

## OBJECTION

flight or fight

**BEC BRITTAIN | BYUNG HOON CHOI | CHRISTOPHER SCHANCK  
CHRIS WOLSTON | ETTORE SOTTASS | FRANZ WEST | HUY BUI  
JULIAN WATTS | LIN JIUN-TING | NENDO | PRYCE LEE | QIN FENG**

October 19 - December 16

Opening reception: October 19, 6-8pm

559 W. 23rd Street. New York, NY 10011

Crossing Collective, at 559 W. 23rd Street. New York, NY 10011, is proud to announce its inaugural exhibition: *Objection*. Organized by Joseph Ian Henrikson of Anonymous Gallery, the exhibit dissects the expansive definitions of art and design. Through unconventional vocabulary and transdisciplinary working methods, the selected artists both embrace and at the same time protest functionalism. Through the application of materials, methodology, education, politics, and identity, each artist tells an individual story of how ideas relate to national history; how personal narratives respond to contemporary culture and conditions of production and consumption.

Featuring a cross-generational selection of historically significant artists such as **Ettore Sottsass, Byung Hoon Choi, Franz West, and Qin Feng**, with new innovators such as **nendo, Christopher Schanck, and Pryce Lee**, the exhibition shakes the balance of what it means to be the creator of ideas and objects.

**Byung Hoon Choi** for instance is considered to be the father of contemporary Korean design.

Prominently featured in the exhibition are a series of his works (also included in the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Art Museum) that use raw stone and marble to find taoist notions of balance between raw and refined, sculptural and functional.

This material and mental juxtaposition can also be discovered through the work of artists such as **Julian Watts** and **Bec Brittain**. Watts defies utility and decoration through his curvaceous hardwood, quasi-functional sculptures that mimic domestic objects. Using his knowledge of raw wood carving techniques, he often pushes the pieces to the point of surreal. Known for binding smart design and technical lighting with balance and luxurious practicality, Brittain's sculptural lamps are composed of brass, bronze, concrete and leather.

Additionally lighting the way is **Franz West's** famous "Privat Lampe des Kunstlers". Like many of his works fabricated from uniquely ordinary materials, the work is made from a welded raw metal chain and fits a singular lightbulb atop. Responding to the Actionist and Performance Art movements of the '60s,



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the Austrian sculptor Franz West created delightfully light-hearted mixed media objects and large scale installations merging ideas of form and function. Provocative, compelling and disturbing, his work can be found in the permanent collections of most renowned major museums.

West's irreverence and subversion can also be found in the works of artists such as **Chris Wolston, Christopher Schanck, and Pryce Lee**. Wolston's terra-cotta chair, impressed with fingerprints, combines traditional technique with playful fabrication. Influenced by his work and life in Columbia, these imperfections have led the New York Times to define him as one of the young talents who are redefining the perception of ugly. Chris Schanck's laborious works are often crafted using humble materials such as steel, industrial foam, and aluminum-foil. With few straight lines or perfect angles, Schanck distorts the large-scale mirror on exhibition as a peculiar 3 dimensional work. Producing large commissions for Tom Ford, Christian Dior and Peter Marino, Schanck remains grounded in the Detroit community where he lives and works. Pryce Lee, a young and talented British artist and architect (by happenstance), explores his irreverence through personal experience, social commentary, and real events. Best known for his works with mirrored glass, plexi, brass, and bullets, Lee works in a variety of techniques and media. The featured works come from his series "Come Fly With Me", and explore the randomness and fragility of life.

Looking further to artists or objects imbued with symbolism, emotionality, global and historical references we can cite the work of luminaries such as **Ettore Sottsass** and Chinese artist **Qin Feng**. Ettore Sottsass, a seminal figure in 20th-century design, created a vast body of work over a period of more than six decades. Associated with Memphis - the design collective he spearheaded in the 1980, he created the work "Ashoka Lamp". The lamp is named for an ancient Indian emperor. Featured in the exhibition, it is an emblem of his interest in ancient legend and ritual.

