

10th Semester – Master Thesis

Industrial Design
Institute for Architecture & Design
Aalborg University
Østerågade 6
9000 Aalborg

Title:

In Public View: The Role of Industrial Design through Urban Furniture
In Shaping Cities.

Project Group:

AD10 - ID12

Group Members:

Ilektra Christina Mandragou

Project Period:

1st of February – 4th June 2008

Supervisor:

Nicola Morelli
Østerågade 6 (rum 316)
9000 Aalborg
Nordlylland
Denmark

Issues:

4

Page Number:

97

Synopsis

This Master Thesis is an analysis on the role of industrial design through urban furniture in the process of shaping the character and identity of a city. It aims to convince the reader of the influence urban furniture can have both in the image and aesthetic appearance of a city.

The topic was chosen by the author and its framework is within research and analysis towards a proposal for a different approach.

Ilektra Christina Mandragou

Contents

Introduction..... 7

Framework..... 9

Subject/ Problem Formulation..... 13

Modification..... 13

Delimitation..... 15

Scope..... 17

3 areas of research..... 18

Urban Design 18

Urban Furniture 19

Visual communication 20

Strategy..... 20

Goal..... 22

Significance..... 22

Vision..... 22

TheCases..... 25

DissectingAalborg..... 28

Observation..... 28

Cultural probe..... 31

History..... 33

Industry..... 34

Reformation..... 35

Recreation of the harbour..... 36

Maintenance and Urban Furniture..... 38

A Visitor in Den Haag..... 41

History..... 42

Re-Branding the city..... 43

Meeting the city..... 43

Mapping an area by the water..... 46

Observation..... 48

Looking at Delft and Bologna..... 50

Delft as a student city..... 50

Bologna as a character..... 51

Reflection..... 52

On diversity..... 52

On city image and identity..... 53

Theories As Filters..... 55

Urban Design..... 58

Urban Furniture and Industrial design..... 60

Visual Communication..... 63

Reflection..... 65

Who is the city for?..... 66

Negotiating The Future 67

Reflection..... 69

Proposal..... 72

Evaluation..... 78

Questions not answered..... 78

Implications not examined 79

Conclusion..... 80

Illustration List..... 82

Bibliography..... 83

Websites..... 83

Articles..... 84

Books..... 86

Appendices..... 87

Appendix 1: Alexander’s context-form scheme..... 88

Appendix 2: Alexander’s approach methods..... 89

Appendix 3: Cultural Probe..... 90

Appendix 4: Interview with Anne Juel Andersen..... 92

Appendix 5: Survey..... 94

Appendix 6: Brainstorm..... 96

Appendix 7: Guy Julier’s diagram on factors..... 97

Introduction

This paper has been put together in order to point out the significance of urban furniture in the environment of a city—in this case, Aalborg, Denmark. It argues that treating urban furniture as a mere decoration of the city is short-sighted and that industrial designers of the field should view this design task as something that requires time for research and responsible design—not for the company that will eventually sell the furniture to a municipality, but for the municipality itself as a social whole.

In doing so, this project investigates the practice of industrial design in the field of public furniture and attempts to frame a hierarchy, positioning industrial design somewhere high in the process. Three areas of design which are considered to be key areas for argumentation are investigated: urban design theories and social influence, industrial design as a field of design through the significance of urban furniture, and visual communication to explain the interaction between environment and individual.

Nevertheless, for the first part of this project and, as an introduction to the methodology of approach and the overall framework, delimitation and specifics of the project are presented. To better focus the project and to justify its research, an entire chapter will be dedicated to the framing of the analytical pages to come as well as a discussion of relevant theories and definitions.

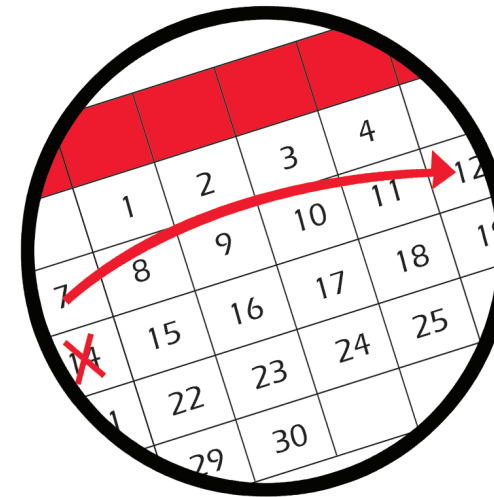
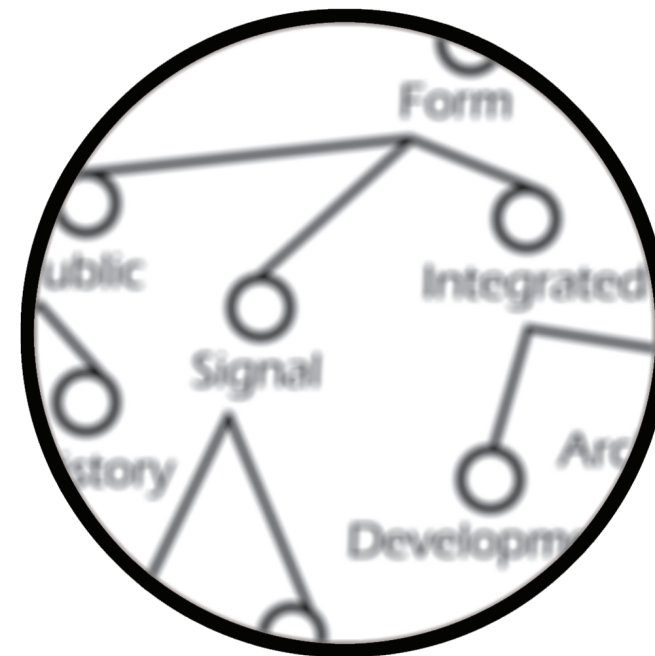
As this project leans more towards a research paper, the outcome is not a practical solution. The goal of this project is to argue that urban furniture today is viewed as something generic that can be picked out of a product catalogue, when it actually has a greater impact on people's behaviour within the city. The identity of a city and how it is separated into quarters or themed areas can also be expressed through the use of urban furniture. Organised diversity is a key term that can successfully summarise the main argument this paper supports. As all serious research requires justification, there must be a reason for urban furniture to be used and handled in the selection and function stages. This paper argues that there is no plausible reason for the present situation to remain as it is, especially since there are very good reasons to the opposite: why "intelligent" and customized-to-particular-



framework

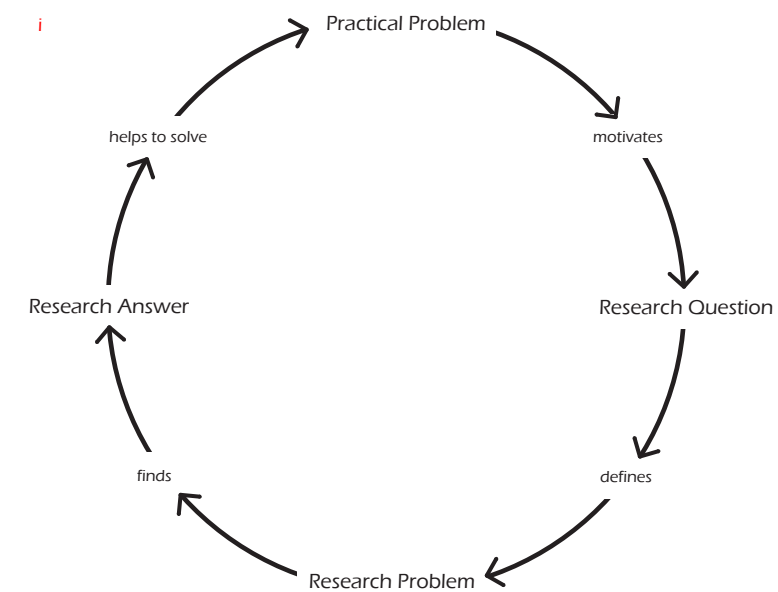
environment urban furniture can actually help the diversity, identity and aesthetic appeal of a city.

This project hopes to spark a different approach for designers by including industrial design through urban furniture in the design process (either from scratch or simple renovation) of a city and not merely as a proposal absent external input. Therefore, this project focuses heavily on the social aspect of urban furniture. It proposes a strategy that will involve citizens either in the design process or for aiding the cultural research that needs to be done when placing urban furniture in public view



Although Arkitektur&Design's curriculum aims to provide a strong practical background and, when it comes to specific semester projects, expects a practical outcome, a design, this project is a pure research paper. It concentrates on arguing the theoretical importance and attempts to define the significance of a specific field of industrial design—namely the design of public furniture.

To engage in worthwhile research, one must have an actual problem that needs to be solved. Once that problem has been determined, the researcher must find a corresponding question, which will isolate the main points of examination. After this focus has been made, there is a research problem that (after investigation and careful analysis) will direct the research to some kind of conclusion. This conclusion does not necessarily contribute to normative implementation, yet helps to address the problem by introducing theoretical aspects that need to be addressed one way or another. Combined research outcomes solve the whole.



The structure of any research project must be accurate and with a solid purpose; one cannot create a problem arbitrarily. The arguments will have to constitute logical support towards a realistic proposal. Especially when examining and criticising the urban furniture status quo, long-term institutionalisation is a significant factor to consider and it may inspire some to ask: "Why bother?"; "Do we really need research for this specific topic?"; or "Isn't the present situation fine as is?"; ad nauseam. In the following pages of this chapter, precise reasons for this paper

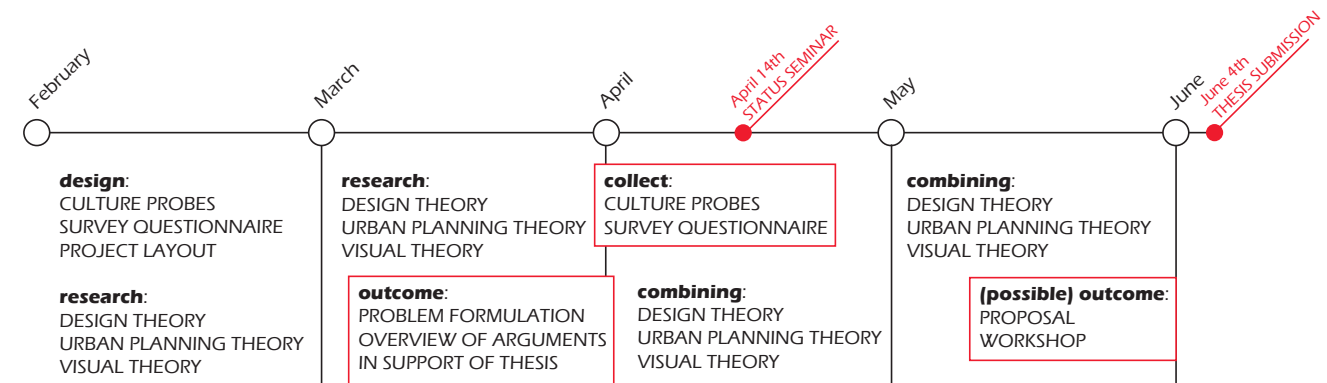
i. Wayne C. Booth, et al. *The Craft of Research*, 2003, p.58.

**Good design begins with honesty,
asks tough questions, comes from colaboration
and from trusting your intuition.**

Freeman Thomas, automobile designer

to exist will be explained as well as the overall approach, layout, and progress of thought.

Given the limited amount of time an academic semester provides, calculating and organising time towards a coherent and rich research project is essential. The collection of written material from articles to books as well as surveys, interviews and probes is organised within the first period of research. The research question is the guideline and the research problem (or problem formulation) is the outcome. Once this has been established, the analysis and research conclusion are dealt with until the end of the project.



One must not forget that during the entire process, meetings with supervisors take place as well as discussions challenging the nature of the project and its significance. As someone once said, “If you can not explain what it is you do in ten seconds, it is probably not worth explaining at all...”

The trigger for this project occurred with use of the simplest of all research tools: observation. Walking through the streets of Aalborg, one can see (mainly in central areas) a variety of street-lights, benches, rubbish bins and other examples of urban furniture one next to the other. On one of the busiest streets of central Aalborg, lights designed by Philippe Starck eclipse an old rubbish bin, robust benches lose their character amidst three different street-light designs and there exist numerous other instances of urban furniture stacked upon urban furniture throughout the years.

It did not take much longer for the question to appear: Why this intense diversity of urban furniture, which finally serves no functional or aesthetic purpose? Why did newer urban furniture not replace the old? Why this waste of municipal funding on whims of “fashion”? When someone looks for a rubbish bin or for a post-box, how easy is it for him or her to find in this overload of visual information? All these questions spontaneously arose, simply by observing the city from afar.

The decision was made to direct this semester’s project towards creating a more uniform image of urban furniture—a new series of urban furniture so of speak—with specific focus on Aalborg’s aesthetics as a city and in collaboration with locals to grasp the true feeling of Aalborg’s identity. The main point was to identify the *image* Aalborg projected its inhabitants and, with their help, to create a series of urban furniture uniquely customised to Aalborg’s space and way of life.

At this point, many factors were taken into consideration apart from aesthetics. One of them came from a comparison between Aalborg’s huge variety of urban furniture and the uniformity of post-boxes throughout the entire country of Denmark. It was discovered from previous discussions with Aalborg residents that everyone could easily identify post-boxes because of their unique colour and because of the length of time the design had remained the same; long enough for people to recognise. Why couldn’t this be the case for the entire set of urban furniture: a recognisable, uniform set of urban furniture that would live long enough for people associate with the city.

