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MARKUS BADER and MAX WOLF, 2002-2003:
BOOTLEG OBJECTS

A phono-radio without the phono, a cassette receiver sans cassette, and a non-turning turntable are the first three pieces in a series called "Bootleg Objects". Obviously, something has been stolen here from these three right honourable design classics. Or rather, was something added? The name gives a hint: Bootlegging, historically a pseudonym for illegal liquor-making, was later also used for unauthorized recordings of music. Today, "bootleg" is one name for the musical style of recombination, of mashing up pop music pieces (preferably done undercover) of the most disparate origins. Both diluting and revamping, carelessly sampling objects, like a self-service shopping spree in the design museum. Creation that's happily or witlessly unconcerned by commercial or juridical regulations such as copyright or marketability. An expression of deference to the qualities of the original object. But also its iconoclastic deconstruction. The subject of this manner of designing no longer is – as traditionally – interrelating form to function, but rather a positioning into a target context by "meta-design-decisions" as, for example, choosing the right citation or the rearrangement of the found objects.

The three objects presented follow three deliberate methods of appropriation of a form: In "ReBraun", recombination is paramount – while most features remained present, they slide along the surface, into new meanings. At the ReBo, nothing has been moved. Instead, an alien object – the touch screen – has slyly integrated himself. Lastly, the record player object Re-SP has not changed at all (apart from three clownish minimanipulations). Rather, its whole usage context has been taken. All of its working functions are completely different than it might seem, and all of its previous controls are now dead.

"Skinning" is the name for the process that makes computer software freely designable. With programs that are skinnable, look, layout and even logic are free to redefinition. The designers have here applied the same principle to the tangible object: A general-purpose personal computer – nothing else is hidden inside the "bootleg objects" – is optimised for a specialized task and gets a new, old, amiable disposition.

Max Wolf

BOOTLEG OBJECT #B0.01: REBRAUN

MP3 JUKEBOX AND SERVER, 2002-2003

Vintage case, digital data, mixed multimedia, aluminium, acrylic, steel, liquid crystal. CNC-milled, welded, thermoformed, lacquered, anodized.

Programmed with the VVVV MULTIPURPOSE TOOLKIT.

DIMENSIONS (WxHxD): 650x120x280mm

Designed in 1962 by Dieter Rams, the "Audio 1 Kompaktanlage" is a milestone of German post-war design. It embodies, even more than its predecessor, the famous "snow-white's coffin", the design ideals of the rationalist "Ulm School".

These sober paradigms of utility and matter-of-factness are playfully remodelled in the "ReBraun": Two TFT-Displays take the place of the radio scales, the lettering on the anodised front plate ironically quotes the lingo of the radio era. A randomly positioned button, labelled "Zufall" (Randomness) stands for the freedom from mechanical constraints.

The antenna does not receive any FM radio, but is used to connect the system to the internet via Wireless LAN. The case and acrylic hood were lowered by several centimetres for sporty reasons (think: hot rod!), and the window that formerly contained a signal strength readout now becomes a tabernacle for the old Braun nameplate.

BOOTLEG OBJECT #B0.02: RE-BO

Vintage case, mixed multimedia, liquid crystal, teak wood.

CNC-milled, anodized, manually reworked.

Non-functional design dummy

DIMENSIONS (WxHxD): 660x80x260mm

"Beocenter 1400" – designed for Bang&Olufsen in 1973 by Jacob Jensen – embodies the epitome of Scandinavian design at the top of its historical relevance. Formal language, relation of nature and technology, and formalism in interface design all conjure up the spirit of modernism.

In the series of the Bootleg Objects, the BO.02 is a representative of the era of the music cassette.

However, the cassette slot now houses a smart card reader. Further, a DVD-drive is hidden behind a previously unused groove in the front panel, and a 16:9 TFT display has joined the object on the sly. The legendary slider control formerly used to control the radio tuning now becomes both a display and controller for a whole slew of functions. Consequently, instead of "tuning" the label now reads "anything".

BOOTLEG OBJECT #B0.03: RE-SP

Vintage case, digital data, mixed Multimedia, Magnesium, tough rubber, fiber concrete, acrylic. Manually reworked.

Programmed with the VVVV MULTIPURPOSE TOOLKIT.

DIMENSIONEN (BxHxT):430x120x370mm

Since its inception in 1980, the Technics SP 1210 MKII has become the universal altar of the cult of DJ. Its technical innovations had a lasting influence on the development of a number of musical styles. In the bootleg version, it has been bereft of all function: The turntable no longer turning, the center pin is gone. Instead of vinyl records, one puts on souvenirs marked with a special chip – e.g. a cut-out of the original record sleeve, or an empty CD box. In order to skip to the next track, one simply gives the case a slap with the palm.

Freed from all functional constraints, the record player becomes a nostalgic cult object, the ritual of selecting music turns into aesthetic contemplation, and retaining the record sleeves is discerned as a romantic gesture.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

„Bootleg Objects“ are the result of a collaboration between artist Markus Bader and designer Max Wolf. In spring 2002, they created the first functioning prototype during a “Zirkeltraining” period of only 14 days. After an invitation to the Milan exhibition of Droog Design the other two models of the series were produced.

