

This furniture was designed by children: Galerie Philia presents 'Design Brut'

'Design Brut' is a new initiative by Galerie Philia whereby children create furniture design in collaboration with the gallery and BehaghelFoiny Studio



'Design Brut | Philia & Kids' is the inaugural edition of a new not-for-profit initiative by Galerie Philia in collaboration with BehaghelFoiny Studio. Designers Antoine Behaghel and Alexis Foiny worked with children from a school in Breil-sur-Roya, south-east France, who designed a series of furniture pieces that were then realised by the pair. A new exhibition (until 8 December 2022) shows the fruits of this collaboration alongside a film that documents the process.

'The documentary questions the actual definition of furniture design,' says Galerie Philia's founder, Ygaël Attali. 'The meaning emerges gradually through the drawings of the children and their physical incarnation.'



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The project's name is a nod to artist Jean Dubuffet's notion of 'art brut', created outside the boundaries of academic tradition by people who didn't normally participate in the cultural environment of fine art. For Dubuffet, artworks created by prisoners and patients in psychiatric hospitals, for example, were more expressive, emotional and direct, as they were not bound by cultural conventions.



(Image credit: Maison Mouton Noir, Courtesy Galerie Philia)

Attali was inspired by this notion, starting the Design Brut initiative with the aim of working alongside designers to bring to life children's design expressions. For the programme's debut, Attali and the designers enlisted a group of 6- and 7-year-old children, who created the works over a period of five months. 'The children were invited to draw shapes and ideas on paper to form their own interpretations of sculptural design,' reads a note from the gallery introducing the project. 'The children's drawings were then realised as physical designs, sculpted in local olive wood by BehagheFoiny Studio together with a cabinetmaker from the region, [and there followed] a small display in the chapel Notre-Dame-des-Monts in the presence of the children and local community.'

Concludes Attali: 'If raw art is defined by the unadulterated approach and absence of limits in the creative field, it seems here that functionality – the necessary notion of proportion and balance – is maintained, making it a key component of sculptural design.'

'Design Brut | Philia & Kids' is on view until 8 December 2022 at Espace Meyer Zafra

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