



Victoria and Albert Museum

The world's greatest museum of art and design

Opening times

10.00 to 17.45 daily

10.00 to 22.00 Fridays

Design Resident: Julia Lohmann

April – September 2013

Biography

Born in Germany, Julia Lohmann spent her childhood climbing trees and railroad bridges in a nature reserve near her home, befriending stray dogs on caravan trips across Europe and collecting driftwood for sculptures with her father. She moved to the UK to study for a BA Hons in Graphic Design at the Surrey Institute of Art and Design, Epsom and graduated in 2001 with a book on artwork created by maggots, which she curated and displayed together with partner Gero Grundmann in a series of unofficial exhibitions and performances at Tate Modern, London.

After a short stint at an advertising agency, Julia moved to Iceland to work on a horse and sheep farm before commencing her MA in Design Products at the RCA. The stark contrast between her time in Iceland and life in consumer culture London became a catalyst for her subsequent work on the transformation of livestock into materials and objects.

Since graduation in 2004, Julia has been running her own eponymous design practice. She is Professor for Design at the University of Fine Arts, Hamburg (HFBK). Her objects and installations are exhibited worldwide and form part of major private and public collections such as the British Council, UK and MoMA, New York.

Julia Lohmann has received awards, bursaries and support from the D&AD, the Esme Fairbairn Foundation, the British Council, Jerwood Contemporary Makers, Stanley Picker Gallery, S-AIR residency in Sapporo, Japan and the AHRC.

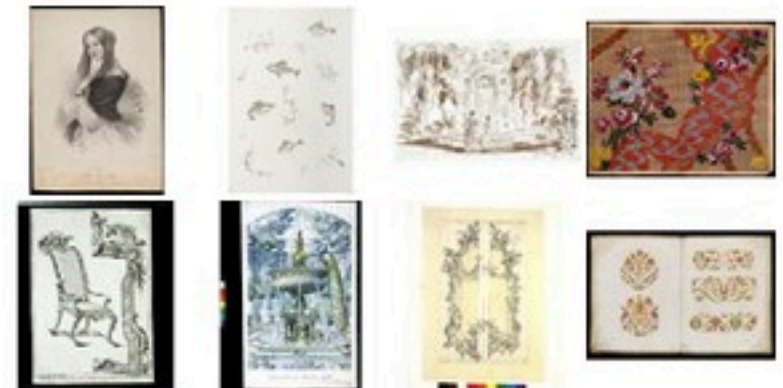


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Practice

Julia Lohmann is a designer, researcher and educator currently engaged in an Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded PhD studentship at the Royal College of Art and Victoria & Albert Museum. She creates objects and installations in the liminal space between design, science, art and craft which probe our attitudes towards the world that sustains us. A recurrent theme in Julia's work is the transformation of nature into artifice – and occasionally vice versa. She conducts practical investigations into socially constructed value systems, which she deliberately deconstructs and reconfigures to create objects that encourage designers and users to utilise and consume materials in a more responsible manner.

After a series of projects on animals and materials of animal origin, Julia's current interest has shifted to the sea. She is developing new craft techniques to create objects from kelp, thereby exploring its potential as a sustainable alternative to manmade materials such as leather, plastic and glass. During her residency at the V&A, entitled 'The Department of Seaweed', Julia will draw analogies between her work with kelp and existing craft techniques and object typologies in the V&A collection.

Julia uses co-design processes to create a body of work and open-design strategies to share her research, discoveries and work processes with specialist craftsmen of other disciplines and the public.

Research interests in the V&A Collections

'I do not see seaweed as a weed.'

To develop techniques and methods of working with seaweed I research analogies with existing materials and craft techniques, as well as the formal language of objects created through their interplay. Using artefacts from the V&A Collection as case studies, I aim to analyse their material qualities, such as colour, texture, tensile strength, malleability, stability and UV resistance, as well as the cultural and formal context of artefacts, and the craft knowledge and creative and technical developments needed to turn specific materials into objects.

I am interested in a broad range of artefacts. These include Japanese screens and Urushi lacquerware; Samurai armour and kimonos; lace patterns and crinoline cages; marquetry work and stained glass windows; contemporary jewellery and bronze age gold collars.

Incorporating my research findings into my design repertoire I work with kelp based on established points of reference, instead of starting with a blank page. I create new craft processes by mixing, remodelling and recontextualising existing processes to tailor them specifically to the material qualities of kelp. Having access to the collective knowledge of the V&A expert staff and by collaborating with other designers, craft specialists and scientists I hope to create a diverse range of research designed outcomes.

Julia Lohmann, 2011. © Petr Krejčí



Cowbench Antonia, Julia Lohmann Studio, 2008. © Julia Lohmann Studio



Ruminant Bloom, Julia Lohmann Studio, 2004. © Julia Lohmann

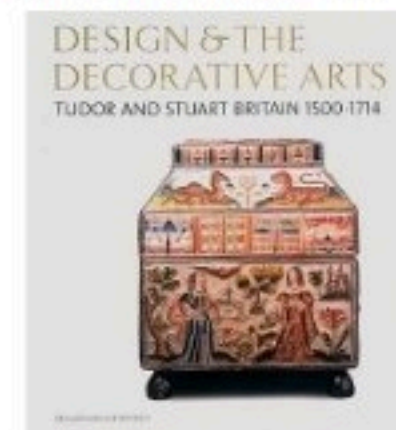


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Event - Open Studio: Julia Lohmann: Design Resident

Wed 24 April 2013–Wed 26 June 2013



OPEN STUDIO: Visit the V&A Residency Studios to meet design resident Julia Lohmann. Find out about her research, creative practice and work in progress. 13.00-16.00

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