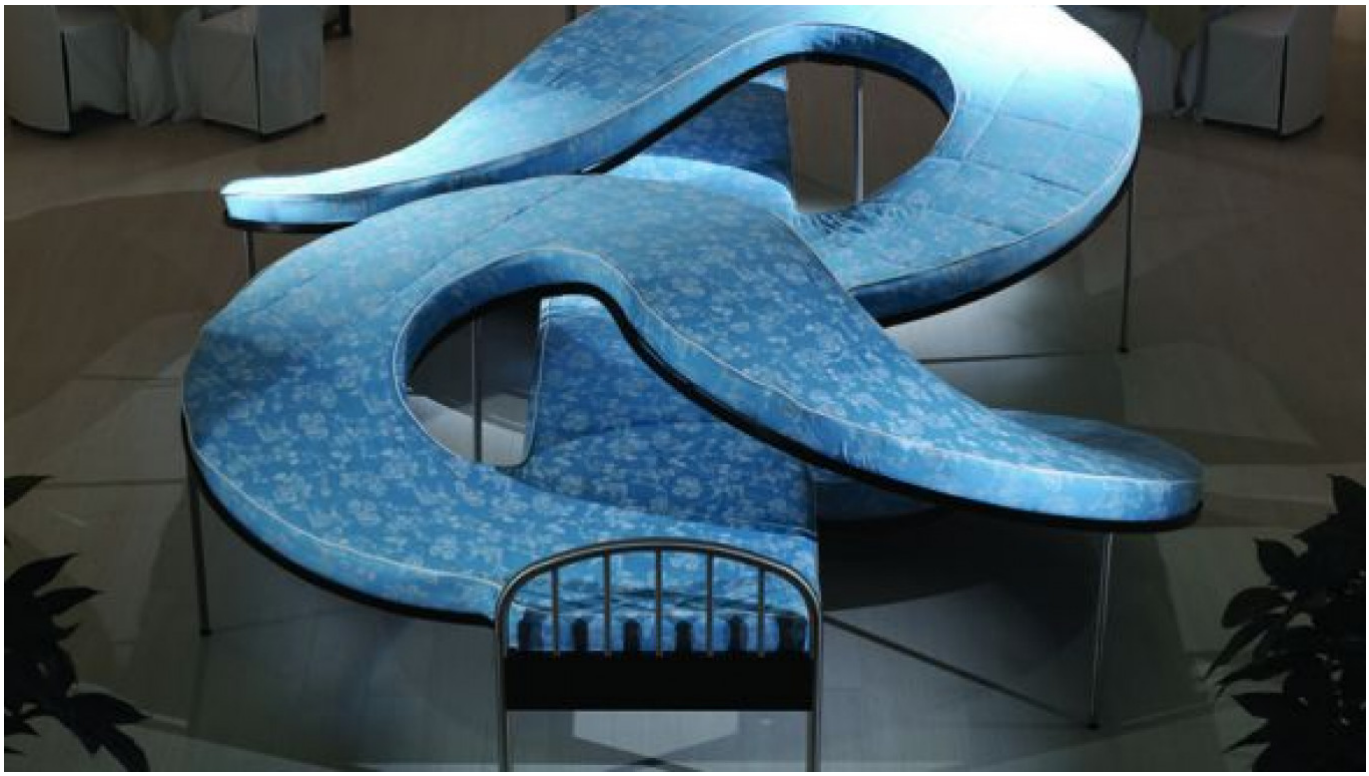
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Changing Furniture In Art's Name

By Claudia Arozqueta

November 29, 2010



"The New Decor," on at Garage until Feb. 6, displays everyday objects such as a bed, lights, a hammock and a room reinvented by renowned artists.

Flying tables, a sofa that lights up and other furniture turned into unusual and enchanting objects can be seen at "The New Decor" exhibition at the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture.

The show's aim is to question our daily surroundings as artists explore interior design as a means of engaging with changes in contemporary culture.

"The New Decor challenges visitors' perceptions of their own environment and explores a new chapter in the history of exhibitions looking at art and design," said Ralph Rugoff, director of the Hayward Gallery in London and the exhibition's curator.

Thirty-six renowned artists, including Jimmie Durham, Mona Hatoum, Martin Boyce, Yuichi Higashionna, Loris Cecchini, Jin Shi, Pascale Marthine Tayou and the Raqs Media Collective, look at the possibilities and interpretations of daily objects in the show.

The works in this exhibition attempt to “explore an arena between practicality and imagination, theater and everyday life by drawing out the social, historical and personal stories which are embedded in the furnishings that surround us,” Rugoff said.

The exhibit was previously displayed at the Hayward Gallery in London during the summer. The only difference for the show in Moscow is that Garage has specially commissioned new artists to create works involving local materials, such as “Soft Protection: Russian Version,” by Polish artist Jaroslaw Kozlowski, who connects two tables of different periods and styles.

Many of the artists explore the interior and exterior, private and public spaces in their work. One of the most attractive artworks that play with this idea is “Cama” (2007), by Cuban art collective Los Carpinteros, which changes a bed’s form so that it resembles a motorway junction. Among many interpretations, this absurd and surreal object reminds us that despite being immobile and finite, the act of dreaming could be the greatest trip in our daily lives.

In the series of works entitled “Powerless Structures,” Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset explore our prejudiced conception of objects by throwing in an element of surprise. In “Fig. 22” (2000), two ordinary white doors merge with the exhibition space. Both seem like simple objects but are actually linked to each another by a security steel chain making them dysfunctional objects that cannot achieve their principle function as apertures that control access between the inside and outside.

Young Russian artist Anna Zholud presents an interesting artwork titled “An Outline of Space,” a spatial composition of a room with objects made from wire rods. Zholud’s installations are like 3-D drawings: solid and illusory. Metal in her artworks is used as a method of drawing in space.

“The New Decor” runs until Feb. 6 at the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, 19A Ulitsa Obraztsova. Metro Novoslobodskaya. Tel. 645-0520, www.garageccc.com.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/11/29/changing-furniture-in-arts-name-a3362