While Sottsass's work looked to eastern cultures for examples of how to create spiritual connection between form and meaning, Qin Feng's art blends Eastern and Western qualities. Qin Feng is a leader of contemporary ink painting and a forerunning representative of the Chinese avant-garde art movement. His paintings experiment with traditional Chinese ink painting and Western abstract expressionist styles, maintaining a link with the traditional while toying with the imported. By transposing the language of western paintings to the medium and language of Asian art, he remakes the medium of ink with contemporary aesthetics and functionality. His interest in balancing the dynamic between positive and negative space, within his compositions, mirrors his interest in exploring the delicate harmony between humans and nature.

**Huy Bui** explores the relationship between humans, nature and design through architecture and ecology. His "Geological Frame" pieces are small, sculptural terrariums and miniature stand-ins for his life-size



utopian “Plant City” structures. The objects are mobile in the way that they can be arranged or stacked to form other modular objects.

Modular, sculptural, functional, experimental, and optical are only a few words to describe the practice of design firm **nendo**. nendo, founded in Tokyo by Oki Sato, is focused on a multidisciplinary practice. Works can be found in dozens of permanent collections including the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, and the Museum of Art and Design in New York. The “Scatter Shelf” on display is composed black acrylic shelves in a grid form, stacked in three layers and slightly displaced. Structurally sound, it’s diffused reflections cause a kaleidoscopic effect.

*Objection* examines the deviations between logical contemporary forms and the role of function in art and objects. In so doing, it argues the idea that art is a genuine creative labor that cannot be resolved ontologically or epistemologically. It argues the 'principles' approach to design, promoted by the De Stijl movement, and underpinned the Bauhaus movement, is a form of purism that is limited to functionality and esthetics. Do both not constitute an encounter with the problematic? It is all the property of the living, of intelligence coupled to action, that not only enacts poiesis, but indicates a broader role for creative anomaly.

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**Further curatorial text:**

What, then, are these distinctions? Perhaps function is a presently differentiating characteristic. Architecture and design serves a purpose, and by embodying an aesthetic philosophy can point also towards a higher realm of living. Whereas, the modern acceptance of self-expression as a productive artistic force means that in terms of function, art may relate the object to its maker, while design relates the object to its audience. Of course this is limited; much art today has an outward facing function, addressing aspects of collective life rather than the artist’s singular experience, for example, or inducing chaos or instilling calm in a viewer rather than offering the maker his own cathartic gratification.

It is in the form’s relationship to function and purpose, rather than the quality of possessing purpose itself, that art and design might be separately understood. Where form follows from function, we are speaking primarily of design. But where form is something understood in itself, untethered to aesthetic values that intend meaning, we might be then in the presence of art. “Art is art-as-art,” said Reinhardt. Wittgenstein: “the meaning is the use.” A work of art is a useless tautology: it manifests the artist’s intention to make a work of art, and is therefore a work of art. “Art-as-art” – excluding conceptual art, artwork carries no information beyond itself, while aesthetics binds appearances to perceptions and judgements about the



world in general. The habit of connecting art to aesthetic, borne out of philosophy's attitudes towards beauty and taste, ultimately conflates distinct notions.

An object's individual relationship to perceived aesthetic, form, and function may help more clearly separate design from art, and yet all the objects here, presented within the context of exhibition, are eligible for consideration aesthetically, formally, and functionally - objecting to classification. Indeed, such a comprehensive assessment illuminates the motivations and understandings of the world that contribute meaning to each work, helping orient us to the objects, their makers, and to one another. But we may well also admire each piece for its beauty, its art in itself.

### ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Bec Brittain** is a New York-based lighting and product designer driven by a love of luxurious materials, intuitive forms, and forward-thinking technology. After studying product design (Parsons), philosophy (NYU), and architecture (The Architectural Association), Brittain began her career designing and producing bespoke door hardware. Handcrafting hardware allowed her to unify her diverse interests and discover a love of metalworking. She continued to hone her craft as Design Director for the renowned Lindsey Adelman Studio from 2008 through 2011. In 2011, Brittain opened her own studio in Brooklyn, where she developed her signature product, the critically acclaimed SHY Light.

