

Thinking in systems ("Denken im System")

Designer in Residence Program of the HfG Archive/Museum Ulm
Tender 2019/2020

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Ulm School of Design was one of the centres for education in industrial design. Founded as a successor to the Bauhaus, it quickly developed its own profile in the design field. **The architect and designer Hans Gugelot** (1920-1965) played a decisive role in this development. Therefore, the Museum Ulm/HfG-Archiv will dedicate an exhibition to him in 2020.

Alongside this, the HfG Archive/Museum Ulm is now offering a scholarship as part of its **Designer in Residence** programme, which will take place for the 2nd time. With the DiR series, the HfG Archive is pursuing the goal of combining its own dual function as a museum and archive, situated in the rooms of the former Ulm School of Design with contemporary design research and mediation.

As a product designer, **Hans Gugelot** was a pioneer in terms of systematization and standardization. Today the design world is well advanced in this field. Not only furniture and other household objects, but also means of transport, lighting, vegetables and, last but not least, the people themselves are more and more standardized and integrated into systems. What freedoms result from this? What limits are set? And what happens if two systems do not fit together?

Hans Gugelot's developments provide the opportunity to address the systematisation of our lives in the industrial society in a theoretical and/or practical way

About Hans Gugelot

In 1954, Hans Gugelot [hans gyʒəlo] came from Zurich (Switzerland) to the newly founded Ulm School of Design (Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm). Here, together with his team, he developed a new product design for the company **Braun, which caused a sensation** at the 1956 radio fair in Düsseldorf. For this new design, Gugelot followed the company owners Artur and Erwin Braun's requirements to design products which would express the modern way of life. These were the devices to play the then popular Cool Jazz and to expell the musty atmosphere from the homes.



Left: Hans Gugelot (front) with the members of his development group at the HfG Ulm, 1962.
Right: Radio-Phono-Combination "SK 4", Design: Hans Gugelot/Dieter Rams, 1956. Photos: Wolfgang Siol © HfG-Archiv / Museum Ulm

In the following years Hans Gugelot developed numerous industrial goods for leading manufacturers: shavers, sewing machines, copiers, film cameras, slide projectors, trains for the Hamburger Hochbahn. He was particularly interested in system design. He recognised early on that the **systematisation of design** was a prerequisite for industrial series production and at the same time offered the opportunity for a wide range of possible uses.

Hans Gugelot's design principles were characterized by thinking in larger contexts. His furniture system M 125, the development of which he began in 1950, was based on the standardization of its individual components and on a unit of measurement of 125 mm, which formed the basis for all the dimensions of this furniture system. On the one hand, it was intended to allow individual pieces of furniture to be assembled variably, but it also functioned as a room divider in the form of wall units.



M 125 furniture system, in parts and as a sideboard. Design: Hans Gugelot, 1950 and following years.
Photos: Wendel Roelli © HfG Archive / Museum Ulm

With his designs for the company of Braun communication devices -- radios, televisions, record players – Hans Gugelot pursued similar ideas. From the very beginning, Gugelot did not develop individual devices, but thought in terms of combinations and expansion possibilities. He worked closely together with his lecturer colleague Otl Aicher, who designed trade fairs and sales stands as well as a concept for Braun's corporate design.

Gugelot also thought in terms of systems when developing the cars for the Hamburger Hochbahn (1959-1962): Light strips, interior cladding, brackets, outer skin – everything was designed as a modular system, interchangeable and related to each other.



Hamburger Hochbahn, exterior view and interior fittings. Design: Hans Gugelot, Development Group 2 of the HfG Ulm, 1959-1962. Photos: Wolfgang Siol © HfG Archive Ulm / Museum Ulm

System Design 2020: Between Mass Production and Individualization

The development, manufacturing and sales process of industrial goods follows the laws of the division of labour and is therefore fundamentally different from the approach in craftsmanship and traditional architecture.

The participants – business economists, engineers, designers, marketing experts and merchants – work closely together in the creation of a new industrial product, in order to then develop a product that is suitable in function, design, cultural environment and consumer needs and, ideally, already to think about its disposal.

