKERS Ø 120cm POLYESTER VARIATIE OP CIRKELS NO IV 1965-1967

© c/oPictoright Amsterdam, 2013

Variation on Circles IV is one of a series of five reliefs based on the systematic reduction and displacement of the circle. The principle behind the composition is always quite easy to deduce but the result is a complex and intriguing visual play of (suggested) movement and counter movement.

In this relief, a circle 120 centimetres in diameter is reduced in equal steps of four centimetres – the diameter of the smallest circle. The first fourteen reduced circles have been halved and moved away from one another across the middle axis. Where the semicircles reach half of the original diameter, they continue in two separate stacks of full circles until the two smallest circles of four centimetres are reached in fifteen steps.

The *Variations on Circles* series marked a turning point in Ad Dekkers's oeuvre for a number of reasons. From then on the circle occupied a prominent place in his work, and his approach to composition changed radically. In 1965 the intuitive search for harmonic relationships gave way to a far more systematic approach in which he attempted to give shape to his ideal of an objective and universal art. And finally he introduced polyester – a material that was still extremely unusual for works of art in the Netherlands in the mid-1960s.

Three of the five compositions in the *Variations on Circles* series were also made in polyester as well as wood. Dekkers had a (negative) mould made from the 'mother relief' in which a (positive) relief was subsequently cast. This allowed the reliefs to be produced in numbers and made them easily affordable. This democratic objective was achieved as fifteen copies of *Variations on Circles III* and eight copies of number *v* were sold in various colours. But number *IV* remained exclusive: the 1965 wooden relief was only cast in polyester once – two years later and in a radiant yellow unusual for Dekkers.

LITERATURE:

Oeuvres d'art acquises par l'état en 1967: prix décernés à des artistes Belges, exh. cat. Brussels (Paleis voor Schone Kunsten) 1967, cat. no. 20

C. Blotkamp, *Ad Dekkers*, The Hague 1981, p. 180 (cat. no. 80)

PROVENANCE:

Purchased in 1967 by the Kingdom of the Netherlands as part of the Belgisch-Nederlands Cultureel Akkoord (until 2012 on loan to the Vlaamse Gemeenschap and placed in the S.M.A.K. in Ghent); transferred from the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, 2012

(inv. no. SK-A-5012).



9 AD DEKKERS (Nieuwpoort 1938-1974 Gorinchem)

Relief with Segment, 1967

Polyester, polyurethane lacquer, Ø 180 x 3 cm

Signed on the back: *RELIËF MET SEGMENT 1967 POLYESTER Ø 180 CM AD DEKKERS NO 1**Design for Relief with Segment*, 1967

Paper, cardboard, ink, pencil, 600 x 423 mm

© c/o Pictoright Amsterdam, 2013

His introduction of the round relief in 1965 opened up an entirely new world of shape relationships between the circle and the square for Ad Dekkers. In the early 1960s the square in his work served mainly as a neutral base for a composition, but shortly before the *Variations on Circles* series he made a number of reliefs in which the square itself was the subject. Soon after this he created the first works in which he explored the relationship of the circle to the square. This subject was to recur regularly until shortly before his death in 1974.

Unlike most of his other reliefs, the man-sized *Relief with Segment* was only ever executed in polyester and only one was made. It must have been a splendid counterpart to the somewhat earlier *Relief with Centre Lines and Diagonal* (1965) in the collection of the original owners, the collectors Wijnand and Annette Wildenberg. In that work he divided a square into smaller squares and triangles by means of saw cuts. *Relief with Segment* is divided in the same simple way.

