

Exhibition: **Ingo Maurer – Light. Reaching for the moon**
Institut Valencià d'Art Modern. IVAM
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Organized by: Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein
Co-produced by: IVAM Institut Valencià d'Art Modern

Curator: Jochen Eisenbrand

Sponsored by: 
Bancaja

This exhibition, presented by the IVAM and sponsored by Bancaja, shows about a hundred works produced between 1970 and 2000 by Ingo Maurer. This acclaimed designer, who devotes himself to the use of light with commitment and enthusiasm, has created more than 120 lamps and a variety of lighting systems over the last four decades, and his installations illuminate many public buildings and private homes. The exhibition, organized by the Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany, in collaboration with Ingo Maurer, is accompanied by a catalogue with illustrations of the works exhibited and texts by Jochen Eisenbrand, Claudia Clemente and Deyan Sudjic.

Something that sets Maurer apart from his fellow designers is the fact that he is not only a creator but also a developer and producer rolled into one. Operating his own factory does not just give Maurer significant artistic freedom; the development department and team-based collaboration also allow him to be one of the first to explore the creative potential of new technologies and even himself develop materials and technical components refined down to the last detail. The initial trigger for this self-taught designer's career was his fascination with the light bulb as the "perfect union of technology and poetry", a fascination that has endured to the present day. Inspired by Pop Art, Maurer first designed *Bulb* (1966), a table lamp in the form of a giant light bulb and a homage to Edison's ingenious invention that is now a classic in its own right.

Maurer frequently attempts to involve the user in the final appearance of his lamps, the consequence of his pursuit of "good light". For every occasion and every setting he strives to create the ideal illumination, the perfect lighting conditions. For instance, flexible reflectors are integrated in many of his lamps so that users can direct the light in whatever direction they wish. Yet most often the lamps themselves are tremendously mobile and versatile, such as the programmatic *Max.Mover* (2001). Its ingenious cable construction holds the wall and ceiling lamps in balance in any desired position. This lamp also reveals yet another typical characteristic of Maurer's designs, namely reduction to essentials. Not least to achieve this aim, a main focus since the early 1980s has been work with halogen lamps, in most cases in conjunction with low-voltage technology.

Another technology that has furnished Maurer with possibilities for reduction is LEDs (light-emitting diodes), which, like halogen lamps, were long almost exclusively employed in a technical function but are now found in residential interiors and offices as well. With the table lamp *La Bellissima Brutta* (1997), Maurer was one of the first to recognize and make use of this potential. The cool aesthetic of his LED hanging lamps *Yoooodoo* (1999), *Stardust* (2000) and *Licht.Enstein* (2001) plays with the experimental character still inherent in pioneering work with this forward-looking technology. Like many lamps by Maurer, table lamps such as *EL.E.DEE* (2001) or the *Licht Prototyp* shown in the exhibition function with Touchtronic, a system that allows dimming through touch and – here another example of reduction – makes a switch unnecessary.

Since the 1990s, the MoMA-celebrated Maurer has increasingly turned his attention to developing complete lighting concepts for private and public clients. For the Westfriedhof underground railway station in Munich (1998), he created giant aluminium ceiling lamps in the form of a dome, lacquering the inside surfaces in different hues to imbue the light with a unique tone. A New York hotel subsequently commissioned Maurer to produce a similar dome-shaped lamp, whose twin brother can now be admired in the exhibition. The light sculpture *Paragaudí*, a gilded aluminium band several metres long, was created by Maurer for the conference room of a bank in León, Spain. In London, the lighting artist set Issey Miyake's showroom aglitter under a filigree cloud adorned with hundreds of silver leaves that reflect the light and shimmer when stirred by a draft (1999). The same year, in Paris, Maurer put the couturier's fashion show in a favourable light with a sky of small, seemingly floating

coloured sails. A poetic installation that continually involves the surrounding space and is likewise on view in the exhibition.

Ingo Maurer, born in 1932 on the island of Reichenau in the German part of Lake Constance, is one of the most acclaimed designers on the German art scene. In 1966 he set up the Design M company in Munich, and there he designed his first lamp, *Bulb*, purchased four years later by the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 1991, in addition to specializing in designing lamps, he also began to work increasingly on lighting concepts for public and private clients.

This poet of light has been inundated with distinctions, notably including the award of the rank of Chevalier des arts et des lettres, conferred upon him by the French Minister of Culture in 1986. In 1997 the magazine *Architektur und Wohnen* named him Designer of the Year, and in 1999 he opened a shop/showroom in New York and received the Design Prize awarded by the city of Munich.

In 2000 he received the Lucky Strike Designer Award from the Raymond Loewy Foundation and the Primavera del Disseny prize from the city of Barcelona. In the autumn of 2002 he was awarded the Collab Prize by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and in 2003 he was presented with the Georg Jensen Prize 2002 in Copenhagen. In September he was awarded the fourth Oribe Award of the Design Academy Division of Gifu, Japan.