At the same time, the form and function of the things that surround us relate to each other as they do to us humans. Visible objects and invisible laws are coordinated with each other and thus form each other.

In the early days, systematisation was used to ensure the mass production. Since the middle of the 20th century, consumers have had more and more opportunities to assemble products such as modular furniture, kitchens, bicycles or services from individual components and thus adapt them to their individual needs.

Advanced computer technology as well as the larger markets opened up by the internet and globalisation offer numerous new opportunities here.

This results in new freedoms, but also limits and limitations. What is helpful about this? Where is the benefit of a system, where are the limits? When does it give us orientation, where does it hinder us in our individual development? Starting from the concrete things, fundamental questions soon arise when dealing with system design.

In the best tradition of the Ulm School of Design, the aim of this year's call for proposals for the Designer-in-Residence Programme of the HfG Archive and the associated exhibition is to combine the two.

Who is the programme aimed at?

Through an international call for entries, designers are invited to apply for a three-month residence grant, which invites them to an experimental, technical, artistic and scientific examination of the HfG heritage from today's perspective.

The scholarly debate is already given in particular by internal and external research (visits to archives, requests for publications, exhibitions, etc.). For this reason, the programme explicitly addresses personalities from design practice and / or at the interface to applied design research in order to promote young talent. The subject areas are oriented towards the areas of teaching historically represented at the HfG Ulm, which also determine the archive's collection:

Architecture, visual communication, product design, photography, information, film. Cross-disciplinary access is also welcome.

What is offered with the scholarship?

The person selected by the jury will be offered the following services as a three-month scholarship by the HfG-Archiv Ulm:

- monthly financial scholarship of 1.200 €
- Budget for working materials (by arrangement)

- One-off reimbursement of travel expenses (arrival and departure from / to Ulm) corresponding to a 2nd class train journey or, in the case of a travel time of more than 6 hours, the flight costs in the lowest flight class (economy or comparable class)
- Work rooms in the HfG archive, access to workshops, research support
- free living space on the campus next to the former HfG Ulm, kindly provided by the foundation HfG Ulm
- Support in public relations and contact with local partners, if necessary, as well as presentation and discussion opportunities
- Integration and presentation of the Residence results in the context of the exhibition "Hans Gugelot: The Architecture of Design".

What is involved in accepting the scholarship?

- Responsibility: valid existing health and liability insurance, if necessary, obtaining a visa for the stay in Ulm, cost of living and meals
- three-month attendance in Ulm (by arrangement between April and September 2020)
- Procurement of working materials (with support from the HfG archive)
- Documentation of one's own work processes and results with the aim of making them visible in the following exhibition (form open)
- The working language can be German or English. Knowledge of reading German is helpful.

How can I apply?

- CV and portfolio (selection of previous projects, work samples in documented form)
- Letter of motivation and description of the work project (possibly with cost estimate and / or sketches) during the residence with reference to the topic "system design" and the HfG archive, max. 2 pages, in German or English.

How does the application and selection process work?

- Submission of application documents as PDF (max. 15 MB) by 2 February 2020 at the latest exclusively by e-mail to c.wachsmann[at]ulm.de
- After reviewing the submitted applications, a jury will meet at the beginning of February to select one applicant.
- Conclusion of the procedure: expected at the beginning of March, with written notification of the jury's decision to the applicants without stating reasons
- the jury shall be composed:

Dr. Martin Mäntele, HfG-Archiv Ulm

Dr. Dagmar Rinker, Hochschule für Gestaltung Schwäbisch Gmünd

Felix Timm, Busse Design Ulm

Dipl. Ing. Christiane Wachsmann, HfG-Archiv Ulm

Dipl. Ing. Alexander Wetzig, HfG-Stiftung Ulm

The application for the scholarship does not entitle the applicant to receive a scholarship. Only applications submitted by 2 February 2020 and by e-mail can be considered. The scholarship will be awarded by the jury. The judgement is not contestable.

Contact: HfG Archive / Museum Ulm, Designer in Residence - Christiane Wachsmann, Am Hochsträß 8, 89081 Ulm, c.wachsmann[at]ulm.de