

2016 NeoCon Showroom

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press@maharam.com
Maharam 251 Park Avenue South NY, NY 10010
800.645.3943 maharam.com

For NeoCon 2016, Maharam presents a new installation created by the American industrial designer, Leon Ransmeier, in collaboration with the Maharam Design Studio.

In the last decade, Maharam has worked exclusively with the British conceptual artist, Liam Gillick, and the American architect, Neil Logan, to transform its Chicago showroom into a flexible gallery space in which a minimum of product can be shown to its best advantage. Retaining these principles, Maharam invited Ransmeier to propose a novel experience based on his "thoughtful yet minimal approach to product design," says Mary Murphy, Maharam's Senior Vice President of Design.

Following a period of inquiry, Ransmeier assembled an 82-page reference book of images organized around themes of color, light and texture; structure and procession; volume and comfort—ranging from a 1621 etching by Willem Buytewech to modern-day snapshots of padded football blocking bags—all intended, Ransmeier says, "to explore the atmospheric possibility" of the showroom. Ultimately, this research was distilled into a uniform but adaptable presentation system that prioritizes natural light and open space—precious commodities in the Merchandise Mart. In addition, the system is intentionally freestanding to provide for maximum flexibility in arrangement. Three heights of cantilevered steel frames—informed, according to Ransmeier, "by the efficiency of early modern furniture" like that of Marcel Breuer and Mart Stam—are staggered on a grid. The result simultaneously conveys uplifting openness while providing alcoves for conversation. Tubular and sinuous, the frames range from 44" to 80" in height, with the majority standing 60" tall, or slightly below eyelevel. This human scale offers broad sightlines and invites interaction—a hands-on experience, Ransmeier believes, is a "means of communicating quality".

Finished in a matte black powder-coating with subtle texture, the frames are accompanied by two L-shaped, sheet-steel benches topped with slim cushions and anchored by expanses of Cocoon, a highly dimensional, handwoven wool rug designed by Hella Jongerius for Danskina. An upcoming textile by Jongerius joins new designs from Kvadrat, Scholten & Baijings, Paul Smith, and the Maharam Design Studio. With the textiles in place, Ransmeier notes, the graphic frames "almost disappear, creating a pleasing floating effect."

In addition to textiles, Maharam introduces an inaugural collection of leather. Featuring seven styles sourced in Italy from small-scale tanneries—with the addition of a true suede from Spain—Maharam leather features a variety of grains and textures but forgoes the excessive finishing that characterizes much of the leather available today. Instead, guided by Maharam's material expertise, the collection celebrates the inherent beauty of leather returned to a more natural state. Color palettes of remarkable depth and specificity complement this approach. Developed by the Maharam Design Studio—which prioritizes an independent, intuitive response to the material qualities of the product at hand—the palette comprises one-hundred colors. In its NeoCon debut, the breadth of the color line is on display—from nude, camel, chamois, and pewter to moss, Kelly green, cadet and cornflower blue, ultramarine, aubergine, carrot, and cadmium red. With their intermingled solid surfaces offering punctuation and material contrast to the woven textiles, the leather hides are cleanly presented as broad, rectilinear panels.

About Leon Ransmeier

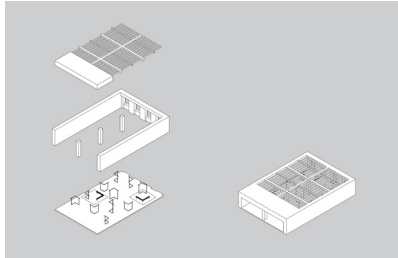
Leon Ransmeier (b. 1979, United States) is an American industrial designer. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, he founded his New York-based studio, Ransmeier Inc, in 2008. Since then, he's designed furniture and interior products for clients including Arita 2016/, HAY, Herman Miller, and Mattiazzi. This is his first project with Maharam.

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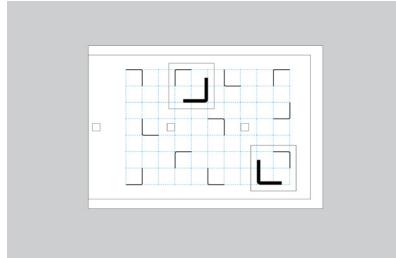
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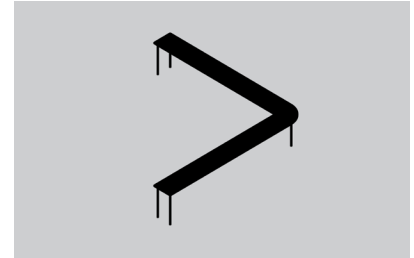
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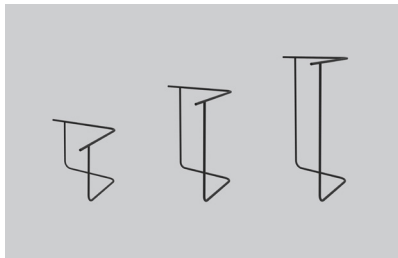
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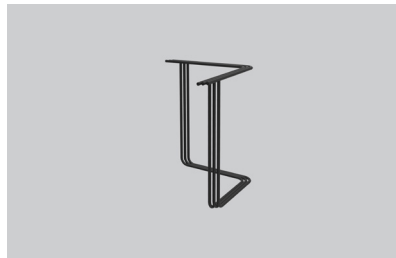
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