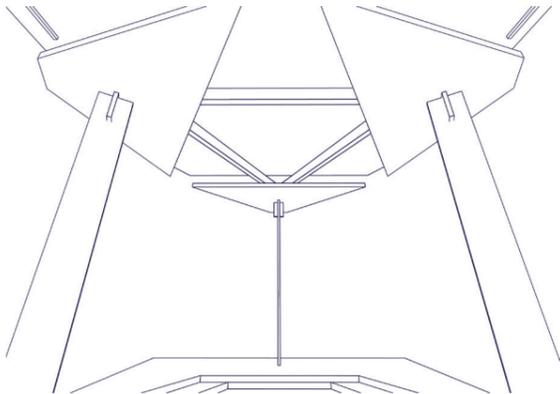


Except for Access Only

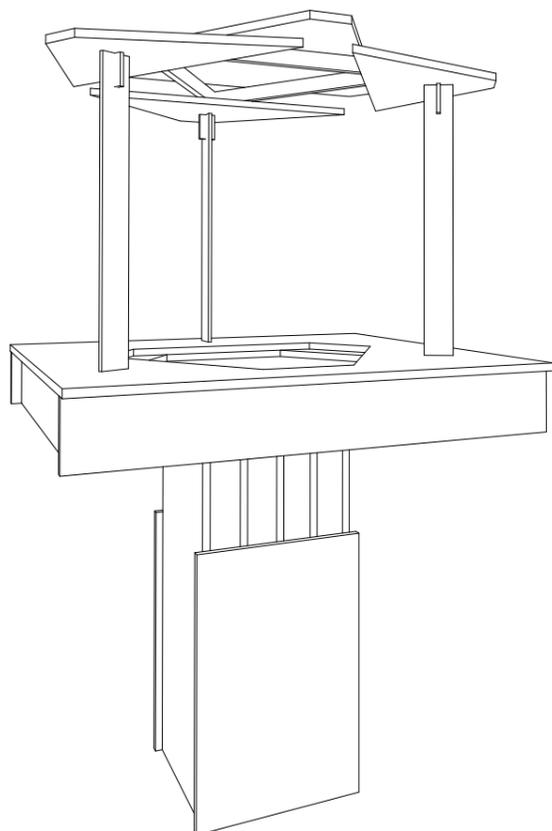
TOM VAN MALDEREN

9 March → 21 April 2018
Malta Contemporary Art, Valletta



Hermetik III

- » The mirrors show the plan configurations of several baffled entry gates.
- » Gates that were introduced by the stone fortress builders.
- » Points of entry to fortifications, designed in a way to gain advantage over any unwanted invaders.
- » They look a bit like an alphabet, a code, or even elements from early arcade video games like Space Invaders.
- » Laser-engraved on the shiny surface, they 'belong' more to the digital world than the physical fortified structures.
- » Our physical and digital worlds are still obsessed with the right of passage, surveillance, defence, control and gaining advantage.
- » It appears to be inescapable.
- » The mirror draws you into the work.
- » Possibly provoking the desire to take a 'selfie' and gain an advantage through the promotion of the self on your social media.



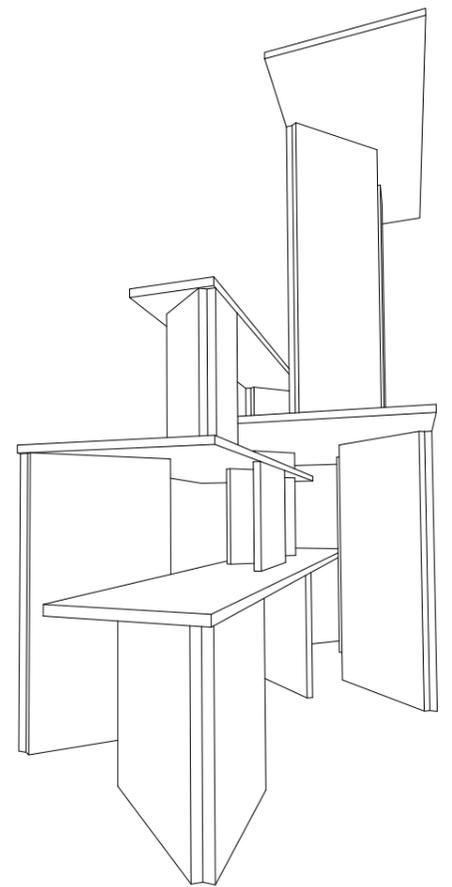
ERNST (Neufert) I

Dear Ernst, departing from a set of normative rules I constructed something that is not so obviously evaluated, measured, quantified nor categorized. Some have argued that the structure turned a set of 'recommended heights' into an ironic illustration of industry standards and an impossible piece of furniture. I hope you are not taking any offence.

