



Verbier Mountain Climbers

Revisiting a Swiss Icon

Press release (June 5, 2013)

Verbier Mountain Climbers: Revisiting a Swiss Icon

Premiered at Design/Miami Basel 2013, Verbier Mountain Climbers is a Swiss cultural and entrepreneurial project for charity. A travelling exhibition of old gondolas transformed by Swiss designers, which will then be sold at auction by Christies and benefit the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Switzerland.

Concept:

Celebrating a Swiss icon of industrial design and ski tourism, the project consists in collecting dismantled old ski gondolas from Verbier, and having them revisited by some of Switzerland's most acknowledged designers and artists.

Featured works by:

Adrien Rovero
Anoush Abrar
Atelier Oi
ECAL / Baker Wardlaw Yves Décoppet
Jörg Boner + Lela Scherrer
Nicolas Le Moigne
Philippe Cramer

Exhibitions:

Once transformed, the gondolas will be premiered at the Design/Miami Basel fair, in Basel, from June 11th to 16th (opening on Monday 10th of June). Following this premiere, the works will go back to their roots, for a summer exhibition in Verbier, the project's main partner. In the fall of 2013, Genève Aéroport will host the final exhibition. At the end of this exhibition, Christie's will auction the gondola on behalf of Verbier Mountain Climbers. All the sales proceeds will benefit the Make-A-Wish foundation of Switzerland, which grants wishes of children living a life-threatening illness.



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About the founders:

Three young entrepreneurs from Geneva manage the project: Inès Flammarion, Nicolas Bernheim and Albert Schrurs. They are managing this project on a voluntary basis, outside of their professional occupations.

Holder of a History of Art degree and after working for international galleries, Inès Flammarion was responsible for corporate philanthropy projects related to contemporary art. She has recently joined the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève as a public relations and fundraising manager.

Albert Schrurs is the founder of Allegory Studio, an architecture and design firm. He is a graduate architect from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL) and a MAS Luxury graduate Designer from the Lausanne School of Arts and Design (ECAL). He lives and works between Geneva and Paris.

Nicolas Bernheim is the founder of Bernheim Bureau, an agency specialized in art public relations and event planning. He is a graduate from the Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne and the Luigi Bocconi University of Milan. He currently lives in Zurich.

Sponsors, partners and benefactors:

Verbier Mountain Climbers is made possible thanks to the generous donations as well as its strength in offering powerful marketing and communication sponsorship opportunities to private donors and companies.

A private donor or a corporation sponsored each gondola.

Main sponsor : Verbier (Commune de Bagnes)

Presenting Sponsor : Genève Aéroport

Exhibition Sponsor : Design/Miami Basel

Media Partners : DADI, Yooko.fr

Partners : Teo Jakob, Téléverbier, Christie's, MUDAC, Art Paris, ArtGenève, Fiduciaire de l'Entremont

Communications : GVA Studio, SUMO Interactive

Logistics : Manor, Bornand SA, Carrybox

Event Partners: Les Vins du Valais, Le Café des Banques, Le Verre à Monique, Fleury Viande Séchée du Valais, Maison d'Alpage



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Quotes:

Inès Flammarion

- *"The designers have no restriction at all for the transformation of their gondola but to stick to budget"*
- *"The project is made possible thanks to the generous sponsors, partners and private benefactors. In return, we offer them visibility and benefit according to their needs. It is essential to have a "tailor-made" approach when it comes to fund-raising."*
- *"Verbier Mountain Climbers is proud to support the Make-A-Wish foundation from Switzerland. Thanks to the amazing work from its team and volunteers, Make-A-Wish makes the dreams of children with life-threatening medical condition come true and brings support to their families."*

Nicolas Bernheim

- *"This is an ambitious project. We want to bring something new on the cultural level, but also in the field of charity. We are trying to break the codes and change the game."*
- *"We are trying to work mainly with young entrepreneurs like us. Its in the project's DNA."*
- *"The exhibition and the auction sale by Christie's in the heart of Geneva's international airport are bringing a lot of visibility to the project. The number of potential visitors is very high."*

Albert Schrurs

- *"The gondola we are transforming for the project is a beautiful and typical example of industrial design at the time it was built. The Plexiglas windows are particularly representative. Nowadays, we wouldn't build them the same way."*
- *"The designers approached the project in many different ways. At times, the gondola was perceived as a volume, a source of material or as an emotional trigger."*
- *"We asked the designers to give these objects a second life, as interesting and emotionally strong as was their first life."*



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www.facebook.com/MountainClimbers





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Rock by Adrien Rovero

Hanging on the cable, the gondola is always rocking. Adrien Rovero's project transforms the gondola in a 4-seats rocking chair recreating the same emotions. «Rock» follows Adrien Rovero's line of work and humour, as well as his constant reflexion on landscape and scale. «Rock» was premiered in 2012 at the MUDAC, as part of Adrien's first retrospective «Landscape», and presented in 2013 at ArtGenève, Teo Jakob, and Art Paris.