Today, with the help of a small and dedicated team, Brittain continues to explore and experiment with new techniques and materials, pushing the boundaries of American-made, centerpiece lighting design. Bec Brittain products are all designed and engineered by Bec; each is then produced in New York, using a broad variety of techniques and a trusted network of local fabricators and artisans. Every piece is hand assembled by her studio team, and personally inspected by the designer.

Bec has been featured in numerous publications, including The New York Times, Elle DÉCOR, Case Da Abitare, Vogue, and Wallpaper\* magazine. Her clients are among today's top designers and architects, and her work can be seen in commercial and residential projects across the globe

**Byung Hoon Choi** was born in Gangwon-do, Korea in 1952. In 1974, he graduated from the Hongik University with a degree in Applied Fine Arts. He later completed a Masters of Fine Art from Hongik in 1979. In 1977, he founded an association of young artists, 'The Society for the Creation of Decorative and Applied Arts' which had a profound effect on defining the future of applied arts in Korea. He travelled around the world during the 1970's soaking up inspiration from the Mayan, Incan, African and Indian



cultures. He has exhibited his work throughout Korea and the world, while concurrently working as a professor at a number of schools. Choi has also developed extensive research in the field of furniture design and crafts, working as a research professor, throughout his career. He is currently a professor of woodworking and furniture design at Hongik University, in Seoul, Korea.

**Christopher Schanck** was born in 1975 and raised in Dallas, Texas. He received a B.F.A. from the School of Visual Arts in Sculpture in 1999 and an M.F.A in Design from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 2011. After graduating, he opened his studio in Detroit in 2012. He is interested in materials and processes that are not traditionally associated with luxury, mass-production, or standards of perfection. Among his best-known works are those that comprise his 'ALUfoil' series, in which industrial and discarded materials are covered in aluminum foil, and then sealed with resin. His methods characteristically involve both outsider techniques as well as the help in his studio of marginalized members of the Detroit community.

**Chris Wolston** is a New York-based artist whose work explores the material vernacular of the modern day, and the fetishization of process. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Rhode Island School of Design, and a Fulbright grant to Colombia. Inspired by manual techniques and the regional contrasts between his Brooklyn and Medellin studios, Wolston creates work that demonstrates playful adaptations of materials, often mixing high- and low-tech processes. Wolston's work can be found in the permanent collections of the Museum of American Glass, and the Museo de Antioquia in Medellín, Colombia

**Ettore Sottsass**, one of the most significant counter-forces to modernism in design history, made monumental artistic contributions to every decade of his working life since starting his practice in the late 1940's. His career produced a provocative body of work, including architecture, furniture, industrial design, glass, ceramics, painting, photography and a wealth of writings.

For Sottsass, creating a lexicon of design that incorporated emotive, sensorial and humanist concerns was a rebellion against post-war rationalist architecture that valued function over form, and left human nature largely out of the architectural equation. He was moved by the subjective gesture of American Abstract Expressionist painting and the direct resonance of Pop Art. He also looked to ancient eastern cultures for examples of how to create a spiritual connection between form and meaning. A central concern of much of Sottsass' work is the social, cultural and technical implications of architecture and design on the way people live and interact. Always counterintuitive and built on complex thought-patterns, the notion that a functional object could communicate an abstract idea was revolutionary and has emboldened legions of designers today.

Sottsass' work can be found in the permanent collections of international museums, including the Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York, NY; the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; the Design



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Museum, London, England; the Design Museum, Ghent, Belgium; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; M+ Museum, Hong Kong; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Netherlands; the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK.

**Franz West** was born in 1947 in Vienna, Austria, and died in Vienna in 2012. West also studied in Vienna at the Academy of Applied Arts. Belonging to the generation of artists exposed to Actionist and Performance Art of the 1960s and 70s, West instinctively rejected the traditionally passive nature of the relationship between artwork and viewer. Being equally opposed to the physical ordeal and existential intensity insisted upon by his performative forebears (such as Actionism), he made work that was vigorous and imposing yet free and light-hearted, where form and function were roughly compatible rather than mutually exclusive. In the seventies, he produced the first of the small, portable, mixed media sculptures called “Adaptives” (“Passstücke”). These “ergonomically inclined” objects become complete as artworks only when the viewer holds, wears, carries or performs with them. Transposing the knowledge gained with these formative works, he explored sculpture increasingly in terms of an ongoing dialogue of actions and reactions between viewers and objects in any given exhibition space, while probing the internal aesthetic relations between sculpture and painting.

