

PRESS RELEASE

Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Kiss)*, Stool 60, 2019
Design Alvar Aalto
ICA × Artek

The ICA presents a second run of a newly commissioned artist's edition by Barbara Kruger, produced in collaboration with the Finnish furniture company Artek.



Photo: Todd White

Untitled (Kiss) (2019) marries Alvar Aalto's classic piece of modern furniture design, Stool 60, with a newly commissioned work by conceptual artist Barbara Kruger.

With a career spanning the past fifty years, Kruger is internationally known for her pictures and words. Her photographic works, expansive installations and multi-channel videos engage issues of power, gender, identity and value. Finished in Kruger's signature black, white and red, the initial run sold out within 48 hours. A new batch is currently being produced in Finland, each numbered and finished with the artist's stamp of authenticity.

Kruger's *Untitled (Kiss)* forms the starting point of a new collaboration between the ICA and Finnish furniture company Artek, which will result in a series of artists' customisations of Stool 60.

Barbara Kruger says:

‘This project has been a wonderful opportunity to work with Aalto’s classic piece of modernist furniture, while at the same time supporting the ICA, the first institution that offered me a one-person show of my work in 1983. I was honoured, a bit intimidated, but hugely thrilled by both the ICA and the complex and vital city that was, is, and will always be London. The memory of that exhibition, the wonderful space, the excitement and buzz of the ICA’s programme of visuality and intellectually rigorous public programming, its bookstore and crazily cool cafe, will never fade in my mind.’

Stefan Kalmár, Director, ICA, says:

‘It is rare that one can literally sit on one’s own institutional history. Alvar Aalto was a close friend of Jane Drew, the modernist architect of our building when we moved to The Mall in the spring of 1968. The ICA gave the first one-person exhibition to Barbara Kruger in 1983 – and neither the ICA nor Barbara have lost the urgency in confronting the present moment. I could not be happier about this collaboration, as it will allow us to amplify the crucial and critical role that the ICA has to play – now more than ever!’

Marianne Goebel, Managing Director, Artek, says:

‘We are excited to see Barbara Kruger’s sharp perspective on consumerism expressed on Alvar Aalto’s Stool 60, possibly the most elemental, yet iconic seating in modern design history. We could not imagine a more distinctive beginning of our collaboration with the ICA, which will celebrate contemporary culture across disciplines.’

Pre-order *Untitled (Kiss)* at Design Miami/ 3 – 8 December 2019 or purchase directly from the ICA from 4pm GMT on Tuesday 3 December.

Order online here: www.ica.art/editions

To request further information, images and interviews, please contact:

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BUYERS INFORMATION

On sale from 3 December 2019, 16:00 GMT

Price: £450

The stool will be available from the following outlets and dates:

ICA Bookstore, from 3 December

ICA Artists' Editions online shop, from 3 December: www.ica.art/editions

Design Miami/ 3–8 December, as part of the ICA × Artek Satellite exhibit, marking the first time the ICA has exhibited at Design Miami/.

For sale enquiries, please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

American conceptual artist **Barbara Kruger** (b. 1945) is best known for her layered photographs featuring provocative statements on issues surrounding commercial culture, feminism, and identity politics. Kruger was born in Newark, NJ, and studied art at Syracuse University, the School of Visual Arts, and Parson's School of Design, under Diane Arbus. She spent several years working as a graphic designer and artistic director for publications such as *Mademoiselle*, *House and Garden*, and *Aperture*. At the same time, she gained critical recognition for her photographic and screen-printed works, in which she layered found images from commercial sources and overlaid them with short, challenging phrases, such as 'You are a captive audience', and 'I shop therefore I am'. Kruger's work powerfully examines individual participation within consumer and media culture, and provides a forceful feminist critique. She has exhibited her work at the Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the National Center for Contemporary Art in Grenoble, France, and at the Kunsthalle Basel in Switzerland, among other institutions. Her work has also been reproduced on billboards, t-shirts, and at various public venues. Kruger currently lives and works in Los Angeles and New York.

Alvar Aalto (1898–1976) was a Finnish architect and designer. His work includes architecture, furniture, textiles and glassware, as well as painting and sculpture, though he never regarded himself as an artist, seeing painting and sculpture as 'branches of the tree whose trunk is architecture.' The style of his work ranged from Nordic Classicism to an International Style Modernism over the span of his career, eventually evolving during the 1940s into a more organic modernist approach. Aalto approached architecture as part of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a 'total work of art'; whereby he – together with his first wife Aino Aalto – would design not just the building, but also the interior surfaces, including furniture, lamps and glassware. His furniture designs are considered Scandinavian Modern, owing to his concern for materials, especially wood, and his approach, which combined simplification with technical experimentation. Aalto received patents for various manufacturing processes, including the bentwood as seen in Stool 60.

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 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. Artek stands for

clarity, functionality and poetic simplicity.

ICA Artists' Editions are made exclusively for the ICA by some of the most vital artists working today, with all proceeds directly supporting the ICA's progressive programme. These commissions – which include prints, sculpture, apparel and furniture – provide an opportunity for artists to develop self-led experimental work that expands on their existing practice outside the format of an exhibition. Recent editions include those by Cory Arcangel, Andrea Büttner, Barbara Kruger, Oscar Murillo, Frances Stark, Hito Steyerl, Martine Syms, Juergen Teller, Oscar Tuazon, Peter Wächtler, Jordan Wolfson and Cerith Wyn Evans. www.ica.art/editions

Founded in 1946 by a collective of artists, poets and their supporters, the **Institute of Contemporary Arts** is an independent organisation and registered charity which supports the most pressing debates in contemporary culture. The ICA stages groundbreaking exhibitions, performances and keynote lectures by many of the world's leading thinkers. Previously home to the Independent Group, the ICA played a pivotal role in the development of pop art and charted the course of punk, performance art and independent cinema. The ICA staged the first institutional exhibitions by Francis Bacon, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Tacita Dean, Damien Hirst, Mike Kelley, Mary Kelly, Barbara Kruger, Gerhard Richter, Dieter Roth, Cindy Sherman, Nancy Spero, and Cosey Fanni Tutti and early exhibitions by Bernadette Corporation, Robert Mapplethorpe, Steve McQueen and Tino Sehgal; many now historic performances including those by Laurie Anderson, Einstürzende Neubauten and Yoko Ono; legendary concerts by The Clash, Throbbing Gristle, The Smiths, David Bowie and The Beastie Boys; and critical discussions by the likes of Kathy Acker, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Stuart Hall and Homi K. Bhabha. The ICA Cinema and its dedicated artist's film programme continue to showcase independent film and support pioneering filmmakers including Chantal Akerman, Kenneth Anger, Matthew Barney, Derek Jarman, Ken Loach and Laura Poitras. From its home on The Mall – the geographic heart of the UK establishment – the ICA is an organisation in which different modes of cultural production thrive on the mutual engagement with one another, and a programme that speaks to the challenges of the 21st century. www.ica.art

For information about tickets and membership, please contact:
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