It was not long before problems began appearing—problems such as the importance and respect that should be given to any diverse environment with respect to years of history and various styles of living. Certainly, attempting to create a uniform set of massively “consumed”¹ products detracts from the livelihood and the actual identity of a city. To take an example from architecture, Le Corbusier’s *Pavillon de l’Esprit Nouveau*, created an entirely

Subject/ Problem Formulation

Modification

1 Here, the consumption is perceptual.



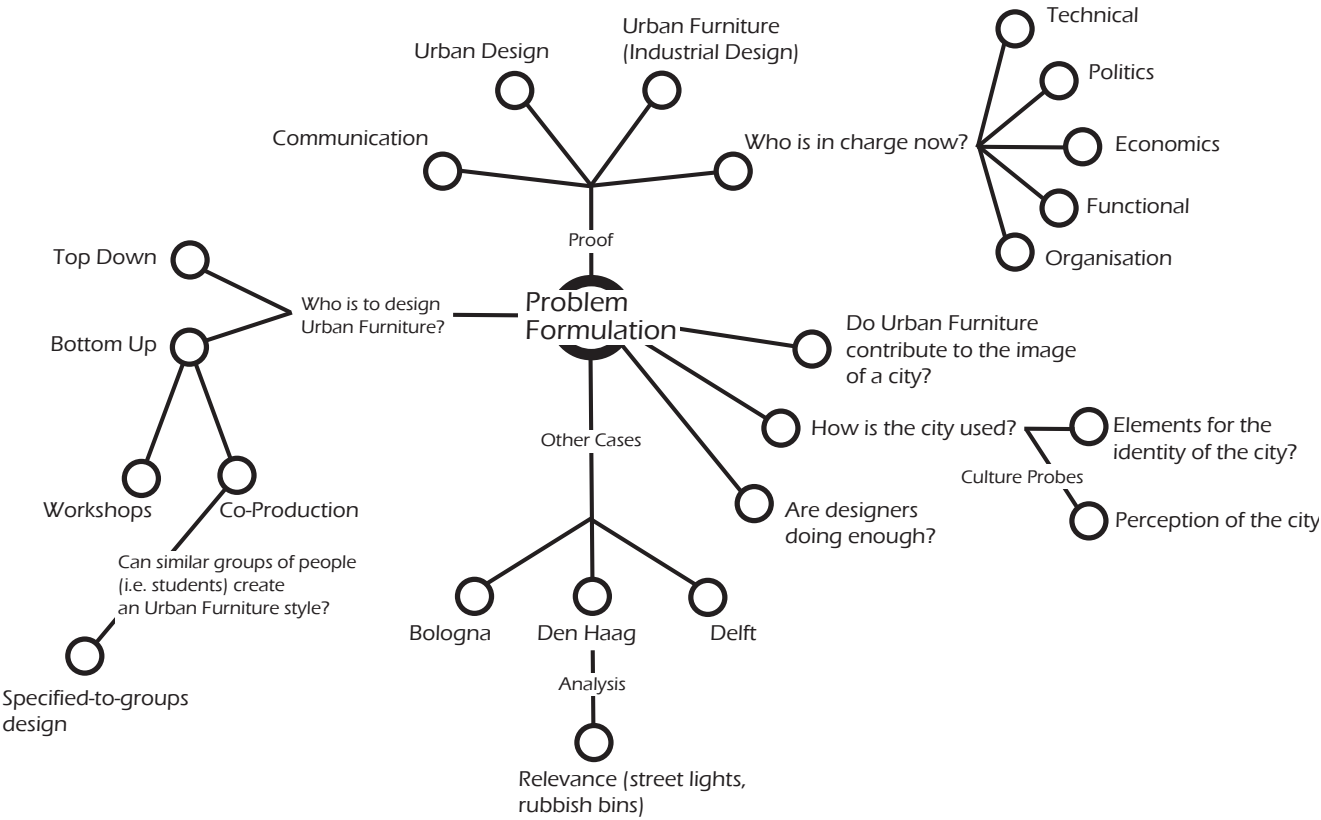
homogenous visual setting, the creation of a single mind. This homogeneity of the whole came largely from the adaptation of structure to an aesthetic derived from certain classes of objects and the rejection of any aspects deviant from this aesthetic.² While this approach could very well be applied to a single object,³ working within a system as diverse as a city, one cannot be so absolute.

Another factor that required this project to narrow focus was the time limitation. For such a project to touch upon the social aspects of design, the fundamentals of urban design, to organise a strategy for the co-production of urban furniture with Aalborg residents, and to design a series of urban furniture would require an unseemly length of time—perhaps something to consider for doctoral research.

The project therefore required modification. This was done with the vision of keeping the original idea of working with a city’s image, a city’s identity, urban furniture and how these factors have an impact on the people using them. The problem formulation can be summarised in the form of a question as follows:

How can urban furniture be designed in such a way as to preserve and respect a city’s diversity, identity and aesthetics?

This phrasing of the problem formulation necessitates an investigation into the role of industrial design through urban furniture within a city environment. Once it was expressed in its final form, a mind-map was also put together in order to visualise the aspects requiring examination as well as necessary research material. This provided a holistic view of the approach and brought out the strengths and weaknesses of this research project, while at the same time helped to narrow and focus the field of interest.



Even after the modification of the original idea, some elements remained the same; these can be summarised as *context* and *form*. These two concepts are fundamental for industrial design in general and they are also important in this case, albeit in a broader way.

The concept of *context* here stands for the context of urban furniture: the city. This includes social aspects of a city including history, geographical location, domestic placement, the culture and lifestyle of its residents, and perhaps the political background that has assisted in bringing the city to its current state, etc.

The concept of *form* is the straightforward term for the appearance of urban furniture. This refers to colour, texture, size and the general characteristics that constitute the object. A combination of these two could be the placement, a word that infers the positioning of the *form* in a certain context.

The concepts of *context* and *form* constitute the overall delimitation of this project. When viewing the specific case of urban furniture in a city, there can be three scenarios closely related to a time process leading up to the current state of affairs: past, present, and future. To better illustrate this, the need for a post-box will be used as an example. This need was originally met

Delimitation

2. Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, 1960, p. 247.

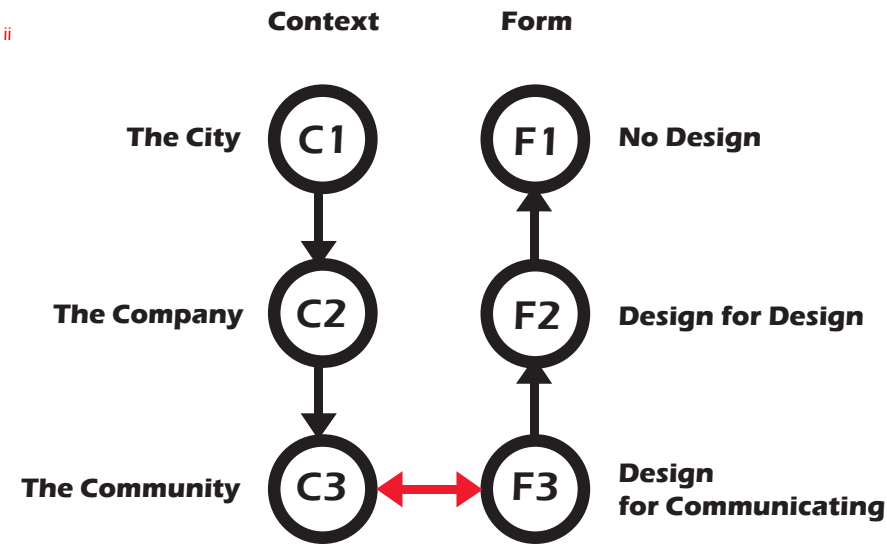
3. Le Corbusier was strongly criticised for his tendency to homogenise most of what he designed.



in its simplest form: placing a box and printing the word “post” on it. In this case, the city serves as *context* to our functional construction. Perhaps one can only conjecture how the decision for placing a particular post-box was made when the need was met at a very basic level, but today this is not enough.

One must consider the aesthetics and the functions of a post-box—for instance how can the postman empty it as easily as possible? Today, this decision is more likely to be made through the city council or even by a specially designated department. Moreover, there are also numerous designers specialising in urban furniture and companies that have well established themselves in the field.

However, this is also a problem. The context today is leaning more towards the company and their expectations from the designer (stylistic, economic, etc.). Are the designers themselves designing for the company or for the city? Do they view their design task as fulfilling a specific need or a specific market position? And how do the municipalities themselves treat urban furniture?



ii. This diagram was taken and modified from Christopher Alexander’s *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*, 1964, p. 76. For more on this scheme see appendix 1.

This paper attempts to reveal that urban furniture functions very differently in a city than does a couch in a living room. With results extracted from research, the new *context* becomes the community; thus, the link between the community and the required *form* is the primary focus of this paper.

The relationship between public furniture and the user is very different from the more nuanced relationship people tend to have with furniture in their own homes. This difference can be

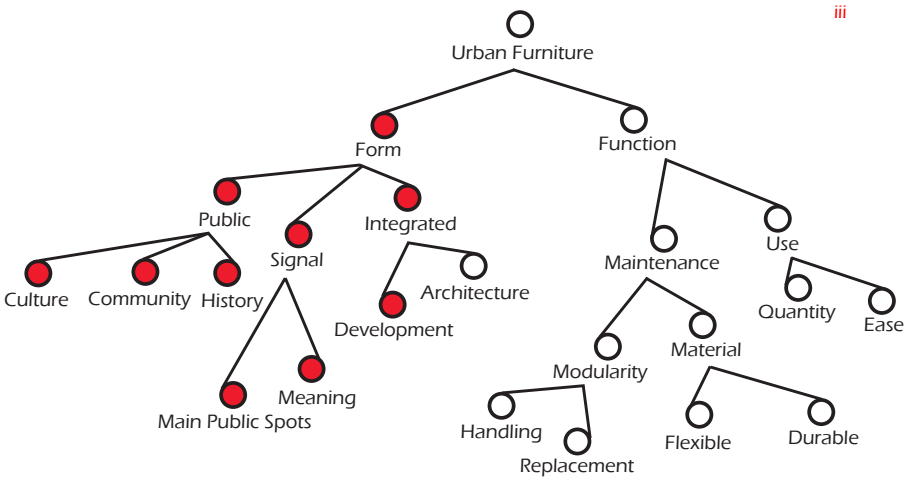
taken not only from a technical perspective, (meaning tougher materials or a more neutral aesthetic appealing to a variety of cities) but also from the actual design perspective—designing for everything the object stands for. Yet, when a municipality is “shopping” for urban furniture, the process proves to be quite similar to the purchasing of furniture intended for private homes.

A great part of the framework consists of choosing related aspects of discussion, and the extent of elaboration on those aspects. In order not to overload the reader with unnecessary details, the choice of information to be presented has to be made at an early stage of the paper. Therefore, given the limited amount of time, but also to make oneself coherent and focused, some limits have to be set.

In examining the case of Aalborg, information has been gathered concerning the municipality’s plans for recreating the city, the local habits within the city and much personal observation. Unfortunately, the typical corporate approach to designing urban furniture for cities was not examined, in part because it was too difficult to establish contact with company representatives and also due to time constraints.

Additionally, no criticism is presented during the analysis of Aalborg’s urban planning and future image of Aalborg, because this paper is not concerned with urban design itself, but with the role industrial design plays within a city.

During the comparison of Aalborg to Den Haag, the results of meetings held with city officials did not meet the author’s satisfaction. Surely, the interviews provided a significant amount of information, yet the municipality of Den Haag’s point of view was not directly explained. Most of the results were taken from a combination of interviews and observation of the city as a result of the “back-office” arrangements.



Scope

iii. Ibid, 94

3 Areas of Research

Urban Design

Generally, theories and “-isms” will not be questioned. What *will* be questioned and observed with a critical eye is practice itself. How is urban furniture implemented? Does it fulfil its intended role for the city? What is it meant to provide to begin with? Is industrial design left aside while designing a city and is it important to include it more in the process? Can industrial design through urban furniture have a more active role in the display of actions and orientation within a city?

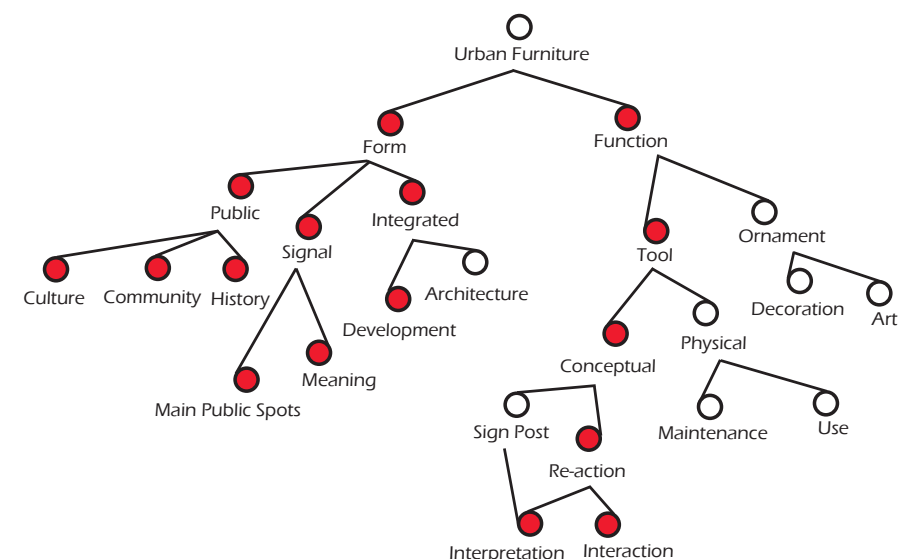
As cities develop all around the world, so does urban design. Once in the hands of engineers and urban planners, cities are today transforming into an aesthetic whole, appealing to their residents while simultaneously attracting even more in order to increase overall economic growth. Closely cooperating with architecture, urban design finds itself in the higher layers of Maslow’s pyramid of needs, taking care of the leisure and well being of citizens.

In the case of Aalborg (a city that has been undergoing a great deal of change), the challenge is to transform the city from a former industrial, rural area into a modern, cultural centre using existing as well as new facilities. The Municipality has dedicated a substantial amount of time and money towards this end and the Urban Planning department has been in coordination with several companies from all over Europe to reach the best outcome possible.

To understand the nature of approach and planning for this difficult task, Aalborg’s city officials have been interviewed and guideline material of vision and restrictions of financial, political and human resources have been provided and examined. This information has been compared to another case of a very similar city with similar goals: Den Haag.⁴

The desire here is to find out how social urban design in its applied form is, how a city brands itself, whether it is something imposed by the design itself or something of a process as the city transforms itself over time. How people live and act within the city is something that will be examined through probes and references to experts with specialisation in the field, but also through observation and personal experience. By using interviews and printed material combined with theories of the social dimension of urban design, an attempt will be made to understand how a city alters its image to its own inhabitants, to visitors and how this is related to industrial design through the use of urban furniture.

