

# MISCHER´TRAXLER

Guest Professor  
Product Design  
School of Art and Design, Kassel  
2016/ 2017

## 6–9 EXCHANGE OF IDEAS

INTRODUCTION

## 10–15 ON MISCHER'TRAXLER

PORTRAIT

## 16–37 COLLECTIONS

- 20 JOHANNES CHOE – *Mahlzeit\_*  
22 HONGQIAO GU – *What kind of textil I am*  
24 LIANG ZANG – *Lingling*  
26 EVA BULLERMANN – *Still life*  
28 XINYANG DU – *I am You*  
30 FRANZISKA GÜHNE – *Kirschvariation*  
32 LEA LÜDTKE – *U-Cups*  
34 SANCHIR KATH – *My Life, My Collection,  
on the shelf*  
36 EMILY JEAN BOWE – *What [a] Waste*

## 38–45 "A COLLECTION OF MOVEMENT" – PRALINEN PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE

## 46–65 THE GOOD NEWS ARE OPTIMISM THROUGH/ IN DESIGN

- 52 XINYANG DU – *'Re-Listen'*  
54 NATHALIE INDRA – *'Mehr als eine Vase'*  
56 JULE HELENE LEINPINSEL – *AlgaQua*  
58 CHRISTIAN FREUDENBERGER – *Mykes*  
60 MEIAN LYU – *'Look at Me'*  
62 ZHENG WANG – *'Erstarrende Zeit'*  
64 YUANQING XIE – *'Essbare Suppeschale'*  
66 JI TONG – *Constant dripping wears the Stone*  
68 BO SHI & SIMENG – *Vitality of a Tea Table*  
70 RUI WANG & YINGE ZHAO – *Koko*

## 72–77 FREE PROJECTS

- 74 HONGQIAO GU – *Fake Textile*  
76 LIANG ZHANG – *V Experiment*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 78 – 85 EXTRAS

80 EXCURSION WIEN - *Studio Visit Mischer-Traxler*

81 VISIT TO LOBMEYR

82 "HELLO ROBOT" – *Exhibition in the MAK Museum*

83 RUNDGANG – *Exhibition in KH Kassel*

## 86 – 89 COLOPHON

# EX- CHANGE OF

## IDEAS #3



Mischer Traxler Studio Summer2012, credit by Martin Robitsch

### INTRODUCTION

The Product Design course at the School of Art and Design Kassel is highly versatile, covering industrial design, furniture / exhibition design, design of textile products, as well as the theory and practice of design. We consider this broad approach to the field a great strength. Aside from academic and artistic staff, six professorships are assigned to our department. One of these professorships is not held by a permanent candidate, but offered annually to internationally renowned designers.

In order to build up and develop elementary fields, an artistic course of studies needs consistency and reliability. On the other hand, welcoming alternative views from outside offers a helpful and refreshing outlook for both students and teachers. As a result, the course of studies is

PROF. JAKOB GEBERT

open to new fields, many of which are often overlooked during the course of “everyday” teaching. With this concept we can appeal to design personalities from all over the world for temporary teaching positions. This allows us to benefit from their knowledge, especially as they would not ordinarily be interested in a permanent position. And because of the temporary nature of the role, we are able to put the project professorship out for tender internationally and thus enhance the quality of our course of studies in many different areas.

Katharina Mischer and Thomas Traxler were the third to take on the position of the one-year “project professorship” at the Kunsthochschule Kassel. With their interactive and performative way of working, they brought, after Ineke Hans and Yael Mer, another outstanding design perspective to the Kunsthochschule. In

their teachings, mischer´traxler made a personal influenced design collection subject of discussion with the students, examined phenomena of motion and industrial productions in a performative manner, and explored a multitude of positive possibilities of design.

The collaboration with mischer´traxler at the Kunsthochschule Kassel was very impressive for everyone involved. We are therefore very pleased that they took over the position with such great dynamics and we would like to thank them for their great commitment.

