

Revolutions on Request

Helsinki

DISCIPLINES
Industrial design,
graphics, painting,
sculpture, video,
mixed media

FOUNDED
1998

MISSION
To create
immersive
spectacles

COLLECTIVE HEROES
Artist Ricky Swallow and
Ned Ludd, the original
Luddite

MEMBERS
Jiri Geller, Klaus Nyqvist,
Panu Puolakka, Karoliina
Taipale



Revolutions on Request is less a collective than a mindset—“a way to exist,” as its members put it. In the economically depressed Finland of the late '90s, finding a way to exist was quite literally the goal when the quartet first met at Heke, an “inventors’ workshop” planted among the warehouses of the Helsinki Metro. Heke offered cheap, plentiful space and equipment to struggling designers and artists. Encouraged to band together to win government grant money, the four designers launched RoR with a dozen other people.

By late 2001, the group had shrunk to its current core, each member with a different background and specialty: Panu Puolakka, an interior architect, stitches place mats and rugs with pop kitsch imagery; Klaus Nyqvist, a painter, mounts sophisticated video projections; Karoliina Taipale, a graphic designer, has been developing an endless series of lenticular prints; and Jiri Geller, a sculptor, creates enormous, surreal models of such things as waves and escalators. Early on, RoR harbored commercial ambitions, but the members soon opted to pursue client projects on their own, and the collective turned into a laboratory for fusing disparate creative strategies into a single alchemical whole. “The reason we are four is that when we put our work together, it doesn’t need curating,” says Geller, 36. “It really mixes to create a world.”

Presented at museums throughout Scandinavia, the RoR world is an immersive experience that brings pop iconography and industrial products into a highbrow context while thumbing its nose at both art and design. Typical is the group’s belt-making machine that spits out a useless helix of material. Currently, RoR is planning an exhibition at Glasgow’s Transmission Gallery in tribute to Metallica’s so-called black album. “From the very beginning it was understood that you should enjoy your work,” Geller says. “But we don’t want to scare people. It’s probably better to seduce them first.”

www.ror.fi — JESSE ASHLOCK



RoR creates hodgepodge installations from the works of individual members, like a foam model of piled police cars by Panu Puolakka (top) and a digital collage by Karoliina Taipale called *Friendship* (bottom).