



PHAIDON

# POLKA, Vienna

Q: *Tell me what you do.*

A: *We do product design, we call it product pleasure, and we work in different areas, from furniture and consumer products to interiors.*

During the course of an interview, Marie Rahm and Monica Singer came up with this answer, which provides, in a way, a key to their work. At the risk of opening up a minefield of political correctness and gender issues, this could be regarded as an ultimately feminine attitude, but it has to be acknowledged that the work of Rahm and Singer is imbued with a clear sense of femininity.

Rahm was born in Munich and Singer in Salzburg, both in 1975, and they studied at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. Rahm also studied at the Royal College of Art in London, but they are now currently based in Vienna. In 2004 they set up their own design company, naming it POLKA: 'We like the idea of being a little bit irritating. And the polka is a very fast and energetic dance.' Their intention to act as agents provocateurs runs through every one of their pieces, many of which promote interaction on the part of the consumer. The Cut light (2002), includes a pair of scissors, inviting the owner to cut the lamp's shade into whatever size and form he or she desires. Likewise, Breadbasket (2006) allows the user to freely shape his or her own basket, whose main, structuring element is the napkin usually placed over a standard breadbasket.

Another piece suggesting exchange and pleasure is POLKAchair (2005), a rocking chair that responds to the user's body movement, with its three regular and one shorter feet. In a more subtle and ambiguous but also slightly disturbing approach, POLKA developed Tattoofurniture (2004). Tapping into customization and decoration, and making the surface an equivalent for skin, the result was, as the designers commented, a kind of 'irritating familiarity'.

POLKA wants to uncover the beauty and the extraordinary hidden beneath the banal and the ordinary. As POLKA casts its own special light on the everyday, our surroundings seem to take on a liveliness that is as amusing as it is unsettling. **Guta Moura Guedes**

1-4

Tattoofurniture

2004

POLKA

Natural leather

*This range of furniture uses the tattooing process as a means of decoration, exploring the idea of combining old and new techniques.*

5-7

Josephine

Water jug

2006

Lobmeyr

Musselglass (mouthblown)

*This elegant water jug comes complete with a glass that fits perfectly into its neck to make for an interesting sculpture on any desk or bedside table.*

8-10

Breadbasket

2006

POLKA

Fabric, wire mesh

*A napkin that can be transformed into an attractive breadbasket.*



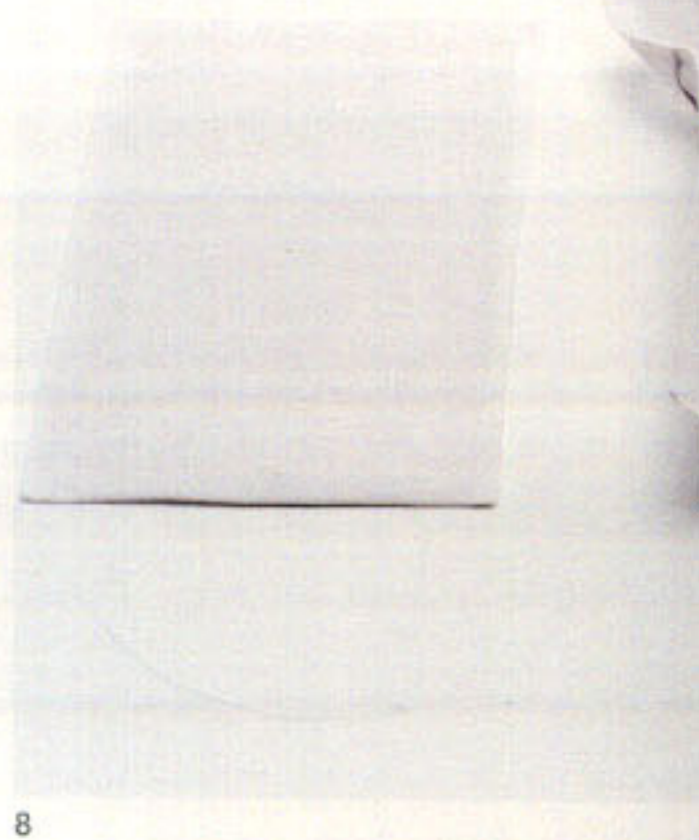
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