Prof. Jakob Gebert with  
Prof. Ayzit Bostan,  
Prof. Lutz Pankow,  
Prof. Martin Schmitz,  
Prof. Oliver Vogt,  
Prof. Daniel Hornuff

# ON MISCHER` TRAXLER



Photocredit, Daniel-Gebhart-de-Koekkoek

Katharina Mischer and Thomas Traxler form mischer`traxler studio. Based in Vienna, they develop and design objects, furniture, processes, installations and more, thereby focusing on experiments and conceptual thinking within a given



the idea of a tree - recorder one / 2008-ongoing

context. Balancing between handcraft and technology, they envision whole systems, new production methods and kinetic or interactive installations which question topics, tell stories or open up new ways of doing things. Influencing and complementing each other, Katharina and Thomas examine, experiment, analyse and reject. Their results are often playing with uniqueness and some of their projects are poetic records interacting with the viewer and evoking unexpected reactions. By using their outcomes also as a means of communication, the

studio tries to show that Design can be functional, good and beautiful not just in objects, but as well in the ideas they represent.



reversed volumes for PCM Design / 2012\_photo-credit: Jara Varela

Katharina Mischer and Thomas Traxler already met whilst studying. They completed their BA-degrees in product and furniture design at the NDC St.Pölten and at Kingston University London and then continued to study an IM-masters programme at the Design Academy



reversed volumes for PCM Design / 2012\_photo-credit: Jara Varela

Eindhoven. After graduating in June 2008 and several years of collaborating on various projects, Katharina and Thomas founded studio mischer`traxler in 2009.



Offsets / 2017

Their projects are displayed in exhibitions on contemporary design and art, as well as in international museums like the Boijmans van Boiningen, the Design Museum London, the Triennale Milano, Cafa Art Museum Beijing, Mudac Lausanne, but also on international festivals and fairs. Projects by mischer`traxler are to be found in the permanent collections of the Art institute Chicago, the Vitra Design



the idea of a tree - bench and lamps 2008-ongoing

Museum and the MAK Vienna, among others. Their work has won several awards, such as the Wu Guanzhong Art & Science Innovation Award 2012, the Austrian Experimental Design Award 2009, an honorary mention at Prix ArsElectronica 2009 and the DMY-Award 2009.



colour breeze for the British Crafts Council / 2017

As a studio, mischer'traxler was honoured with the 'W-hotels designer of the future award' by Design Miami/Basel and W-hotels

in 2011 in 2014 with the 'Young talent award' by the Be-open foundation and recently with the Swarovski Design Medal 2016 by Swarovski and the Vienna Design Week. Besides developing projects, mischer'traxler teach, give talks about their work and lead workshops in various universities and institutions.



Level for Victor Hunt / 2016



# MY PERSONAL COLLEC- TION



For reversedvolumes colourtest / 2012

MISCHWER TRAXLER ON WINTERSEMESTER

In the field of design a lot of details and thoughts need to work within existing or developing collections – either by understanding how something new fits into a companies' existing variation of products or by creating a set of objects that work together as a family. Additionally many objects of our daily use do carry personal characteristics. Some objects appear to be cheeky, others stiff and serious, some are playful and some are

wise. In order to understand this more abstract layer of form, the first term of the year placed the focus on personalities and the development of objects, which would fit to personal characters, which would work to store personal collections and/or which would form a collection of objects in themselves. Needs and characters were visualized, analyzed and translated into personal products. Their functionality was allowed to be interpreted quite freely.

In the task of the first two weeks, the students had to define several of their own characteristics and translate these into small items. The aim was to create a collection of small things representing those characteristics. Together, these items should form a little collection fitting together visually, conceptually and also in the way they were displayed.

Based on that first hands-on phase, some of the resulting ideas were developed further or, alternatively, students analyzed their own personality for a second time and developed new projects based on these thoughts. The results were as diverse as the students themselves and ranged from small desktop items, various tabletop objects up to furniture pieces. The objects combined personal characteristics and functionality and often surprised with new typologies.

