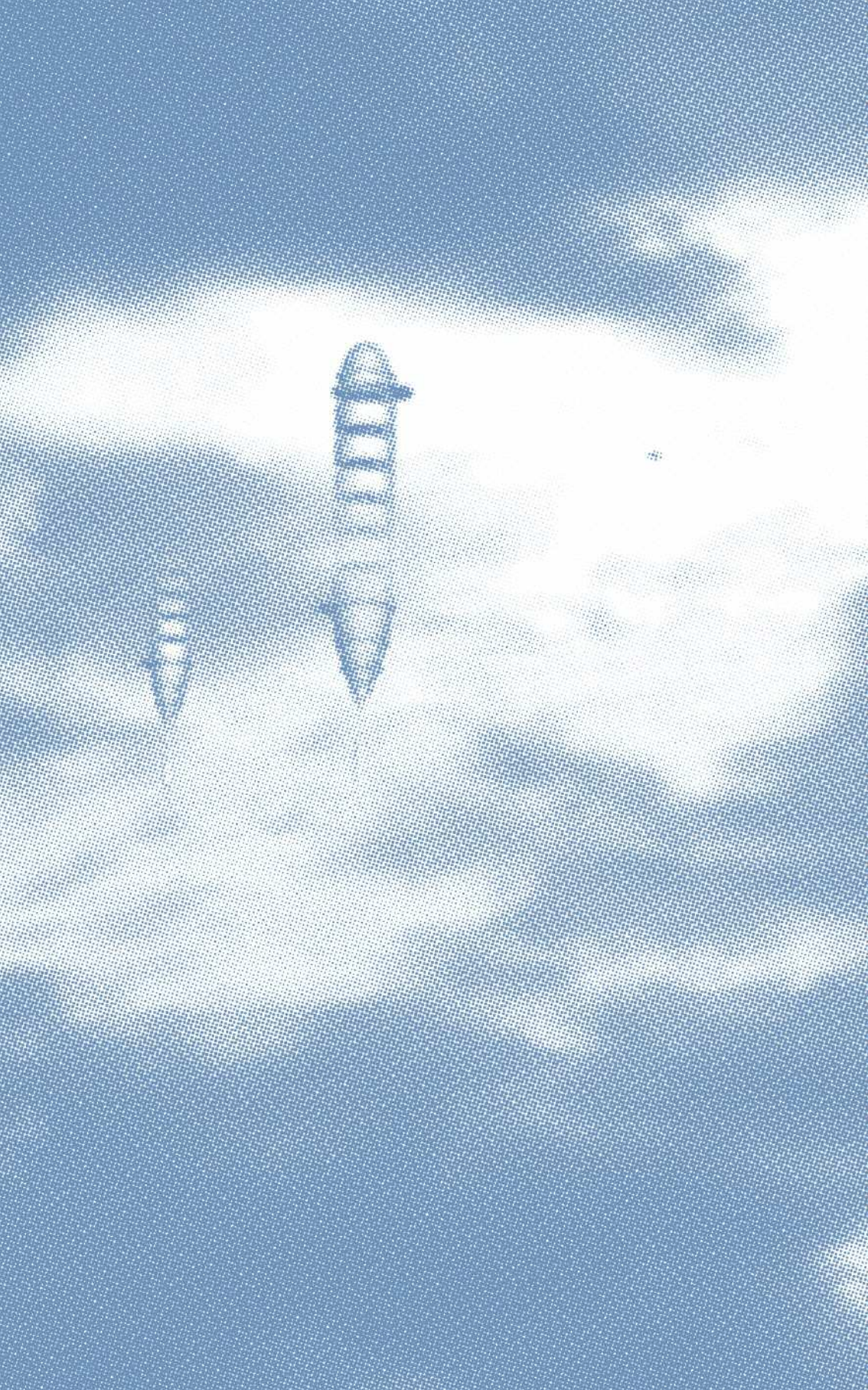




PORZELLAN MANUFAKTUR
NYMPHENBURG

FLYING CITY TABLEWARE



FLYING CITY TABLEWARE

CARSTEN HÖLLER

FOR PORZELLAN MANUFAKTUR NYMPHENBURG

2010

PORZELLAN MANUFAKTUR NYMPHENBURG



GIANT TRIPLE MUSHROOMS, 2009
View from the exhibition DIVIDED DIVIDED, Boijmans Van Beuningen
Museum, Rotterdam, The Netherlands



