

Press release

28 February 2023

## **Unpacking Jak R. Maier Inherited and Unpacked – The Value of Things**

**1 March 2023 – 30 June 2023, the temporary bauhaus-archiv**

**In the new exhibition *Unpacking Jak R. Maier*, the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung presents the story of a surprising inheritance and the first review of the life and work of the Berlin artist who died in 2010. The public vernissage will take place on Wednesday, 1 March 2023 at 6:30 pm at the temporary bauhaus-archiv, Knesebeckstraße 1, 10623 Berlin.**

Everything began with an unexpected phone call and a testament. The Bauhaus-Archiv had inherited the estate of the artist Jak R. Maier. But who was Jak R. Maier? And how did the archive come to inherit his estate? What does it mean to assume responsibility for and make decisions about other people's personal belongings? **The exhibition *Unpacking Jak R. Maier* takes a first look at the artistic and private archive of this Berlin artist** and explores key questions regarding museum collection practices today.

The exhibition consists of four stations featuring **original sculptures, graphic works and selected documents** which introduce visitors to the life and works of Jak R. Maier. Interactive, multimedia elements shed light on contemporary museum collection practices – and problems – which are usually hidden from public view. Current videos capture the unpacking and inventorying process of the estate, while visitors can participate in a shadow play based on Maier's works and test their skills at recognising the objects. At the station "My Estate", the exhibition's guests can write down what they would leave to posterity, assign it a value and stipulate what should happen to it.

### **A changing exhibition**

The **event series *unpackings*** dynamically presents the themes of the exhibition. In dialogue with distinguished researchers and practitioners, the museum team will examine the artist's estate live at **six theme-based events**. The information we learn about Jak R. Maier, his work and the value of things will be documented on site by the designers sieblersiebler, thereby constantly changing the exhibition as more of the estate comes to light.

**Dr Annemarie Jaeggi, director of the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung:** "I can still clearly remember that unexpected call when we learned about Jak R. Maier's estate. I

look forward to having his works presented for the first time in an exhibition. What's especially exciting, I find, is the process-driven approach the project team has adopted and the topical questions these evoke regarding the responsibility of museums in handling estates."

**Project team of the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung:** "We've become fans of Jak R. Maier. He documented his work in hundreds of photo albums. They inspired us to think about legacies and the value of things. We're especially looking forward to seeing how the exhibition changes over time through our work with the visitors and designers."

The exhibition was curated by Nina Wiedemeyer, curator at the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung, Gloria Fock, research associate at the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung and curatorial member of the project team and Maximilian Wahlich, research associate at the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung and curatorial member of the project team.

## The inheritance

It all started with the last will and testament of Marianne Maier. After she died in 2013, she bequeathed her estate to the Bauhaus-Archiv. It comprised her house in Berlin-Reinickendorf, the artistic works produced by her husband Jak R. Maier, who had passed away in 2010, and an assortment of household items. The proceeds from the sale of the property were transferred to the *Jakob and Marianne Maier Foundation for the Cultivation of the Ideas of the Bauhaus*. The artistic estate of 100 small sculptures, 2,000 photographs and 1,500 drawings, graphic works and documents – enough to fill 17 boxes and 10 portfolios – became part of the collection of the Bauhaus-Archiv. In her testament, Marianne Maier wrote, "Jak R. Maier was the ideal Bauhaus artist." These words aptly express Maier's appreciation for the art of the Bauhaus and his connection to the school. His academic path and devotion to teaching also mirrored the principles of the Bauhaus. Maier was trained as a blacksmith before he eventually became a professor for metal sculpting at what is today the University of the Arts in Berlin.

## Unpacking Jak R. Meier

### Inherited and Unpacked – The Value of Things

**1 March – 30 June 2023**

the temporary bauhaus-archiv

Knesebeckstraße 1, 10623 Berlin

Mon–Sat, 10 am – 6 pm

free admission

## **unpackings**

Wed., 1 Mar. 2023, 6:30 pm – 8 pm | unpacking 1: public vernissage

Wed., 29 Mar. 2023, 6:30 pm – 8 pm | unpacking 2 – Who was Jak R. Maier?

Wed., 26 Apr. 2023, 6:30 pm – 8 pm | unpacking 3 – What does the estate contain?

Wed., 24 May 2023, 6:30 pm – 8 pm | unpacking 4 – What can be sorted out?

Wed., 14 Jun. 2023, 6:30 pm – 8 pm | unpacking 5 – How is an estate catalogued?

Fri., 30 Jun. 2023, 6:30 pm – 8 pm | unpacking 6 – public finissage

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You can download additional press and photo materials at [www.bauhaus.de/presse](http://www.bauhaus.de/presse).