A city’s decoration can be separated in two categories: public art and public furniture.⁵ Artists of several specialisations have taken over the first category and have developed their own theories to follow to and identified their own unique challenges to overcome. Public furniture is mostly developed through the industrial designer’s eyes and design processes. However, when it comes to placing an object in public view and attempting to signal a function (whether mere admiration or [inter]action), both public art and urban furniture are based on the same intuitive and perception principles of the human mind and its social dimension.



This section of the paper is dedicated to examining the treatment public furniture implementation has received within a city. This is done via interviews and observation but also through other research on attitudes towards urban furniture, market positioning and theories relevant to the role of urban furniture as objects within a city.

A connection to industrial design and the role it maintains in the interaction of a city with its residents is the logical extension of everything written thus far. Industrial design is seen in this paper as a branch of design capable of improving communication a city and its residents in the form of an interpretable image. Unfortunately, urban furniture continues to be treated merely as another product to be designed and sold for a client, with little concern for the specific needs and character a specific city requires.

Urban Furniture (Industrial Design)

4. The author travelled to Den Haag for research purposes, including interviews with city officials.

5. Gyorgy Kepes, ed. *The Man-Made Object*, 1966, p.76.

Visual Communication

Visual communication will be mentioned in relation to objects and the very basics of perception theory. The discussion will remain related to branding and how images contribute to identity through visual signs and by developing relationships with objects in the surrounding environment.

This chapter discusses theories of visual communication not literally related to either urban or industrial design, but which are purely part of that specific field. The sub-chapters, in which urban design and industrial design through urban furniture will be analysed, contain some visual communication—albeit, filtered through their practice in those two fields. Nevertheless, when analysing visual communication in particular, fundamental principles of visual interaction will be used to clarify the means of expression and the dynamics of interpretation.

The analysis of this sub-chapter will not be to the same extent as the others, since it merely attempts to seal the issues of branding and identity. The purpose is to demonstrate how industrial design can emerge to have an important say in the process of creating or renovating a city along with urban design through the design of intelligent urban furniture. The terms of guidance and communicating identity via uniqueness can be found in this part, by use of analyses of interaction and individual interpretation of stimuli.

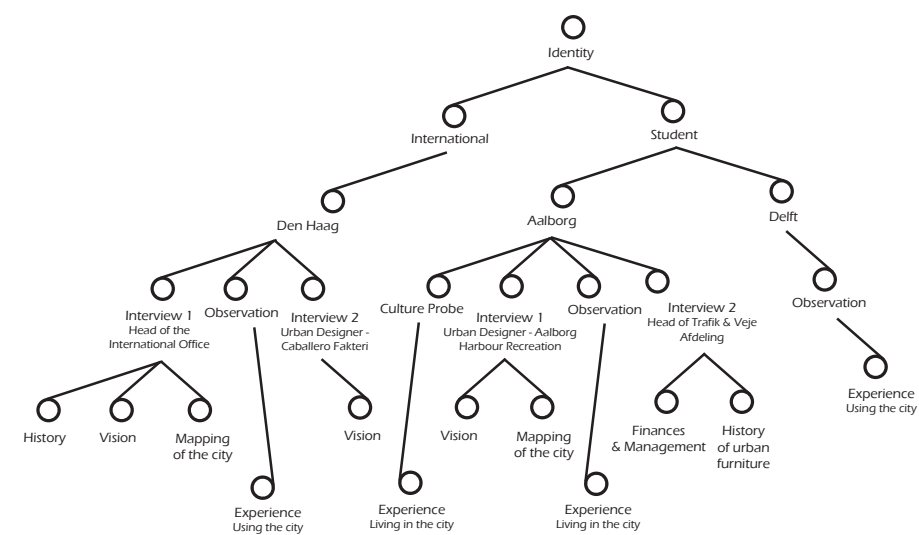
Strategy

Having worked with strategies in the previous semester project, two approaches are presented: the top-down and bottom-up. Then (as now) the favoured method was the bottom-up. It provides knowledge on reality first and then moves on to attempt to modify the initial positioning, where the alleged problem can be found and modified.

This project began bottom-up. From the observation that initiated this paper, the project began researching the process of selecting and installing urban furniture by city officials, conducting probes and discussions with locals and generally investigating the facts. Gradually, investigation was undertaken concerning the theoretical and educational background upon which the final outcome bases itself.

When progressing towards the finalisation of this project and examining for sample visual communication, however, it seemed more realistic to consider the guidelines theory offered first. From there—from the more general—it moves towards the more specific by pointing out practices that have been based and evolved from the wider idea into the more specialised and specific practices.

Schematically, an example of the approach is as follows:



This pyramid can be read both ways: beginning from the bottom or from the top. When studying the cases of Aalborg and Den Haag, the approach is bottom-up—that is to say, the city is observed, compared to a similar example and then cross-checked with theory, leading to criticism of the practice. The top-down approach can be found when a theory is used not to validate but to instruct and convince of errors. Following the given theory, the practical application can be criticised, therefore schematically one is going from the general, from the norm to the specific, to the practice.

This paper favours the bottom-up. Although top-up is used mainly to fill in gaps that practice was found incapable of fulfilling, it merely serves the purpose of the classic academic argument in a paper. However, most of the importance is given to the bottom-up approach, meaning how the existing situation is viewed and how some things could change within a framework that is already set.

Although this approach was subconsciously applied to this paper, it is well understood that it is the most efficient.⁶ The bottom-up approach means that one examines the present status of actions or situations and attempts to work their way through it to achieve a better outcome. This is precisely the point of approach here—weighing the present situation, analysing the possibilities and attempting to combine the two towards a realistic change.

iv. This diagram was taken and modified from Christopher Alexander's *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*, 1964, p. 94. For more on this scheme see appendix 2.
6. If the lectures on strategic design in the faculty of Architecture & Design at Aalborg University can be taken as representative of industry opinions, then the bottom-up approach is clearly most efficient.



Goal

Significance

The main goal of this project is to convince the reader of the importance of the problem. Without understanding that urban furniture serves a broader public—a public composed of diverse demographic communities—there can be no progress in the field. The argumentation is gathered with this guideline in mind, that there are several fields dedicated to studying the impact of aesthetics on the perceptual level of individuals, yet when designing for mass use, it apparently makes no difference whatsoever in the design process.

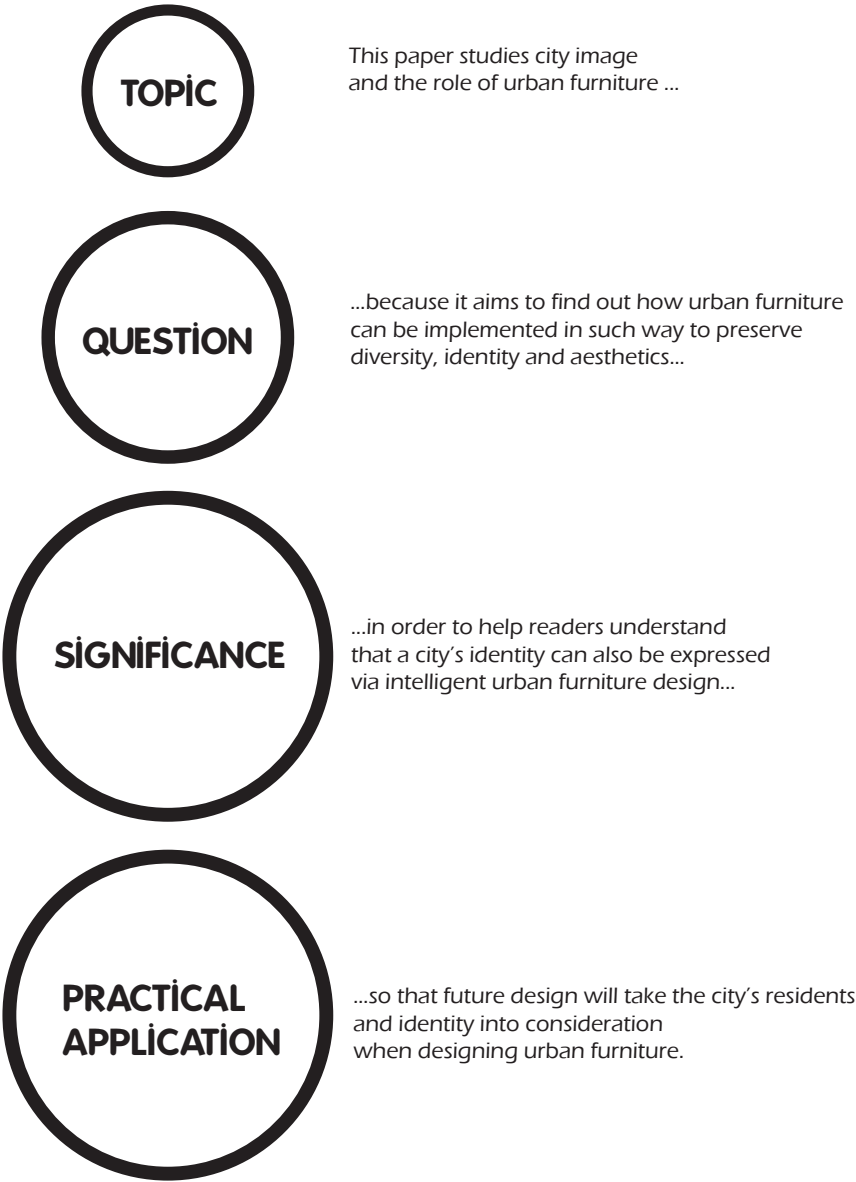
This paper does not attempt to radically alter viewpoints or hierarchies; it merely identifies an error and proposes a different path towards resolving this error than the status quo. The result of compiling such a paper and highlighting the field with sufficient data and analysis should at least provoke discussion by offering an alternative point of view.

Above all, this project was undertaken in an effort to acquire knowledge regarding the present situation of industrial design through urban furniture in the market of branding cities. It was also important to grasp the flow of argumentative/persuasive writing at an academic level. The challenge of knowing one’s audience and attempting to persuade them of something they have not previously considered (or considered significant) is what makes this paper so important.

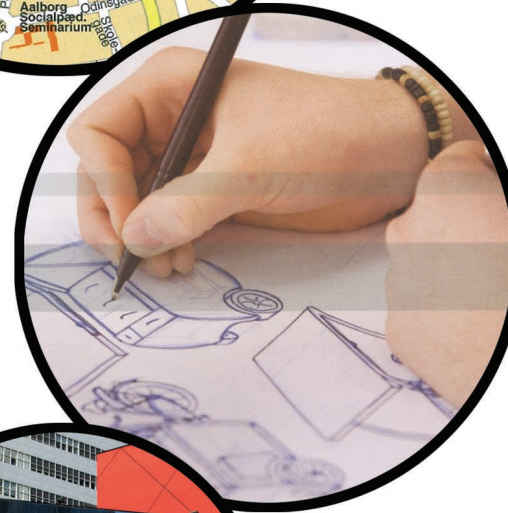
Vision

This project is an attempt to add knowledge to the field of industrial design; this is the vision for this project. In its ambition, this project hopes to offer something modest to the field—or at least serve as a platform for further research.

Since the fields of visual communication and visual interaction are so nebulous, this paper hopes to set the foundations for a more extensive, detailed and holistic project. Ideally, such a project will have the time and material to actually co-produce a series of products made by the representatives of the audience for which it is intended: the inhabitants of a city. One need not flatten the character of a city in the name of design, but it should be possible to organise its diversity and character into something meaningful, something that can have a subtly practical function followed by good design—not *vice versa*. All one can hope is for this notion to be understood and perhaps even recognized by designers to come.



the cases



In the following pages of this chapter, research into two cities is extensively presented: Aalborg and Den Haag. Near the end of the chapter, two more cities are mentioned briefly to identify the type of character they promote and to demonstrate how they project their image to themselves and to the outside world.

The section begins with a very brief description of the geographical position and comparable characteristics of the cities, moving from there to their respective histories. Their economic situations will follow and finally their current situation in general, meaning what their current development plans involve. The texts here are taken and modified from the cities' branding and advertisements to attract people to the city as residents eager to take advantage of the new and exciting ways of life offered to them.

Interviews with members of the municipalities, either currently working on projects or able to provide information on the vision and identity of the city, follow. For this part, substantial research material was gathered towards understanding the cities' development and their priorities, the competition between cities and their treatment of spaces and inhabitants.

Although the layout is seemingly top-down (beginning with general information and moving into specifics and facts on the ground), this was merely done for the reader's benefit. Research began from observing the aesthetic result and moved on from there to investigate the reasons for it.

At the end of the chapter, there is a brief reflection, critically analysing the research conducted until that point and focused on extracting the essence of the image and the identity of a city. The location and focus on the importance of diversity and its expression, both intentionally and unintentionally, holds an important place in this project as well. At the same time, urban furniture will be inserted into this critique, evaluating its role and importance as it has been experienced.

**A town is a tool...
A city!
It is the grip of man on nature...
Geometry is the means, created by ourselves,
whereby we perceive the external world
and express the world within us.**

Le Corbusier, architect/ designer



Dissecting Aalborg

Observation

The Municipal District of Aalborg is the third largest in Denmark with a population of over 190,000 and a total area of 1.144 km². The First European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns took place in Aalborg in 1994. The Conference adopted the Aalborg Charter, which provides a framework for the delivery of local sustainable development and calls on local authorities to engage in Local Agenda 21 processes. The 4th European Sustainable Cities and Towns Conference, held in Aalborg in 2004, adopted the Aalborg “+10 Commitments”. These commitments are an important step forward in transforming sustainable urban development from words into actions.

