

GERMAN AVANT-GARDE DESIGN IN THE 1980s  
PENTAGON GROUP WITH BEATE KUHN

MAY 2 – JUNE 16, 2018

Demisch Danant is pleased to announce its second micro-presentation: *German Avant-Garde Design In the 1980s: Pentagon Group with Beate Kuhn*. Pentagon Group and Beate Kuhn, although employing very different practices, compliment each other in the way they both address art and design in post-modern Germany. Each of their work has an inherent poetry in their designs, emotionally charged and materially expressive.

The 1980s were a reactionary period in which designers sought to liberate themselves from the constraints of functionality and turn more towards the visual arts, to include narratives and emotional content. German designers, influenced by the freed expression established by Italy's Alchimia and Memphis movements, developed their own design vocabulary and aesthetic derivative of the divided German post-modern experience.

The New German design movement produced different schools or groups within itself according to geographical location and its particular influences. A common thread amongst the different groups was a distinct sense of self, evident in the work, which had not been previously present in classic German design. Using common materials that were low cost and readily available, the result was a raw, severe aesthetic with an unmistakable energy. With its brutal honesty, new German 80s design remains uncontrived, refreshing, and truly reflective of the social conditions in which it originated.

**PENTAGON GROUP**, a collective artist group from Cologne founded in 1985, had a constructivist approach with more strict, minimal forms. The five members of the group—Wolfgang Laubersheimer, Reinhard Muller, Meyer Vogggenreite, Ralph Sommer, and Gern Arens—were not designers *per se* but all had artistic training, masters in their craft. Their furniture was functional but experimental and raw, challenging the realm of post-modern design.

**BEATE KUHN**, one of the most important figures in post-war German ceramic arts working from the 1950s, also had a reactionary approach to post-war ceramic practices and traditional German modern design. Since the 1960s, she was one of the first potters in Germany to abandon utilitarian work in favor of purely artistic work. Kuhn's works are heavily influenced by nature and she described them as abstract interpretations of naturally occurring forms. Even her less figurative works conjure up associations of the underwater world, of corals and marine plants, and the nature in our surroundings, the branches of shrubs, tree trunks, flowers or other plants. The additive groupings often reflect natural laws of the life process, of growth and rhythmic change.



