

PRESS RELEASE

## **Artek and BLESS create BLESS N°60 Lobby Conquerors for the Chicago Architecture Biennial**

Finnish furniture company Artek and Berlin/Paris based BLESS have joined forces to create BLESS N°60 Lobby Conquerors, commissioned for the Chicago Architecture Biennial.

Artek is the official furniture partner of the Biennial, which takes place 16 September 2017 to 7 January 2018. This year's exhibition is entitled *Make New History* and has been curated by Artistic Directors Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee of Los Angeles based architecture firm Johnston Marklee.

BLESS N°60 Lobby Conquerors is related to the BLESS N°07 Livingroom Conquerors (1998), a series of options for dressing and shape-refining existing furniture for private use. At the Chicago Cultural Center these ideas expand, inspired by the colors and material concept of the building.

Through garments and fragmented architectural add-ons, Artek's iconic Kiki Lounge Chairs, designed by Finnish Master Ilmari Tapiovaara in 1960, are transformed into small *architurniture* units. Meanwhile Tapiovaara's Lukki stools (1954) appear dressed-up in hairy costumes that seem to occupy the seating objects, challenging and inviting the visitors to take a seat. A number of Tapiovaara's classic Kiki Benches complement the space, welcoming the Biennial visitors to sit down and become a decorative subject themselves, celebrating a tentative appointment in the Here & Now. This conglomeration inhabit a transitory space and invite interaction in two ways: either by connecting people or by providing privacy and shelter. The lobby has become a romantic location of encounter between human and furniture.

### **About Artek**

Artek was founded in Helsinki in 1935 by four young idealists: Alvar and Aino Aalto, Maire Gullichsen, and Nils-Gustav Hahl. Their goal was "to sell furniture and to promote a modern culture of living by exhibitions and other educational means."

In keeping with the radical spirit of its founders, Artek today remains an innovative player in the world of modern design, developing new products at the intersection of design, architecture, and art. The Artek collection consists of furniture, lighting, and accessories designed by Finnish masters and leading international designers. It stands for clarity, functionality, and poetic simplicity.

### **About BLESS**

Founded in 1997 by Desiree Heiss and Ines Kaag, Paris and Berlin-based BLESS is best described as a platform of creation. BLESS create products and situations that connect people to their surroundings and atmospheres in the celebration of *Jetztzeit*, treating the restless now. Their works span over fashion, visual arts, sports, design, social activities and architecture.

BLESS has exhibited at prestigious institutions worldwide including Centre George Pompidou in Paris, Villa Noailles in Hyères, Boijmans Museum in Rotterdam, MoMA in Tokyo and Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein.

## **About Chicago Architecture Biennial**

The second edition of the Chicago Architecture Biennial is the largest architecture and design exhibition in North America, showcasing the transformative global impact of creativity and innovation in these fields. This year's Biennial features over 141 practitioners from more than 20 countries addressing the 2017 theme "Make New History". Artistic Directors Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee have selected architects and artists whose eye-opening creations will invite the public to explore how the latest architecture can and will make new history in places around the world. The main exhibition is free and open to the public from 16 September 2017 through 7 January 2018.

BLESS N°60 Lobby Conquerors – a project by BLESS and Artek  
Chicago Architecture Biennial  
16 September 2017 – 7 January 2018  
Chicago Cultural Center  
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