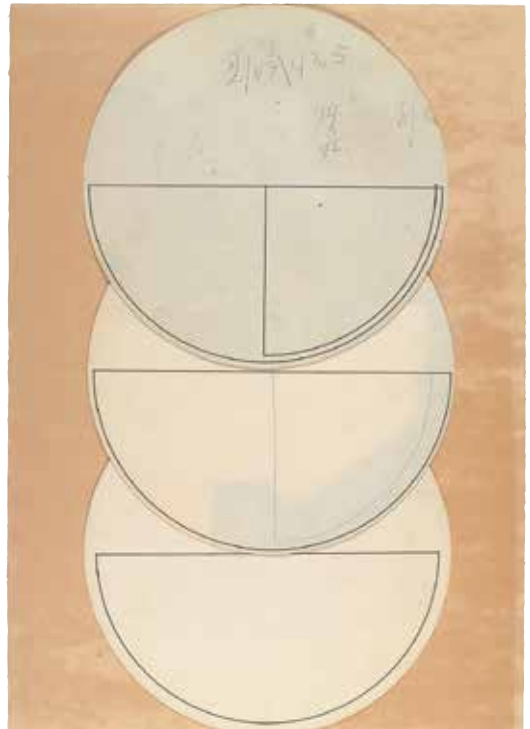
In a preliminary study on paper which has survived with the relief, we can see how Dekkers went to work. In the first (bottom) cut-out of a semicircle in a whole circle he evidently thought that the remaining edge was too wide, so he made a new drawing with a narrower edge. Then he had the idea for another cut-out. He began by sketching it tentatively in pencil, and then finalized it in ink. By cutting out a semicircle from a full circle and then again a quarter circle, a right angle that can be interpreted as a 'segment' of a square was created at the deepest level of the relief. The intervention is convincing in its simplicity and clarity and is evidence of the classic mastery that Ad Dekkers had already managed to achieve as a young artist.

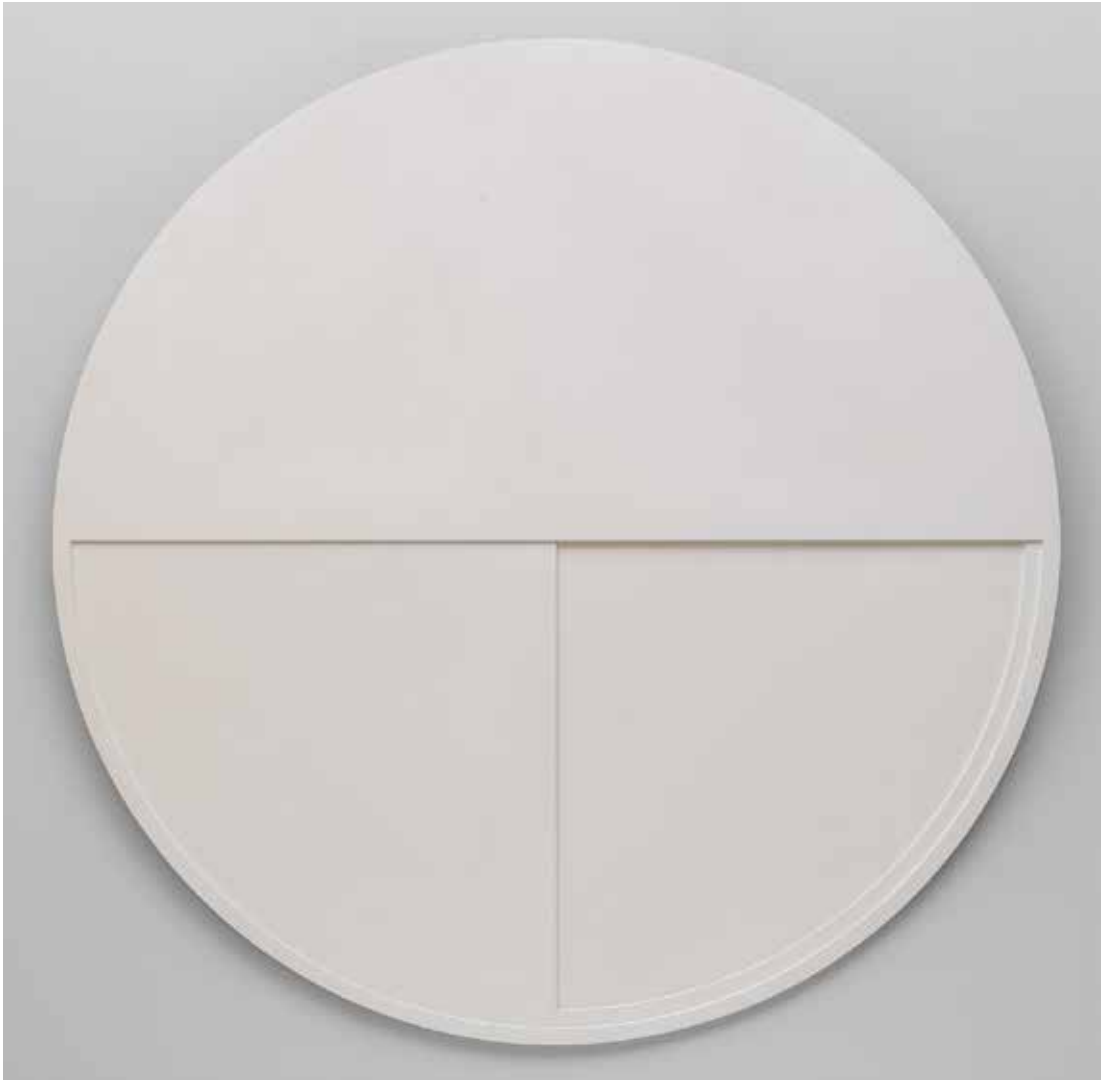
LITERATURE:

