

ARCH 384 Competition Elective

OFS HOTSEAT2

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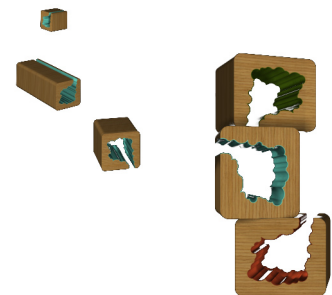
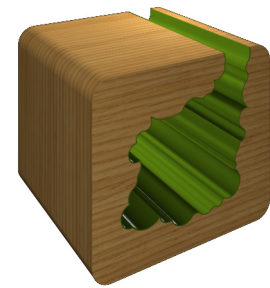
PROBLEM STATEMENT

“The works of the past always influence us, whether or not we care to admit it, or to structure an understanding of how that influence occurs. The past is not just that which we know, it is that which we use, in a variety of ways, in the making of new work...The typology argument today asserts that despite the diversity of our culture there are still roots of this kind which allow us to speak of the idea of a library, a museum, a city hall, or a house. The continuity of these ideas of type, such as they are, and the esteemed examples which have established their identity and assured their continued cultural resonance, constitute an established line of inquiry in which new work may be effectively grounded.” (Hancock, 71)

RESPONSE

Previous experiences or observations undeniably persuade and impress upon individuals to do one thing or another. Inherent in all humans is the conscious or subconscious decision making process based on precedence. “The instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures and through imitation learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated.” (Aristotle) Innovators in art, architecture, and design have always been strongly influenced by imitation; drawing precedence for their inventions from specific previous works as well as political and social experiences and interactions. The problem of precedence, as presented by Hancock is the “proliferation of the influential past”(Hancock, 67). “The theory of a precedent seeks to mediate this dilemma through the use of two intellectual tools. This first is convincing limits - the capacity to appropriately select only portions of the past according to the needs of a current task (narrowing our choices within historical freedom). The second is rigorous methods - the techniques to thoroughly analyze that which is selected in order to use it most effectively (replacing the loss of traditional immersive knowledge).”(Hancock, 67) The competition presented by OFS and Metropolis asked for the design of a chair. Utilizing the theory of precedent, the programme and final design of my chair was a result of numerous influences, some of which were deliberately selected and others that were subconsciously ‘decided’.

The design scheme presented was a small stool, composed primarily of wood slices each cut with the same profile and stacked together. The shape cut out of the centre of the chair is somewhat organic in form. It is delineated with either a green plastic polymer or a reflective material.





The final product was strongly influenced by “undesigned” seats; places where people manage to sit when a chair is not available. ‘Undesigned’ seats are interesting as they illustrate an individual’s idea of a chair when one is not already defined for them. They also demonstrate when and where the most natural type of seating occurs. Most of the observable types of ‘undesigned’ seats exist

outdoors. A chair is defined by the Urban Dictionary is “a raised platform on one would sit to keep one’s self off the dirt which is on the ground.”(www.urbandictionary.com) One of the most typically used seats in this context is the street curb. Always available, curbs are frequently used as seating in social or individual situations outside. The design intent of my chair was established using these seats as precedence by defining the context and programme. “Context can be understood on a number of levels..as the typological nature of those buildings, the formal and programmatic orders that organize their appearance; and as the perception of the qualities that characterize a location.”(Editorial, 59) The programme or intention of proposed use for my chair is to be flexible and casual. Therefore, the chair I’ve proposed does not have back, arm or footrests, as chairs with these accessories have traditionally been used in formal situations.

Recently there has been a significant shift in attitude towards invention and more specifically in relation to technology. In the past the attitude was held that the individual was obligated to modify their routines and lifestyle to suit the capabilities of invention. Oppositely, the modern individual responds to invention with the attitude ‘how can this invention be modified or adapted to suit me and my needs?’ This shift in attitude, seemingly unrelated, has strongly influenced furniture design as exemplified by Philippe Starck’s Bubu. Bubu was described as “one of the most versatile stools available. This is one item where you can allow your imagination to fly. From the gritty bottom teeth to the storage bin this stool is completely multifunctional. This stool can be used as a planter, storage bin, ashtray, ice cooler and even as a small side table to name a few.”(www.unicabome.com) Bubu with the ability to be used for multiple household needs begins to blur and question the traditional definition of a table, chair, or decorative piece. The concept of maximum flexibility resonates in the design of my proposed scheme. The shape and proportion of the seat implies flexible and multiple uses. The body of the seat is composed of several ‘slices’ of wood cut with the same profile. This construction gives the ability and implies that the stool should be rotated, stacked, and arranged in rows. Thus in addition to a seat, the invention can be used as a bench, small table, or ottoman. **ACCOMMODATE ME !**



Bubu, Philippe Starck

Kirei board is to be the primary material used to construct the base of the chair. Technologically relevant, it is an environmentally sustainable material composed entirely from the recycled agricultural fiber of Sorghum stalks. Previously discarded, sorghum stalks were leftover after the harvest. Kirei board is constructed using these stalks and a non-toxic adhesive to create a durable but lightweight building material. It has been used for cabinetry, furniture, and interior wall surfacing. The strong linear grain of the wood contrasts and strengthens the organic profile of the cutout in the centre. Bart Bettencourt and Carlos Salgado who use scrapile wood in their designs have use a similar construction method.

The chair in my scheme was conceived as a singular volume. Like many recent works in furniture design, Pebbles by Marcel Wanders illustrates a similar concept. Unlike a typical chair comprised of four structural legs and a seat, these objects are composed as a single mass. Thus, the chair becomes similar to a sculpture, a volume to be shaped and molded. The organic profile in my proposed scheme though mostly intuitive, speaks to two ideas as precedence, corrosion and maximalism. Maximalism, visually rich, colourful, and elaborate has recently become more prominent in modern design as a response or reaction to previous minimalist works. The outline of the profile in my proposed scheme suggests influence from damask or paisley prints. The idea of corrosion or infiltration is also present in the chair. The break at the side of the seat visually connects the opening in the centre to the space surrounding the chair implying a permeation. The smooth exterior surface of the chair is broken. The toxic connotation held by the colour green made it an appropriate selection for the interior of the profile. Alternatively, a reflective material would mirror and distort the surrounding room within the chair. "The unwritten building code of imagery, materials, and technology; and the shared values of the builders and their users - these are the products of a lifelong immersion in the fabric and life of a single place." (Hancock, 65) These references are recognized because humans are socialized into common understandings and definitions. Individuals have shared experiences based on recognition.



Kirei Board
www.kireiusa.com



Scrapile
Bettencourt & Salgado

Courtesy of present-day technology, images of all sorts have been reproduced and distributed with unprecedented accessibility to the public. Access to the 'past' is simple and convenient. Precedence for invention will continue to become more varied and more significant, relying far more on individual preference than financial or social means. "The plurality of precedents necessitates the establishment of a framework for choice so that intentions may be understood and expressed in a coherent design proposal...It should, by the hierarchies that it establishes, be an affirmation of basic personal values so that the result is authentic, reflecting the motivation of the author as well as the contingencies of fact and reality. Most of all, it should be based on convictions, for without conviction, the architect is unable to work." (Editorial, 63)



Pebbles, Marcel Wanders

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