# MAHLZEIT



The project 'Mahlzeit' arose out of a personal confrontation with two different cooking cultures. On the one hand the Korean culture and on the other hand the German culture, in which I grew up with.

Based on traditional table settings, which are culturally distinguished from each other, the analysis of the positioning of dishes, utensils, and glassware used for serving and eating meals at a table, was something I took up.

The aim was to set up a medium, which assembles both cooking cultures and to rise a dialogue between them.

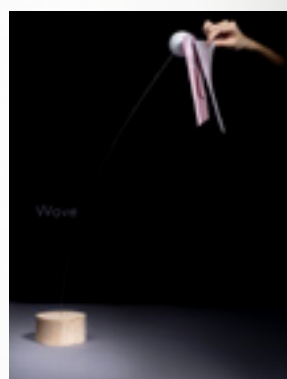
Therefore, the plans of the table settings were merged – resulting in the outcome of some interesting interconnections. These symbiotic interconnections between a german and a korean table-ware, created a collection, which unites one part with the other.

## WHAT KIND OF TEXTIL I AM



Faithful, obstinate and gentle are represented by these three scarves, but also also represent my main personal characteristics. faithful represents the first scarf, for which the material canvas was used. Canvas usually refers to the heavy version of linen or panamage fabric, the lighter version is duck. Characteristics for both fabrics are the robustness and durability. Hopsacks are called fabrics with mat-like braid structure, which are usually woven with two chains and two wefts. Hopsack is often used as a structured variant for flannel or twill materials and is particularly popular as a transitional material. In terms of appearance, the pyramid shape means more or less obstinate up to aggressive. Wool is the textile fibre obtained from sheep and other animals, it is crimped and elastic. When touching wool, one feels very soft and warm. Therefore it means amiable and kindness, in another word gentle.

# LINGLING



The Lingling Collection consists of three pieces of stationery. The underlying concept is the playful communication between object and user. Mirroring the behaviour of their users, the objects react to actions and movements immediately. In designing these three objects I have used my desire to make things that can be played with, that can be looked at, that can be touched. Wave is a note holder whose spring adjusts to the weight of the paper it is holding up. The more tasks are added, the further the sphere at the top sinks down. Completing tasks causes it to rise again gradually. The pencil cup Plug presents the user with apparent disarray when only a few pencils are inserted. Its order only manifests once all the slots are filled and their pattern become visible. Swing is a balancing tape dispenser which can hold two rolls of tape. Playing with gravity, the dispenser tilts towards the side where less tape has been used.

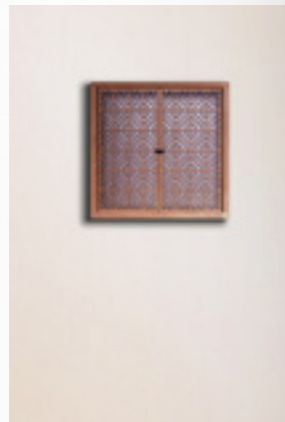
## STILL LIFE



In the living room many objects are gathered which are sometimes more or less used by us in our everyday life. While using them, they move around the space and are collected, depending on the type of use, in certain places. A system can help to arrange the abundance of things and to make it easier to access. Everyone has different preferences and therefore different things to sort. In my project I analyzed my own disorder and searched for possible solutions for areas where the disorganization is out of control. The cloakroom is inspired from a spider net. The thread system support an air exchange between the garments.

A desk collects a lot of things that take away space while working. The writing desk has therefore lateral grooves, in which all disorder should be collected.

# I AM YOU



The three objects from the collection are the result of my self-analysis, and something that I want to say to myself. This project links the dualism with the world of dance and creates three products with dual meanings: Necklace stands for pride and humility; Mirrors represents quest and introspection; Bracelet represents dream and action.

# KIRSCHVARIATION



My products are made out of different elements of the cherry tree, which reminds me of my family and hometown – the cherrytown, Witzhausen.

Through the choice of material my two objects remind me of my family, my hometown and all the precious moments that I experienced there. Besides the personal anecdote of using cherry wood, the function of each object is derived of my personal needs while working away from home.