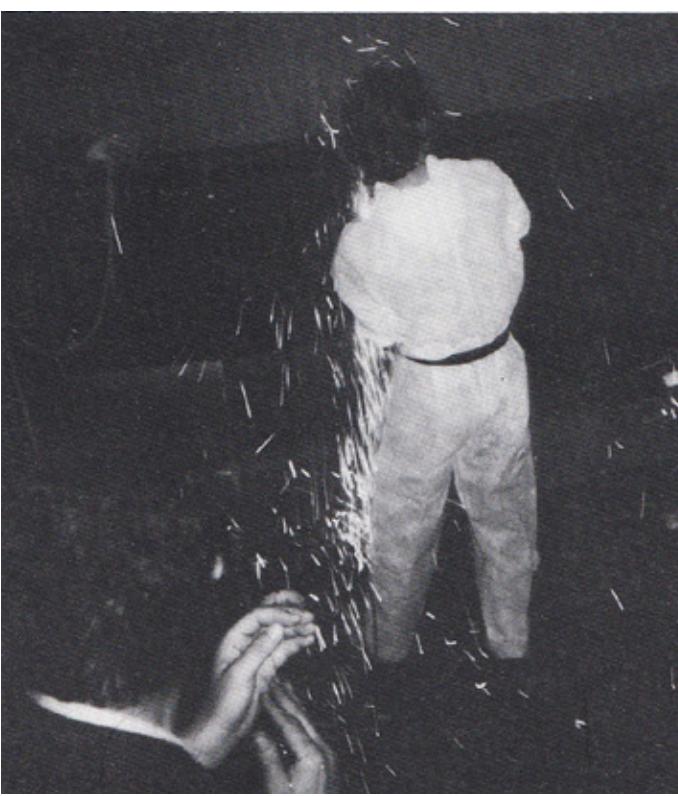
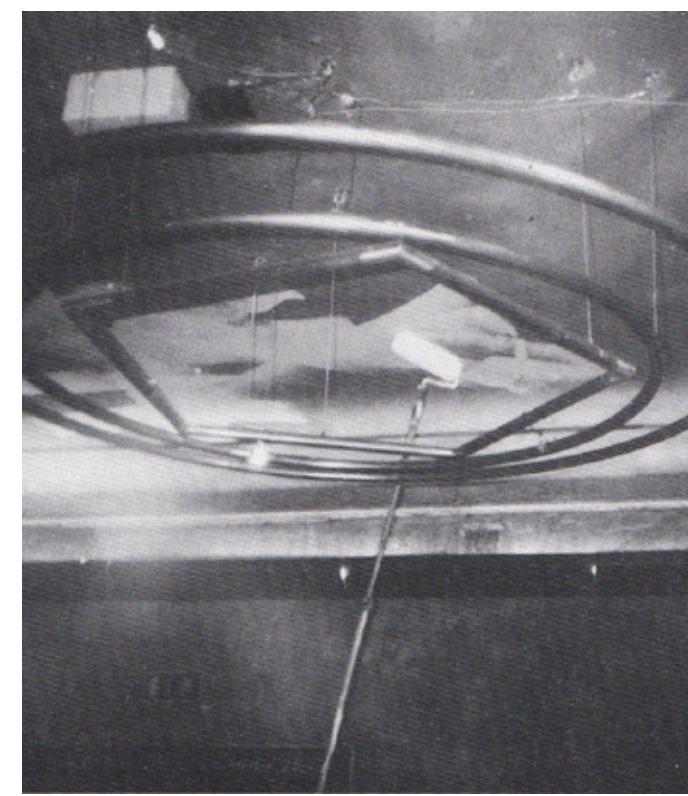
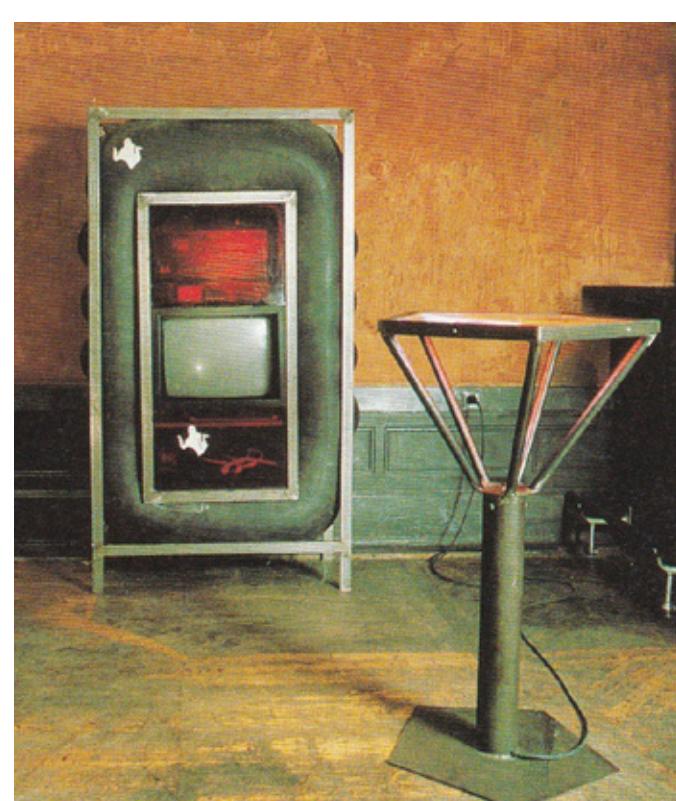
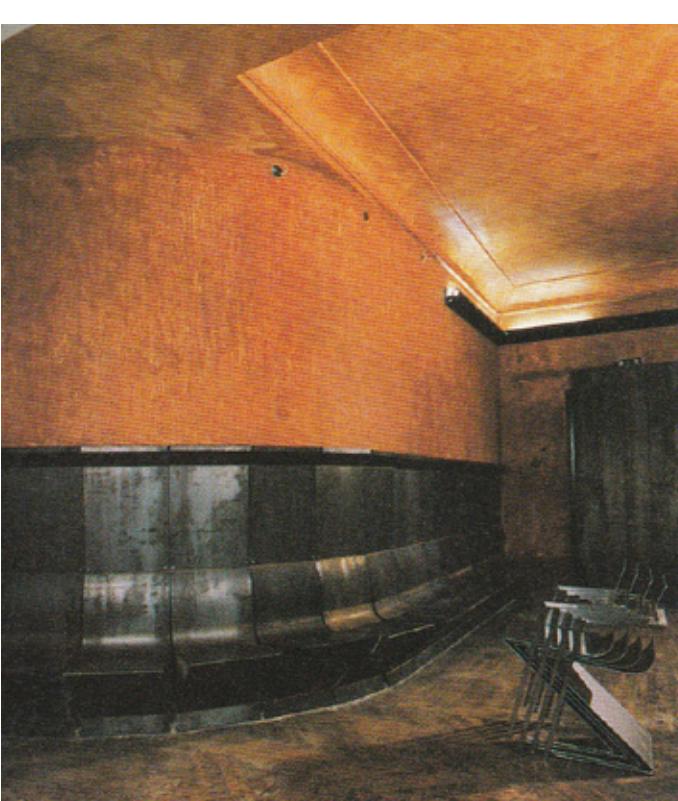
Pentagon Group (left to right): Wolfgang Laubersheimer, Gerd Arens, Meyer Voggenreiter, Reinhard Müller, Ralph Sommer



