

# Hella Jongerius – Breathing Colour

Gewerbemuseum Winterthur, Switzerland

29 November 2020 to 24 May 2021 (Whit Monday)

Media conference: Fri 27.11.2020, 11.00 a.m.



Invitation card design, photo: Roel van Tour

The Dutch designer Hella Jongerius is internationally famous for her unique approach to colours and materials. “Breathing Colour” presents room-size installations which the designer uses to explore the impact of colour and how it is perceived. After appearing at the Design Museum London, the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen Rotterdam and the Nationalmuseum Stockholm, the exhibition is now coming to the Gewerbemuseum Winterthur.

The world around us offers an immensely rich assortment of colours, but we rarely appreciate their almost boundless diversity and transformative ability. This is where Hella Jongerius steps in with her studies of the phenomenology of colour, in which she examines a fundamental yet under-appreciated aspect of contemporary design. With the help of compelling three-dimensional shapes, careful grouping and a diversity of textile works, the designer raises awareness and heightens perception of hues, shades and reflections. She uses colour, material, light and shadow to create an almost endless variety of colour effects as they appear at different times of the day. Going far beyond the usual standard colour systems, the designer gives colours the scope to reveal themselves anew – or even, as she puts it, enables them to breathe.

Each of the exhibition zones simulates the specific light conditions at a particular time of day: morning, noon or evening. Hella Jongerius uses these three phases to investigate how they affect our perception of colour. A series of three-dimensional objects, which Jongerius describes as “colour catchers”, are the core elements of the exhibition. These experimental objects were specifically devised to enable colours and their impact to be observed. The complex exhibits are constructed with convex, faceted surfaces which can absorb and reflect colours in a nuanced way. As a result, colour effects in almost countless combinations turn the exhibition setting into a kind of three-dimensional colour chart.

**Morning:** Lightness, luminosity or a dull feeling on waking? The morning light first appears from the low sun on the rim of the horizon. As the sun gradually rises, the warm tones of dawn disappear and the colder morning air produces a crystal clear light in bluish shades.

**Noon:** When the sun reaches its zenith, daylight is at its most intense. The sharp light from above casts correspondingly hard shadows, producing strong contrasts in distinctive, bright colours.

**Evening:** The installation bathed in evening light offers a completely different experience. The sun is going down as the day draws to a close. Shadows materialise among the individual exhibits, appearing as physical shapes.

## Statements by Hella Jongerius

*“I rebel against the flatness of the colour industry. I miss the dash of red in industrial recipes for green. This gives the colour its intensity, its life. I miss colours that breathe with the changing of the light. I miss the changeability, the options, that allow us to read and re-read an industrially produced colour just as we reinterpret works of art.”*

*“Through this exhibition, I’ve tried to reveal colour’s full potential and how light helps colours breathe and come to life. It is designed to make us question colour – one of the most elemental aspects of design. My ultimate aim is to pit the power of colour against the power of form.”*

*“Colour is a visual experience, not a scientific one. When I look at designers’ and colour theorists’ work from the past, the most interesting ideas arose from isolated and personal experiences, and a willingness to question things. The fact that there is no objectivity in colour is a blessing to me.”*

*“The most important aspect in the quality of a colour is its pigments – this is the recipe that lies behind the colour. Perfectly arranged, immaculate industrial colour systems don’t offer us the full potential of colour. With this exhibition, I hope to build an archive and create a tool for understanding colour. I want to show a broader perspective than the industrial palette and demonstrate how powerful colour can be in transforming shapes and objects.”*

*“As well as making colours breathe, light also creates shadows. This has become an important and intriguing part of my colour research. Without shadows, objects would be naked. Shadows are the projection of objects, which mark their position in space.”*

## Further information about Hella Jongerius

Hella Jongerius (\*1963, NL) studied at the Design Academy Eindhoven. She was a member of the Amsterdam collective Droog Design and participated in its first exhibition in 1993. In that same year she founded her own design company, Jongeriuslab, in Rotterdam, before going on to open a second studio in Berlin in 2009. From 1998 to 1999 she taught industrial design at the Academy in Eindhoven, where she was head of the Living/Atelier department from 2000 to 2004. In 2010 and 2013 she was a visiting professor at the Kunsthochschule Berlin-Weissensee.