The seat cowl-stool, it prevents muscle tensions and aids the correct sitting posture. The fitting was worked into the wood by manual labour, with a gouge and hammer.

The cherrypit - slippers not only keep your feet warm while working at home, but also stimulate them through their rough texture.



## U- CUPS



The project arises from a personal interest in haptics and follows the impulse to let the fingers touch and play with interesting details or smooth surfaces. 'U-Cups' is a work focused on haptic aesthetics, which are not attached great value to in our visually dominated world. Drinking cups as everyday objects, that we are in very close and intense contact with, change to subtly stimulating objects for hands and lips. Like this, enjoying a cup of tea brings about not only the gustatory and olfactory experience but also a haptic pleasure. With the help of vacuum deep-drawing and the application of everyday structures, six different haptic elements are generated that stimulate to playfully touch and trace details. The collection is made from grey and anthracite coloured porcelain. The absence of glaze on the outer side causes a very smooth feeling and a highly detailed surface to discover.

# MY LIFE, MY COLLECTION, ON THE SHELF



My modular shelf system is an object which physically intervenes my personal claims and habits.

I have developed an object representing myself by analyzing my person, my self-esteem and the persecution of my character. A detailed analysis of my personal interests shows that things in my daily life are connected to me by carrying a story that reminds me of a journey, of people or of phases of my life. In the whole discussion about the individual objects, one especially came to the fore. It is a shelf that turned out to be the centre of my everyday life, as it contains all the important items, such as keys, shoes, money, cards and other treasures. In addition, there are also memories such as photo albums, books and "things-to-accomplish"- lists.

# WHAT [A] WASTE



Our responsibility for our waste does not end once we dispose of it, even if our interest or awareness does.

Our waste has a big impact, politically, environmentally and socially, whether we like it or not. And our responsibility for our waste does not end once we dispose of it! This became apparent to me within this project, when I confronted myself not only with my materialistic consume, but also the result of it. There are more ways to deal with our waste than the trashcan, that are preventive, creative, maybe unusually, yet always more interesting and somewhat fun at times. I made it my mission to reawaken my relationship to the waste I create and explored "new" alternatives – especially for organic waste, as we cannot prevent it entirely. The result of this? A worm compost landscape!

# 10 DAY WORK- SHOP



Within the winter-term the group and us worked together in an intense 10-days workshop on a group project. The start was based on the idea of developing a collection of movements and how they could be turned into production devices. Movements to experiment with were: jumping, balancing, rolling, hitting, falling, turning, rotating, swinging and similar. In pairs the movements were actively explored and used to move a ball or to create

something. Slowly the perfect movements were picked and the full group was brainstorming together what would be an interesting object to produce and essentially how.

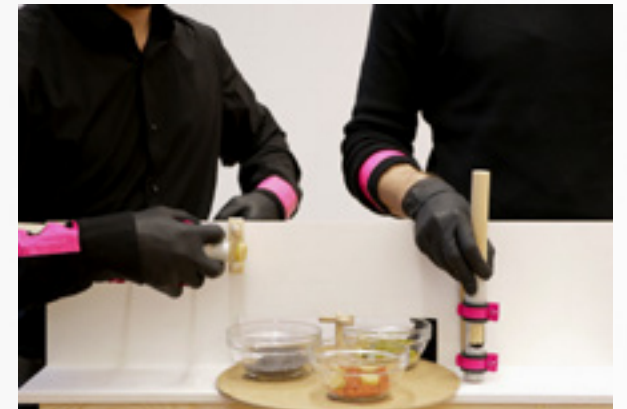
The idea of producing various marzipan-chocolate balls arose and a whole “production facility” was built – one that mainly used body movements. Based on the movements tools and simple, but clever mechanical apparatuses were designed. Within several days everything was constructed and during the end of the term a performance was staged for other students. – A performance that focused on the body movement and the designed tools and machines.

