

# IKON

Ikon Gallery, 1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HS  
0121 248 0708 / [www.ikon-gallery.org](http://www.ikon-gallery.org)  
Open Tuesday-Sunday, 11am-5pm / free entry

## Philippine Hamen *For The Man Who Wouldn't Get Up – Homage to David Lodge* 23 September – 27 November 2016



Philippine Hamen, *For The Man Who Wouldn't Get Up – Hommage to David Lodge* (2015)  
Laminated beech, steel, upholstered foam.

French design student Philippine Hamen presents a new hybrid piece of furniture in Ikon's Tower Room. It is inspired by David Lodge's short story, *The Man Who Wouldn't Get Up* (first published in 1966), about a man who is tired of getting up every morning to live the same joyless life, day after day, until one morning he decides to stay where he is.

*In reality, he didn't love life anymore. The thought pierced him with a kind of thrill of despair. I no longer love life. There is nothing in life that gives me pleasure any more.*

*Except this: lying in bed. And the pleasure of this is spoiled because I know I have to get up. Well, then, why don't I just not get up? Because you've got to get up. You have a job. You have a family to support. Your wife has got up. Your children have got up. They have done their duty. You have to do yours. Yes, but*

*it's easy for them. They still love life. I don't any more. I only love this: lying in bed.*

The hero, or perhaps anti-hero, decides not to get up – ever. The consequences are unexpected, for himself and others.

Hamen has made a “lounger desk” for Lodge’s character and in a sense for the writer whose imagination conceived him. With an appropriate ergonomic structure, including a ‘face hole’ usually found in massage tables, it enables the user to read or work lying face down and thereby questions the long-held association of verticality with the activity of work, whereas horizontality is mostly associated with idleness. Hamen’s lounger desk assuages any guilt we might feel when lying down, reconciling the work space with the domestic sphere.

*For The Man Who Wouldn't Get Up – Hommage to David Lodge* (2015) also responds to the postural problems prevalent in Western society as a result of the domination of the chair/desk and daily office life. Hamen’s work recognises that the human spine is designed to support a standing-up position and not sitting-down at 90 degrees. Sustained seating leads to slouching, increased blood flow to the legs and muscle ache – symptoms that Hamen attempts to alleviate through the horizontality of the lounger desk which allows even distribution of body weight, stability assured by gravity, respect for the curvature of the spine and elevation of the feet. As with a massage table we can lie prone and symmetrically, still able to read a document placed on the ‘desk’, but with arms hanging on either side at a comfortable angle, the hands resting. If the purpose of sitting is to relax those muscles not involved in a task then the lounger desk achieves this very well. However Hamen is quick to point out that there is no such thing as a perfect chair or a perfect posture, and that we must keep moving to avoid ending up like the Man Who Wouldn't Get Up.

Please note Ikon’s Tower Room is only accessible via a number of steps. The exhibition is supported by Fluxus Art Projects.

*The Man Who Wouldn't Get Up and Other Stories* by David Lodge is published by Vintage on 15 September and will be available from Ikon Shop or online at [www.ikon-gallery.org](http://www.ikon-gallery.org).

Event: David Lodge and Philippine Hamen in conversation

Saturday 8 October, 4.30–7pm, £8 per person, £6.40 concessions

Ikon Gallery and Studio Theatre, Library of Birmingham, Centenary Square, Broad Street, Birmingham B1 2ND. Booking essential.

Designer Philippine Hamen and writer David Lodge discuss Hamen’s work *For The Man Who Wouldn't Get Up – Hommage to David Lodge* at an event chaired by arts journalist Rosie Goldsmith. The event begins at 4.30pm at Ikon Gallery with a drinks reception and special viewing of the current exhibitions, followed by the talk at 6pm at the Library of Birmingham. To book visit [www.birminghamliteraturefestival.org](http://www.birminghamliteraturefestival.org) or call 0121 245 4455.

**Social Media Handles:** Instagram, Twitter and Facebook: @ikongallery #IkonGallery

**Note to Editors:**

1. Ikon exhibition opening: Friday 23 September, 6-8pm.
2. Philippine Hamen (born 1986) grew up in the North of France and her academic path took her from Modern Literature at La Sorbonne in Paris to studying architecture in London. The subsequent transition to furniture design occurred organically and led to her enrollment on the BA Furniture Design course at the Cass College of Art and Design, London, where she trained in woodwork and metalwork. Hamen's design aesthetic is based upon a somatic approach, which considers the body as a whole, its sensations and the way it moves, and relies on both empirical testing and ergonomic research. Somatic considerations and the influence of literature converge in *The Man Who Wouldn't Get Up – Hommage to David Lodge*. [www.philippinehamen.com](http://www.philippinehamen.com)
3. David Lodge is a well-known novelist and critic, and Emeritus Professor of English Literature at the University of Birmingham where he taught from 1960 until 1987, when he became a full-time writer. His fourteen novels include *Changing Places*, *Small World*, *Nice Work* and *Deaf Sentence*, and he has also written stage plays, screenplays and numerous books of literary criticism. In 2015 he published a memoir, *Quite a Good Time To Be Born*. He has received several prizes and awards for his books, which have been translated into more than thirty languages. Two of his plays were premiered at the Birmingham Rep, and his adaptation of *Nice Work* for BBC television was produced at Pebble Mill, Birmingham. He continues to live in the city.
4. Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, Ikon's Learning Team aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art. [www.ikon-gallery.org](http://www.ikon-gallery.org)
5. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 5pm. Admission is free. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. For the latest news and events

follow @ikongallery on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

6. For more information or high-res images please contact Rebecca Small or Emily Luxford at Ikon on 0121 248 0708 or email [r.small@ikon-gallery.org](mailto:r.small@ikon-gallery.org) or [e.luxford@ikon-gallery.org](mailto:e.luxford@ikon-gallery.org)

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