The vision is to preserve and enhance the distinctive character of the City and District, making it an outstanding place in which to live and work and to visit, where everyone enjoys a range of quality and efficient services in a progressive community.⁷

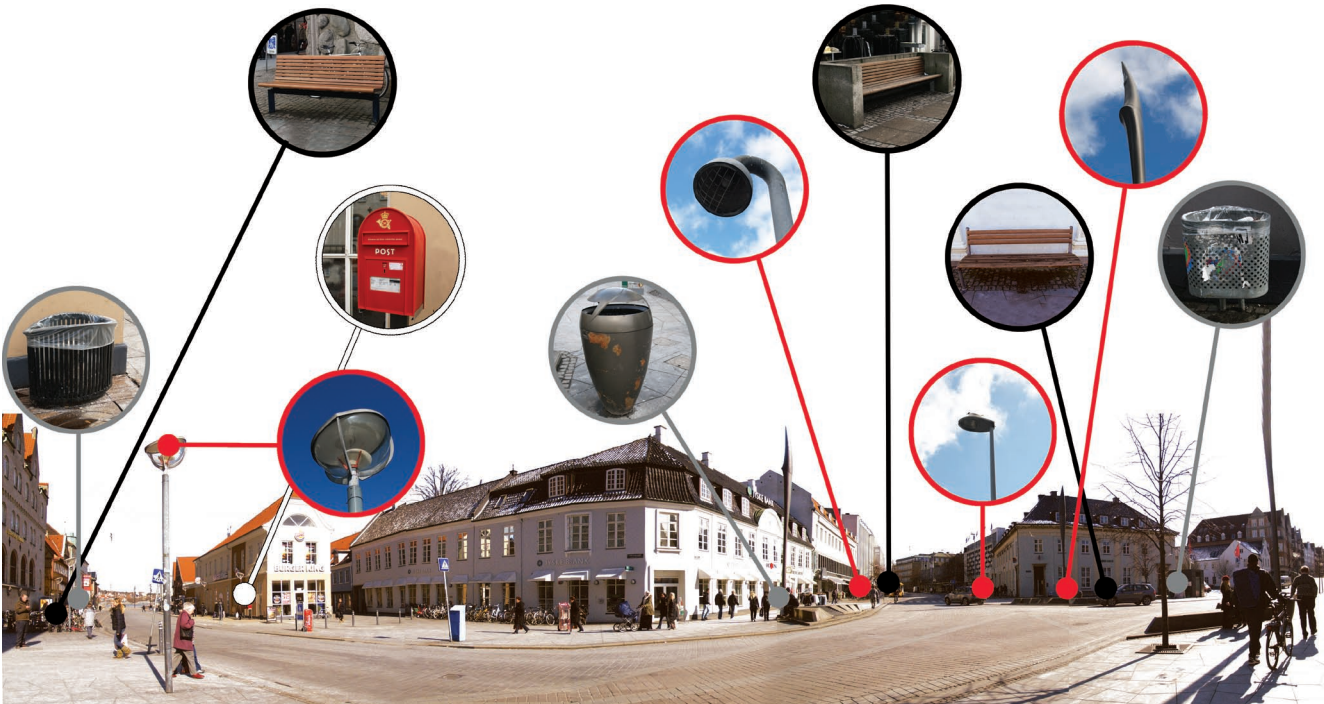
Although Aalborg is situated in the northern part of Denmark, there are several sunny days throughout the year and residents take advantage of them, sitting outside and enjoying the weather whenever possible. Cafés and restaurants always provide the possibility of outdoor seating near main squares and in central areas surrounded by shops, banks and bars. These central areas are the places where businesspeople often relax on their breaks, residents do their shopping, and where families take strolls together.

One of these central areas is Nytorv; it is a crossroad between Aalborg’s shopping/walking streets, harbour area, and the main road of Boulevarden (leading to the city’s central transportation centres). The site of numerous cafés, restaurants, shops, and banks, Nytorv is almost always busy with people. Aalborg University also operates one of their downtown buildings adjacent to Nytorv.



7. From the official website www.aalborgkommune.dk

Nytorv and Boulevarden hold great historical significance to the city of Aalborg as it was always a main area—either for business or as a public place where people would meet. The area used to have a stream of water running through it and was the centre of commerce, engaging in significant import and export deals for the industries placed near the harbour.

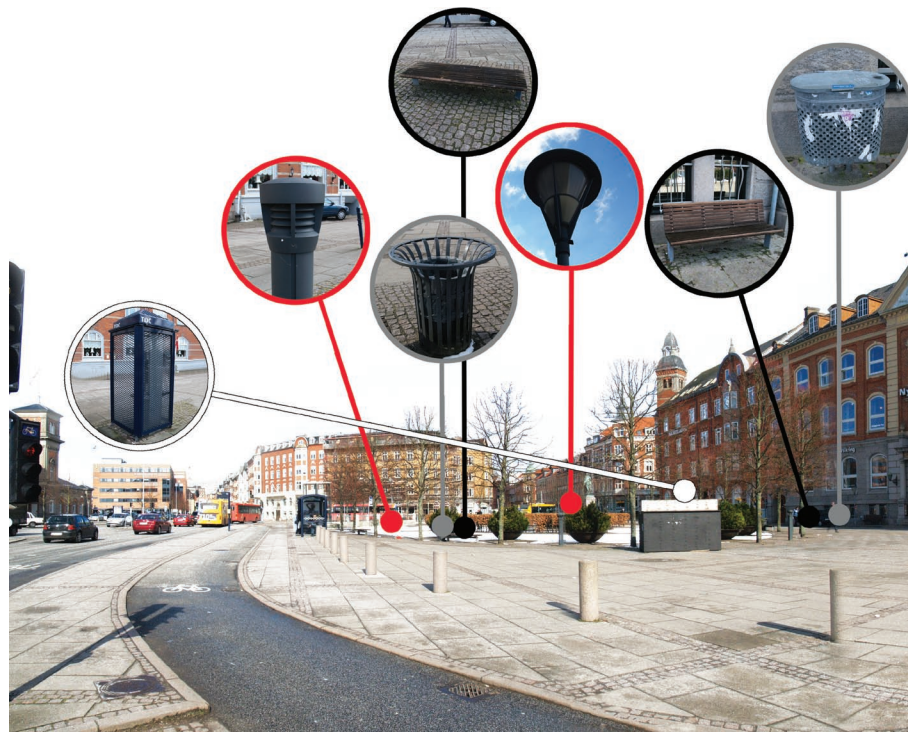


When viewing a picture of Nytorv, well-maintained historical buildings can be seen next to modern offices. The streets have been recently renovated and they contribute to an atmosphere of a recreational walking area, although buses and taxis are constantly buzzing their way through the crowds. This is the area where urban furniture can be found in a huge variety, from rubbish bins and streetlights to newspaper stands, etc.

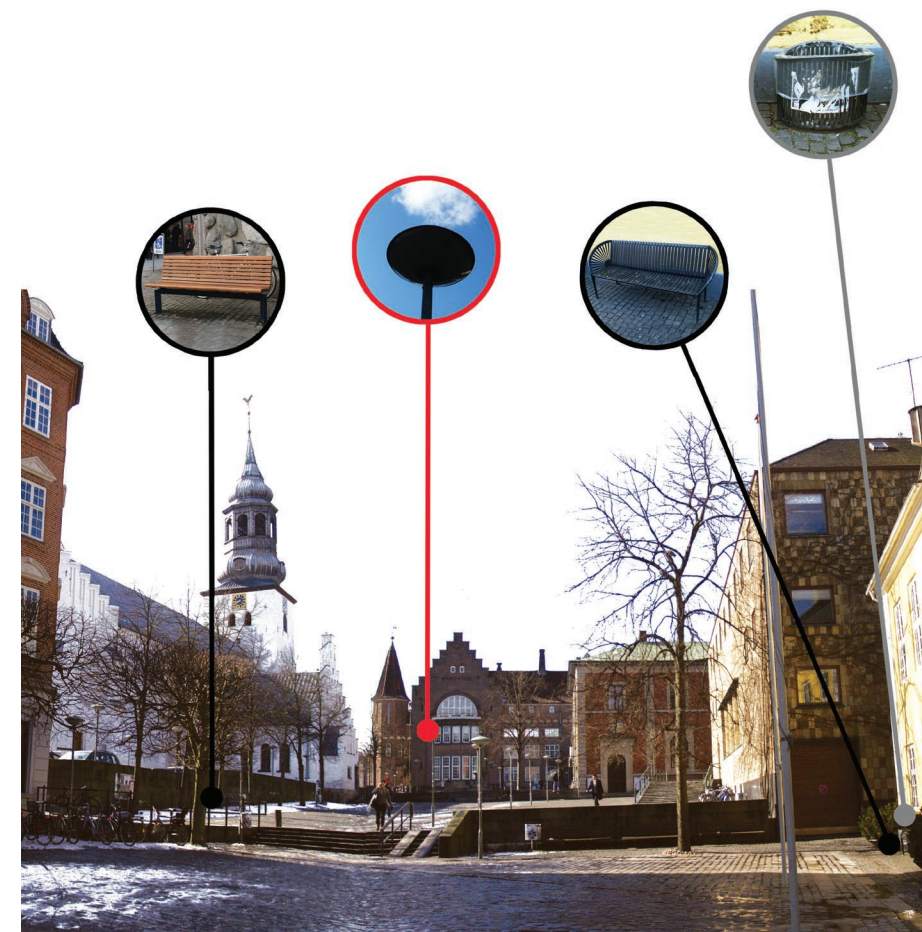
Traveling down Boulevarden to JFK Plads, a main square directly across from the central train and bus stations, one gets an idea for the first impression visitors receive upon arrival—whether they arrived via bus, train or taxi. Several prominent hotels line the Plads, as do numerous bus stations and taxi parking zones. However, apart from the maps placed near the train station, it is difficult to orient oneself due to the lack of signs or any other indication of how the city is actually structured. There is a large shopping mall, the Kennedy Arkaden, which apart from hosting a multiplex cinema, a supermarket and several stores, is also the

central bus station. There are wide pavements to facilitate a large density of foot-traffic and this area is indeed bustling with people visiting the shopping mall as well as those who wish to travel or change bus lines.

Urban furniture in JFK Plads is very subtle and does not vary as much as in other parts of the city. Both road-traffic and foot-traffic in this area are very dense. Traffic lights and tall lampposts are the most common types of urban furniture and (with the exception of the square) this open area visually interacts with only bus stops and public floral decorations.



Gammel Torv is probably the most historic place in Aalborg, the traditional “centre” of the city and a landmark in itself as it hosts Aalborg’s main cathedral, Budolfi Kirke. It is also the centre of Aalborg’s student life with the student house (a student oriented concert-hall, café and bar) holding a predominant place right opposite the church. The central post office operates in one of the oldest buildings in Aalborg and the traffic around it is always dense. One of Aalborg University’s buildings, the Arkitektur & Design building, is adjacent to the student house, followed by the town hall, a place used mostly for bureaucratic and matrimonial purposes. Opposite the town hall lies a central parking spot, with a limited number of spaces, yet due to its centrality, is always full.



By looking at these three central spaces, one notes that urban furniture is scattered sporadically, without creating any particular pattern or purpose. They serve as functional decorations, yet it is obvious that they have not been selected according to any overall aesthetic purpose or to assist in creating a character for the landscape itself. Especially in the case of Nytorv, urban furniture varies in a very discontinuous way, placed layer over layer and the final result makes them almost invisible.

One of the first areas to be examined was the residents' lifestyle and habits in the city of Aalborg. At an early stage, cultural probes were distributed to permanent residents of Aalborg. That they are permanent resident was especially stressed, since the large population of students is enough to engage a separate target group research—something to be considered in further investigations perhaps.

Cultural Probe

The residents were asked to fill in a short booklet containing questions regarding their recognition of existant urban furniture and their respective positions in the city by shape alone; colours and background were excluded from the experiment. Other questions concerning their habits in the city (e.g. favourite bicycle routes, intuitive memory of the placement of recycle bins and post boxes) were also included in the experiment.

The third and last part of the culture probe asked the volunteers questions reflective of their perception of Aalborg's identity as a city. This was done by asking them to select from a list of Aalborg's various key-localities and landmarks, the items they felt most reflected Aalborg as a city. Then they were also asked to point out a colour that reminded them of Aalborg, as well as logos they associated with the city.⁸



8. For the entire culture probe see appendix 3.

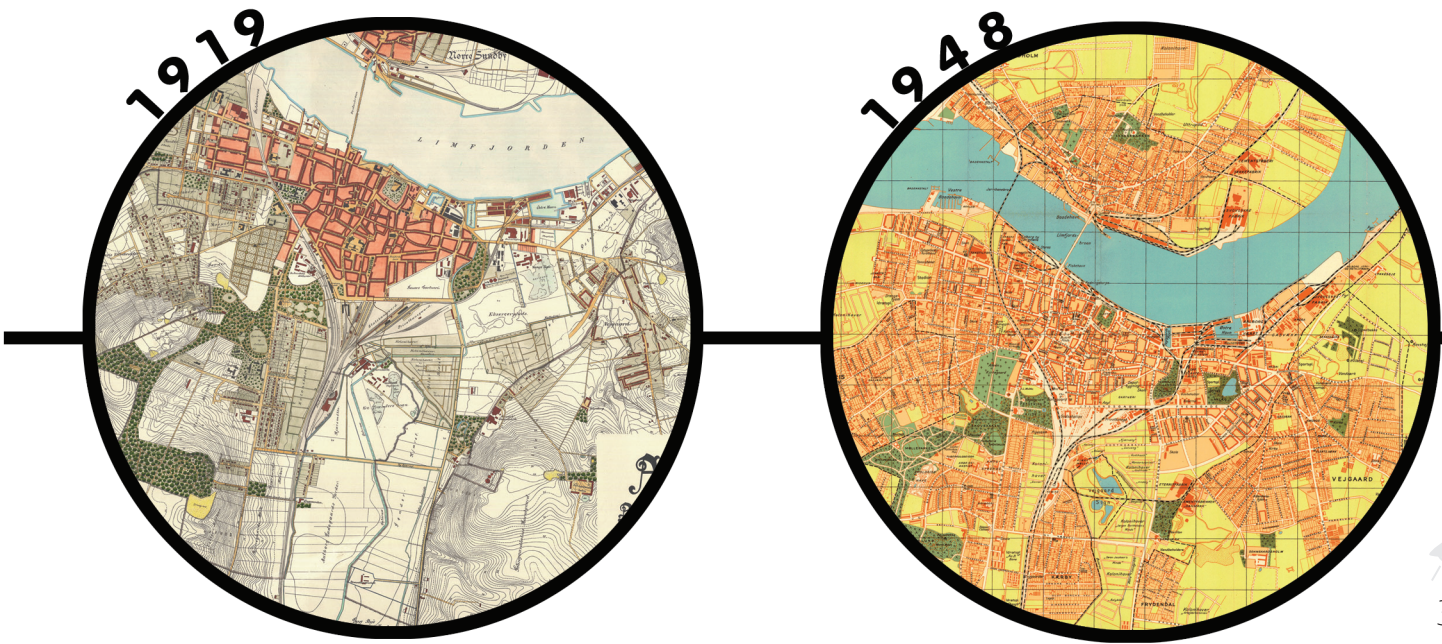
The results of the culture probe suggest that there is at least some recognisable urban furniture in the city, yet the rest are relatively difficult for residents to identify or to connect. There is, for example, a single rubbish bin which is the most common model to be found in all quarters and streets of Aalborg; every volunteer that participated in the culture probe was able to recognise it. Some spaces were commonly seen as representative of Aalborg

as a city and others previously expected to be important were totally ignored. As for living habits, it was quite evident that the volunteers preferred to use facilities within a limited distance from their home or at least along a route with which they were already familiar (e.g. the route to work, school, etc.). Another finding was that elderly residents perceived some kind of melancholy in Aalborg's identity, while younger participants perceived a more vibrant and vivid image of the city. All of the volunteers, however, referred to the Aalborg Kommune as the strongest link between Aalborg as a city and its social dimension.

