

press release

KUNSTHAL ROTTERDAM



Bakelite, everyone knows it **25th anniversary of the Amsterdam Bakelite Collection**

17 December 2016 – 5 March 2017

Press release, 29 November 2016

Industrial design meets nostalgia in the exhibition 'Bakelite, everyone knows it'. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Amsterdam Bakelite Collection, the Kunsthall Rotterdam presents a historical survey of objects made of Bakelite and related materials. From the beginning of the 20th century, the versatility of Bakelite has brought about revolutionary developments in telecommunications, the car industry, air and space travel and other fields. The exhibition shows such objects as photographic and film cameras, radio and TV sets, domestic articles, items of furniture, tools and toys. Designs by twenty-five prominent designers including Philippe Starck, Friso Kramer and Isamu Noguchi form a part of the presentation.

Bakelite, one of the most amazing materials ever invented

The invention of Bakelite in 1907 by the Belgian-American chemist Leo Baekeland (Ghent, 1863-1944) is a milestone in the history of chemistry. This thermosetting plastic that is hardened by heating, is used for the casing of a variety of objects and applied in electrical engineering because of its insulating properties. Objects made of Bakelite are often characterised by their curved shape, which makes it easy to remove the product from the mould. Through large-scale production and the possibility of making attractively designed products, Bakelite grew globally to become the number one material with more than a thousand uses. Many products came within reach of ordinary citizens from the 1930s on, but in the 1950s Bakelite gradually began to go out of fashion as more modern plastics appeared that are more colourful and robust. Bakelite is still applied worldwide on a very large scale. China, the USA, Japan and Europe produce million of tons every year, mainly for industrial use. You may not see it, but it is there, even in your phone and in your car. The prewar articles, on the other hand, have become highly sought after collectors items. With the exhibition 'Bakelite, everyone knows it' the Kunsthall contributes to opening up hidden private collections.

Back to a bygone era

The hundreds of everyday products from the collection of Reindert Groot in the exhibition afford a comprehensive view of the industrial design of the last century. The objects, including typical Art Deco, Bauhaus and Streamline styles, are thematically grouped by function and use – domestic appliances from stoves to fridges, curious medical instruments, items of furniture and office articles. Rare products such as advertising material, original working drawings and moulds, 19th-century predecessors of Bakelite and tangible memories of the former Corodex Bakelite factory in Zandvoort are also on display. Back to a bygone era!

Opening Saturday 17 December, 15:00 hrs

The exhibition will be opened at 15:00 hrs on the afternoon of Saturday 17 December by Reindert Groot, founder of the Amsterdam Bakelite Collection. The event coincides with the opening of the exhibition 'Drawn from life. Courtroom sketches by Chris Roodbeen' by the criminal lawyer Inez Weski, and of 'Beelder... by J.A. Deelder' by Jules Deelder. The press is warmly invited to attend the openings. Please register with communicatie@kunsth.nl

Foto's: Cord switches, international, 20th and 21st century; Extendable desk lamp Lucidus Bloc, France, 1944, design by André Mounique, manufacturer: Société Nouvelle des Etablissements JUMO; Toy car CODEC UK, ca. 1930, photo's © Reindert Groot

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→ Please include the following information in all publications: info +31 (0)10-4400301, www.kunsth.nl, opening hours: Tuesdays to Saturdays from 10 am to 5 pm, Sundays and public holidays from 11 am to 5 pm. Follow the Kunsth Rotterdam: www.kunsth.nl | Facebook | Twitter | Youtube | Instagram



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The Amsterdam Bakelite Collection

The Amsterdam Bakelite Collection, founded in 1990 by the professional photographer and producer Reindert Groot (1946), contains more than 4.000 American and European objects. Besides managing the private collection, the Amsterdam Bakelite Collection Foundation also aims to promote knowledge about Bakelite and its history, as well as focusing on applied art, design and research related to thermosetting plastics. www.amsterdambakelitecollection.com

About the Kunsth Rotterdam

The Kunsth Rotterdam is a leading cultural institution in the Netherlands and is located in Museumpark Rotterdam. Designed in 1992 by the famous architect Rem Koolhaas, the Kunsth has no less than seven different exhibition areas. Every year, the Kunsth presents a varied and diverse programme of approximately 25 exhibitions. The Kunsth always presents several exhibitions simultaneously, taking visitors on an exciting journey along various cultures and art movements. From modern masters and contemporary art to forgotten cultures, photography, fashion and design, this is culture for a wide audience. The Kunsth also organises an extensive programme of activities to accompany the exhibitions.

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