The many clients of Jongeriuslab include the US textile manufacturer Maharam (New York), the design companies Vitra (Switzerland), Artek (Finland), IKEA (Sweden), Nymphenburg (Germany) and the oldest stoneware factory in the Netherlands, Koninklijke Tichelaar in Makkum. The Dutch design collective Droog and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines also appear on its client list.

Meanwhile, Hella Jongerius’ works have been exhibited in international museums and galleries, including MoMA in New York and Galerie Kreo in Paris.

More information: [www.jongeriuslab.com](http://www.jongeriuslab.com)

## Portrait of Hella Jongerius on Vimeo & video message

<https://vimeo.com/210757811>

At the media conference a video message from Hella Jongerius will be shown in German and English:

[www.gewerbemuseum.ch](http://www.gewerbemuseum.ch)

## Events

Numerous additional events are being laid on to accompany the exhibition, most of them in German:  
[www.gewerbemuseum.ch](http://www.gewerbemuseum.ch)

## Publishing details

“Breathing Colour” was developed in collaboration with the Design Museum of London. Having appeared at the Design Museum London, the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen Rotterdam and the Nationalmuseum Stockholm, the exhibition is now coming to Winterthur.

## Fundamentals of design

The Gewerbemuseum Winterthur regularly explores questions related to the basic principles of design and their impact on art and design generally. In the course of this exploration, colour is often highlighted in exhibitions, special presentations and workshops. This series of events is now being enriched by the current exhibition, “Hella Jongerius – Breathing Colour”, which takes a further look at a wide spectrum of topics from the world of colour.

## Thanks to

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## General information

### Gewerbemuseum Winterthur opening hours

Tues to Sun 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thurs 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., closed Mon  
Special public holiday opening times: [www.gewerbemuseum.ch](http://www.gewerbemuseum.ch)

### Admission to Gewerbemuseum Winterthur

Entire museum: CHF 12 / CHF 8

Children + young people up to the age of 16 + school classes: free

Thurs 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. with Legi card: free

### Covid-19: exceptional times – special rules

Any amendments to the safety precautions as a result of official guidance, and any programme changes, will be announced on [www.gewerbemuseum.ch](http://www.gewerbemuseum.ch) as they arise.

### Gewerbemuseum Winterthur

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## Information for media professionals

### Media conference

**Friday, 27 November 2020 at 11 a.m.**

Welcome by Susanna Kumschick, Director of the Gewerbemuseum Winterthur, followed by introduction and tour of the exhibition with Mario Pellin, Research Associate at the Gewerbemuseum Winterthur. Unfortunately, Hella Jongerius will not be able to attend the media conference in person because she cannot enter Switzerland at this time. However, we shall be connecting with her online, so she will still be available to answer individual questions at the end of the tour. It is essential to register with the Media Office in advance.

### Individual interviews with Hella Jongerius

Individual tours of the exhibition and digital interviews with Hella Jongerius can be arranged at any time. Please contact the Media Office for appointments.

### Media Office

Luzia Davi, [gewerbemuseum.medien@win.ch](mailto:gewerbemuseum.medien@win.ch), telephone +41 (0)52 267 51 36 (direct line: 68 83)

## Media images

High resolution media images are available to download at [www.gewerbemuseum.ch](http://www.gewerbemuseum.ch). Further photos with views of the exhibition rooms will be provided at the opening. Please respect the rules regarding copyrights and crediting the photographers, and use these images only in connection with reporting on “Hella Jongerius – Breathing Colour” at the Gewerbemuseum Winterthur. Thank you very much.



Hella Jongerius – Breathing Colour, Design Museum London, photo: Luke Hayes, jpg 300dpi A5



Hella Jongerius – Breathing Colour, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, photo: Lotte Stekelenburg, jpg 300dpi A5



Hella Jongerius – Breathing Colour, Design Museum London, photo: Luke Hayes, jpg 300dpi A5



Hella Jongerius in the Jongeriuslab Studio, Berlin, photo: Roel van Tour, jpg 300dpi A5



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