Aalborg traces its history back over 1000 years. It was originally settled as a Viking trading post, because of its position on the Limfjord. The sites of what were two settlements and a visible burial ground can be seen on Lindholm Høje, a large hill overlooking the city from the Northern bank of the Limfjord. The size of these settlements emphasise the significance of this place as an old crossroads of civilisation.

During the middle ages, Aalborg prospered and became one of the largest cities in Denmark. The herring fishery linked Aalborg to the eastern coast of England, across the North Sea, both in commercial competition and cultural exchange. Last century, during the Nazi German occupation of Denmark, Aalborg was the site of significant grassroots resistance and experienced the brutality of WWII.⁹

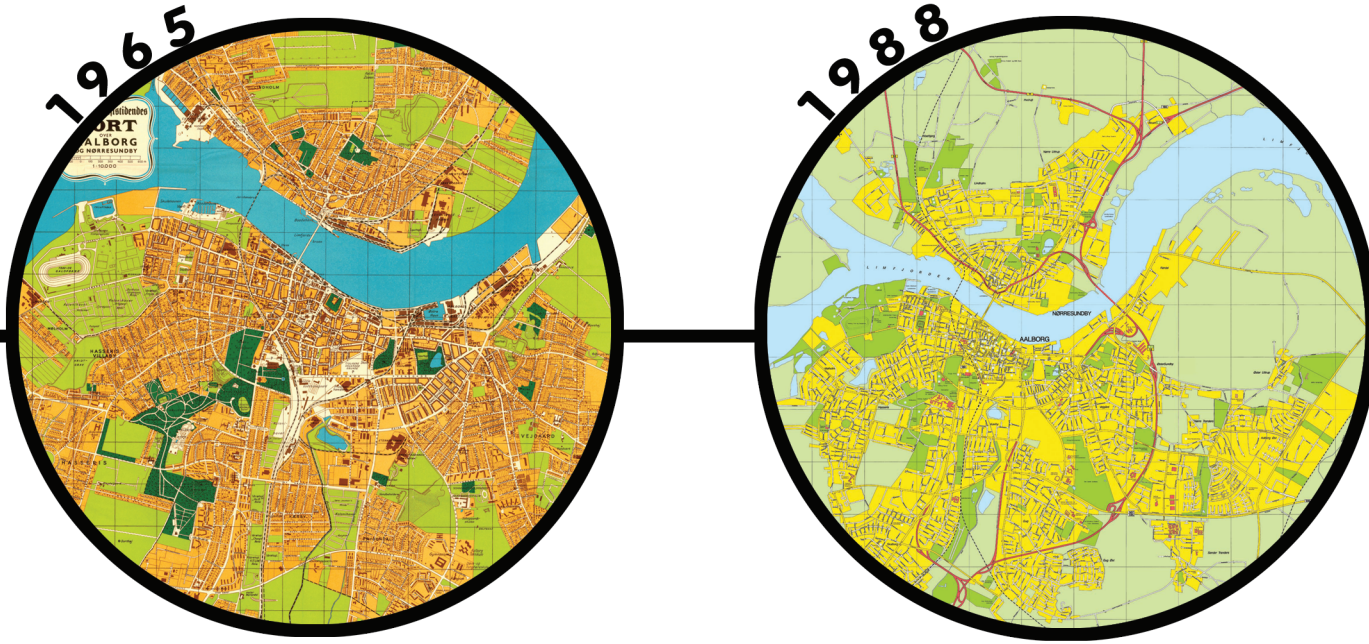
History



Industry

Today, Aalborg remains an industrial and commercial centre in Denmark, exporting grain, cement and fish, but many of the large industries in the city have been closed in recent years.

Aalborg is home to De Danske Spritfabrikker's ("Danish Distillers") Akvavit snaps, production facility for the distillation of the Aalborg family of Akvavits consisting of 17 different brands.

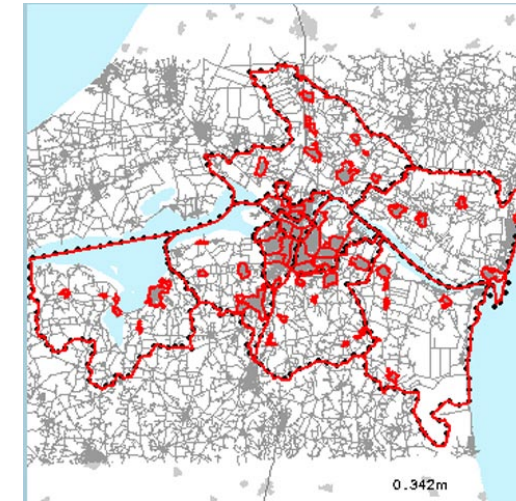


Danish Distillers is Scandinavia's largest producer and supplier of spirits for consumption, and is the world's largest producer and exporter of Akvavit, supplying over 140 geographic markets. Aalborg Industries, the world's largest manufacturer of marine boilers, is headquartered here.¹⁰

9. From the www.visitaalborg.com page
10. From the official website www.aalborgkommune.dk

Reformation

The Danish government introduced legislation in 2004 for a national reform of local and regional government. A major portion of the reform involved a reduction in the number of local authorities from 271 to 98. As part of this reform, the city of Aalborg amalgamated with three neighbouring local authorities of Hals, Nibe and Sejlfjord and in 2005, voters elected members to the new Aalborg city council. During the transitional period, prior to amalgamation, the new Aalborg city council acted as the coordinating authority for all issues relating to the integration of Aalborg with these three neighbouring local authorities.¹¹



Today, Aalborg is an active city of commerce and service while still having retained a significant industrial and production sector. During the recent decade, major developments have taken place within IT, education and research. The centre of the telecommunications industry is based at Aalborg university.

Aalborg presents itself as a young and attractive city of education with a well-developed cultural life with a population of approximately 14,000 students. In the central section of the city, one finds bustling streets and squares, many shops, cafés, roadside restaurants and modern coffee bars. Furthermore, the city is home to a lively entertainment and restaurant street named 'Jomfru Ane Gade', relatively well-known throughout Europe, and which is open almost around the clock.

Despite Aalborg's reputation as a lively city with lots of activities, it stresses the importance of safety and boasts of this online. The city provides its inhabitants with good living facilities as well as an efficient public bus transport system with Aalborg University as a central traffic hub.¹²

11. From the www.visitaalborg.com page
12. From the official website www.aau.dk



Recreation of the harbour

Aalborg will undergo a great amount of urban changes (some of which will alter its overall character) during the next five years. Mainly focusing on the area adjacent to the Limfjord, the transformation of a former industrial area will gradually give way to a cultural, business and educational centre. As there is a shift of economic interest, with many industries closing down one by one, Aalborg is turning to its other strong cards as it reinvents itself—such as its history, the vibrating student life and other opportunities that have yet not been seized upon.

An interview with Anne Juel Andersen proved most helpful in gaining a deeper understanding of Aalborg Kommune's plans, restrictions and realisation of this project. As a member of the Urban Development board (By og Miljø), Anne had an abundance of information and vision to present.¹³

The outline of Aalborg's recreation project focuses mainly along the Limfjord where the main industrial area of Aalborg used to lie. Now, most industries have closed down, leaving their empty, imposing buildings behind. The concrete structure of the harbour that was previously used for cargo spans a massive distance beginning at the Limfjord bridge and extending all the way to Aalborg Øst. The Aalborg Kommune is reusing and renovating this entire area with help from the departments of Architecture and Urban Design at Aalborg University. The Utzon Centre, the House of Music and the Karolinelund wedge are amongst the facilities already being constructed as a result of contracts with companies, competitions and collaborative projects between architecture companies and Aalborg University, the Aalborg Kommune and development consultancies, etc.

The *Program for Musikkens Hus Området og Karolinelundskilen* is a guideline paper, explaining the vision and setting the framework for Aalborg's future recreation. The summary of the plan for Aalborg's Limfjord area stresses to maintain: urban spaces and urban life; cultural heritage and historical traces; attractive knowledge-city environments; architecture and large-scale landscape; sustainability; and health.¹⁴

The goal of these projects is to create attractive urban spaces while using Aalborg's morphology of the landscape and its historical dimension, and to retrieve any cultural elements that can be branded unique and attractive. This is done by giving an artistic element to the area with the use of higher-level architecture (one example is the Utzon centre), encompassing "content, functionality, aesthetics, construction engineering, economy, environment and social and cultural consideration", as the guideline puts it.¹⁵



Part of the city's vision discusses respecting and celebrating diversity by creating the new recreation area both for business and for culture, for student activities and for family strolls. Creating a passage from the old town leading to the new, involves a delicate balance and deliberate preservation of typically industrial aspects, while simultaneously modernising the area. For example, the transition of the old brick roads of traditional Aalborg to the concrete platforms of the now-defunct shipping docks, captures this balance and reminds Aalborg residents of the industries that once stood. Student dorms can be seen next to super-modern offices; a sports centre (including an area in the Limfjord for swimming) is almost directly across from the Music House and, as it seems, "the aim is to emphasize the contrasts".¹⁶

To be more specific regarding the image the harbour will project at the realisation of this project, there are a few restrictions concerning the preservation of a uniform image of the city that will disallow senseless building and morphing of areas according to individual private aesthetics. One of them is the desire to keep the buildings at a low level in respect to the medieval character of the old town—a high priority in the municipality's agenda. Another, is the overall style of the materials to be used for the urban spaces.¹⁷ The vision outline also mentions, interestingly, that to accommodate business visitors, there is a preference towards "an easily recognisable hotel chain". Needless to say, the architecture of any such building must take into consideration the number of requirements set by the city.

Concerning the target group analysis conducted by the city, the vision outline provides an abundance of information. It recognises the users as "a mix of residents, neighbours, employees, students, guests, customers, pedestrians in transit, visitors to the urban spaces and event guests" after having taken

13. For the entire interview, see appendix 4.

14. *Program for Musikkens Hus Området og Karolinelundskilen*. Aalborg Kommune, 2006, p. 5.

15. Ibid, 16

16. Ibid, 21

17. According to the *Program*, materials such as "asphalt, corten steel and timber" hold a big part of the project as they create "references to the harbour". They also provide a contrast to the "refined granite paving and fine urban furniture".

into consideration the timetables of students and employees, which provide a stable flow of life on particular days and parts of the week.¹⁸



To summarise this guideline for the numerous projects towards the transformation of the Limfjord, all kinds of viewpoints have been examined and several restrictions and rules have been set. The goal however, is evidently one: to create a strong *identity* for Aalborg now that changing its *image* is on the move. By doing this, it is certain that Aalborg will attract more and different crowds than it has so far, truly placing it as the third largest city in Denmark.

When looking for an official responsible for the selection of urban furniture for Aalborg's public spaces, one name kept reappearing: Henrik Jess Jensen. As head of the Technical and Environmental Department (Teknik og Miljøforvaltningen) in Aalborg Kommune, Henrik is one of those responsible for managing urban furniture and distributing them around the city. He is also in charge of overseeing maintenance, which (now, with the reformation) has expanded to three more areas of oversight.

Henrik explained how and why urban furniture is selected and placed in specific locations. First, he explained the outline of placing urban furniture, such as benches and rubbish bins.

The latter especially has a specific method of handling since it is directly related to the environmental department, which collects rubbish regularly. He then went on to describe the process for the selection and the criteria for urban furniture.



Urban furniture such as postboxes are treated the same way and are placed around the city according to similar criteria. However, for objects such as benches or streetlights, the case is similar, yet in many ways different. Their placement depends on the surrounding area. For example, a bench is more likely to be placed near a bus stop, in case the seating at the stop itself is not adequate. Another criterion is how central or rural the place in question is. In central places, the occurrences of urban furniture are more frequent.

When asked to explain the huge variety of urban furniture, Henrik answered that this was simply because of changes in fashion and that modern urban furniture is selected to keep up with this trend. But why was old urban furniture left standing amidst the new designs and not simply replaced altogether? This is something that will be done very soon, according to Henrik, especially now with the recreation of the Limfjord. A whole new set of urban furniture that follows the aesthetic restrictions of the *Program for Musikkens Hus Området og Karolinelundskilen* on materials and style will be bought and placed around the city.

Maintenance & urban furniture

18. Ibid, 9



To obtain an overview of how a specific design of urban furniture is chosen, Henrik was asked to give an example for one of the streetlights. A company is first selected to undertake the supply of urban furniture. This is done either via an announcement by the municipality to companies, explaining the need for urban furniture or via the “Licitationen”, a European institution with entrepreneur announcements. In the former case, companies make their bids and the municipality chooses the best one, consisting of the most appealing price combined with the most appealing design. In the latter case, the municipality directly chooses a company to collaborate with.



The selection takes place after meetings between the departments of interest. The Maintenance and Traffic Departments could very well cooperate in selecting the best rubbish bins, for example. The aesthetic selection is made after an agreement on environmental harmony by the members of the board who are in charge of these decisions. It is not uncommon for the municipality to dictate the materials and the overall style they wish to use as well as which company they would like to design the urban furniture.