[www.bauhaus.de/maier](http://www.bauhaus.de/maier)

[stories.bauhaus.de/maier](http://stories.bauhaus.de/maier)

#bauhausarchiv

#unpackingjakrmaier

## Unpacking Jak R. Maier

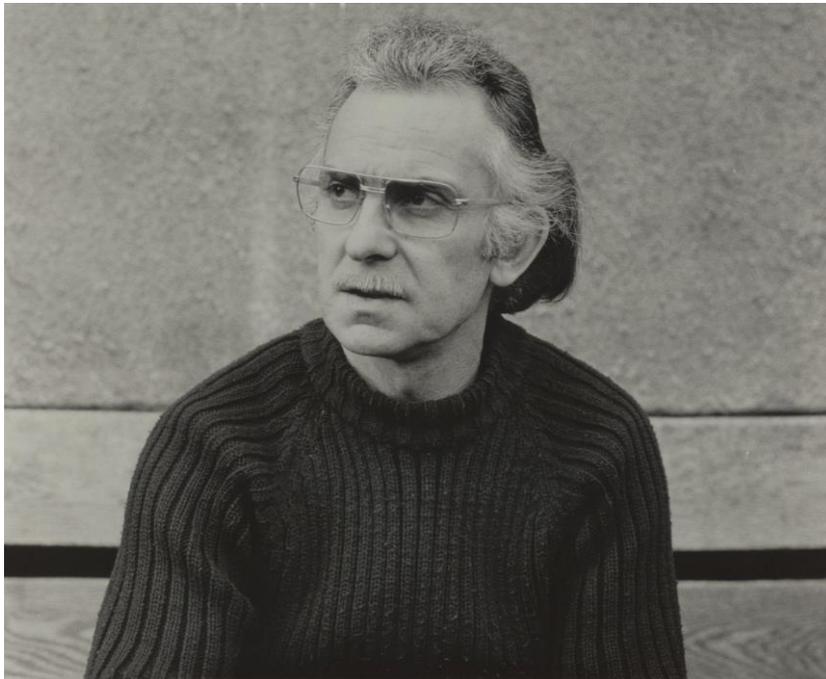
### Inherited and Unpacked – The Value of Things

An exhibition by the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung

#### Biography

**Jakob (Jak) Richard Maier** was born in 1933 in Tailfingen (Baden-Württemberg). From 1947 to 1950 he completed an apprenticeship under his father as a smithy, after which he worked in the blacksmith and locksmith trade. After spending 1955 in Switzerland, he enrolled at the Master Locksmithing School in Stuttgart in 1956 and earned his certification as a master artisan metalsmith two years later. In 1962 he married Marianne Maier, born in 1932 in Berlin-Karlhorst.

In 1957 Maier went to Treviso, Italy to study under Prof. Toni Benetton, and in 1959, enrolled at the Berlin State University of the Fine Arts (HfbK, now the Berlin University of the Arts) to study metal design under Prof. Hans Uhlmann. In 1964 he became Prof. Uhlmann's master student. In 1967 Maier began working as an instructor at the State Academy for Graphic Arts, Print Media and Advertising until he was appointed professor of metal sculpting at the HfbK in 1971. There he remained until his retirement in 1998. Maier passed away in 2010 in Albstadt-Tailfingen. Marianne Maier continued living in Berlin-Reinickendorf until her death in 2013.



## Unpacking Jak R. Maier

### Inherited and Unpacked – The Value of Things

An exhibition of the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung

#### Events

The objects on the shelves originate from the estate of Jak R. Maier. We inspect and discuss them with our guests and colleagues during the unpacking events. We want to get a feeling for the estate. Everything we discover about the artist, his work and the value of these things is compiled and presented here on the shelves. The result is a constantly changing and expanding exhibition.

More information and registration on [www.bauhaus.de/maier](http://www.bauhaus.de/maier).

Mi, 1 March 2023, 6:30-8 pm

#### **unpacking 1 – public vernissage**

Join us for the opening of the exhibition where we set the tone for future unpacking event. You can playfully gain insights into Jak R. Maier's life and works in a joint game of Memory.

Mi, 29 March 2023, 6:30-8 pm

#### **unpacking 2 – Who was Jak R. Maier?**

Follow the clues! How did Jak R. Maier's estate end up in the collection of the Bauhaus-Archiv? And what subsequent processes occurred at the museum? We speak with those who were the first to come in contact with the estate.

Mi, 26 April 2023, 6:30-8 pm

#### **unpacking 3 – What does Jak R. Maier's estate contain?**

The estate of Jak R. Maier consists of drawings, photographs, sculptures, and diverse documents. Most of them are decades old and reveal much about Maier's life and career. With our guests and colleagues from the archiving and restoration department, we explore Maier's artistic and professional development.

Mi, 24 May 2023, 6:30-8 pm

#### **unpacking 4 – What can be sorted out?**

Museums and archives are where today's treasures are collected and preserved for future generations. But is this feasible in times of sustainability and downsizing? We discuss this problem with various experts and decide together: what stays and what goes?

Mi, 14 June 2023, 6:30-8 pm

**unpacking 5 – How is an estate catalogued?**

First, objects are selected and sorted. Then they are documented for the collection. But what does the process look like? Join us on a tour of our temporary photo studio with colleagues from the digitalisation department. We show you how objects are indexed, what aspects must be considered, and what specific conditions apply at the Bauhaus-Archiv.