The incorporated recommended heights are 40 cm for a bench; 75 cm for a desk; 85 cm for an exhibition table; 110 cm for a desk counter; and 202 cm for the height of Ikea's most sold bookcase 'Billy'.

The world of architecture and furniture has been fascinated with normative rules for design and ergonomics since you first published your notorious reference book Architects' Data in 1936. We all love them! Reference books for spatial requirements perfectly suit our world, with its focus on efficiency and its obsession to make mankind 'work' best and perform at all times. The books perfectly support our fetishization of work, and our life between a maximum and a minimum.

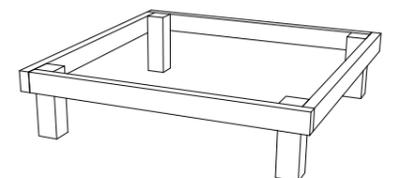
For your pleasure, I painted the structure in a blue reminiscent of the 'blue-print'. After all, blue-print technology used to allow for the rapid and accurate reproduction of construction documents, immaculately spreading the use of norms and regulations for more and more production.



Reflective Tree Guard

This work highlights the bitter irony of a society that introduces all sort of gadgets to protect a tree from immediate harm but gives up greater visions like the Kyoto Protocol, spreads questionable myths regarding climate change and behaves increasingly reckless towards the environment.

The tree guard might be more an extension of our control-obsessed society than an expression of genuine and profound care.



- reflective tree guard - protecting our nature -
- reflective protective - guarding our true nature -

Gazebo (monument for the public-private space)

KW: This object looks like an idealised model of a Gazebo, some sort of archetypal or 'reduced form'. Did you know that gazebos have always existed as either very public or privileged and private places for meeting and shelter?

JF: Maybe it is a pointed metaphor for the loss of public space? In the wake of the exploding world wide web, private and public spheres have become so intertwined with each other, each mirroring the other, and totally absorbing each other's mode of action and justification.

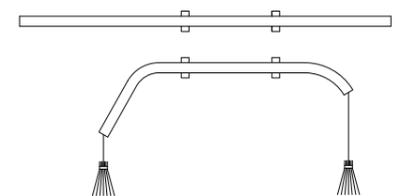
KW: Is the debate between public and private space therefore still relevant?

JF: I think that personal ecosystems fed by the so-called 'filter-bubble' indeed replaced any urge for shared space. Bring on the slow collapse of social space!

KW: Wow, you are not really making me happy.

JF: Well, then maybe I should point out that whilst we have been building gazebos for thousands of years in a myriad of delicate and inspiring ways, the latest popular addition is a PVC coated polyester, soft top 4-legged pop-up gazebo that allows for instant occupation of what's left of the public space, with easy-attaching Velcro and quick-release pull pin system.

KW: I love pop-ups!



Pipes & Tassels

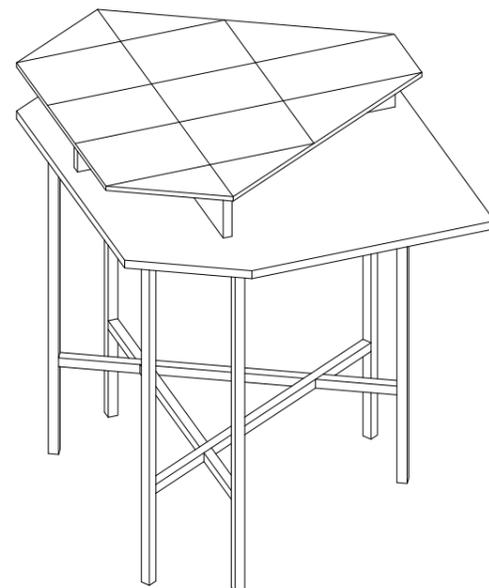
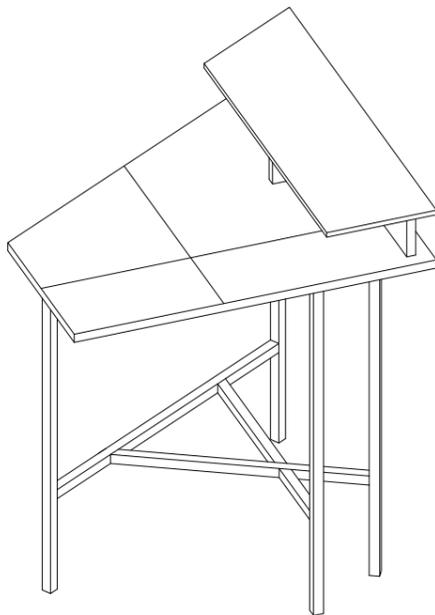
What if this work transforms typical materials, shifts contexts and explores the tensions between functionalism and formalism, can we therefor consider the functional copper pipe and soft fabric finishes of the tassels to be counterparts?

