

[JOHN NIXON'S TABLE - GDR PROPOSAL] by Annie Wu and Ziga Testen



*(John Nixon's table in New Zealand)*

The project we have in mind begins with a little anecdote. Upon a chance meeting with Australian geometric abstraction painter John Nixon (1949) in the Netherlands, a thorough conversation revolving around a discontinued line of an Ikea table was brought up. The table was first spotted in John's numerous catalogues, as a surface to place his paintings on in exhibitions. It was a simple support structure that he continued to use in a number of exhibitions, and in a way adopted a staple identity of its own as the useful functional design object that becomes an art object.

In John's account of the table, due to the unfortunate circumstances of the discontinued line, he forcibly sort to recreate the table for an exhibition in New Zealand by sending strict instructional sketches and photographs for a replica to be produced. However, upon arriving in New Zealand, he had found that the table looked precisely like its original model, but the function of the inward folding legs were disabled. It was not considered in the construction process because its appearance was already removed from the once transportable, utilitarian function it once had.

Through the table's many mass manufactured incarnations, it has now entered the art context as a unique hand crafted object. It was considered so important that it was shipped back to Australia along with the exhibited paintings.



*(Enzo Mari constructing the Sedia-1 Chair)*

So what we propose in the context of what has happened already, is that we bring this idea to the GDR house as a research and construction project. As a point of departure, looking again at Enzo Mari's DIY project from 1974 called 'Autoprogettazione' (self designed), where he designed a series of manuals for self construction of furniture. We would like to propose the opportunity to revisit the table's design and release it to the public sphere via a manual. Included in the manual will be our research into John Nixon's story, to find the original polish designer / manufacturer of the ikea design, investigate the reasons for its termination and the documentation of our attempts at reconstructing the table.

Our topics of consideration will also encompass the necessities of republishing and redistributing exiting material, the resourceful rescuing of potentially useful blueprints for self use from industrial obscurity, open source design, and the discovery of unexpected twists in the geographical locality of production and consumption (ie. offshore manufacturing in Poland by a Swedish brand that is partly owned by a Dutch industrial group and is then sold in Australia) and the obstacles that arise when tracing the origins of a globalised object, as well as the Reproducibility of an industrial product vs. the singularity of an art object.