

OVERVIEW

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Designing Circularity

We are witnessing that designers and companies are slowly learning how to process products that already completed their life cycle into new designs. Products which employ the materials that have already been used for realising other products / buildings etc. are called circular products as they are enabling the materials to circulate and start a new service life instead of becoming waste. This year in the DDW, The Embassy of Circularity organised many events and presentations of circular designs in the Strijp-S area, inside the halls of Klokgebouw, a former Philips electronics factory. Cartoni is an emergent circular design brand meanwhile Gispén is a long-established producer that is applying circular approaches to their high-volume production. These projects and initiatives let us intuit that we are moving towards a future with truly circular products that are designed for being reused and recycled.

Tafel Stockholm
© Thomas van Schaik



Cartoni 900, lightweight LED-light in cardboard by Wisse Trooster

Beginning...

We started by exploring alternatives for wooden panels. For example, if our recycled cardboard based material is treated in the right way, it can be recycled over and over again. These cabinets if returned to the company, they can be turned into new plates again within an hour and the paint doesn't contain any toxic materials. It's so harmless that the manager of the paint company ate a spoonful of it in a demonstration!

We have been working a lot on efficient processes and after that, we look for a designer who can work with it to make a nice product.

I hope people never throw these away but if they should, we produce them in such a way that everything can be taken apart easily and recycled. There is always a time that people like things and then they like it less, and maybe they like it again, so we produce them in a responsible way.

Business model...

This model is absolutely working, we were also selected as one of the Best of Milan Design Week 2018 with Wisse's lamp. I think it's not easy to launch a new sustainable label. But it can be made possible, people don't have to see that it's made out of recycled material and it has to look good, that's the first thing. You also need good communication. So, if it looks good and if it's made out of recycled material, you got it!

Marijn MULLER
CARTONI DESIGN

In the 2018 edition of the Dutch Design Week there were three emergent themes: Circularity, Meaning and Interaction.

Designing Meaning

We could design more consciously if we were to consider what things mean. In her project I-Wall, Elvira Von Wieding reinterpreted the historical meaning of an object in a contemporary framework. Even though hers is a quite provocative design, her reference may be pointing to one of the elements that constitute a good product: its meaning. Meanwhile when Ineke Hans was talking about meaningful design, she pointed to the fact that consumers are not searching for the solution per se, but rather for the result that a solution brings them. When we consider that the solutions (i.e. products) that are purchased only as the result they deliver to the consumers, we intuit that materiality sometimes loses its importance, and that some needs can be satisfied without employing the conventional material solutions we are used to.



Instant Desk



Long Bench



Smallroom

The proposition "meaning" instead of "more"...

I think it is important to remember that as designers we look at the world from the production side. We stand between the users and the manufacturers, so we add value to that process. We like that because we like to generate ideas. But you could also say "If we are so good at thinking about products and thinking about how things should be produced, one could also use that knowledge for producing less." During this process you shouldn't focus too much on small ideas that don't get you anywhere because it's very important that you bring them to a good end. Stick with the stories that you want to tell from the start to the end. Otherwise you are again not very sustainable, you just burn ideas all the time. The problem is that design is very good in being the starter motor of the car engine but sometimes we have to take more responsibility. As designers, so many times we send a child to the kindergarten but we forget that it has to come out of the gymnasium. I think we should take more responsibility.

Lifecycle metaphor...

Of course, the life cycle is important but it's very complicated as a debate. It's easy to say that we have to design less, that we should have fewer design fairs, but not so easy to do when you consider that every year the hotels wouldn't have all these clients during the fair in Milan and the magazines would have nothing to write about. So, it means that the whole economic system is affected. It's a very complicated thing to say let's produce less, and: let's produce things with meaning. In the last few years as I moved back to London I have been setting up salons where we had debates about this topic. There were not only designers involved... Also the retailers, manufacturers, curators of museums attend to the salons. It was really about "How can we change something about the matter?" or "Can we talk about this together?" In a way it's difficult but sometimes there are small things you can start with. One of the things is that you see in the DDW 2018 is that design is moving, there is a tendency to move towards intangible objects.

Immaterial solutions...

The importance of this feeling is getting less and less. Sometimes people can't afford classic stuff like a house, for example, in London it's something a lot of people will never own anymore because it's simply too expensive. A car is a nonsense because you are stuck in the traffic. All these classic status symbols are useless at the moment and there is a generation that likes to travel with a light suitcase and stay with a Facebook friend in Singapore. They are more interested in sharing and experiences than in possession. It's a different society, it's becoming a different world.

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