Occasionally, the motives behind selecting urban furniture are purely of status. The case of Philippe Starck’s street lamp and rubbish bin in Nytorv is one of these cases. The municipality decided to invest in urban furniture designed by a famous designer and placed them along the busiest street in Aalborg. Another example is the case of one particular style of bench used only in Gammel Torv out of the entire city, and only twice. Nevertheless, Henrik made it clear that with the recreationalisation of several areas in Aalborg, the department would be sure to place better-designed urban furniture.

The overall impression received from the meeting with Henrik Jess Jensen was that urban furniture play a secondary role in forming the image of the city, something that follows the more important and imperative aspects of architecture and urban design. The furnishing of a city is selected from an existing product catalogue of a specialised company or tailored to fit the practical and aesthetic needs of a city as it attempts to create a unique identity for itself. This is done by arranging meetings with the heads of municipality departments, all of whom discuss their respective needs and reach a consensus regarding aesthetics. Nonetheless, does this serve the initial purpose of urban furniture? Is urban furniture to be treated merely as decoration of a city?

Den Haag is the third-largest city in the Netherlands after Amsterdam and Rotterdam, with a population of almost 500,000 spanning an area of approximately 100 km². It is located in the west of the country, in the province of South Holland, of which it is also the provincial capital. Den Haag is (like Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht) part of the conglomerate metropolitan area, Randstad.

Den Haag is the actual seat of government, but, somewhat anomalously, not the official capital of the Netherlands—a role

A Visitor in Den Haag



set aside by the Dutch constitution for Amsterdam. Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands lives and works in Den Haag. All foreign embassies and government ministries are located in the city, as well as the Supreme Court, the Council of State and many lobbying organisations.¹⁹

With its treasure chest full of jewels, The Hague has plenty of opportunities to develop into a strong brand name with allure. As International City of Peace, Justice and Security, The Hague is a one-of-a-kind city. Tens of thousands of people in this city are working together towards making the world a better place. And if we spread the word, this number will grow.²⁰

Den Haag was founded in 1248 by William II, Count of Holland and Rex Romanorum, who was intended to become Holy Roman Emperor. He initiated the construction of a castle in a forest near the sea in Holland. It was not finished, but parts of it remain and are now called the Ridderzaal (Knights' Hall). The Ridderzaal is still in use for political events, such as the annual speech from the throne by the monarch. Because of its history, Den Haag lacks a large historical inner city like the nearby cities of Leiden and Delft. When the government started playing a more prominent role in Dutch society after 1850, however, Den Haag quickly expanded. The remaining older parts of the city are therefore mostly from the 19th century and the early 20th century.

Parts of the city sustained heavy damage during WWII. The Atlantic Wall was built through part of the city, causing whole neighbourhoods to be torn down by the German occupiers. The scars in the city can still be seen today. After the war, Den Haag was at one point the largest construction site in Europe. The city expanded massively to the southwest and the destroyed areas were also quickly rebuilt.

In the 1970s and 1980s the mostly white middle-class moved to neighbouring towns like Voorburg, Leidschendam, Rijswijk and most of all Zoetermeer. This led to the traditional pattern of an impoverished inner city and more prosperous suburbs. Attempts to include parts of the suburbs in Den Haag were highly controversial. In the 1990s, with the consent of the Dutch Parliament, Den Haag did succeed in annexing fairly large areas from its neighbouring towns on which complete new residential areas were built and are still being built.²¹

Today, city life concentrates around the Hofvijver and the Binnenhof, where the parliament is located. Den Haag has a limited student culture because it has no real university, although the Royal Conservatory of Den Haag is located there as well as a vocational university named Den Haag University.

Den Haag is the largest Dutch city on the North Sea and comprises two distinct beach towns. With 10 million visitors a year, Scheveningen is the most popular beach town in the Benelux. The older parts of the town usually have characteristically wide and long streets. Houses are generally low-rise (not more than three floors), and quite elegant. The layout of the city is more spacious than other Dutch cities. Some of the most prosperous (Statenkwartier, Belgisch Park, Marlot, etc.) and some of the poorest neighbourhoods (Transvaal, Moerwijk, the Schilderswijk) of the Netherlands can be found in Den Haag.²²

The city has many civil servants and diplomats. In fact, the number and variety of foreign residents (especially the expatriates) makes the city culturally quite diverse, with many foreign pubs, shops and cultural events²³.

During the Den Haag visit, the planning and vision of the city was presented. Martijn Kuiper, of the welcoming committee, was to provide information on the layout of the city and to explain the vision behind the recreation of Den Haag. The city is separated into quarters and all issues are dealt with by the corresponding authorities. Regardless of the difference in size, Aalborg is similar to Den Haag in many ways, especially considering the fact that it still has districts being added to its jurisdiction ever so often—a factor which increases the incoming funds for development in both cities while simultaneously increasing the number of projects at work towards unifying the new districts a uniform vision.

Re-branding the city

Meeting the city

History

19. From the official www.denhaag.nl page

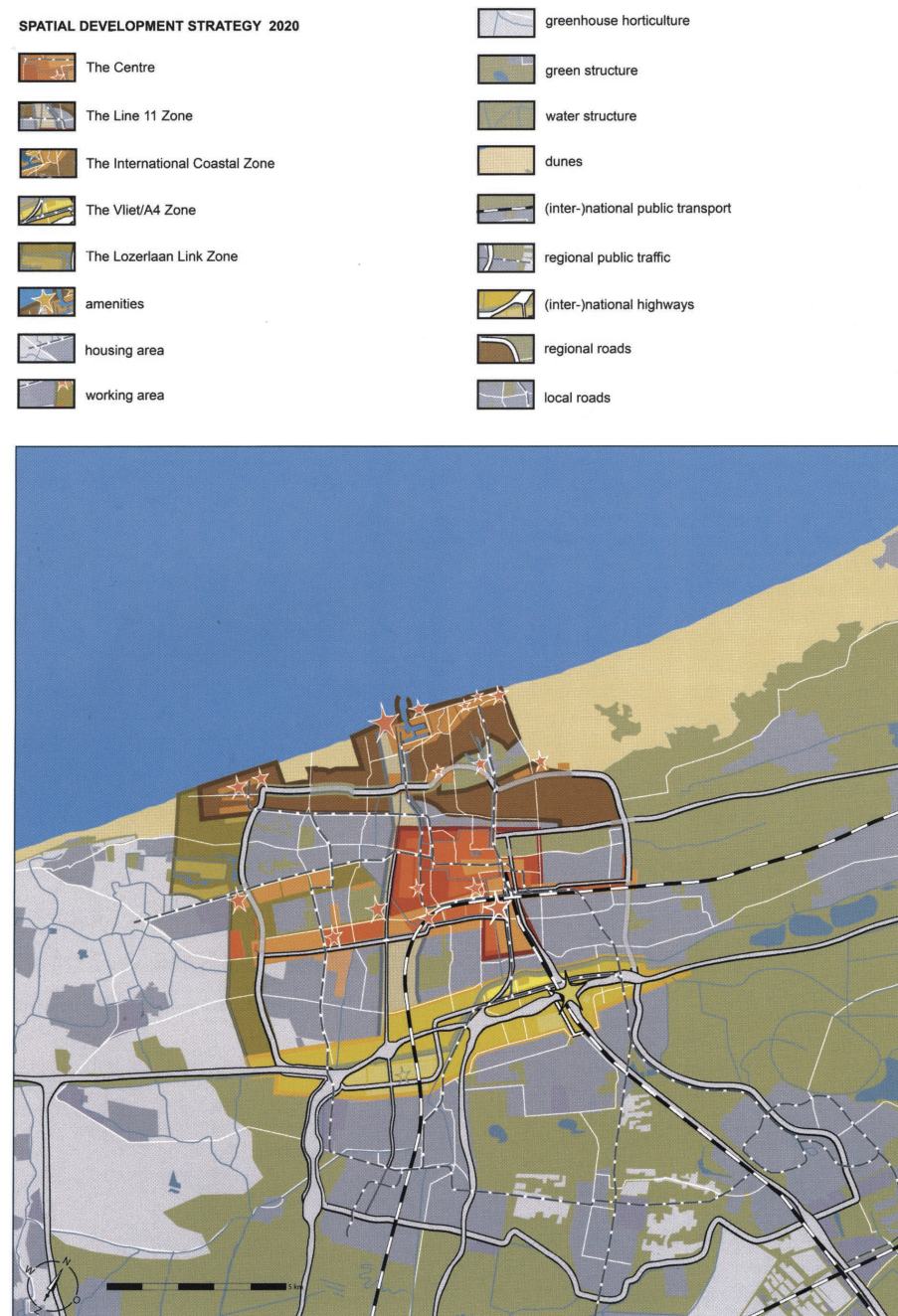
20. Ibid.

21. *The Briefest History of The Hague*, Municipality of The Hague, 2007, p.15.

22. Ibid, 17

23. From the official www.denhaag.nl page





The re-branding of Den Haag began ten years ago, when the goal to attract international business and international institutions was set. Since then, Den Haag has worked towards creating a multi-cultural environment, opening its arms to different mindsets and lifestyles from all over the world. When mapping the city for visitors and prospective residents, a categorisation of theme-streets and theme-areas is presented. It was for leisure reasons this concentration of interest was organised in such ways and to address specific needs.

Although the style of the city does not significantly change from one theme-area to the next, the overall image is reflective of one's location within the city. The Chinese and Arab districts, for example (and apart from the evident difference in typography on shop signs and rest areas) is also built very differently from the area around the town hall which has a far higher level of architecture. Similarly, the artistic area, in which several museums and galleries are concentrated, provides a very different atmosphere than the shopping areas in the heart of Den Haag.



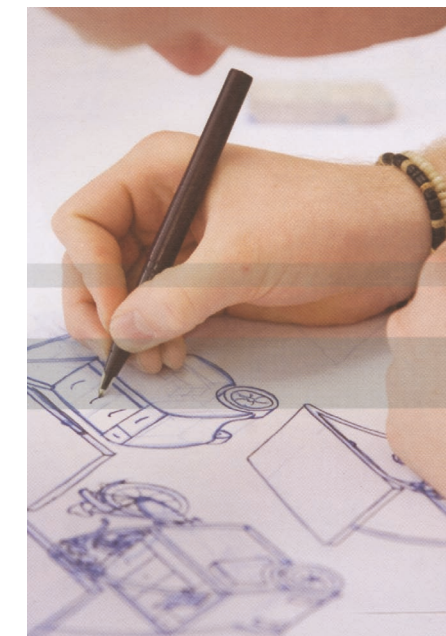
The municipality of Den Haag, like Aalborg, also orders its urban furniture from companies that make the best bids. The urban furniture is therefore either pre-designed or, according to the company's capabilities, is tailored to fit the needs of Den Haag. However, the process of placing urban furniture in the city differs from the process followed in Aalborg. For example, in some strategic streets around the city, the Den Haag municipality places streetlights of one particular style. These roads or streets do not necessarily belong to one of the theme-areas mentioned before, but they could well connect two main buildings or be one of the city's main roads. In this way, urban furniture helps to unify otherwise divergent aspects of the city.



CABALLERO FABRIEK

DE CREATIEVE START VAN DE BINCKHORST

Caballero Fabriek was an old tobacco factory, which had been shut down for several years. It is now in the process of being transformed into a design society, where designers of various fields can share the same space, communicate and inspire each other. Caballero Fabriek is situated in the southern part of Den Haag, in Binckhorst, near the sea. The entire area around this old factory is slated for renovation will be turned into a living and working area, particularly for designers. Additional housing and a shift of character in this old industrial area is currently in process and is expected to be finalised within three years.



Mapping
an area by the
water

One project which attempts to clearly create these specific-oriented centres is the *Creative Stad* (Creative City). This project aims to create several design-dedicated areas all around Den Haag by renovating old, abandoned buildings and factories. This project is inspired and based on Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*, which argues that people no longer follow work but that work follows people. By transforming these areas into working spaces, the surrounding landscape of these centres also needs to be recreated and redefined, with Caballero Fabriek posing as a bright and large-scale example.

An urban planner working with the municipality on the renovation project, Catelijne Elissen, was more than happy to provide information. She stressed the importance of turning the space into an interdisciplinary-shared area, a place where designers will have a home and a source of inspiration. She mentioned, in jest, that architects were not as welcome in this project, since they cannot seem to work well with designers of other specialisations. Unfortunately, when asked if she was working with any industrial designers on the morphing of the project's façade, Catelijne said that she had never worked with industrial designers on any urban project and that urban furniture was always mentioned at a very basic level, simply as neutral placements (e.g. "a few benches here, a couple of rubbish bins there...").

Observation

Den Haag holds a high place in the fields of urban design and is often praised for the design of its urban furniture. When gathering material for this paper, Den Haag was specifically referenced several times, especially when the design and modernity of a city were being praised.

Indeed, from observing the city it is clear that attention is given to design and that conscious choices have contributed to the aesthetic result observable today. Concerning urban furniture, some patterns were noted: the city mapping according to theme-streets and theme-areas is expressed with the use (or lack thereof) of different urban furniture when changing neighbourhoods. For an example, the route from the central train station to the town hall, serves as a perfect instance of this:

As one can see, the same lights are used on this street with different environments, sometimes with a greener background and at other times with artificial decorations. The entire route from the train station to the next main street is decorated with them, yet these lights are not used in any of the other streets. When reaching the Town Hall, the style changes.



The same pattern can be observed in other urban furniture locations all across the city. Although the architecture and the overall style of the city changes from block to block, at some parts of the city, urban furniture changes as well. This gives the feeling of subtle change and one feels almost as if one has changed environments because of the intentional placement of different urban furniture in different parts of the city interacting with the changes in architecture. It is a subtle difference, but one that is very intuitive and really does have an impact on the overall image of the city. Incidentally, the placement of urban furniture was also very convenient for orientation, especially at night.

Looking at Delft and Bologna

Delft as a student city

Delft is a student city ten minutes away via train from Den Haag. Its history is older than that of Den Haag and this is something apparent in its architectural style, which has been maintained since the older days and is preserved as it once was. The old city is full of canals and bars, with bicycles as the primary mode of transportation.