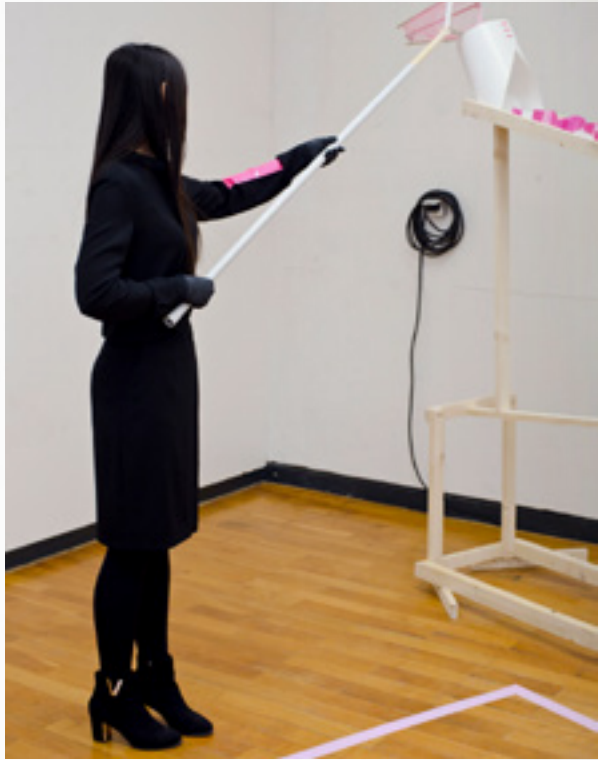
The start was a marzipan portioning station with various fillings (chilli, poppy seeds or pistachio chunks). From there the marzipan slice was taken by shaping tools. A big shaping disk and a transport tube resulted in round marzipan

spheres. These spheres came into the sugar-dialogue-roller, where a team had to roll the marzipan through a spiral filled with sugar. At the end of the spiral it fell through a hole and was caught with a delicate catcher and brought to the chocolate-cover-randomiser. The sphere rolled down on a slide and ended up on one of three plates, which decided whether it would be covered with white, dark or milk-chocolate. At the

dipping-station, the marzipan sphere was pinned onto a skewer, slowly moved on a conveyor belt towards the hot chocolate bath, dipped in chocolate, and then dipped into ice water to cool down the chocolate. Covered in chocolate it arrived at the roll-through-final-decoration-device where it was either jacketed with coconut flakes or sugar sprinkles. In total 18 different marzipan-chocolate-ball combinations were possible.

# “PRALINEN PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE”





# THE GOOD NEWS ARE

MISCHER TRAXLER ON SUMMERSEMER

1. a disposition or tendency to look on the more favourable side of events or conditions and to expect the most favourable outcome.
2. the belief that good ultimately predominates over evil in the world.
3. the belief that goodness pervades reality.
4. the doctrine that the existing world is the best of all possible worlds.



# OPTIMISM THROUGH AND IN DESIGN

What are great current developments, what do we want more of, what is good and how do we make the good visible? We often have a feeling the world is dominated by negative developments and apocalyptic scenarios. In times where negative headlines dominate our everyday life and one is permanently confronted with the fact that everything seems to be getting worse, we asked the students to look for positive developments and use these as inspiration rather than pinpointing towards more problems. Instead of over-analyzing problems, the aim of the summer-term was to use already existing solutions and new possibilities in material technology, to test sustainable alternatives, to highlight with design proposals positive technical developments and to create objects that communicate optimism and cheerfulness. Objects that are optimistic and products that make one smile, either be-

cause of its background story or because they are positive in another way.

As optimism was a rather big topic we defined chapters and encouraged the students to pick one of these chapters in order to develop their personal projects. Chapters were the following:

1 / projects based on good news / positive statistics / etc.

2 / objects that highlight a positive aspect or an interesting detail etc.