Programming of the systems was done by Sebastian Oschatz, who, like Max Wolf, is one of the founders of media lab/design office meso (www.meso.net) and developer of the graphical programming language “vvvv”, which was also used to create the operating software of the bootleg objects (vvvv.meso.net) The complete series was first presented in April 2003 under the title “Play-Back” in the exhibition of Droog Design in Milan during the Salone del Mobili.

WWW.BOOTLEG-OBJECTS.COM

MARKUS BADER

* 1967 in Wangen, Germany

Diploma in Visual Design/Media Art at HfG Offenbach.

Since 1992 diverse solo- and group exhibitions.

Works as artist and designer predominantly in the field of new media at integrating virtual and real objects.

Lives and works in Frankfurt am Main.

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MAX WOLF

* 1971 in Giessen, Germany

Diploma in Product Design at HfG Offenbach

Since 1993 media installations and –objects

Since 1995 authorship for diverse magazines

Since 1997 commercial work as cofounder of medialab / design office meso

Since 1998 co-developer of the realtime video synthesis toolkit VVVV.

Since 2001 experimental design projects e.g. for Droog Design, NL, as cofounder of the label

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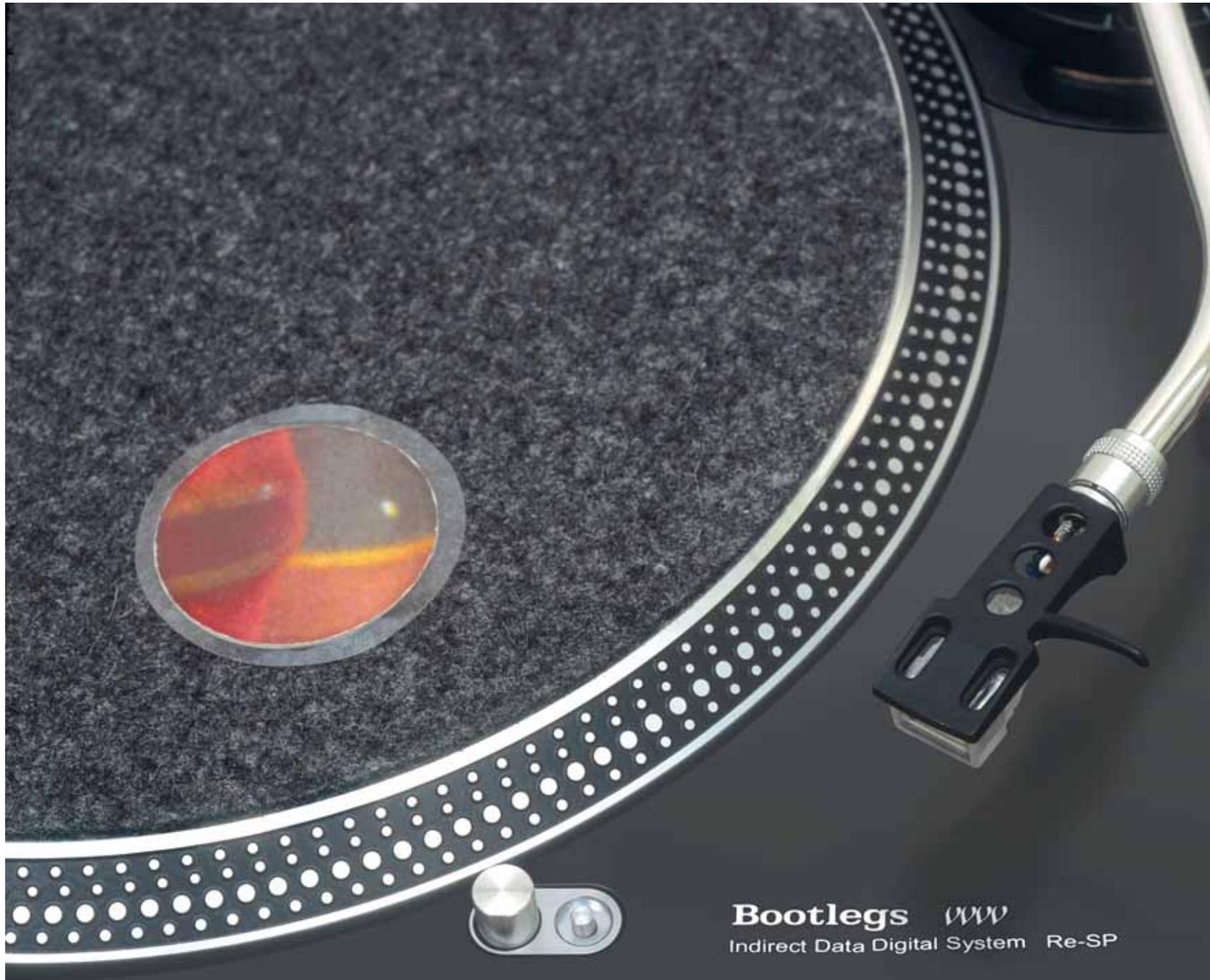






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Bootlegs *www*
Indirect Data Digital System Re-SP