West's work has been a fixture in countless international survey exhibitions such as Documenta and Biennales all over the world, and it is included in major public collections including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and MAXXI, Rome. Recent solo exhibitions include “We’ll Not Carry Coals,” Kunsthau Bregenz, Austria (2003); “Recent Sculptures,” Lincoln Center, New York (2004); “Les Pommes d’Adam,” Place Vendôme, Paris (2007); “Sit on My Chair, Lay on My Bed,” MAK, Vienna (2008); “To Build A House You Start with the Roof: Work, 1972–2008,” Baltimore Museum of Art (2008; traveled to Los Angeles County Museum of Art through 2009); “Franz West: Autotheater,” Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2010; traveled to MADRE, Naples through 2011); and “Franz West: Where is My Eight?” Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany (2013; traveled to Hepworth Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England through 2014). West was awarded the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011.

**Huy Bui**, whose practice is rooted in environmental design, builds modular units that stacked and suspended, and host to a network of micro-ecosystems. The units vary by scale and medium, bridging the disciplines of industrial, furniture, interior, architectural and urban design. The objects and installations, which inhabit home, retail, work, public, and gallery spaces, inspire questions about the ecology of our daily lives.

Bui is the co-founder of Plant-In City, an ongoing collaboration that explores the cross-section of architecture, technology, and plants. Bui also co-founded \*HB\* Collaborative, an industrial, lighting, furniture, interior and environmental design studio, with clients like Alexander Wang. The fabrication shop is located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn—a dynamic neighborhood where new ideas regularly materialize, inspiring new forms of spatial expression. \*HB\* experiments with the “why” of functionality, and pushes the way abstract brand objectives can translate into experiences.



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**Julian Watts** uses traditional wood carving and furniture making techniques to explore the relationship between sculptural form and functional object. Using everyday items like wooden utensils as a point of departure, Watts follows the formal, functional, and cultural threads of each object to their most extreme, surreal end points. The result is an ecosystem of both sculptural and functional works that challenge the viewer to reconsider their preconceptions about the objects that make up the world around us. Watts was born and raised in San Francisco.

**nendo**, Founded in Tokyo in 2002, with a second office established in Milan in 2005, has received many distinctions, including the Iconic Design Award ‘Interior Designer of the Year’ in 2015, Wallpaper\* Magazine’s ‘Designer of the Year’ in 2012, and the ‘Red Dot Design Award’ in Germany in 2008. In 2011, nendo presented Visible Structures, a solo commission for the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA. Visible Structures was also included in Modern by Design, a collaborative exhibition between the High Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY.

Works by nendo are included in the permanent collections of the 21\_21 Design Sight, Tokyo, Japan; Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Cooper- Hewitt National Design Museum, NY; Design Museum, Holon, Israel; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; Indianapolis Museum of Arts, IN; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; M+ Museum, Kowloon, Hong Kong, China; Museum of Art and Design, NY; Museum of Modern Art, NY; Museum of Fine Art, Houston, TX; Musée des Art Décoratifs, Paris, France; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Canada; Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; Triennale Design Museum, Milan, Italy; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK, among others. nendo's first-ever large- scale retrospective opened at the Design Museum Holon, Israel in June 2016.

**Pryce Lee** (b. 1975, lives and works between New York, NY and Birmingham, UK.) Pryce Lee’s work interchanges between social commentary, personal experience and actual events. Lee experiments with diverse concepts, techniques and mediums to create visually arresting work that juxtaposes the boundaries and challenges of beauty, life and death. From single, autonomous pieces to large, site-specific installations, Lee’s work is centered around space and motion, and provokes individual interpretation.