3 / projects based on optimistic developments / new technical possibilities / sustainable alternatives

4 / objects or projects for groups, that motivate people to do something good together

5 / objects that are optimistic themselves

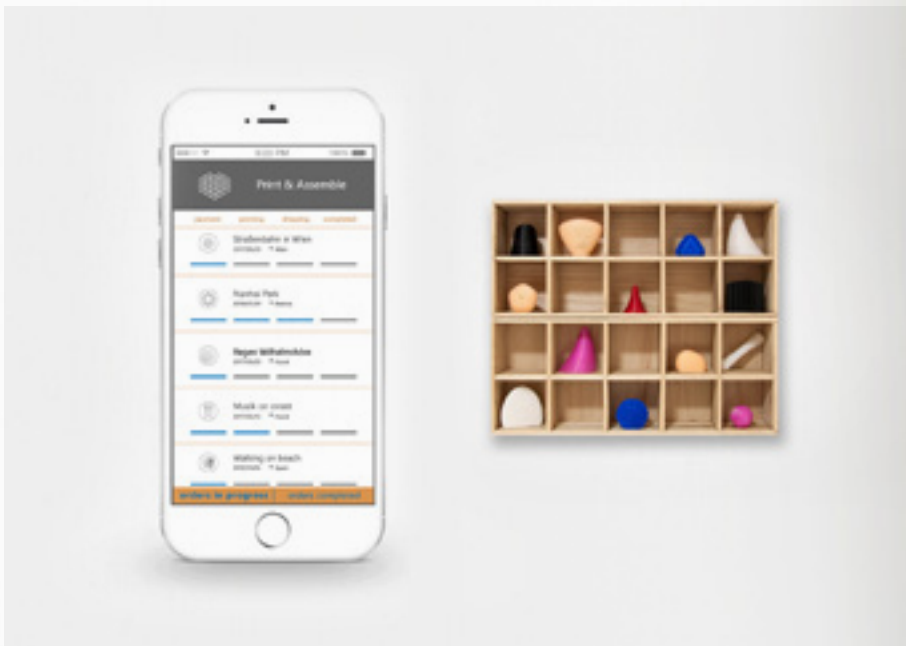
6 / projects that make use of existing open source ideas, technologies, machines, data

In this term the resulting projects truly show how diverse design can be. We enjoyed the most that some students managed to combine rather complex new technologies with an analogue, tangible world.



"Politics as Art of the Impossible" under  
<https://www.onlineopen.org/politics-as-art-of-the-impossible>

## RE-LISTEN



'Re-Listen' is the perfect app for people to store their acoustic memories both in the mobile phone and as real object. Sound not merely threads the changes of a city but also evokes memories. It is another perspective to discover the world and the most sensual way to keep personal memories. Imagine that you can not only record sounds at any time with this app, but also 3D-print them based on your design in different shapes, colours and materials. It will be assembled with the sound module with your recording and shipped to you, so that you can collect them on a shelf in your home. Anytime you take or shake or blow the object, you will 'Re-Listen' the recording. As time goes by, there will be more and more sound collections and you will know, what your life sounds like!

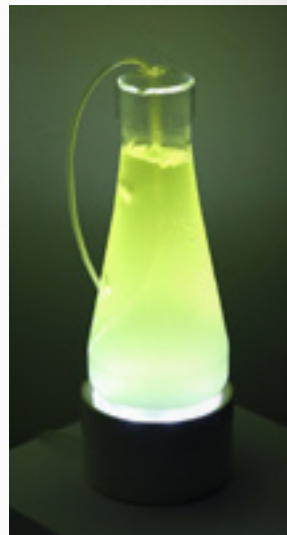
## MORE THAN A VASE



Up to now, it is not possible to completely recycle used ceramics. That's why 'More than a Vase' rethinks the end of old ceramic vessels.

'More than a Vase' is a concept of creating tiles from old vases. The idea was generated when visiting different flea markets because almost at every stand there were one or more vases for sale. In the project, these vases are collected, smashed to small pieces and mixed with a gap filling material to hold them together. First models were built with Jesmonite. The mix is cast into a mould and becomes solid. Then, the material block is cut into slices. The shape of the tiles fits different vases that can be put as a whole into the mould in addition to the material mix. The project aims at giving a new life to used ceramics.

