

EVENTS/CAUSES

Roche Bobois taps artists to rethink iconic piece for charity

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Roche Bobois Mah Jong sofa

By STAFF REPORTS

French home furnishings maker Roche Bobois is reinterpreting its Mah Jong sofa with the help of eight artists.

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Presented in partnership with the magazine ArtReview, "8 x 8 Mah Jong Re-imagined" will kick off with a London exhibition, with a charity auction to follow. Turning the most iconic and well-known piece in Roche Bobois' collection into art will help to highlight the design of the sofa.

Rethinking the sofa

The key defining feature of Roche Bobois' Mah Jong sofa is its capacity for customization. Developed by designer Hans Hopfer in the 1970s, the modular system can be put together however the client desires, allowing them to mix prints in the same piece on different cushions.

For his "Study for a Grotto," Pio Abad affixed 3,500 to 4,000 seashells to a single cushion and backrest. The resulting piece weighs 88 pounds.

George Eksts' "Shorthand" reconfigured cushions and backrests with felt, ribbon, chains, film, bobbins, weights and chalk.



George Eksts' "Shorthand"

Going minimalistic, Peter Liversidge's piece is a framed proposal for Roche Bobois atop a blank canvas of Roche

Bobois seats. Once his art is purchased at auction, he stipulates that the sofa will be donated to charity.

Roche Bobois will host a public exhibition at its Chelsea store in London from April 5-10. Those who attend the exhibit can express interest in the art ahead of the auction, which will be held April 21.

Roche Bobois and ArtReview Charity Art Exhibition

The resulting profits from the auction will be donated to Vital Arts and Gasworks, two art-centric charities.

Vital Arts is the organization of Barts Health NHS Trust. The nonprofit delivers arts to patients, staff and the hospital community, using creativity to foster well-being.

Gasworks provides studio space for London-based artists, helping emerging artists present their first show.

Other brands have given consumers new ways to look at an iconic product.

French fashion label Christian Dior brought the work of 16 female artists to a Shanghai exhibit in 2014.

The "Miss Dior" exhibit included paintings, installations, films, photographs and montages to provide guests with many different ways of understanding the iconic perfume of the same name. The exhibit further emphasized the link between the brand and the art world by showcasing the relationship founder Christian Dior had with artists such as Pablo Picasso, Man Ray and Salvador Dali ([see story](#)).