

PRESS RELEASE

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Gerrit Th. Rietveld, Galerie VIVID, Rotterdam

April 7 - May 26, 2013

First Ever Rietveld exhibition in a Dutch Gallery

Selection of works from important private collections

In the past a few foreign galleries made exhibitions devoted to the work of Gerrit Th. Rietveld. Galerie Vivid is very proud to be the first ever Dutch gallery to organize a comprehensive presentation of the Dutch architect's original works.

Many of his iconic designs will be on display. Amongst others his famous 'Red-Blue' chair, the 'ZigZag' chair and 'Beugelstoel'. The works come from major Dutch private collections, most have never seen by the public before.

The generation that has known Gerrit Rietveld in person and worked with him is slowly disappearing. This exhibition will tell the story of these people, show their love for the work of Rietveld and let us admire the Rietveld furniture they collected.

One of the highlights of the exhibition will be Rietveld's, monochrome black 'rood-blauwe stoel' designed in 1919, that was commissioned by the famous Dutch designer Kho Liang Ie in 1963.

A part of the works in the Galerie VIVID exhibition is for sale.

Gerrit Th. Rietveld (1888 - 1964)

Dutch architect and furniture designer. He started work in his father's furniture workshop at the age of 12, and then from 1906 to 1911 he worked as a draughtsman for C. J. Begeer, a jeweller in Utrecht. During 1904-8 he took evening classes in drawing and the study of ornamentation at the Kunstindustriële Onderwijs der Vereeniging of the Museum van Kunstnijverheid in Utrecht. His interests nevertheless extended further than the applied arts. Around 1906 he attended classes given by the architect P. J. C. Klarhamer (1874-1954), a like-minded contemporary of H. P. Berlage. This contact with Klarhamer, who at that time shared a studio with Bart van der Leek, was of great importance for Rietveld's development, for it was through them that he learnt of recent national and international trends in architecture and the applied arts.

In 1917 Rietveld set up a furniture workshop in Utrecht; the following year Gerard A. van de Groenekan (1904-94) came to work for him as an apprentice, and he was to make a significant contribution to the execution of the furniture designs throughout Rietveld's career. The workshop was a turning-point, for it allowed Rietveld to make furniture according to his own judgement and taste. In 1918 he designed an unpainted armchair, of which he produced a coloured version in red, blue, yellow and black probably not before 1923. Known as the 'Red-Blue' chair, it brought him international fame. It is composed of

horizontal and vertical rectilinear planes that overlap at the point of intersection, thus blurring the volume of the chair and its surrounding space. In 1919 he became involved with the journal De Stijl: Maandblad voor nieuwe Kunst, wetenschap en Kultur, probably through Robert van 't Hoff; he continued as a contributor until its demise in 1931. The contacts that he made at De Stijl gave him the opportunity to exhibit abroad as well. He collaborated with Vilmos Huszár on the model of an interior, which was exhibited in Berlin in 1923. This included two scale models of pieces of furniture of his design. A number of life-size examples were made from one of these, the 'Berlin' chair, an unconventional, asymmetrical design, composed of flat surfaces in shades of grey and black.

During the same year Rietveld made three more asymmetrical pieces of furniture and took part in the exhibition Les Architectes du groupe 'de Stijl' (Hollande) in 1923 at the Galerie de l'Effort Moderne in Paris, where his model of the rebuilding of the G. Z. C. Jewellery Store (1920–22; destr.), Amsterdam, was exhibited. Under the influence of De Stijl painters, Rietveld began to experiment for a few years during the early 1920s with the use of primary colours in combination with white, black and grey on his furniture and architecture. He believed that the principle behind using colour was that the colours must follow the form and even emphasize it. Although the journal De Stijl supported a unity of the arts and De Stijl colleagues often collaborated, Rietveld usually worked alone. He determined the colour schemes used on his designs and designed the lettering on his façades, for example for the department stores Zaudy (1928; destr.) in Wesel, Germany, Gonsenheimer (1929; destr.) in Cleve, Metz & Co. (1938; destr.) in Amsterdam and Steltman (1964; destr.) in The Hague. Indeed Rietveld was concerned with typography throughout his career. He designed all his own printed matter and received commissions from private individuals and from such magazines as De Gemeenschap and Nieuw Rusland.

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