# ALGAQUA



The chlorella algae is a quite underestimated future organism. Chlorella offers solutions for many areas of our lives.

'algaQua' is a lit up carafe device, designed for growing chlorella, a microalgae. This undemanding algae requires nothing but water, light and CO2 to grow. While expanding quickly, it metabolizes these substances into vitamins, amino acids, fatty acids and oxygen. Additionally to obtaining a high amount of nutrients, chlorella is said to have the ability to absorb toxins and transport them out of the body. The algae-water can be harvested daily by pouring out the water from into a glass. It is ready to drink! Besides of being a potent source of nutrients, chlorella is a potential resource for creating alternative fuel, power, heat and bioplastics. It requires little space, is fast growing and unlike soy and corn, does not compete with food production.

# MYKES



I wanted to show how easy it is to cultivate fungi for gourmet and medical use. The development of today's world questions more and more the way of food consumption. Local production of food becomes more important because of soil pollution, waste of natural resources and urbanisation. Fresh gourmet mushrooms are delicate and healthy, they are full of important nutrients. 'mykes' is an object, designed to grow mushrooms indoors on a wall structure, which integrates itself in the living space like a house plant. Mushrooms are one of the main recyclers in our ecosystem. You can grow them on organic waste with low consumption of resources. For example, oyster mushrooms are easily cultivated on coffee grounds. Unlike crop plants the growth time of mushrooms is much shorter – you can harvest them cyclical in three to four weeks.

## LOOK AT ME



A design that stirs up positive emotion in people and brings them small moments of delight.

A design that uses the “window” as a motif. It combines daily houseware with the beautiful moments and childhood excitement that the window brought us. Furthermore, with traditional Chinese window elements, this collection expresses a positive Chinese worldview: concealment and incompleteness can also be beautiful.

Warm rose gold colour combined with lovely shapes, just like elves and friends, they will always be there. Like their name ‘Look at Me’, they can “communicate” with people and bring them small moments of delight in everyday life.

## FREEZING TIME



Sometimes people have no idea how fast time flies, we can't see it, can't touch it but this abstract thing truly exist. A clock is the only thing that measures time. With the clock 'Freezing Time' you can see how the time runs and how the time disappears. The clock works with sand to display the time and it doesn't look like a clock you see in your daily life. It's made up of three parts, a frame with a reduced form, a surface on which the pointers draw patterns on sand and a light system which allows the user to see the time at night. When the clock runs, you can see the time running and disappearing at same time.



# EDIBLE SOUP BOWL



This soup bowl and soup spoon are made of rice, glutinous rice and other organic materials. Compared to other materials, this bowl has a great advantage in recycling - you can eat it or throw it away. Even if you throw it away, it has little effect on the environment. You only need to pour in hot water and wait a few minutes, then you can drink delicious glutinous rice soup. The soup bowl has two layers. The first layer will melt in 5 minutes, the second layer will take about 30 minutes. The spoon has red beans and it will melt in the soup too.

YUANGING XIE - 6 SEM

## CONSTANT DRIPPING WEARS THE STONE



Maintain an optimistic attitude towards life, and believe that constant effort brings success.

Water droplets are a Chinese idiom, this sentence represents a belief. We believe that as long as we insist on it, we will succeed. My work is inspired by it. The heat is produced by the halogen lamp so that the water evaporates and then condenses again at the top. Finally falls on the stone and forms a cycle.

Every drop of water has the same goal, that is, through the stone. And this self-awareness is what I want to express optimism.

# VITALITY OF TEE TABLE



Products should not be so lifeless. A living and interactive product can make our lives colorful. An optimistic product means that one can find the beauty in our daily life. With the help of the ferrofluid and the electromagnet, we can develop a dynamic object, which can surprise our life. Chinese people drink tea very often, not only to quench the thirst, but also to relax with friends. Because joint tea drinking is a perfect way to improve the relationship with friends or business partners. Besides, we have a traditional habit that during tea drinks enjoy some beautiful sceneries, such as flowers, porcelain and landscape. So that you can relax multi-sensory (visual and taste).

