

# PIN-UP



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# FLOW

Plus: A Water Special by Wolfgang Tillmans

Featuring

Johnston Marklee, Cookies, Leong Leong,

Arno Brandhuber, Guy Nordenson,

Tom Burr, WOHA, Smiljan Radic,

David Hartt, Olson Kundig,

and much more...

LOS  
MEXICO!

URUGUAY!

CHILE!

DESTINOS

Spring Summer 2017

ALSO: AKIRA MINAGAWA, ANIA  
CARLSEN, CHRIST &  
JILLIAN MAYER, LOT-EK,  
AND

JAWORSKA, ASGER  
GANTENBEIN,  
NATHAN BROWNING,  
PETER OPSVIK.

Kunstmuseum Basel Extension,  
Basel, Switzerland (2016).

For their first series  
of freestanding furniture Swiss  
architects Emanuel Christ  
and Christoph Gantenbein were  
inspired by vernacular pieces  
from an Athenian fish market.

Christ & Gantenbein, Athens  
series (2017); poplar wood, paint.

Swiss National  
Museum Extension, Zürich,  
Switzerland (2012–16).

Image of Kunstmuseum Basel © Stefano Graziani. Image of Swiss National Museum © Walter Mair. All images courtesy Christ & Gantenbein and Maniera, Brussels.

Salvaging the remnants of material culture both past and present, Swiss architects Emanuel Christ and Christoph Gantenbein find among this global inventory and engage them as the springboard for their creative practice. The duo takes existing sources — a building, an object, an image — and interrogates them, transforms them, ultimately subjecting them to reinvention. “We have a position of authorship. It is about recreating, reconsidering, and reinterpreting relationships within a given context. It’s what I call the Marcel Duchamp moment,” says Christ. “Can I take this form out of its context, give it a certain autonomy and start to rework it, make it my own?” Christ and Gantenbein, now in their mid-40s, met while students at ETH Zürich and established their eponymous firm in 1998. Since then they have maintained their conviction that culture is a process of constant iteration, a stance they explore in their architectural projects, which have often themselves been extensions to existing structures.

# SWISS

Their much-lauded 2016 addition to the Kunstmuseum Basel engages in a sensitive dialogue with the mass and muted colors of the original building across the street, constructed in the 1930s. Meanwhile, their addition to the stately Swiss National Museum in Zürich (2002–16) is a work of quiet subversion: in contrast to the original late-19th-century building with its Renaissance-château styling, the new wing is uncompromisingly of its time, while still picking up on cues from its predecessor. This same method is carried over into their latest work, the *Athens* series, a collection of furniture for Maniera, a Brussels-based gallery specialized in design objects by architects and artists. For their first foray into freestanding furniture, Christ and Gantenbein drew inspiration from chopping blocks at an Athens fish market near the Parthenon, whose manner of assembly had captivated them. Employing a similarly rustic method, the three tables and two seats are held together thanks to overlapping rods driven through pre-drilled holes. They are finished with a matte white paint that still allows the appearance and touch of the wood grain. As much as this evokes the original chopping blocks, the architects were careful to allow room for their designs to evolve. “The way we interpret the construction is not how the original object was done,” Christ notes. “Already the source is fading, so that we end up with an object whose source is still there somehow, but is a piece on its own.”

In the wake of their two-volume compendium of building types entitled *Typologies* (published by Park Books in 2012 and 2015), the architects hope one day to expand the furniture project into a series of object typologies. But while the reappropriation of vernacular design methods can be something of a trope for architects and designers, Christ and Gantenbein move beyond irony or blind reverence for bygone eras. As Christ points out, they are careful to borrow only in the name of finding novel solutions to contemporary issues: “It’s not because we’re nostalgic or because we dream of a better world in the past. Not at all. I think it’s enriching, and a privilege, for us to imagine the future by using things that are left to us from the past.”

— TIFFANY LAMBERT