

Press release

**Christien Meindertsma
Beyond the Surface**

18 August 2018 – 20 January 2019, Vitra Design Museum Gallery

Opening: 17 August 2018, 6 pm

The Vitra Design Museum exhibition »Christien Meindertsma: Beyond the Surface«, is the Dutch designer's first solo presentation outside her native country. The exhibition will be shown from 18 August 2018 until 20 January 2019 at the Vitra Design Museum Gallery. For Christien Meindertsma, the creation of a product is only one element of the design process. In her unique approach, she explores the mechanisms of modern industrial production, undertaking expeditions to factories and conducting meticulous detective work at waste disposal sites and workshops – while bringing her unquenchable thirst for knowledge to interviews with the protagonists of these adventures. The exhibition focuses on Christien Meindertsma's work with the materials of wool, flax, incinerator bottom ash and recycled wool. On display are projects such as the »One Sheep Sweater« (2010) – for which she produced garments from the coats of individual sheep – or the »Flax Chair« (2015), an innovative, sustainable piece of furniture made from a now rarely used material, which was nominated for the New Material Award (2016) and won the Dutch Design Award (2016).

As the title »Beyond the Surface« suggests, the exhibition does not merely concentrate on finished products, but also encompasses material samples, prototypes and photographs. A particular focus lies on the production processes behind the completed object, which Meindertsma captures by means of films and publications – a method she refers to as »documentary design«. This renders visible how deeply the designer dives into her subject matter, often exploring a topic for long periods of time and positioning one completed project as a launch pad for the next.

Meindertsma is driven by such questions as: What are the effects of globalized production chains? How do you define transparency? What is the value of local production? How does commodity trading work? And, again and again: Could this be done differently? While the final results of her research vary greatly, they are all united by her interest in the origin of products, their processing, sustainability and transparency. Christien Meindertsma's work and attitude demonstrate that design is not only the act of creating physical objects, but also a means to critically engage with our established modes of consumption and to disrupt thinking patterns in favour of positive change.

About Christien Meindertsma

Christien Meindertsma (*1980, Utrecht) graduated from the renowned Design Academy Eindhoven in 2003. Among the institution's instructors at that time were Hella Jongerius, Jurgen Bey and other members of the Droog Design collective. Meindertsma's most recognized works are »One Sheep Sweater« (2010), which is part of her ongoing work with wool as a raw material, and the results of her »Flax Project« – including a light, a rug and the »Flax Chair« (2015). She has also created documentary films and images in collaboration with photographer Mathijs Labadie and filmmaker Roel van Tour. Christien Meindertsma's books and products are held in the collections of many international museums, such as the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

Meindertsma's unique working methods were already evident during her student years. For »Checked Baggage« (2004), she acquired more than 3000 objects confiscated within a single week at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, cataloguing them individually in a publication and putting them up for auction.

Meindertsma first attracted international attention with her book »PIG 05049« (2007). The publication presents the results of a three-year research project, documenting a wide array of products that are created from a single pig. The 400-page book shows objects such as ammunition, photo paper, brakes, porcelain or chewing gum. The project has been the subject of numerous international exhibitions and many talks, including a TED symposium.

The »Bottom Ash Observatory« project (2015) summarizes her research into the extraction of valuable materials from incinerator bottom ash, the residue of household waste incineration.

»Fibre Market« (2016) marked the beginning of Meindertsma's investigations into the possibilities of recycling wool. After its first presentation at the London Design Museum, the project was further developed and led to a collaboration with the last Irish Donegal yarn spinner and a fifth-generation Donegal tweed weaving company, which continues to the present day.

The designer lives and works in the Dutch province of Gelderland and in Rotterdam.

About the exhibition concept

Conceived by Hamburg-based design studio Besau Marguerre, the multi-layered exhibition design is inspired by Christien Meindertsma's meticulous research and archiving activities. Its spatial organization resembles a three-dimensional publication, placing a special focus on conveying the depth of Christien Meindertsma's research, especially her use of films and photographs as a method of »documentary design«.

General information

Curator:	Viviane Stappmanns
Opening:	17 August 2018, 6 pm
Dates:	18 August 2018 to 20 January 2019
Opening Times:	Daily from 10 am to 6 pm
Location:	Vitra Design Museum Gallery Charles-Eames-Strasse 2 79576 Weil am Rhein Germany
Exhibition Design and Graphics:	Studio Besau Marguerre, Hamburg
Films:	Roel van Tour/Marek Iwicki, Texture/Kortrijk
Photography:	Mathijs Labadie and Roel van Tour
Social Media Hashtags:	#vitradesignmuseum #VDMGallery #ChristienMeindertsma
Press Images:	www.design-museum.de/press_images
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