

CRAFTS

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BUDDHA HANDS, CUP AND SAUCER, PETER TING, 2010



THANKS TO WHITE CUBE, DAVID WARD AND DEREK FROST

CONNECT FOUR

Four different people, doing very different work – across these pages we find out

how they'll all be making their mark at this year's Collect. Portrait by *Alun Callender*

Left to right: Jo Bloxham,
Hannah Robson, Angel
Monzon and Ineke Hans



THE TALKER
**INEKE
HANS**
by Grant Gibson

It took a little under 12 months for Ineke Hans to establish herself as the go-to thinker on the future of furniture. Starting in February 2016 and ending exactly a year later, she held a series of salons on the subject, half of which were aimed at the capital's design cognoscenti (and held in private studios with speakers including the likes of Luke Pearson, Nina Tolstrup and Benjamin Hubert) while the others targeted a more public audience, at venues like the V&A and Goldsmiths' Centre.

Why did she decide to take such a profound interest – as well as invest so much time and money – in furniture? 'It's because I'm basically trained as a furniture designer. I do really like it and I saw there was all kinds of trouble with it,' she says, getting into her stride almost instantly. 'It has to do with the way we live nowadays. The way spaces are getting smaller and more expensive, which means less money for furniture and less space. There are also lots of things changing with furniture in our offices, too – it has become more domestic but also much smaller. We have a generation of people who aren't so interested in possessions as they are by experiences, so they buy less. There are also new and inspiring ways of producing furniture, through open source production and so on. You can make things where you need it and when you need it. That all has an impact.'



And Hans herself is perfectly placed to talk about the range of social and economic issues affecting the traditional chair. Raised in the Dutch countryside, she initially studied sculpture at the Academy of Art & Design Arnhem before switching. 'Very quickly I found out that design is where I wanted to be,' she tells me. 'My family was not into art and it was quite a challenge to tell my parents that I wanted to go. They weren't happy about it. I thought if you go to art school you do art, so that's what I did.'

After five years of studying she set up her own practice before going on to the Royal College of Art to study furniture design, graduating in 1995 and immediately picking up a job as

a 'serious freelancer' for Habitat, as well as working on her own collection that she exhibited initially at the Tramshed in East London in 1997.

Over the next two decades, initially from a squat in Arnhem, she has created a wildly diverse portfolio, which ranges from industrially made chairs for substantial manufacturers via smaller, more obviously crafty projects for the likes of People of the Sun, an organisation that helps artisans in Malawi use their skills to make new products for a global market. 'For me, it's not such a difference if I work on these varied types of design. I just have to solve another problem,' she reasons.

Most recently she has been made professor of design in social context at the University of the Arts, Berlin, a new position that would seem an ideal fit, although also one that requires a certain amount of travel. 'I have created a fantastic Bermuda triangle between two over-rated cities – London and Berlin – and Arnhem,' she laughs. At Collect she will be chewing the furniture fat with Joni Steiner, co-founder of open source company Opendesk, and maker Sebastian Cox. 'I love to design and to think about new ways of getting objects to people. I'm not so much interested in creating art pieces.' It will be fascinating to see what Saatchi's audience makes of her. *At Collect: Material Focus talk – Furniture, Sunday 25 February, 11.30am inekehans.com*

Top: Ahrend 380 chair, 2010.
Below: Black Gold coffee set, 2002, modular black porcelain, produced at EKWC



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INEKE HANS



Above: baskets and a stool made for People of the Sun, Malawi, 2017.
Right: Pilszen glass bowls and table pieces for Czech brand Křehký, 2014.
Left: Chair from FLIX, 2017, a new seating system for Hitch Mylius