R.M. Dippel, 'De collectie Wijnand en Annette Wildenberg, Amsterdam', *Museumjournaal* (1968), no. 2, pp. 78-84 (fig. p. 79)
C. Blotkamp, *Ad Dekkers*, The Hague 1981, p. 183 (cat. no. 96)

PROVENANCE:

Wijnand and Annette Wildenberg (until 1984); sale Sotheby Mak van Waay Amsterdam, 5-6 June 1984; Kingdom of the Netherlands (Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst); transferred from the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, 2012
(inv. nos. SK-A-5010, RP-T-2012-1).





10 FERDI (F. Tajiri-Jansen, Arnhem 1927-1969 Baarlo)

Wombtomb, 1968

Synthetic fur, 75 x 100 x 225 cm

© Estate of Ferdi Tajiri-Jansen

Ferdi's *Wombtomb* is one of the last objects in her small oeuvre of fewer than twenty *hortisculptures* that she made between 1966 and 1969 (the year of her sudden death). Until she presented this group of works in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1968, she was known chiefly for her sometimes spectacular 'bijoux' of welded iron, whose skeleton-like structures were inspired by shapes from the insect world.

A five-month-long trip through the United States and Mexico in 1965 brought about a revolution in her work. Inspired by Mexican folk art, in particular by the large paper flowers she took home with her, Ferdi began to work on large objects made of foam rubber covered with fabric and fake fur in contrasting, almost fluorescent colours. Insects yet again, but the most notable sources of inspiration were flowers and plants and reproductive organs. Initially these objects had neither an autonomous nor a public character but were part of an environment that Ferdi wanted to create in her studio, a sensual alternative to the harsh day-to-day reality she sometimes wanted to withdraw from.

In the same way as she had stretched the boundaries of jewelry to sculptural dimensions, the *hortisculptures* are also hard to place within a defined category of art. They are Surrealist soft sculptures, whose liberal sexual symbolism and psychedelic modelling originated from the spirit of the age, which reached its peak in the Summer of Love of 1967. In the *Wombtomb* the symbols of birth and death and resurrection are directly and literally linked – it is a *chaise longue* in the shape of a coffin, made in long-pile fake fur, with a lid decorated with stylized labia around a slit-like opening. People can enter the box through the 'birth canal' and leave again, purified perhaps after a rest in pleasant warmth, or just happy that escape from this suffocating space is possible.

LITERATURE:

