

November 2012: Press Release

## COMMON ROOTS Design Map of Central Europe

November 15, 2012 – March 2, 2013

This November Design Museum Holon will present *Common Roots*, a dynamic new design exhibition exploring Central and Eastern European design.

*Common Roots* will examine the shared traits in contemporary and historical design from Central and Eastern Europe from the past seven decades. Divided into two parts, the exhibition will present historical design from after World War II (1945-1989) and contemporary design from after the fall of communism (1989) to the present day.

Objects have been collected from Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. With the help of cultural institutes and embassies, a team of **nine curators lead by Agnieszka Jacobson-Cielecka**, have been assembled to sub-curate each of the prominent countries, giving a unique insight into the thriving design scene of each country. Jacobson-Cielecka is the programme advisor for Lodz Design Festival, the Head of Design at the School of Form in Poland and an independent design curator.

The upper gallery of the museum will hold the exhibition's contemporary design objects; work has been selected from innovative designers and small studios including **RIJADA** (Latvia), **QUBUS** (Czech Republic), **MALAFOR** (Poland), **ALLT Studio** (Slovakia) and **GRUPA** (Croatia).

The historical objects will be displayed throughout the lower gallery of the museum. The RM58 armchair by **Roman Modzelewski**, one of the first pieces of furniture in Poland to use plastic, and a television set from the Hungarian company **Videoton**, will be on display alongside significant items from the Slovenian Museum of Architecture and Design, the Estonian Museum of Applied Art and Design and pieces from private collections.

The lower gallery of the museum will also present a narrative mind map, curated by Israeli designer Yael Taragan, illustrating the migration of textile traditions from Central and Eastern Europe to Israel. At the centre of the exhibit, historic objects will be compared to imagery of the communist landscape in which they were produced. Two movies will also be shown in the lower gallery, to compare historic and contemporary toy manufacturing.

The circumstances between 1945 and 1989 were similar across the majority of Central and Eastern Europe; communist rule and nationalised industrial production meant that design was functional with concepts of aesthetics, ergonomics and style being of lesser importance. After 1989, the shift from Soviet to capitalist influence led to an economic and cultural transformation; the arrival of foreign capital allowed a greater freedom of production and aesthetic awareness.

Rather than presenting the exhibition geographically, the objects have been arranged according to common characteristics, similarities and themes. The different categories showcase the creativity, ironic humour and nostalgia within the pieces designed.

Leading guest curator Agnieszka Jacobson-Cielecka explains, *'Over the past century, Central and Eastern Europe has experienced the rise and fall of different political orders, and had its borders repeatedly redrawn. In this historical context, design has not been*



*examined in terms of national categories, but has instead been examined in relation to the experiences and cultural affiliations that characterise the region as a whole.*

*As this exhibition reveals, the individual stories of the participating designers are shaped by remarkable similarities and simultaneous developments. Despite their linguistic and national differences and the geographical distance that separate them from one another, they engage with the same concerns and questions, are inspired by the same sources, and attempt to come to terms with the same past historical events.'*

Galit Gaon, chief curator of Design Museum Holon adds, 'The exhibition "Common Roots" is dealing with two main aspects: the common roots of the participating countries from Central and Eastern Europe and the common roots that the Israeli design industry share with the design tradition in those countries. During the curation process we realised that many of objects designed or created in Israel are influenced by the design culture of the participating countries. After 2 years of work we are certain that the toolbox of the Israeli designer is deeply rooted in the design traditions of Central and Eastern Europe.

*A decade ago one might not have considered the design innovativeness in Poland or its surrounding countries. The communist era's dark (and grey) shadow deeply influenced the world of objects, architecture and graphic design. Moving to a new era, the liberation has brought the design field new achievements, a feeling of nostalgia and the rediscovery of old traditions. Young designers from the region, with their unique genetic code, are now translating their knowledge into excellent contemporary design.'*

During the exhibition, the College of Interior Design will also have the opportunity to personalise objects from the exhibit and build themed rooms in the Museum's Design Lab.

There will also be a virtual exhibition hosted on the Museum's website in which members of the public can interact by contributing to the photo archive.

The Common Roots exhibition intends to travel onto other venues after it closes at Design Museum Holon.

-ENDS-

**For press information or visuals of the exhibition and Design Museum Holon, please contact Sameera Hanif and Amy Ullman at LUCHFORD APM: sameera.hanif@luchfordapm.com / amy.ullman@luchfordapm.com / + 44 (0) 20 7631 1000**



## Notes to Editors:

### 1. The exhibition has been organised into the seven categories of design:

**Creative Minds** – The resourceful use of limited materials through extraordinary inventiveness; creative 'sustainable design'.

**New Democracy** – An appreciation of industrial, simple, rough, prefabricated and non-decorative elements, viewed as attractive and desirable.

