

# Herald St

## **A Single Work**

Amalia Pica

3rd September - 2nd October 2021

(Clockwise from entrance)

Study for rearranging the conference table 24  
2021  
Wood and formica laminate  
160 x 528 x 5 cm / 63 x 207.9 x 2 in  
Ed. Unique

Amalia Pica and Rafael Ortega  
Rehearsing the Conference Table  
2020  
Video  
9 mins 17 secs

Amalia Pica (b. 1978 Neuquén, Argentina) lives and works in London. Her practice sits between form and thought, exploring systems of language and communication as well as social habits and interaction.

Forthcoming and recent exhibitions include Fondazione Memmo, Rome (2022); Brighton CCA, Brighton (2022); Joy, Wellcome Collection, London (2021); Round Table (and other forms), Zurich Art Prize 2020, Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich (2020); And Say the Animal Responded?, Fact Liverpool, Liverpool (2020); Private & Confidential, The New Art Gallery, Walsall (2019); Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Seville (2019); While inside, Herald St, London (2019); Animalesque / Art Across Species and Beings, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2019); Is This Tomorrow?, Whitechapel Gallery, London (2019); please open hurry, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Perth (2018); (un)heard, Cc Foundation, Shanghai (2018).

Pica's public commissions include Semaphores, King's Cross, London, UK and Sipping colors, De Pijp Station, Amsterdam, NL. Her work is held in public collections including Tate, London; Guggenheim, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Fundação De Serralves, Porto; and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

## Herald St

Herald St is pleased to present *A Single Work*, a new programme of exhibitions focusing on a unique piece by the gallery's artists. Debuting the series is Amalia Pica's large-scale wall sculpture, *Study for rearranging the conference table* (2021).

The present work evolved from the artist's 2020 exhibition at Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, titled 'Round Table (and other forms)'. Using generic boardroom furniture as a starting point, Pica created a group of Formica and plywood tables on wheels in her emblematic formal language of geometric shapes and bright colours. These were reconfigured each day in kaleidoscopic arrangements by museum staff, in a joyful performance contrasting the workaday corporate humdrum and stativity of the works' source of inspiration.

Spanning over five meters and consisting of fourteen panels, *Study for rearranging the conference table* is the largest in a series examining the choreographic possibilities of these tabletops, reproduced on a smaller scale and supplanted onto the wall. The individual shapes – semicircles, trapeziums, and rectangles – stay true to those of existing tables in office furniture catalogues, commonly used as modules for larger conference arrangements allowing for formal communication and defined hierarchies. Pica instead plays with the configuration, producing a meandering composition and inviting viewers to imagine the conversations which would take place if they were sat around such a whimsical formation.

The geometric planes in *Study for rearranging the conference table* demonstrate Pica's longstanding interest with Concrete art, a movement which was explicitly political in South America, including in the artist's home country of Argentina. The sculpture also playfully nods to the art adorning lobbies of large companies – an idea which finds particular resonance by the initiation of this series at a museum dedicated to Swiss Constructivism, long derided by its local audience as 'office art'. By finding visual pleasure in the dull conventions of office bureaucracy, Pica overturns the relationship of corporations acquiring art to enliven their premises and impress their visitors. The present work thus acts as a maquette and recording of Pica's performative work at Museum Haus Konstruktiv, a continued investigation into the socio-political tropes which dominate her wider oeuvre, and an autonomous artwork which lies between representation and the canon of twentieth century abstraction.

*Study for rearranging the conference table* is accompanied by the film *Rehearing the conference table* (2020), made in collaboration with filmmaker Rafael Ortega, which records Pica planning the daily dance of the tables using prototypes in stop-frame animation. The video is overlaid by a soundtrack composed of generic office noises, which were frequently downloaded during the lockdown to create a professional atmosphere while working from home – an experience which drew attention and poignancy to the unique rituals of corporate life. Opening up endless possibilities of formations, the present body of work challenges the rigid rule-abiding structures of the officious environments from which they originate.