# KOKO



‘KOKO’ is a series of Café supplies, which made from coffee grounds from Café. In this design, we want to work on the optimistic process in our daily life. And drinking coffee is the one we focus on. We feel like good, not only when we drink coffee, but also when we feel the elements from coffee. In our research, almost 4kg wet coffee grounds are thrown away as waste from a Café everyday. We think it’s not optimistic.

After our research, brainstorming and many tests, we decide to design a series Café supplies, which use the material, that rubber and coffee grounds in 1:1 mixed. In this way, this material will have a good stability and won’t lose the characteristic from coffee grounds. This material can also be thrown away as bio waste.

# FREE PROJECTS



mischer'traxler's workingdesk / 2014

## V EXPERIMENT



LIANG ZHANG - 8 SEM

Light can be seen as a special form of material, so that we can use it for creating design. The visual experiment that I have conducted is playing with situations that might seem confusing. During those experiments, there was one big question coming to my mind: Can we really trust in what we see?

Taking a closer look on the lamp itself opens up an unusual incident: the glowing side is showing a colour but the reflexion in the mirror shows a complete different colour. By rotating the table top the surface changes from clear to non-transparent.

## FAKE TEXTILES



Project description: This project focuses on integrating structures and textures in ceramic design. From the process, it consists mainly of two steps, own development and cooperation with foreign ceramic studios in China. In the first step, ceramic substance is used. Textiles with various structures are immersed in the substance, and after drying and combustion different patterns are produced in plates and cups. In the second step, I developed further patterns in the hometown of Chinese ceramic production in close cooperation with local studios. This is where I became acquainted with the basics of ceramic materials and production. For the prototypes, mainly dough is used. The textile is pressed on it to show texture on ceramics. Modern technology such as 3D printing, scanning and digital engraving were also used

2016 /  
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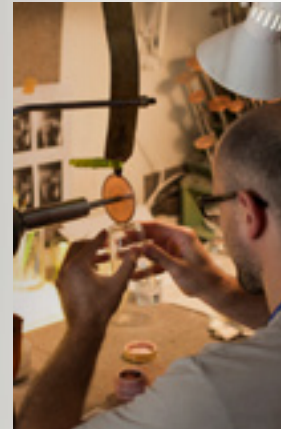
Studio Mischer Traxler



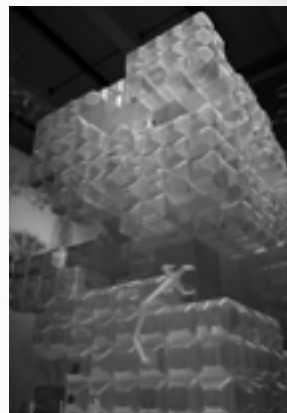
# VIENNA EXCURSION STUDIO VISIT TO MISCHER TRAXLER



# VISIT TO LOBMEYR



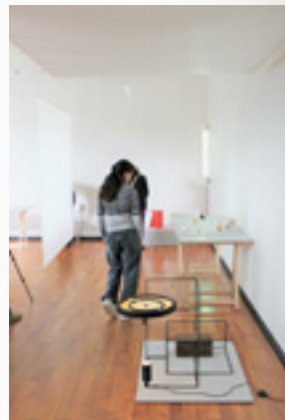
# “HELLO ROBOT” EXHIBITION IN THE MAK MUSEUM



Guided by the curator Amelie Klein



# RUNDGANG EXHIBITION KUNSTHOCHSCHULE KASSEL



This catalogue is a publication of the University of Kassel to conclude the guest professorship of Katharina Mischer und Thomas Traxler during the academic year 2016 / 2017. It is digitally published and is the third in a series of guest professor-catalogues for the Product Design Course of the School of Art and Design Kassel. At a later date, this digital material will come together and be available as a printed version.

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