Lee’s work has been exhibited at Central Saint Martins and included in group exhibitions in New York City, East Hampton, and Los Angeles. Solo exhibitions include Single Shot, Anonymous Gallery, New York, NY (2014), Fish in a Barrel, Anonymous Gallery, Mexico City, MX (2014), What LIES Beneath, Neo Chrome Gallery, Turin, IT, (2015), and Castor Gallery, New York, NY (2016). Lee’s work is included in various important public and private collections including Coleccion Jimenez-Colon and The Depart Foundation.

**Qin Feng's** expressive compositions serve as meditations on time and motion. His bold brushstrokes lyrically combine the gestural impulses of action painting with the tradition of Chinese calligraphy painting and the artist often playfully pairs the traditional medium of ink with alternative materials such as coffee, tea and oil paint. Qin has adopted a post-modern ink style to reinterpret familiar concepts and



creative languages. By transposing the language of western paintings to the medium and language of Asian art, he remakes the medium of ink with contemporary aesthetics and functionality. His interest in balancing the dynamic between positive and negative space within his compositions mirrors his interest in exploring the delicate harmony between humans and nature.

Born in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of northwestern China, Qin Feng studied fresco painting and calligraphy at ShanDong Art Institute. In 1996 Qin moved to Berlin, where he was asked to curate a show to promote cultural exchange between the two countries and then teach at the Berlin University of the Arts. Qin later moved to the USA, living in New York and then Boston, where he did a residency at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies at Harvard University. His work has been exhibited at institutions around the world, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Beijing; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Saatchi Gallery, London; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

**Lin Jiun-Ting** is a Taiwanese new media artist that makes an effort using high-tech media to bring fresh lives in the forms of classical Chinese art. His fascination with “the constant transformation and boundary-breaking of contemporary western art” empowers his preference to interpret Chinese traditions with modern prospect. Blurring the line between “Reality” and “Vanity, drawing audiences into a place beyond time-space limits, Lin’s belief in humanist and Taoism demonstrate entirely in his interactive arts and installations.

Growing up in Taiwan, Lin later studied art in New York City. In 2003, Lin was awarded the techno-art artist residency at Location One in New York by Asian Cultural Council. In 2011, Lin was commissioned by National Palace Museum in Taipei to create a new media artwork and exhibition –“Beyond Landscape”, which later won MUSE Award for Interpretive Interactive Installations in 2012. Lin is also the founder and art director of BluePhoenix New Media Arts based in Shanghai, and the visiting professor in Sichuan Fine Art Institute.



## **Crossing Collective / ABOUT THE CONCEPT**

Crossing Collective is a new concept platform that promotes the work of Asian artisans and makers that are respected and respectful of the craft, design, and heritage of their trade. Located in Chelsea, New York the Collective's Design Lab facilitates collaborations between a select group of artists, galleries, and emerging designers. Each partnership creates original and compelling programming dedicated to exhibiting works by artists whose roots are grounded in tradition. In the fall of 2017, the Collective will be launching their platform online which will connect global enthusiasts to curated works from the world's most cutting edge designers from the Asia region.

## **Joseph Ian Henrikson / ABOUT THE CURATOR**

Joseph Ian Henrikson founded Anonymous Gallery in September 2008 on the Lower East Side of New York City. He opened it's Mexico City location in 2011. Showcasing some of contemporary art's most innovative young talent alongside luminaries such as Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman, Andy Warhol, and Sol Lewitt, the gallery has produced over 40 ambitious exhibitions and public art projects. Creating alternative networks for creative discourse between Mexico and the United States, the gallery regularly garners reviews and profiles in publications such as The New York Times, Artforum, Flash Art, ArtReview, Interview Magazine, Vogue, Vice, and many others.

Joseph has been responsible for developing and maintaining business relationships with world-renowned artists and industry affiliates at galleries such as Gagosian, Pace, Paula Cooper, and White Cube. He has acted as liaison between the gallery and directors, board members, trustees, and curators at organizations such as Art Basel, The Armory Art Fair, Zona Maco, Museo De La Ciudad De Mexico, The New Museum, The Whitney, and the MoMA. The gallery collaborates with, and contributes to, a number of international charitable organizations.

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