



Cut Pratone®, 2024. Based on Gufram's 1971 Pratone® by Ceretti, Derossi and Rosso. Seat of soft polyurethane finished by hand with Guflac®. 33.5 x 55.2 x 55.2 inch. Photographer: Guillaume Ziccarelli. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

MSCHF INDUSTRY PLANTS

September 6 – October 19, 2024

in collaboration with **gufram**

Art collective MSCHF returns to Perrotin New York with *Industry Plants*. The exhibition will present a selection of iconic artworks, alongside the debut of a collaboration with Italian design brand Gufram, marking MSCHF's furniture debut.

Sprouting from the landscape of MSCHF's third exhibition at Perrotin are two new large-scale works created in collaboration with the renowned Italian furniture company Gufram. Since 1966, Gufram has been responsible for producing some of the most provocative and iconic creations associated with the Radical Design movement. Art historian and curator Germano Celant introduced the term "radical" to describe the various architects and designers operating in Italy who sought to critique bourgeois consumerism and the self-righteous functionalism of modernist design through their embrace of eye-catching, unconventional forms and new manufacturing techniques and materials. Responding to both the particularities of the Italian postwar economy and the larger waves of sociocultural unrest sweeping the globe in the 1960s, these designers—many of whom worked collectively, as MSCHF does today—viewed

design as a tool to bring about revolutionary shifts in how people conceived of and engaged with the world around them. Their visually striking designs quickly gained international recognition through the circulation of images in design magazines and as the subject of the groundbreaking exhibition *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape*, held in New York at MoMA in 1972.

Pratone®, one of the works that has been reconceptualized by MSCHF for the Perrotin show, was featured on the cover of the MoMA catalogue: amidst an entire exhibition dedicated to innovative, avant garde designs, this "chair"—consisting of springy, oversized blades of bright green polyurethane grass—was a clear standout. Initially conceived by Giorgio Ceretti, Pietro Derossi, Riccardo Rosso, and produced by Gufram, Pratone® upended the conventions of seating design while playfully raising the question of humankind's relationship to the natural world in an era of hyperconsumption. Over fifty years later, in *Cut Pratone*®, MSCHF prompts a reconsideration of both the original question and the design that posed it by slicing through the thicket, scattering clippings and revealing the Pratone®'s bloodied foam innards. This cutting rejoinder—pun



5G Cactus®, 2024. Based on Gufram's 1972 Cactus® by Drocco and Mello. Coat stand of soft polyurethane finished by hand with Guflac®. Antenna of MDF, with aluminum bar structure. 66.9 x 27.6 x 27.6 inch. Photographer: Guillaume Ziccarelli. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

intended—carries on the spirit of the original design's critical provocation by inviting viewers to interrogate the strategies, aims, and efficacy of the radical attempt to reshape society through design. At first glance, MSCHF's act of design violence against one of the movement's most recognizable icons conjures the title of the group's 2023 major solo exhibition at the Daelim Museum in Seoul: *Nothing is Sacred*. Yet it is only through MSCHF's dissection of Pratone® that we are able to recognize the persistent, pulsing vitality of the original design's revolutionary aspirations and its immediate relevance to the conditions of our ecological and cultural present.

Whereas MSCHF's hack of the Pratone® represents the first and only creative design intervention to that work since its introduction in 1971, 5G Cactus® is the latest in a series of creative collaborations between Gufram and contemporary artists and designers centering on the whimsical Cactus® coatrack, first designed by Guido Drocco and Franco Mello in 1972. In MSCHF's hands, the almost irresistibly sensuous surface of the original design is untouched, save for the addition of a clunky 5G antenna. Perched atop the Cactus®'s glossy green arms, the ominous armature calls to mind today's widespread practice of camouflaging cellular network towers as local flora. The feebleness of these attempts to naturalize (and neutralize) technology's omnipresence are often laughable, but they take on increasingly high stakes as bogus conspiracy theories surrounding the nefarious impacts of 5G technology on

human life proliferate. By situating the source of these contemporary technological anxieties—which are themselves largely circulated through social media platforms reliant upon the global connectivity apparatus—onto an artificial representation of the natural world destined for the domestic interior, MSCHF adds a fresh layer of discourse to the prickly relationships between culture and nature, interior and exterior, desire and ambivalence that Cactus® first poked at over half a century ago. Meanwhile, in a maneuver reminiscent of their other works on view in the gallery space, MSCHF takes the imposing size of the Cactus® and reduces it for an edition of tabletop versions of the work, domesticating these tensions even as they stoke them. Viewed as a whole, the disorienting shifts in scale throughout the exhibition destabilize the relation of the human body to the material things that populate both our lived environment and our digital dreamscapes, provoking reflection on the abstractions and absurdities inherent in the assignment of both sociocultural and monetary value.

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Touch Me Sculpture One More Time, 2024. Bronze, concrete, plastic, electronics. 66 15/16 x 43 5/16 x 3 15/16 inch. Photographer: Guillaume Ziccarelli. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.



Soracelli, 2024. Oil on canvas. 60 x 48 1/2 x 2 1/4 inch. Photographer: Guillaume Ziccarelli. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

In *Industry Plants*, MSCHF will also present a selection of artworks shown for the first time in New York, which challenge our understanding of what constitutes a "masterpiece."

Central to the space is an interactive sculpture, titled *Touch Me Sculpture One More Time*. Deriving from visual language of Baroque and Renaissance sculptures, this work depicts a chaotic moment of friends in embrace. The LED numbers below the figures count each time the sculpture is touched, daring visitors to violate the cardinal rule of a gallery, not to touch the art.

Punctuating the walls of the exhibition are two series of paintings that question the value of traditional artistic ideals. For the *Botched Masters*, MSCHF purchased a series of 17th and 18th century religious paintings and "restored" them into new creations. In the *Animorphs* series, MSCHF generates unique visual narratives through the distortion of classical and contemporary artworks: transforming Michaelangelo into Takashi Murakami, and Botticelli into Sorayama.

Another work, *GesamptKRAFTwerk*, is the epitome of food art. Here, a monumental scale Kraft American cheese brings into question what is concealed within mainstream American food systems. As MSCHF says, "We believe, outside of the US, Kraft American cheese does not meet the Food Administration requirements to be considered cheese."

Finally, we encounter *Met's Sink Of Theseus*. Over multiple trips to the museum, MSCHF replaced the plumbing on a bathroom sink in the Metropolitan Museum, including the faucet handles, and water lines, with nearly identical parts marked by the collective's signature. The pieces are then affixed to a basin, which is cast in resin and accompanied by a video of the heist. Despite repeated trips, the collective was never discovered, raising the question, who decides which cultural objects carry value, and why?