- D. Hillenius (introduction), *Ferdi Hortisculpture*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Stedelijk Museum) 1968, cat. no. 11 (fig.)
- T. van Dormolen, 'De beeldhouwers van Baarlo', *Panorama* (1968), no. 12, pp. 24-27
- Ferdi 1927-1969 Hortisculpture*, exh. cat. Arnhem (Gemeentemuseum)/Den Bosch (De Moriaan)/Heerlen (Raadhuis) etc. 1970, cat. no. 14 (fig.)
- D. Schwagermann, *Wandkleden*, special issue *K&B* 19 (1970), no. 1 (fig.)
- D. Hillenius, 'Ferdi's Hortisculpture', *Delta: A Review of Arts, Life and Thought in the Netherlands* 14 (1971), no. 1, pp. 83-96 (fig. p. 91)
- T. Voragen et al., *Textielkunst uit Zuid-Nederland*, Venlo (Cultureel Centrum/Museum Van Bommel Van Dam) 1983, unpagged (fig.)
- D. Hillenius et al., *Ferdi Hortisculpture*, exh. cat. The Hague (Stroom HCBK) 1992, unpagged (fig.)
- S. Tajiri, *Autobiographical Notations*, Eindhoven 1993, p. 65 (fig.)
- G. and R. Tajiri (ed. and comp.), *Ferdi Hortisculpture*, s.l. 2008, vol. 1, pp. 46-57, vol. 2, passim

PROVENANCE:

- Estate of the artist; purchase, 2012
(inv. no. BK-2012-58).



11 JORIS LAARMAN (Borculo 1979);
made by Habith Model- & Formenbau, Söding
Paper Bone Chair, 2006
Laminated object manufacturing paper, metal, 76 x 45 x 75.5 cm

Bone Chair, 2006
Made by Phil Verdult
Aluminium, 76 x 44.5 x 75.5 cm
Marked under the seat: AP 3/3
© Joris Laarman

The *Paper Bone Chair* is a full-scale paper prototype of the *Bone Chair*, the experimental, organically-formed chair that designer Joris Laarman made in cast aluminium in 2006 in an edition of twelve. In addition three artist's proofs were made, one of which was given to the Rijksmuseum on long-term loan to complement the gift of the unique paper prototype.

The experimental character of this chair is found not so much in the purely formal aspects of the design – which reflect a long tradition of stylized organic shapes – but is above all about the relationship between structure and shape. Unlike most other furniture, the *Bone Chair* is not a construction of separate parts but literally an organic entity. In this design the functional parts that together form a chair (legs, back, seat and joints) have as it were grown out of and into one another.

The underlying approach was based on an inspiring meeting that Laarman had in 2004 with Claus Mattheck, professor of biomechanics at the Karlsruher Institut für Technologie. His original vision of the lessons that can be learned from the growth of trees and bones was used by the German car maker Opel to develop software for the manufacture of car parts that used less material and were actually stronger.

Laarman generated a structure with this optimization software called skO (Soft Kill Option) in which the forces exerted and the strength of the intended material determine the shape. The *Bone Chair* is in fact a visual model of the compressive and tractive forces that a seated body exerts and how these different forces come together and can be absorbed.

That the chair was made with advanced digital techniques, which mimic a natural growth process, might give the impression that the designer was trying to distance himself from involvement.



The prototype shows that the opposite was true. The many sometimes practical and sometimes amusing references to size and shape written on it in pencil – for example ‘can be straighter’ or ‘nice curve ☺’ – are evidence of the hand of the artist, who had the final word.

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- L. Schouwenberg, ‘Digital Déco: The Signs of a New Digital Creativity in the New Sculpture-Chairs by Joris Laarman’, *Domus* (2007), no. 900, pp. 21-23
S. Spurr, ‘Bone Chair’, *Frame, the Great Indoors* (2007), no. 54, pp. 159-60
Troika (i.e. C. Freyer, S. Noel and E. Rucki), *Digital by Design: Crafting Technology for Products and Environments*, London 2008, pp. 22-25
J. Hudson, *Process: 50 Product Designs from Concept to Manufacture*, London 2008, pp. 114-19
H. Aldersey-Williams et al., *Design and the Elastic Mind*, exh. cat. New York (MoMA) 2008, p. 71
‘FURNiTURE: Joris Laarman’s Bone Chair’, *Ignis Fatuus*, 15 October 2009, www.ignisfatuus.com/2009/10/15/furniture-joris-laarmans-bone-chair/
www.jorislaarman.com/bone-furniture.html

PROVENANCE:

On loan from J. Laarman (inv. no. BK-2011-49); gift of Joris Laarman Lab B.V., Amsterdam and Droog Design Inc., New York, 2012
(inv. no. BK-2011-50).