Delft has kept a very simplistic layout in its spaces by concentrating the student dorms in particular areas; moreover, the downtown area is also the shopping district and Delft's bars are located in a picturesque quarter near the downtown, similar to Aalborg. Offices and business-related buildings are located a bit further from the central train station as opposed to student-related activities such as housing and the University of Delft itself. There are several physical signs orienting visitors and travellers as soon as they set foot in Delft directing them to all the "important" locations (e.g. the post office, museums, police station, etc.).



Urban furniture is scarce in the student areas, and in some cases non-existent. Only when one enters the train and central bus station areas does urban furniture begin to make an appearance. The same can be observed in the business districts as well as Delft's main streets and highways. As the downtown consists mainly of canals and quaint brick roads, vehicular parking is limited, leaving the streets without a conventional pavement upon which urban furniture can be placed. When arriving in large squares, one can see only benches and post-boxes, while the overall lighting of the city is very dim because of a lack of streetlights.

The reasons for this particular placing of urban furniture were not discussed with city officials, yet by observing the city during both day and night, there did not appear to be anything overly designed or overly placed. In the areas experiencing a

constant flow of people (the shopping area for example) there were no benches or any other form of urban furniture, due to the narrowness of the streets. On the other hand, in areas of admirable architecture (and where the landscape allowed for it), benches were positioned strategically.

Bologna "Rossa" or "Grossa" has taken its nicknames from the red colour of most of its buildings, the architectural style of its roofs, and from the locals' passion for good food and their enthusiastic appetites. A city's history typically influences the image and structure of that city and Bologna has no shortage of its own unique past. It is a city with great political importance and one of the most troubled regions in Europe since the Roman Empire. Bologna gained importance for its cultural role and became an important commercial, industrial, and communications hub; its population began to grow at the beginning of the twentieth century and old walls were destroyed (save a few remaining sections) in order to build new houses for the population.

The oldest University in Europe is located in Bologna. With a reputation of an excellent academic history, Bologna is a large student city, the 6th biggest in all Italy. It has population of 400,000 inhabitants of which 100,000 are students. It is also one of the most developed cities in Italy ranking in the top places of quality of life for the citizens due to the high level of social services and its strategic positioning in between main railroads and highways, which helped Bologna in developing its industry.



Bologna has a vivid centre mostly concentrating on events and activities, as well as a commercial and business centre. Residential life on the other hand occurs in the outskirts and greater area of Bologna, where the population reaches almost 1,000,000. Urban

Bologna as a character

furniture in Bologna is very subtle, though frequent. The city stresses its character more in relation to its history and historical buildings as well as its university. Several events organised by the University of Bologna, such as the graduation celebration, are hosted in the city's main square. Urban furniture can be seen all over, often placed near buildings and along the corners of streets, where foot traffic is constant.

Reflection

On diversity

When looking at Aalborg and Den Haag, one cannot help thinking that the achievements of humans are extraordinary. Here we have two cities, one struggling to keep a balance between its history and the contemporary technological progress and the other has set as a goal to transform itself into an all-contemporary city tearing down borders of nationality and cultural differences. These two images arrive from a long timeline of constant changes of a political and economic nature, followed by adaptation in order to survive. Marshall McLuhan once wrote "as an energy system, an environment is a process. It reprocesses the earlier environments. Old environments are the nutriment of the new ones."²⁴

This could not be truer for the environment of a city. By reprocessing its older stage, a city develops and the changes are evident by taking a simple look at it. If one is to examine the image of a city carefully, there are numerous examples of remains from an earlier time and not simply isolated instances of ancient ruins, retro buildings or other individual reminders of the past. There is a codified layering of history, which combines diverse elements of the city's unique past into a single identity. Take the case of Aalborg for example; urban furniture from the 1970s can still be seen in the streets, next to modern, trendy models.

Simply by observing and learning about the outcome of this process, it seems that this dichotomy is something natural and not unique to one city above another. The romanticised idea of generations passing through one place and leaving their imprint behind is very evident in the image of any city. This also is the character of a free-spirited lifestyle and could be compared to a bohemian lifestyle "because creative people gravitate toward stimulating environments rich with differences²⁵" to find inspiration and the energy to live and work in such an environment.

Such diversity is an extraordinarily strong characteristic of a city's identity. All cities have diverse elements, but it is the organisation of these elements that provides character and a harmonious aesthetic result—or not. It is the belief in this concept of organised diversity that this paper derives its primary argument, that (above all) the respect of social culture by following a collective mentality should be expressed aesthetically in all city elements, including urban furniture.

The difference between specific groups in a city is also a major factor in the final aesthetic result of a city. In the cases of Delft and Bologna, both being student cities, the character of the city changes; it serves a public with similarities and is obligated to continue doing so, since financial income is strongly dependent on this group. At the same time it must consider that there are several other kinds of citizens in need of similar treatment. Some places have proposed a solution to this dilemma, by keeping the housing for students close to the campus and reserving a specific part of town for entertainment. These parts of town do indeed have a strong student character, just like affluent parts of cities have an affluent feeling to them. Environments tend to reflect the lifestyles of its residents, but is this because of the city's attempts to create this image or because of subconscious influence of behalf of the residents themselves?

The "coordination into a formidable machine is an important part of a town or city's identity, economic vitality and social well-being."²⁶ As has been confirmed by all officials interviewed, there is a great deal of importance given to the aesthetic outcome and the image a city projects. If the environment respects its residents, then the level of life there is considered to be higher than others who create ugly images around them. Since "investments in cultural resources produce visible results like arts districts and new visual identities²⁷" it is a useful excuse for a city to attempt and redesign itself.

Unfortunately, an underlying implication from this part of the research is that urban furniture plays a very secondary (if even that) role in the morphing of public environment. Urban furniture is treated as an element, not to accompany the aesthetics of the environment along with the function it provides for example, but merely to be placed as furniture to go with the main square.

On city image and identity^v

v. For the visual result of a brainstorm on city's identity, see appendix 6.

26. Ibid, 7.

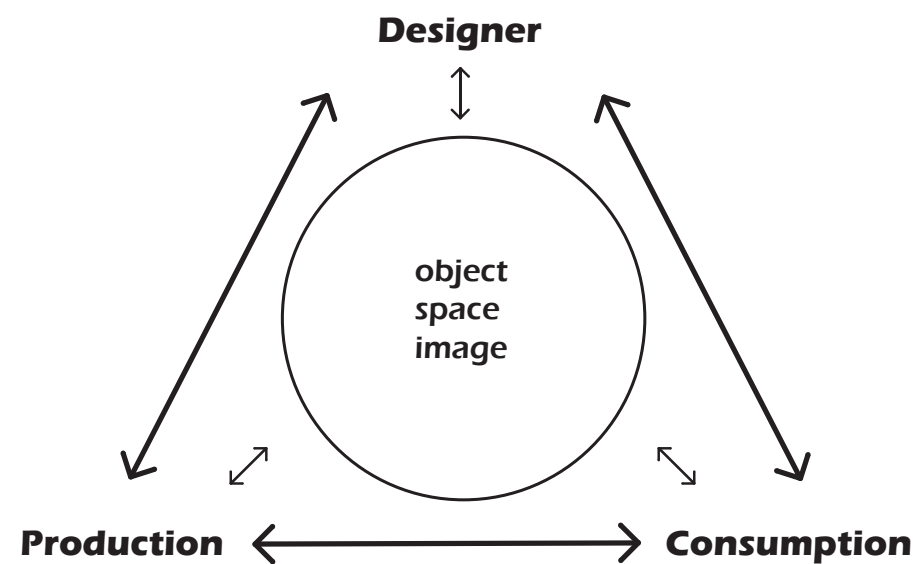
27. Ibid

24. Gyorgy Kepes, p. 90.

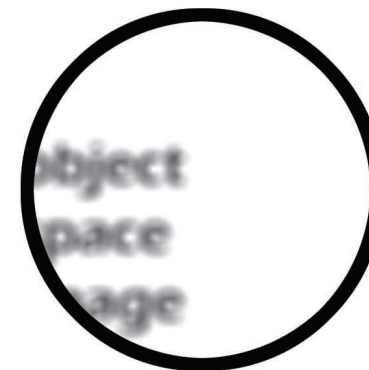
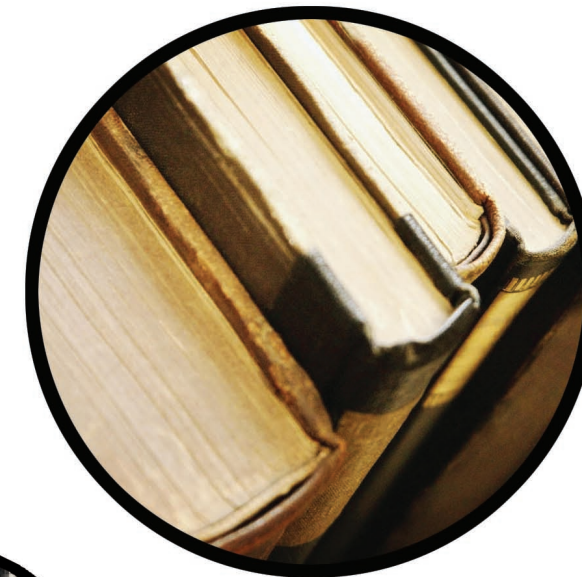
25. Roger, Kemp L ed, *Cities and the Arts: A Handbook for Renewal*, 2004, p. 245.



theories as filters



Although industrial designers expend effort towards making urban furniture aesthetically pleasing, the lack of coordination between urban and industrial design has effectively led to a chasm—leaving urban furniture as passive observer, merely adhering to the whims of the private sector. Urban furniture is designed through a process followed by any other generic product design. The difference is that the context and the end-user is not as clear in this case of designing urban furniture; is the designer designing for the environment, for the city, or for the company? Does the city even realise the impact urban furniture provides the overall image of a city? Does a city simply decorate itself with furniture, becoming inevitably invisible perhaps not even serving the purpose of decoration well?



In the first chapter of this paper, three areas of research were mentioned to frame the approach. The reasons for choosing these specific theories however, were not. Since this paper analyses the role of urban furniture and what that role can be (apart from the practical application examined in the previous chapter), the following section attempts to address the theory *behind* the three areas of research and combine those two successfully towards a coherent outcome.

There are innumerable theories and guidelines that have played a leading role for the development in urban and industrial design as well as visual communication, respectively. It is impossible to attempt to cover the entire range of all three in such a modest paper, not to mention that the focus of this paper narrows the research field. The theories selected in this chapter aim to explain how, from the broader initial theory to the more specific critical one (in all three fields), there are always some elements remaining the same: identity, diversity and the importance of the aesthetically pleasing as complimentary to the other two.

There is no intention to define urban design or to point out the “right” way of designing urban spaces. The theory is presented here to create some kind of flow from one design field to another and to demonstrate how they can be interrelated.

It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see.

Henry David Thoreau, philosopher

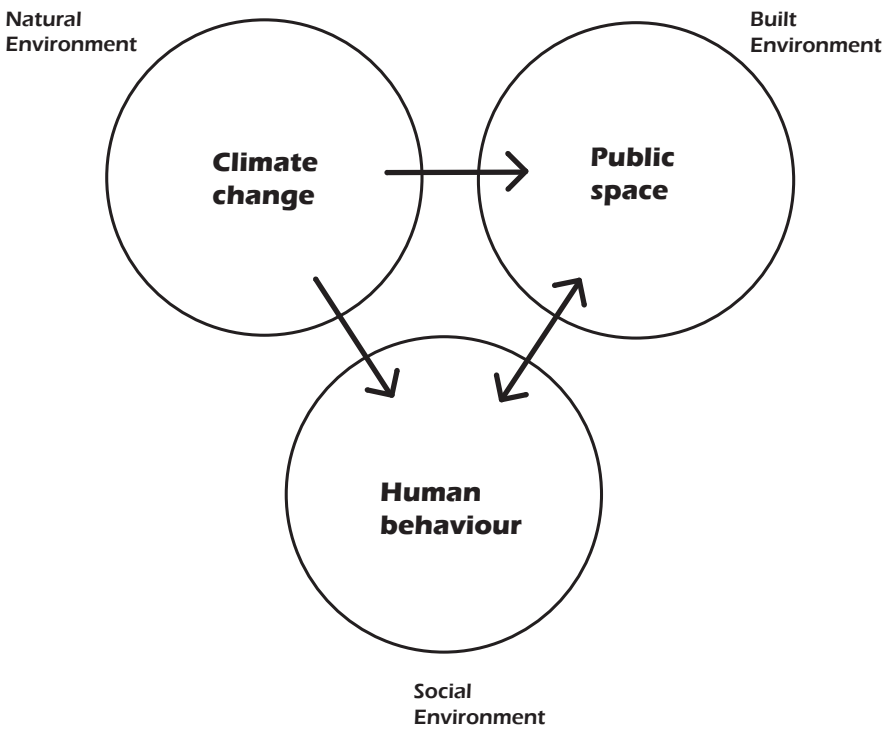


Urban Design

In order to understand the foundations of the task of urban planning, one must bear in mind that it is important “to achieve the necessary consistency of attitude” and that “it becomes essential to inquire into the kind of experience structure that is already common in the urban environment.”²⁸ In the case of re-creating a city, building on existing patterns, and attempting to alter and re-carve living areas, “a new coherency may be planned for.”²⁹ Because of its potentially long history, a city may enact changes in technology that have a greater impact on people’s lifestyles separate from the design task to be performed—“this is a case for direct sociological research of the kind that has already been carried out on the ‘perceptual image of the city’.”³⁰ As cities are physical expressions of people’s collective efforts and demonstrate a deeper sociological dimension of humanity, the fact that city residents have certain expectations from the environment in which they live and interact calls for “the urban planner’s structure [to] be bold and coherent enough to contain the collective images of urban trivia.”³¹

Realising how closely related urban design is with the social sciences, the issue of collective perception of spaces and how forms and types of objects guide movements and lifestyles is a topic extensively researched in the field of urban design. An extension of this line of thought has attempted to address the character of cities, i.e. what factors contributes to creating a unique and widely recognisable image of a city. One of the pioneers of this field, Kevin Lynch, wished to investigate the impact of form in a city and how this affects people’s behaviour. He wished to explore the identity of a city by conducting research in three different cities and he directly addressed the inhabitants “in order to develop and test his idea of imageability and also by comparing image with reality to learn which forms make strong images.”³²

These images and their design can be affected by several factors. Particularly in the case of Aalborg, a phenomenon is occurring that transforms the patterns in which the city is used, apart from the recreation and the shift of identity; more and more “the use of urban public space has changed from functions mostly related to traffic, parking and movement towards a more intense use, including longer sojourn in public areas.”³³ This has much to do with climate and geographical positioning, as it is more or less up to them to allow for external spaces to be used.