Fr, 30 June 2023, 6:30-8 pm

**unpacking 6 – public finissage**

The estate has been examined, sorted and processed. What have we learned, and above all, what remains? We create a digital monument dedicated to Jak R. Maier and complete the process of unpacking Jak R. Maier in the same way we began: with a joint game of Memory.

## Online magazine

On **bauhaus stories**, we dive into the unpacking events' topics with interviews, essays and features, thus providing a deeper understanding of the exhibition and key questions of museum collection practices.

<https://stories.bauhaus.de/maier/>

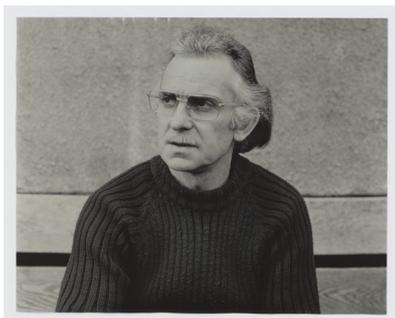
## Unpacking Jak R. Maier

### Inherited and Unpacked – The Value of Things

An exhibition by the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung

#### Fact sheet

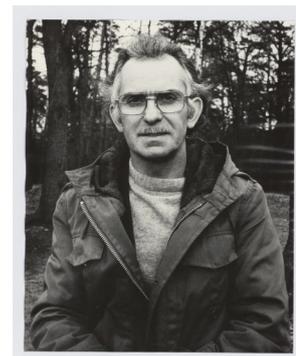
<b>Venue</b>	Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung the temporary bauhaus-archiv Knesebeckstraße 1, 10623 Berlin
<b>Exhibition period</b>	1 March – 30 June 2023
<b>Opening hours</b>	Monday – Saturday 10 am – 6 pm
<b>Admission</b>	free admission all events free of charge
<b>Information</b>	Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung Knesebeckstraße 1, 10623 Berlin Tel. +49 30 30641768 Email: <a href="mailto:welcome@bauhaus.de">welcome@bauhaus.de</a>
<b>Website&amp; online magazine</b>	<a href="http://www.bauhaus.de/maier">www.bauhaus.de/maier</a> <a href="http://www.stories.bauhaus.de/maier">www.stories.bauhaus.de/maier</a>
<b>Social media</b>	#unpackingjakrmaier
<b>Director</b>	Dr Annemarie Jaeggi
<b>Project management</b>	Britta Denzin
<b>Design</b>	sieblersiebler
<b>Media partners</b>	monopol form Magazin tipBerlin



Portrait Jak R. Maier, 1990-2010  
© Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin



Jak R. Maier in his workshop cutting metal, in: photo album of Jak R. Maier with 26 photographs of his metal works and his metal workshop, sheet 24 , 1970s/1980s  
© Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin



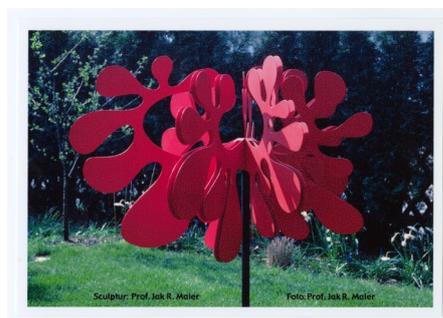
Portrait Jak R. Maier, 1990-2010  
© Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin



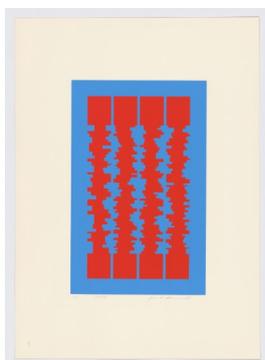
Sketched draft for a sculpture, 1960  
© Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin



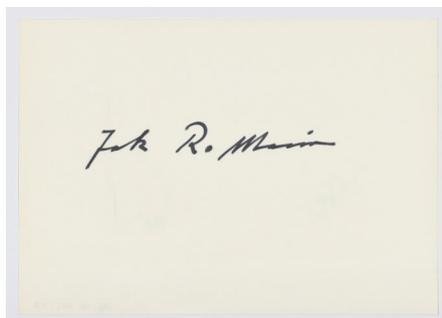
Jak R. Maier, sculpture in front of the Zollernhalle, 1990-2010  
© Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin



Jak R. Maier, sculpture in exterior area, 1990-2010  
© Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin



Jak R. Maier, red-blue composition, 1968  
© Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin



Signature of Jak R. Maier  
© Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin



Portrait Marianne Maier, 1980-2010  
© Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin



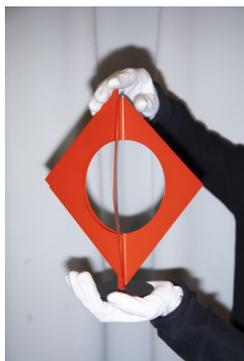
Jak R. Maier, Modell im Raum , 1950-2010 © Bauhaus-Archiv Berlin



Jak R. Maier, sculpture  
© sieblersiebler



Jak R. Maier, sculpture  
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