**Pentagon Group**  
*Casino Model 'd8' Chair, 1987*  
Steel, black vinyl  
31.1 H x 21.06 x 22.05 inches  
79 H x 53.5 x 56 cm



For documenta 8 (1987) in Kassel, the Pentagon Group was invited to create a public artwork. Their contribution was an artists' café, the *Café Casino*, for which each member of the group designed furniture. The exhibition was intended to be a movable, traveling café, but in the end the group destroyed most of the work as a final performance.





**Reinhard Müller**  
*Chambre à air*, c. 1980s  
Steel, inner tube  
83 H x 35.75 x 16 inches  
210.8 H x 90.8 x 40.6 cm





**Hermann Becker**

*Rücklehner Prototype*, 1987  
Steel sheet, 'Beuys' felt  
24 H x 15.75 x 11.81 inches  
61 x 40 x 30 cm





**Wolfgang Laubersheimer**

*Amazonas Desk*, 1988

Stone, steel, water circulation system

29.13 H x 51.18 x 27.56 inches

74 H x 130 x 70 cm





**Wolfgang Laubersheimer**

*Kangaroo Chair*, 1990

Steel, foam, vinyl

32.28 H x 22.05 x 27.56 inches

82 H x 56 x 70 cm

Seat height: 18 inches (45.7 cm)

Unique work



**Wolfgang Laubersheimer**  
*Braced Shelf*, 1984  
Steel  
98 H x 14 x 15 inches  
248.9 H x 35.6 x 38.1 cm  
2 available



**Wolfgang Laubersheimer**

*Vitrine*, c. 1980s

Steel, stone

82.28 H x 26.38 x 15.75 inches

209 H x 67 x 40 cm



Meyer Vogenreiter & Reinhard Müller

*Divan*, 1989

Steel, rubber, foam, fabric, carpet

39.76 H x 62.99 x 31.89 inches

101 H x 160 x 81 cm



**Ralph Sommer**  
*Desk, 1988*  
Steel, Plexiglas, neon  
28.74 H x 66.93 x 27.56 inches  
73 H x 170 x 70 cm  
Unique work



