



# Designing Tomorrow

## Frederick Kiesler's Mergentime Apartment

**WHERE?** Frederick Kiesler Foundation,  
Mariahilfer Straße 1b/1 (Mezzanine), 1060 Vienna

**WHEN?** November 9, 2016 – February 17, 2017  
Opening hours: Tuesday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Free entry!

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

**Special event:** Tuesday, November 15, 2016 at 4 p.m.

Exhibition talk with the curators Jill Meißner and Gerd Zillner

Afterwards (around 5 p.m.) there will be a champagne reception with director Peter Bogner

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

Press: Jill Meißner, T +43 1 5130775-40, E [jill.meissner@kiesler.org](mailto:jill.meissner@kiesler.org)

Press images in high resolution for [download](#) at [www.kiesler.org](http://www.kiesler.org)

Please also visit us on [Facebook](#) – [Twitter](#) – [Instagram](#)

## **Designing Tomorrow**

### **Frederick Kiesler's Mergentime Apartment**

Exhibition at the Frederick Kiesler Foundation

Curated by Jill Meißner and Gerd Zillner

In the spring of 2014 photographs were discovered showing an apartment designed by Frederick Kiesler in the 1930s, which had been rarely documented before. The son of architect and photographer Robert Damora (1912-2009) possessed negatives of a photo series that provided insight into this blind spot in Kiesler research for the first time – they were in a miserable condition though. The Frederick Kiesler Foundation financed the laborious restoration and is now able to exclusively present prints and blow-ups of these photographs in the exhibition *Designing Tomorrow. Frederick Kiesler's Mergentime Apartment*.

### **The *Mergentime Apartment***

The textile designer Marguerita Mergentime (1894-1941) and her husband Charles commissioned Frederick Kiesler around 1935 to design their apartment next to New York's Central Park – this is the only known interior design by Kiesler! It resulted in several aesthetic as well as functional pieces of furniture: drop-shaped floor lamps, three-legged chairs, aluminium side tables (*Nesting Tables*) and a foldable couch (*Party Lounge*) among others. Kiesler also integrated furniture by other designers, for example a chair by Le Corbusier.

### **The *Mergentime Chair***

Several pieces of furniture designed by Kiesler for the *Mergentime Apartment* are available as re-editions by the Wittmann Möbelwerkstätten in Lower Austria, co-founder and longtime partner of the Frederick Kiesler Foundation. When two of the original three-legged chairs from the *Mergentime Apartment* were sold in an auction in New York in December 2014, the

Wittmann Möbelwerkstätten purchased one for themselves and the second one – together with another private sponsor – for the Frederick Kiesler Foundation. Just a short time prior they had decided to launch a re-edition of this very chair. On the basis of the original chair as well as drawings from the Frederick Kiesler Foundation's archive a prototype could be constructed before long and presented in the course of the *Vienna Design Week*. The so-called *Mergentime Chair* expands Wittmann's product portfolio of Kiesler re-editions: For a few years now the *Party Lounge*, the *Bed Couch*, the cantilever chair (*Freischwinger*) as well as Correalist furniture, which traces back to Peggy Guggenheim's famous gallery-museum *Art of This Century* from the 1940s, are sold.

### **The Nesting Table**

Frederick Kiesler continued to develop the *Nesting Table*, a multi-part aluminium side table designed for the *Mergentime Apartment* and forebear of the kidney-shaped tables, and had it photographed extensively. Around 70 photographs are preserved in the archive of the Frederick Kiesler Foundation today, most of them by Ben Schnall (1906-1998). The furniture pieces are staged artistically: In front of a neutral black background the *Nesting Tables* seem to float freely in space and present themselves as abstract surface composition. One of those photographs is depicted on the exhibition poster.

### **The Exhibition**

The exhibition *Designing Tomorrow. Friedrich Kieslers Mergentime Apartment* presents Robert Damora's series of photographs for the first time to the public. Two of the photographs are shown enlarged as blow-ups on the wall and thereby literally invite the visitor to immerse in the apartment interior. This impression is further enhanced by the corresponding pieces of furniture: The two original chairs are exhibited next to a *Nesting Table*. The exhibition is complemented by design drawings and photographic stagings of the *Nesting Tables*.