What if the tassels have become cheap as chips (cheaper actually!) and copper increasingly rare, shall we then conclude that in today's hyper-capitalist world their values have reversed?

What if the tassel has almost always been a symbol of power, prestige, exclusivity and even a talisman, should we then regard these industrially and efficiently produced tassels suddenly void of meaning?

Tables for the 1%

I was thinking about the lure to be part of exclusive groups,
I was thinking about the luxurious world of power and possessions,
I was thinking about the fantasy of wealth and success that is continuously propagated,
I was thinking about the dynamics of a society that is hesitant to admit it enjoys and aspires to participate in the spectacle of exclusivity,
I was thinking about rituals, engaging in specific formalized acts, and utterances not of one's own making,
I was thinking about what these tables can provoke, rather than what they are,
I was thinking about objects, form, shape and material,
I was thinking about access and entitlement.



RITUAL 1*

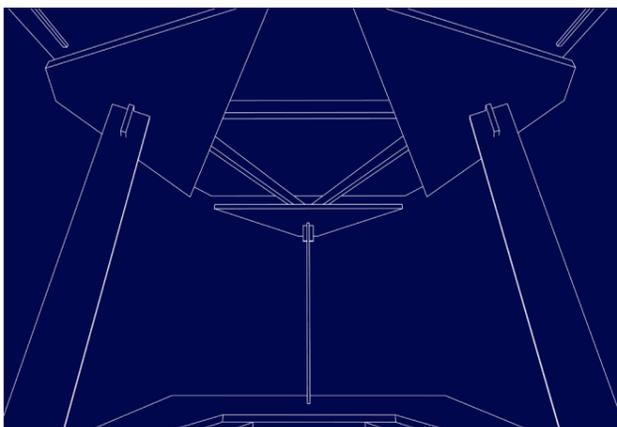
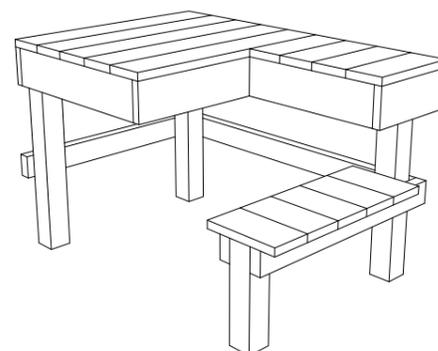
First of all, repeat 3 times in a low voice your investment of the year. Next, focus on the veins in the marble table top for a solid 10 seconds and leave your feelings in one of the shelves underneath. Now look at the calendar and see whether the day is one of good or evil omen. Pretend 7 well-meant apologies and resist any feelings of empathy. Focus on the self and reach out to no one in particular. Stand back, refrain from implying a moral code or any critical dissection of the world out there. Now comb your hair, wash your hands of illegal transactions and imagine your favourite form of economic exclusion. Over the next days, evaluate, measure, quantify and categorize the ones around you and confirm the difference between those who are in and those who are out. Contain your alarming sexual feelings for at least 13 hours.

*From the Annual Smart People Become Rich Colloquium, 2011

RITUAL 2*

Exhale deeply and welcome your participation in the giant human project recreation. Touch the table 5 times and focus on the exclusive playground created by our revered posthuman civilization. Over the next days, invoke the Seventh Dynamic, continue your human re-enactment and be a committed ancestor in the universe of a more sophisticated intelligence. Now trudge towards the side of the table, lift your smart device, set up a blockchain and manage your mobile money. Stand still for 1 minute facing west, reap the capital gains, monetise and imagine your next ravenous spending. Now chant "Don't protect me from what I want" up to 3 times. On the 7th day, let the Dynamic enter your psyche in order to increase efficiency and productivity. Embrace your decadence and realise your dream of freedom. Revere competition, discourage cooperation.

*Simulation Hypothesis Ritual from the International Convention for Intelligence Research & Money Matrix, 2017



text and images by Tom Van Malderen

THANK YOU

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Patrick Tabone
Reuben Lautier
Guillaume Dreyfuss
Jon and Christian Bennetti
Olivia Sike
Stephanie Parisi
Marvic Camilleri
Enikő Madár

Frozen Target shooting playset

He made a copy of the most common blueprint for self-built target shooting tables that you find propagated over the world wide web. Similarly, to a play kitchen set or a workbench playset, he made a smaller version, a kid's version.

He mixed up the realm of supposedly childhood innocence with the harsh reality of politics of fear, defence, segregation, supremacy, demarcation of property, island-like subcultures and various kinds of reactionary resurgences opposing the inclusive mentality of globalization.

He followed his strange curiosity towards un-official militarized objects and buildings that occur at the peripheries, borders, thresholds and interstitial spaces. The kind of home-made architecture and pragmatic improvisations associated with DIY and outsider architecture.

He got carried away by the current rhetoric dominating world politics, emphasizing exclusion, isolationism and the building of walls and fences.