top left

**Beate Kuhn**

*Untitled*, c. 1970s

Stoneware, semi matte brown glaze, gold

5 H x 12 x 8.25 inches

12.7 H x 30.5 x 21 cm

Unique

top right

**Beate Kuhn**

*Untitled*, c. 1970s

Stoneware, glossy and matte brown glaze

9.45 H x 13.39 x 13.39 inches

24 H x 34 x 34 cm

Unique

bottom right

**Beate Kuhn**

*Untitled*, c. 1980s

Stoneware, matte blue and brown glaze

4.5 H x 7 x 7 inches

11.5 H x 17.5 x 17.5 cm

Unique





top left

**Beate Kuhn**

*Disks Sculpture*, c. 1970s

Glazed stoneware

10 H x 15 x 10 inches

25.4 H x 38.1 x 25.4 cm

bottom left

**Beate Kuhn**

*Blackness*, 1980

Glazed stoneware

10 H x 12 x 12 inches

25.4 H x 30.5 x 30.5 cm

top right

**Beate Kuhn**

*Disk Assembly*, 1996

Glazed stoneware

7.87 H x 8.66 x 5.91 inches

20 H x 22 x 15 cm



**Beate Kuhn**

*Untitled*, c. 1980

Glazed stoneware

14.50 H x 14.75 x 18.75 inches

36.8 H x 37.5 x 47.6 cm



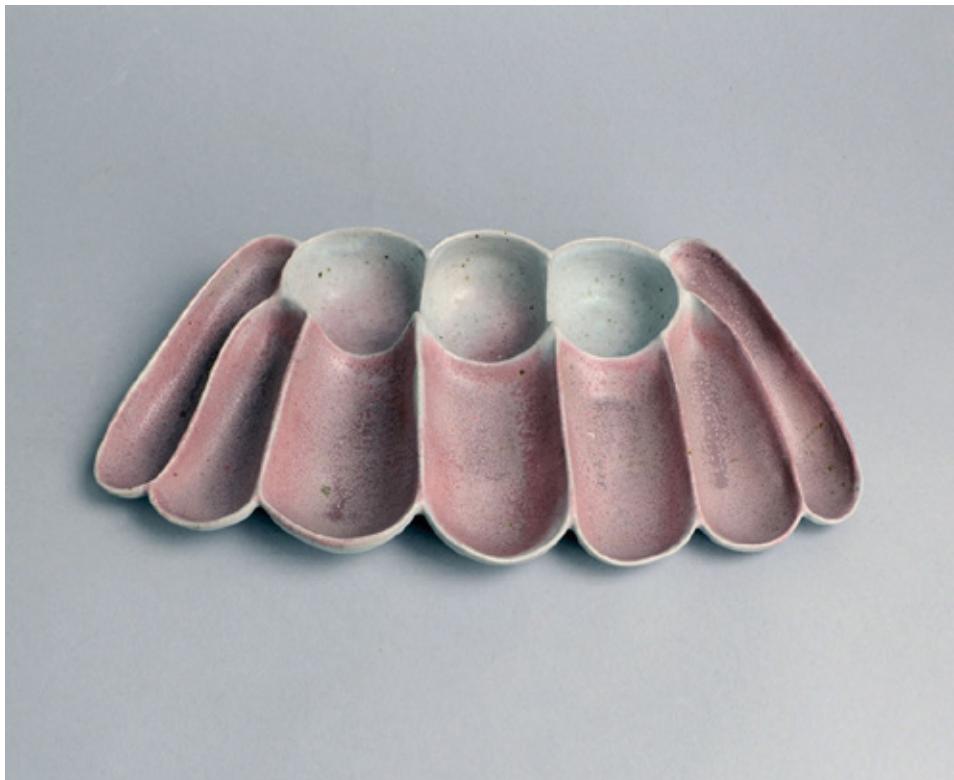
**Beate Kuhn**

*Sensual Sculpture*, c. 1980

Glazed stoneware

8.07 H x 12.01 x 4.33 inches

20.5 H x 30.5 x 11 cm



**Beate Kuhn**

*Untitled*, c. 1970s

Stoneware, matte mauve and gray glaze

2 H x 14.25 x 7.25 inches

5.1 H x 36.2 x 18.4 cm

Unique



**Beate Kuhn**

*Untitled*, c. 1980s

Stoneware, matte white, pink, and blue glaze

10.25 H x 14.5 x 14.5 inches

26 H x 37 x 37 cm

Unique



**Beate Kuhn**  
*Double Wall*, 2007  
Glazed stoneware  
9.45 H x 18.11 x 9.06 inches  
24 H x 46 x 23 cm



**Beate Kuhn**  
*Tree*, 2008  
Glazed stoneware  
7.87 H x 18.90 x 8.66 inches  
20 H x 48 x 22 cm



**Beate Kuhn**

*Disks and Pods*, c. 1970  
Glazed stoneware  
10 H x 11.80 x 13 inches  
25.4 H x 30 x 33 cm

## **ABOUT DEMISCH DANANT**

Demisch Danant was founded in 2005 by Suzanne Demisch and Stephane Danant. The gallery specializes in twentieth century French design with an emphasis on the late 1950s through the 1970s and represents the work of Maria Pergay, Pierre Paulin, Joseph-André Motte, Pierre Guariche, Michel Boyer, Philippon & Lecoq and René-Jean Caillette. Curated exhibitions on historical work are presented within environments that reference architecture and interiors of the era.

The gallery also features exhibitions concerning the intersection of architecture, design and art, including the work of Sheila Hicks, Felice Varini, Krijn de Koning, and César.

Demisch Danant is dedicated to research and scholarship on French design and has published and authored monographs including *Antoine Philippon and Jacqueline Lecoq*, *Maria Pergay: Complete Works 1957-2010* and *Maria Pergay: Sketch Book*. Current projects include a comprehensive monograph on seminal designer Joseph-André Motte and a new book about the architectural commission works of artist Sheila Hicks.



DEMISCH DANANT

30 W 12TH ST NEW YORK

+1 212 989 5750

[INFO@DEMISCHDANANT.COM](mailto:INFO@DEMISCHDANANT.COM)