Levitation by Anoush Abrar

The photographer Anoush Abrar was given carte blanche to realize a photography that will represent Verbier Mountain Climbers. It will become the project's poster and be part of the exhibition. Anoush Abrar decided to celebrate the fact that this object was meant to travel in the sky and clouds. By being taken off its cable, the object can float in the air anymore. With his picture, Anoush Abrar offers a final but perpetual ride in the clouds to the object.



La Cabina del Papà by Atelier Oï

Conceived to physically transport the "happy fews" on the highest summits of Verbier, Atelier Oï's proposal brought them to play on words and with the shape to transform the gondola. Propelled by a new wing, the immaculate white "Cabine del Papà" allows us to dream of taking off in this shape and fly towards amazing encounters and destinations. Atelier Oï cleaned the gondola and painted in white, which revealed the beauty of its global volume. By spinning the axis of the central pile inside the gondola, the user creates a centrifugal force which allows the gondola's new rope-wings to rise. The project fits perfectly in Atelier Oï's global universe and research, inspired by a great sensitivity to materials and movement.





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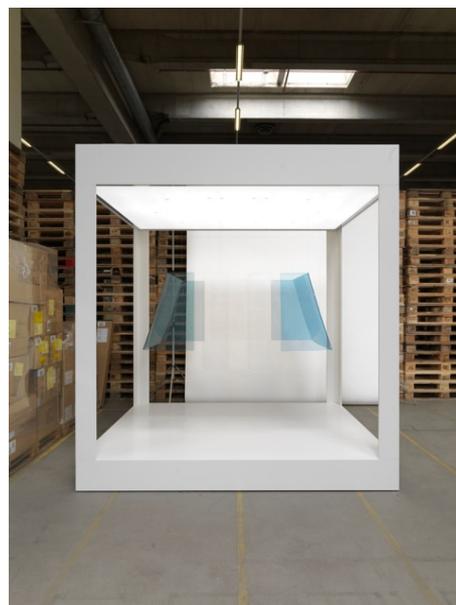
Screen by Jörg Boner + Lela Scherrer

For their first project together, Jörg Boner (product designer) & Lela Scherrer (fashion & textile designer) joined forces and recuperated several gondola doors, which they then re-assembled to create an interior screen. Marking the transition between a cold outside and a warm inside, these doors represent a change of state. In a certain way, one undresses when entering in the gondola and dresses back to return in the cold. The screen is a furniture, behind which people used to go undress and change. Thus, on the one side, the former windows of the gondola doors were replaced by mirrors and on the other by textile.



Artefact by Philippe Cramer

Philippe Cramer decided to recuperate the only parts of the gondola which wouldn't be recyclable: the blue transparent plexiglas windows. The windows of the gondola are quite unique, they are curved, which is something typical of the model recuperated by Verbier Mountain Climbers. By hanging the windows in the air at their real height, one can remember and imagine the shape of the original gondola. Philippe Cramer decided to showcase these windows as if they were in a museum, and thus celebrates this swiss icon by making it look like exceptional and valuable piece.



Transformers by Nicolas Le Moigne

Nicolas Le Moigne was inspired by the famous animated television series "Transformers", where various common transformation means become giant robots. He imagined that the gondola could also be a Transformers and become a new object, by being disassembled and re-assembled in something else. From an object used outdoors, in which people used to enter and were gathered for the time of a ride, the gondola was transformed into a furniture for indoors, around which people gather to share a moment: "a table". In the case of Nicolas Le Moigne's project, the gondola really changes its visual aspect to start a second life!





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Vending Machine

by ECAL/ Baker Wardlaw, Yves Décoppet

Baker Wardlaw decided to completely change the function of the gondola, by really transforming it, rather than changing its visual aspect. Although he wanted his result to be funny, maybe even absurd, he created a project full of meanings. Visually, he established a parallel between the original gondola and the famous gumball dispensers everyone has known as a child. It may be obvious, but the materials and the shape of the gondola really do remind the classic and popular vending machine. Eventually, lets also remember the Verbier Mountain Climbers' project purpose, which is to support the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Switzerland. Selected through a Call for Projects at the ECAL, he then realized his project by working with Yves Décoppet.



Images:

Raw images of the gondolas still hanging on their cable in Verbier

