

Lazar Lyutakov's "Untitled (Lamps)" (2008-ongoing) would not look out of place in a modern home or office, yet these designs are based on a 'how-to' article on designing your own Modern-Style lamps out of cheap household materials, from a Russian communists-era magazine. With companies such as IKEA, design is now available for a growing global middle-class who desire 'design quality' objects at an affordable price. Lyutakov took this idea and developed it further to contextualise the growing art-as-design/design-as-art conundrum, through the placement and/or re-positioning of these objects, supplies new meaning allowing them to float between decorative art and cultural anthropology, and through their contextualization and method of display their exchange-value and use-value have been re-assigned. In Marx's 'critique of political economy', he stated that a thing can have use-value, without having value. This is the case whenever it's utility to man is not due to labor... To become a commodity a product (or object) must be transferred to another, serving as a use-value by means of an exchange and this can also be said of 'cultural readymades'. Therefore, the best way to convert and subvert the 'exchange/use-value' of an object, especially within the art market is to 're assign' an object as exotic, which continuously needs to exoticise the cultural context of commodities for global consumption and expansion.

(text: Michael Hall)