



## “Echt Alt / Original Old” International Upcycling – Fair & Exhibition Designers’ Open 2017 – DO/Spot Kunstkraftwerk Leipzig

Moving away from throwing out: the third annual International Upcycling Fair & Exhibition at the Kunstkraftwerk showcases sustainable design and handicrafts

### With Special Exhibition featuring artists from Poland

According to the Federal Statistical Office, Germany is one of the largest waste producers in the EU, generating 618 kilograms of waste per capita every year. At the same time, Germans are also Europe’s best recyclers, as 64 per cent of the country’s wastes are reused.

Upcycling, i.e. the process of transforming waste materials into something of higher value, is now a booming trend. Since 2015 the Kunstkraftwerk Leipzig has been presenting current developments in this field at its annual International Upcycling Fair & Exhibition “Echt\_Alt/Original\_Old”.

The third edition of this event will be hosted here from 20 to 22 October 2017 in the context of the Grassmesse and Designers’ Open 2017. Some 40 artists from four different countries (Italy, Poland, the Netherlands and Germany) will be presenting their unique solutions for combining sustainability and design in the form of high-quality and unique products from the fields of art, product design (furniture), jewellery making and fashion/textile design. All exhibited works are handmade from reclaimed and repurposed materials.

Visitors can admire and purchase furniture built from ammunition boxes, ashtrays produced from fire extinguishers, folding screens made from newspapers, handbags fashioned from corrugated board,

wastepaper bins woven from videotape, belts handcrafted from fish leather and trendy upcycled streetwear collections.

“Recycling and upcycling have long since made the leap from ‘green’ niche to trend market,” says curator Lilly M. Bozzo-Costa. “The reuse of old and discarded materials is an important theme in art and design. Recycled and upcycled products are being made with impressive quality, ethical approaches and contemporary designs.”

## Special Exhibition Poland

At each “Echt\_Alt/Original\_Old” event a Special Exhibition showcases works from a featured country. In this context, special guests attended from Italy in 2015 and Africa in 2016. This year’s Special Exhibition will shine the spotlight on Poland. The highly sophisticated and multifaceted Polish design culture has earned an excellent reputation worldwide. The four featured artists and design studios – REC.ON Warsaw, Alicja Patanowska from Wrocław, Daria Wartalska from Wrocław/Berlin and MiserArt from Wrocław – provide a good overview of the current design and upcycling landscape of our eastern neighbour. “In the field of upcycling design, we can learn a lot from our Polish colleagues. They combine high standards for design and craftsmanship with a sense of humour, a commitment to social responsibility and an appreciation for beauty,” says Bozzo-Costa.

The Warsaw-based label REC.ON, for example, transforms old car parts into lamps, shelves and coat racks, which they sell to hotels, restaurants and cafés.

The project “MiserArt” from Wrocław combines environmentally conscious design with social activism. Its special upcycling workshops take a stand against the social and cultural exclusion of homeless people. Their aim is to help individuals develop their creativity and handicraft skills as an initial step towards re-entering society. In the context of the fair and exhibition, “MiserArt” will be presenting its work in the form of an open workshop.

The Special Exhibition is being co-partners by the Lodz Design Festival, the Polish Institute Berlin, the Polish Institute Leipzig, the Polish Honorary Consulate in Leipzig and the Europa-Haus Leipzig.