Service plate, dinner plate and side plate
from the FLYING CITY TABLEWARE, 2010

The spirit of an empirically-minded scientist speaks through Carsten Höller's artworks and defines an approach which owes much to his degree in Agricultural Science and subsequent PhD. In quasi-experimental settings that often offer the viewer the possibility of direct participation, Höller, born in 1961 in Brussels and now resident in Stockholm, puts customary perception to the test. "He shakes the foundations of the apparently given and will not accept the predictability of the world." (Baldo Hauser)

Paradigmatic of this are his UPSIDE DOWN GOGGLES (1994/2001), through which the world is seen upside down. They refer to self-experiments conducted by George Stratton in 1897 and 1899 that



UPSIDE DOWN GOGGLES, 1994/2001



TEST SITE, 2006
Installation view Tate Modern,
London, United Kingdom

lasted for several days at a time. He discovered that the human brain is able to compensate for such an inversion of visual information: after eight days, it is possible to perceive the familiar picture of the world once more through the inversion spectacles. Carsten Höller invites us to borrow the spectacles and physically experience this adjustment process made by our own bodies.

Moreover, his installations frequently counter the traditional ways images are viewed, particularly in the museum context: he arranged for the construction of five gigantic slides (TEST SITE, 2006) in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, while in the Kunsthaus Bregenz, in the New Yorker Guggenheim Museum, and in the Boijmans van



FLYING CITY TABLEWARE, 2010
The plate shows the rotating towers of Krutikov's FLYING CITY.

Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam, he presented the REVOLVING HOTEL ROOM (2008) that interested parties could book for an overnight stay. At the core of his work is the perpetual question of the conventions that govern the way we lead our lives and whether indeed it is possible to imagine things in a fundamentally different way.

In developing the FLYING CITY TABLEWARE (2010) for the PORZELLAN MANUFAKTUR NYMPHENBURG, Carsten Höller has devised an edition that takes up this theme in a new way. The tableware comprises a combination of plates—a service plate, a dinner plate, a side plate, and a teacup and saucer—each decorated with a design

