

Designing Tomorrow

Frederick Kiesler's Mergentime Apartment

Exhibition at the Frederick Kiesler Foundation, Mariahilfer Strasse 1b/1, 1060 Vienna

Opening: Tuesday, November 8, 2016 at 7 p.m.

Duration: November 9, 2016 – February 17, 2017

Side tables that are cast in aluminum and nestle into each other, drop-shaped floor lamps, unconventional cantilever and three-legged chairs and a lounge that would “seat a whole party at the same time”: The apartment Frederick Kiesler designed for Marguerita Mergentime (1894-1941) and her husband Charles in the mid-1930s comprised an entire universe of innovative furniture. Regarding this interior's functionality and aesthetics, it is hard to believe that the designs never entered series production and that the Mergentime apartment was to remain the only one designed by Kiesler.

More than 80 years later, two lucky coincidences triggered the plan to dedicate an exhibition to the *Mergentime Apartment*: Together with the Frederick Kiesler Foundation and a private sponsor, Wittmann Möbelwerkstätten was able to purchase two of the initially eight original *Mergentime Apartment* chairs which were now produced again as a re-edition. Simultaneously, negatives of a previously unknown photo series documenting the *Mergentime Apartment* were discovered in the estate of architect and photographer Robert Damora (1912-2009). After an elaborate restoration, for the first time, they provide insight into the apartment designed by Kiesler. Thus, it is now possible to not only experience the apartment through the individual, unique furniture objects but as a whole.

The *Nesting Tables* — they are regarded as the kidney-shaped tables' forebears — were developed further by Kiesler, and he had the new versions extensively documented. In that way, about 70 photographs — extravagant stagings of the objects — could be preserved. In front of a neutral, black background, the *Nesting Tables* appear to float freely in the room and present themselves as an abstract surface composition.

Curated by Jill Meißner and Gerd Zillner

In the course of “eyes on – Month of Photography Vienna” and “Vienna Art Week”