

Special Show: Just Plastics ... new uses

EUNIQUE presents applied art and design made of plastic

Karlsruhe, 28 March 2018. Although it has been on the market for less than a century, scarcely any other material dominates our daily lives as strongly as plastic. Each annual special show at EUNIQUE – Fair for Unique Design Objects is dedicated to an exciting material for craftspeople. After successful special shows in past years focused on paper, wood, leather and other materials, this year's special show shines the limelight on plastic. Entitled "Just Plastics ... new uses", the special show highlights the numerous potentials that plastic can offer for designers. Artisanal skills encounter diverse materials at the tenth anniversary edition of EUNIQUE from 8 to 10 June, where the exhibitors display objects that are fascinating thanks to their uniqueness and the exciting ways they play with the tension between fine art and practical usefulness. The spectrum ranges from finely crafted jewellery, through custom-tailored fashions, to lovingly designed furniture and home accessories.

Capturing the aesthetic of plastic

Plastic is regarded as a material with seemingly unlimited potentials. It can be shaped into almost any desired form and afterwards given new uses through upcycling and recycling. A large number of designers have long been exploring this versatile material. The "Just Plastics ... new uses" special show presents a broad spectrum ranging from artworks to functional products. The focus is on new applications and processing methods, as well as on artefacts made from traditional materials in combination with plastics. The special show is curated by Andrea Basse: an academically trained designer who lives in Hannover, Basse undertakes freelance projects in the fields of applied art and design. "Naturally, I wanted to show a wide variety – because along with plastic as a material, a new aesthetic also comes into being. The special show reflects this in exemplary objects that consist either wholly or predominately of plastic", the curator explains.

From "non-precious material" to "noble object"

Plastic dominates our daily lives, which would be inconceivable without this ubiquitous substance. Documentaries about growing mountains of trash and plastic wastes polluting the oceans constantly focus on our attention on this substance. Andrea Basse explains why, despite these negative associations, working with plastic is a contemporary trend: "We often associate plastic objects with practical household helpers or packaging materials, i.e. 'non-precious' throwaway objects. It doesn't take a great leap of the imagination to understand why designers want to show that plastic can also be used in ambitious, sophisticated designs and that pre-used material can be reused and repurposed to create high-quality objects that find their ways into applications which were formerly reserved exclusively for 'noble' materials."

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TRADE FAIR FOR ONE-OF-
A-KIND DESIGNER OBJECTS

Material.
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Plastic, a miracle for design

Numerous young designers have discovered plastic for their work. Many craftspeople in classical disciplines (e.g. goldsmiths or artisanal weavers) are likewise including plastic in their creations. These inventive people transform plastic wastes into high-quality, creatively designed products. Existing items are given new uses, undergo processing or are embellished: old shopping bags can become delicate necklaces; flip-flops or emptied juice packages can morph into tables, stools or vases; and PET bottles can shine in a totally new light as lamps.

Creations by the designer Sylvia Bünzel from Grethem show how repurposed plastic trash can be staged anew. Linen, music cassettes, video and audio tapes are the materials for the unique table sets that Bünzel presents in a small series entitled “mixed media”. This artisanal weaver’s apprentice with additional training as an “craftsmanly designer” also works with plastic in a second small series entitled “strukturen 3”. Here, Bünzel interweaves micro-tubules, music cassettes, reflective yarn and linen on a traditional loom to create table runners.

Thorsten Franck has likewise dedicated himself to plastic. This industrial designer creates stools with the aid of a 3D printer. In a small series entitled “7Stools7Days”, Thorsten Franck designed a different stool each day for an entire week. With their bright colours and precise patterns, these seats are instantly recognizable as Franck’s brainchildren. His creations can also be seen in public spaces: e.g. one of his benches, crafted from wooden slats in various lengths and coloured in yellow, orange and red tones, stands in Waiblingen. Franck’s pieces have been honoured with numerous prizes, including the “red dot award” and the “if design award”.

Creations by this and other renowned designers, as well as by up-and-coming designers who have surrendered themselves to the fascination of plastic, will be presented in the special show “Just Plastics ... new uses” at the tenth EUNIQUE from 8 to 10 June 2018.

LOFT – The Design Shopping Centre

LOFT – The Design Shopping Centre takes place at Karlsruhe Trade Fair Centre simultaneously with EUNIQUE. At LOFT, professional designers, labels, newcomers and academies present new products in the genres of furniture, living accessories, fashion and jewellery for an audience with an affinity for design. A ticket to one fair entitles its holder to visit both fairs.

Further information is available at: www.eunique.eu / www.loft-designkaufhaus.de