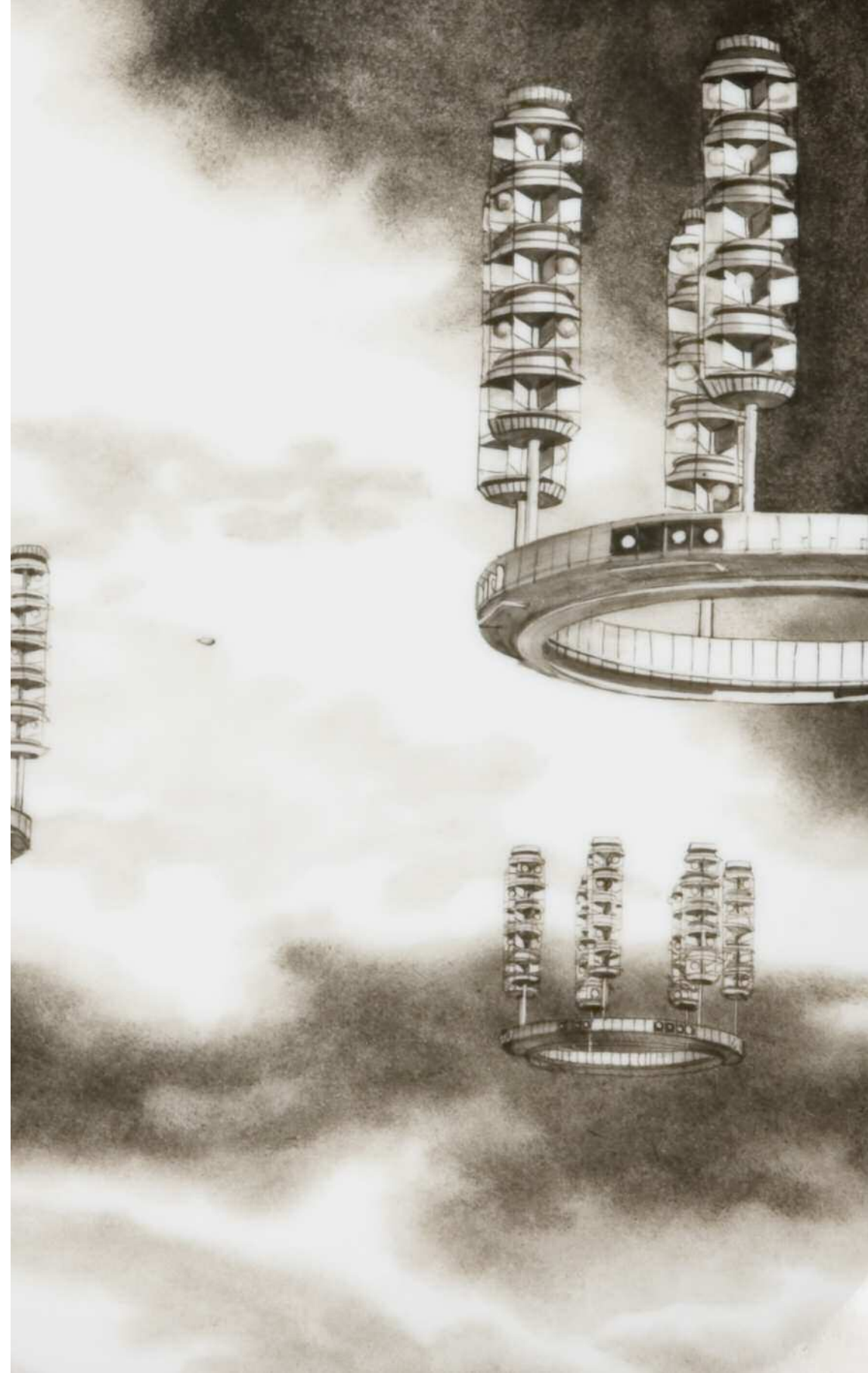


relating to two fundamentally different sources: on the one hand, Georgy Krutikov's design for a FLYING CITY (1928) and, on the other, the rotating Benham top or disc (1894-95), eponymously named after its inventor, Charles Benham. Höller chose Wolfgang von Wersin's LOTOS service (1932) upon which to present the motif—tableware that reflects, in its elegant simplicity, the functional aesthetics of the avant-garde period.

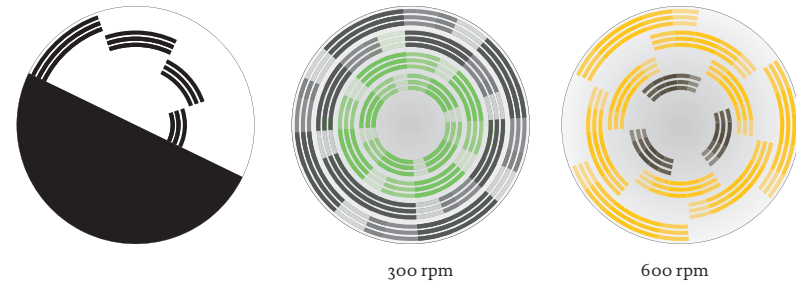
A radical redesigning of the world was at the heart of the avant-garde movements during the 1910s and 1920s. In 1928, as part of his diploma, the Russian architect Georgy Tikhonovich Krutikov (1899-1958) sketched his utopian, future vision of life in the FLYING CITY which would fly across the skies. His concept comprised residential tower blocks linked to production sites, hotels, factories, etc. Residents could access these sites by means of flying capsules that docked directly in the living spaces. Thus, Futurism's proclaimed vision of the dynamisation and acceleration of modern life was transferred by Krutikov to an integrated urbanistic concept clearly structured according to functional principles. According to his vision, people would live and work in the FLYING CITY, whereas the earth was to be primarily reserved for recreation. Höller, for his part, has developed the designs for both the service plate and the inside of the teacup, based on Krutikov's pencil drawings.

