



Donald Judd's Standing Writing Desk (1984)

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## Seven Studies

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"To look at furniture from the point of view of art is very fashionable and everyone discusses the borderlines," admits Jörg Schellmann, an art gallerist and the founder of Schellmann Furniture, a producer of artists' furniture designs. "But we wanted to look at why most designers and artists have thought about and designed their own working space."

The result of Schellmann's investigation, and the inaugural show in Schellmann Furniture's new Munich showroom, is *Seven Studies*, an exhibition exploring study designs by seven designers and artists.

The exhibition is inspired by the notion of the medieval studiolo and its idea of the study as a retreat and private space. Comprising the exhibition are chair, desk and storage unit designs from the designers Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec, Stefan Diez and Sebastian Wrong, along with contributions from Schellmann himself and the artists Donald Judd, Gerhard Merz and Liam Gillick.

"I was interested in associating myself with younger designers and I think those we selected are good examples of the new generation of designers," says Schellmann. "For the artists I wanted people who actually think about furniture, rather than just decorating existing pieces. For instance when Damien Hirst made tables for his restaurant Pharmacy, he just used straightforward white tables that he applied his dots on the surface of. That is a case of thinking about surface rather than furniture."

The pieces on display are diverse and more notable for their differences than similarities. Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec's Tyde standing writing desk for Vitra and Donald Judd's self-produced lectern share a typology, yet the motor-driven legs of the Bouroullec piece and its emphasis on technology stands in sharp contrast to the clean lines and Douglas fir construction of Judd's 1984 work.

Similarly, Diez's sleek metal table and chair (2013) are functional and discrete, a trait emphasized by their display alongside Gillick's vibrant powder-coated aluminium furniture or Wrong's kitsch Sigmund's chair (2013), a seat whose construction is disguised by the Persian rug draped over it.

\* CHASSIS Table and Chair (for Schellmann)

"We're interested in what happens between art and design and have pieces from across that spectrum," says Schellmann. "Sebastian's piece for instance is not a piece of furniture. It's a play with ideas. But the Bouroullecs Stefan Diez's works are totally furniture and they would not claim them as art."

Yet the core of the exhibition is the enduring appeal of the study for designers and artists. "For designers and artists it is the most intriguing and serious space to work with," argues Schellmann. "Almost every artist and designer has thought about his working space and made his own little studio himself."

"The bedroom and living room follow traditional rules and you make much more compromise than you do with your own studiolo, whereas the artist or designer totally identifies with his own working space. The bedroom is special, but almost no famous designer has really done beds. Yet everyone has done hundreds of chairs and desks. Bedrooms and living rooms follow more bourgeois rules, but with a studio you follow your own instincts."

This sense of the studio as a private sanctum is most evident in Schellmann's own design for the exhibition, a tubular room construction that serves as both a traditional desk and shelving unit, while also acting as its own independent space.

"I'm always more concerned about spaces than about pieces in the space," says Schellmann. "I was interested in creating a little working space that isolates you from your surroundings and protects you. If you're working your desk become taboo for someone to intrude on. Your chair and desk is something very personal."

Seven Studies runs until 20 December at Schellmann Furniture in Munich, Germany

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