**New Elegance** – Reinterpretation of 'nouveau riche' style; traditional decorative embellishment ironically recast in new forms, materials and techniques.

**Ironic Joke** – Surreal and conceptual design as defensive reaction and form of dissent.

**Folk Attraction** – After the fall of communism, the previously censored bright and cheerful folk design flourished; also influenced by pan-European trend of ethno-inspired creations.

**Citation** – Nostalgic commentary inspired by nature, industry and personal experience.

**Lasting Tradition** – Sentimental designers interested in pre-industrial manufacturing processes that are rooted in knowledge and experience.

### 2. Leading guest curator:

Agnieszka Jacobson-Cielecka

#### Sub curators:

Adam Štěch  
Claudia Lazar  
EszterBircsák  
Kai Lobjakas  
KlaraCzerniewska  
Melinda Sipos  
ŠpelaŠubic  
Martin Žampach

Mind map curator: Yael Taragan

Selected curators are available for interview by phone and email.

### 3. Agnieszka Jacobson-Cieleckais the programme advisor for Lodz Design Festival (previously artistic director 2008-2011), the Head of Design at the School of Form in Poland, a design critic, journalist, publicist and independent designcurator.

After introducing Elle Decoration to the Polish market and acting as Chief Editor for seven years (2000-2007), Agnieszka left to create and organise design exhibitions, becoming one of the most prominent promoters of young designers from Poland.

Agnieszka became the artistic director of Lodz Design Festival ([www.lodzdesign.com](http://www.lodzdesign.com)) in 2008. Since 2011 she has directed the design program at School of Form in Poznan, Poland ([www.sof.edu.pl](http://www.sof.edu.pl)) – a new educational project created in cooperation



with LidewijEdelkoort under the auspices of Warsaw University of Social Sciences and Humanities. Agnieszka also heads the department of Domestic Design there.

Her most renowned curatorial projects are Polska Folk, Materia Prima, Dziecinada: Polish Design for Children, Just a Thing and Unpolished [www.unpolished.pl](http://www.unpolished.pl)(together with PawelGrobely), presented at several festivals and design museums worldwide.

Agnieszka Jacobson-Cielecka lectures on design and current trends, publishes in national design and lifestyle press, judges numerous design contests - all in the name of making design and its functions more accessible and comprehensible.

4. **Common Roots: Design Map of Central Europe**, a fully illustrated catalogue, accompanies the exhibition and is available at [www.dmh.orh.il](http://www.dmh.orh.il).
5. Designed by world-renowned architect Ron Arad, Design Museum Holon was inaugurated in March 2010 and has quickly established itself as the most exciting recent development to emerge in the Middle East. The Museum is part of an urban regeneration initiative which aims to transform the City of Holon into a centre for design. Central to Design Museum Holon's mission is to supply an enriching and thought-provoking environment for visitors to explore exciting and engaging design ideas, principles, processes and objects in a tactile and practical fashion. [www.dmh.org.il](http://www.dmh.org.il)

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# COMMON ROOTS

## Design Map of Central Europe

### Creative Minds

1.



*Coil Rubber Rug* by MajaMesić  
Photography by Sofia Design Week

2.



*Placebo Necklace* by LevaLaurina  
Photography by ESAD Photo Studio

3.



*Bulldog Clip Necklace* by MirnaOštarić Kerr

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### New Democracy

1.



*Who Is Watching You Table Lamp* by ALLT Studio

3.



*Black Widow Stool* by ZietaProzessdesign

2.



*Neoline 02 Pendant Lamp* by BoaDesign Studio; Photography by Jan Kuděj

### New Elegance

1.



*Cityscapes Rug* by ALLT Studio

2.



*Filigree Vase* by Studio Pirc Porcelain

3.





*Morphé Bowl* by Morphé Design Studio  
Photography by Jan Rambousek

**Ironic Joke**

1.



*Ornament and Crime (Lenin)* by Maxim Velčovský for QUBUS Design Studio; Photography by Gabriel Urbanek

2.



*Rocking Bully, Rolling Bully* by Jan Čapek



### Folk Attraction

1.



*OM Table* Courtesy by JaanusOrgusaar  
Photography by VilluKraan

2.



*Horse on a Stick* by Kalimba (NatkaLuniak)

3.



*Duporet* by POOR (BartoszMucha)

4.



*Fellin Furniture* by SixtenHeidmets

### Citation

1.



*Spools Vase series* by Mara Skujeniece

2.



*XYZ Cow, XYZ Bear* by NUCA Studio

3.



Series of Ceramic Bowls by Odett Rappensberger; Photography Odett Rappensberger

### Lasting Tradition

1.



Sleepy Dog Toy Series by PATTE Photography by AnceFokerote

2.



Doggie Stool by Rijadain collaboration with PeterisBuks; Photography by ValdisJansons

3.



The Boat Swing by Atelier SAD Photography by Tomas Soucek