At first glance, the abstract monochrome pattern of the dinner plate, the side plate, and the saucer may well be reminiscent of graphic designs from the Russian avant-garde. However, it is in fact derived from the rotating discs invented by the British toy manufacturer Charles Benham (1860-1929) towards the end of the nineteenth century. One half of the surface of the disc is painted black whereas the other bears an arrangement of three parallel, black bars that are stepped inwards at a distance of forty five degrees. When the disc is

Detail enlarged from the service plate of the FLYING CITY TABLEWARE







THE BENHAM EFFECT
Colour effects are visible when the plate rotates at high speed.

rotated at sufficient speed, it is possible to see shades of colour in place of the black and white pattern. The seen colours, however, vary from person to person—a phenomenon described by cognitive psychology that remains unexplained to this day. Höller presents the plates with a Benhamesque pattern, as if they had come from the FLYING CITY. When the FLYING CITY TABLEWARE is used, Krutikow's design is extended to encompass the earth—through our minds and our stomachs.

Carsten Höller has already used both motifs in earlier works: the Benhamesque stripes in MASON WHEEL (2001) and latterly Krutikov's visual worlds in THE DOUBLE CLUB (2008-09) in London. In this case, he arranged for the FLYING CITY to be painted onto the azulejo tiles in the courtyard of the club restaurant, thereby creating an extensive spatial installation expanding onto the walls, floor, benches, flowerpots, and fireplace.

He brings both motifs together for the first time in the FLYING CITY TABLEWARE. However, in accordance with the elaborated,

FLYING CITY TABLEWARE, 2010
Installation view Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

consistent geometric division of space and objects that has already been applied in both THE DOUBLE CLUB and his most recent exhibition DIVIDED DIVIDED in the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam (2010), Carsten Höller refrains from fusing the motifs. They remain separate entities that represent, in their direct juxtaposition, the contrast between a utopian design for living and an individual perception of reality.

The FLYING CITY TABLEWARE is produced in two different versions. The wall installation comprises eight hand-painted plates, each mounted on a rotating mechanism and connected to one another by a leather transmission belt. The plates can be rotated at a maximum of 600 revolutions per minute, by means of a manual crank. From about 300 revolutions, the effect discovered by Benham, whereby the black and white graphic design is perceived in colour, starts to emerge. In the installation, the dynamisation inherent in the motifs is achieved through actual mechanical motion. At the same time, the tableware is intended for use: service plate, dinner plate, side plate, and teacup and saucer are also available in a limited edition of twenty five signed services, each designed for two people. A table centrifuge for the rotation of the Benhamesque plates also forms part of this edition.



REVOLVING HOTEL ROOM, 2008
Installation view Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria



THE DOUBLE CLUB, 2008-09
Fondazione Prada, London, England
For this legendary nightclub, Carsten Höller (at right) had Krutikov's FLYING CITY hand-painted onto azulejo tiles covering the entire northern wall of the central courtyard.



PAINTING

The fine lines of the buildings are drawn with a feather.
Gradients are filled in with a small brush after intermediate firing.
Clouds are added using an almost dry larger brush.



The FLYING CITY is hand-painted in the veduta tradition which has been practiced at Nymphenburg since the 18th century.

Carsten Höller has developed his edition in keeping with the specific historical and cultural context of NYMPHENBURG, the porcelain manufactory of the Bavarian royal court. As the first contemporary artist in the NYMPHENBURG EDITIONS series, Höller had recourse to both the tradition of the veduta painting and the ideas of the avant-garde, which placed art radically in the service of life and living to emphasise the design aspects of fine art. The installation presentation refers directly to the historical apparatuses of porcelain manufacture which are still driven by hydropower. Even today, in this manufactory, all chinaware is produced by hand using techniques that have been preserved and passed down from generation to generation for the last 260 years. The outstanding design quality and style of NYMPHENBURG porcelain is due, then as now, to a close collaboration with the most renowned artists, designers, and architects of the day.

FLYING CITY TABLEWARE
CARSTEN HÖLLER FOR PORZELLAN MANUFAKTUR NYMPHENBURG
2010

Design and installation FLYING CITY TABLEWARE (2010): Carsten Höller
Service LOTOS (1932): Wolfgang von Wersin

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First Edition 2010

Printed and bound in Germany
1000 copies in German, 1000 copies in English



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