Aalborg has set the vision of becoming a desirable city, where people will want to come to live and work; this is the case for most cities. The larger the population of a city becomes, the greater the development and the bigger its budget. With the open borders of the European Economic Agreement (EEA), economic mobility has been made simple within the EU and people are now able to move freely as they please and as befits their economic interests. Since “a longer enjoyment of outdoor seasons in central and Northern Europe”³⁴ is occurring, the design of urban spaces faces another challenge. Because of this economic mobility, “the function of public spaces as the ‘showcases’ of a centre in an ever growing competition between cities”³⁵ calls for the consideration not only for a more humane design of cities, but also for a marketing approach to the design task, aiming to “sell” the city to all potential residents who may help to develop its economy.

Cities therefore, must create a strong identity for themselves, providing their residents with unique prestige. This can be achieved in many ways: outstanding architecture is one of them. Either working towards creating a super-modern city by using the latest architectural styles or stressing the old character of a city, architecture plays the dominant role in shaping the image of a city. Kevin Lynch also “asked the respondents to answer questions about what symbolises the word ‘Boston’, ‘Los Angeles’ or ‘New Jersey’ to them.”³⁶ In Europe, when asking someone for

28. Gyorgy Kepes, p 86.

29. Ibid

30. Ibid

31. Ibid, 87.

32. Gitte Marling, *Understanding and Mapping Large City Scapes Outside In – Inside Out*. 2007, p. 15.

33. Sanda Lenzholzer, *Northernmost Barcelona? A Critique of Mediterranean Public Design in Northern Europe*, 2005, p. 1.

34. Ibid

35. Ibid, 4.

36. Gitte Marling, p. 15.



Urban Furniture and Industrial Design

what “London” stands, most people will probably say “the Big Ben” or “the Tower Bridge”.

Nevertheless, there are other non-architectural characteristics that can contribute significantly in recognising a city. When seeing the double-decker bus or the famous old British phone booths, one immediately refers to the context of London. These symbols have been so strongly linked with London’s identity that there is virtually no need to even examine the surroundings otherwise before concluding that we are looking at London.³⁷

In the next part of this chapter, this precise point will be analysed. Objects around us can very often create this a familiar reference, sometimes so strong that an entire context can be symbolised by what may otherwise be considered a minor detail. The identity of a city is no stranger to this occurrence and the relationship between urban design and urban furniture is very strong, especially when it comes to perceiving and recognising the image of a city.

Gillo Dorfles provides a suitable definition of urban furniture by saying that urban furniture are “sign-vehicle objects”. When he attempts to determine the function of urban furniture, he goes to say that “all these objects are invested with significance” whilst “always institutionalised by use or convention known and ‘readable’ to us.”³⁸ True enough, urban furniture aims to signal the various functions for which they are intended, as all objects do. A box placed in a particular position or coloured in a specific pattern can communicate its function as either an ordinary rubbish bin or a specialised recycle bin, for example. These visual messages have come to be recognisable (readable) in the course of several years. Today, urban furniture is an indisputable part of a city’s equipment and its functions vary as cities become more developed.

However, what does urban furniture actually contribute to forming the image of a city? Boccioni³⁹’s field-theory of space describes objects as “distributing lines of force through their surroundings⁴⁰”. This is not difficult to test, simply by taking a look at the public spaces in every city. A rubbish bin certainly has a different feeling about it than a post-box, and a bench is a welcoming image as opposed to a lamppost. These lines of force are related to the purpose of its existence, the reason for it to provide a visual “interruption”. As long as the eye is stimulated by, perceives and interprets an image, it is immediately filed with the overall city image as particular objects, placed in this-and-that spot and intended to serve purpose so-and-so.

Some urban furniture tends to remain invisible, merely communicating its function. Nevertheless, there is some urban furniture that not only contributes to the image of a city, but which reaches the point when it becomes a kind of symbol. Dorfles highlights this phenomenon by discussing the double-decker bus in London and the fire escapes in Chicago. According to Dorfles, this “indicates the immense influence which the formal element constituting the object of everyday use has on us” and “how as differentiating element, the man-made object is almost stronger than the natural elements of the landscape.”⁴¹ There is a significant sociological aspect in this statement, very similar to the dimension of the sociological impact in urban design: that something presented as usable, providing a service, and frequently used comes to be perceived as part of the landscape—something rightfully provided and something that if taken away, has a consequence on the social level.

When using the term *service* to describe the main function of urban furniture, one can take into consideration that “as goods become more information-intensive and interactive and are continually upgraded, they change character.”⁴² When repeatedly using urban furniture and city services (e.g. post-boxes and the post office), these objects “lose their status as products and metamorphose into evolving services.”⁴³ It is precisely this service that attributes to urban furniture its sociological character. A simple thing as a bench is an indication of the city’s consideration for the elderly, of the city’s provision of a spot to enjoy city life, etc.

Unfortunately, sometimes a city’s eagerness for competitive development and keeping ahead of others leads to promotional actions that have no purpose and are poorly planned. If a city can be compared with a company seeking to raise capital production by branding itself to the outside world, then we may observe the strategy it wishes to follow for success in the field. For companies, functional positioning refers to a product that is positioned on its functional benefits and symbolic positioning refers to a product that is positioned as a means for self-expression and prestige. It is the desire of some companies to advertise their new product as being designed by a reputed artist or designer (Philippe Starck for instance).⁴⁴ In Aalborg’s case, something similar has occurred. Aalborg Kommune bought three Philippe Starck lamps, each costing a significant sum of money. The purpose of this purchase was simply to possess and to show off these designer lamps. They ended up being placed in the centre of the city, along Nytorv, amidst a vast number of other urban furniture—adding

37. See appendix 5 for a small-scale survey attempting to link objects to the identity of cities they belong to.

38. Gyorgy Kepes, p. 3.

39. Umberto Boccioni (Reggio Calabria, Italy - 1882): a main theorist of the Futurists’ artistic movement.

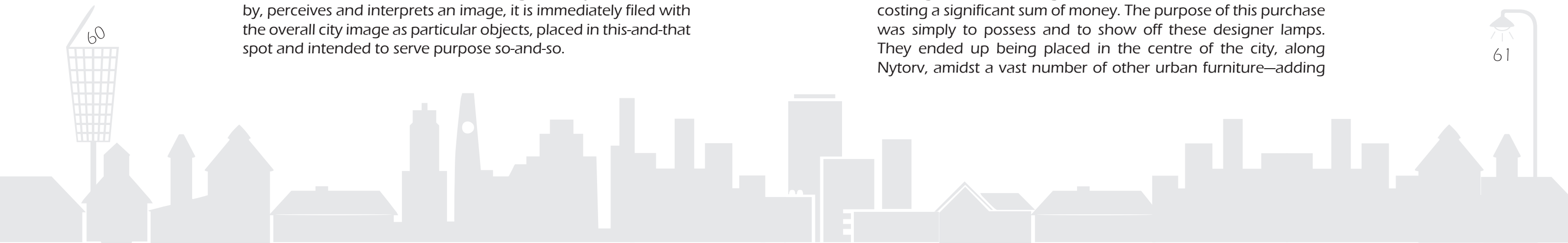
40. Reyner Banham, p. 327.

41. Gyorgy Kepes, p. 5.

42. Jeremy Rifkin, *The Age of Access* 2001, p. 85.

43. Ibid

44. Oscar Person, et al. *Should New Products Look Similar Or Different? The Influence of the Market Environment On Strategic Product Styling*, 2007, p. 35.



to the chaotic and disorganised image of Aalborg's main square. Additionally, although public opinion welcomed the installation of these lamps, the money was spent merely on the status of Starck himself, while most Aalborg residents were unfamiliar or indifferent to the designer's celebrity.

The two points can be summarised as 1) the intended function of urban furniture and 2) the city's attitude towards them. Urban furniture is viewed in this paper as a strongly user-driven series of products, designed to signal functions and appeal to a wide range of people living within a city. As a fundamental statement on the design theory of industrial design puts it: "the core benefit of a user-driven product is derived from the functionality of its interface and/or its aesthetic appeal."⁴⁵ It is the form of urban furniture that creates Boccioni's field of forces and it is the image of urban furniture itself that can add or take from the overall picture of a city's characteristics. "[S]pace circumscribes an area of intelligibility, it defines a world in which certain things make a certain kind of sense."⁴⁶ Urban furniture can be translated as the minor interactive elements between a city and people within its broader landscape.

Another fundamental design process that applies to design of all sorts of products is the definition of the need and the context this product is aimed for. In order to define "the elements to describe an area of complex creative human endeavour like design, one would need to describe the object of this activity, the actor, the context and the structure and dynamics of the complex activities."⁴⁷ When speaking of urban furniture in particular, the context is the city and the complex activities are those of the diverse and unpredictable crowds of people living in the cities. Urban furniture and its impact on a city's image, requires deeper design research to the user's benefit, grasping a holistic image of their characteristics and needs.

As "most products on the market can be improved in some way or another by good industrial design and all products that are used, operated, or seen by people depend critically on industrial design for commercial success",⁴⁸ so should cities. Cities and their competitive character have invested faith in architecture and urban design when it is evident that industrial design through urban furniture plays an important role in the residents' image and attitude towards it. It is not only towards the city's benefit of its overall branding, but also as promotion of services and its level of sustainability, factors that potentially work at luring future residents.

Much has been written so far about the social dimension and interpretation of space and objects, but there is one field of social sciences that sums all this up under one definition: visual communication or "the way in which 'the visual construction of the social field' and its other 'the social construction of the visual field' interact."⁴⁹ Eloquently written, this phrase can be implemented both for urban and industrial design as they have been analysed thus far. Indeed, when diversity is the outcome of years of social change and visual expression follows this change, what kind of identity can we discuss apart from the identity of diversity?

In attempting to frame the nature of identity and its role as a basis for communication, terms such as *perception* and *interpretation* are essential to understanding the value of external stimuli in everyday life. It is impossible to effectively address the fields of psychology, neurology and sociology as they are too extensive to be condensed in a single paper. Moreover, much research has already been conducted and, therefore, it will suffice for this section to begin with some results from the field by acknowledging that "the recognition of appearance triggers interaction and expression."⁵⁰ On the small scale of urban furniture, this is interpreted as the dimension of signalling functionality, perceiving this message, interpreting the message and with the help of social knowledge, knowing which action is expected. This identity of urban furniture situates it as products designed for a specific purpose, while addressing specific people. On a larger scale, the identity of a city is based on the historical and aesthetic image it projects, an image built by combining elements from its landscape.

When bringing together these two scales, one comes across the term *mapping*, a technical term meaning the relationship between two things.⁵¹ Now, as it is defined on the same line, natural mapping (meaning taking advantage of physical analogies and cultural standards) leads to immediate understanding.⁵² When seeing an object and knowing immediately what to do and how to act around it, is the result of some kind of mind mapping and the entire process of stimulation-perception-interpretation-recognition occurs automatically. When it comes to both urban and industrial design, "some follow the principles of perception and allow for the natural grouping or patterning of controls"⁵³ and actions. It is in the design process that this patterning takes place and the result has to communicate and work harmoniously and accurately with existing conventional knowledge.

45. Karl Ulrich and Steven Eppinger, *Product Design and Development*, 2004, p. 201.

46. Ian Buchanan, *Non-Places: Space in the Age of Supermodernity*, 1999, p. 394.

47. Kees Dorst, *Design Research: A Revolution Waiting To Happen*, 2007, p. 5.

48. Karl Ulrich and Steven Eppinger, p. 191.

49. Bal Mieke, *The Commitment to Look*, 2005, p. 151.

50. Ibid, 153.

51. Donald A. Norman, *The Design of Everyday Things*, 2002, p. 23.

52. Ibid

53. Ibid



As done throughout the industry of design, “the dominant transaction of interest is between singularised object and individual viewer, between produced object and consuming subject”⁵⁴ and identity and uniqueness is something essential, both for profit and for social status. As people associate themselves with others (based on common elements and points of reference) on a national scale, people associate themselves with their neighbours and (in Denmark particularly) the entire country’s system is based on cooperative and collaborative efforts towards development. The rise of a city’s social status is not only something that provides financial benefits, but which also raises the sentiment of pride for its residents. The residents of a popular city become proud of their cultural heritage and seek to keep up with contemporary trends.

It is at this point that “culture is no longer one of pure representation or narrative, where visual culture conveys messages.”⁵⁵ Culture becomes something active and vivid that “formulates, formats, channels, circulates, contains and retrieves information.”⁵⁶ As Denmark, for example, maintains high status in the world of design, it is essential to retain this standard in every way possible. It is important to communicate visually to the rest of the world the potential, the vision and the possibilities such a mentality is based on. As a strong card in Denmark’s hands, “design, therefore, is more than just the creation of visual artefacts to be used or ‘read’.”⁵⁷ As mentioned earlier, in the case of urban furniture, apart from the physical object, there is an entire system of services working in “the back office”. The physical object is the only interaction point between the inhabitant and the service provided. Developing this visual culture is therefore “also about the structuring of systems [here, the system of a city] of encounter within the visual and material world.”⁵⁸

Culture is a very strong branding tool and is obviously used in Aalborg’s recreation program as a strong background upon which to build. When branding as a concept is about presenting one’s goods, attempting to overtake competitors, “the systems of branding inhabit much of the space of design culture, turning information into an ‘all-around-us’ architectonic form.”⁵⁹ Physical space is beginning to receive greater attention when it comes to communicating business patterns, living facilities and activities within a city. Living in a highly maintained, affluent district is an expression of good taste and elevated social status for the individual as well as for the city itself, constituting it as unique and desirable to the rest of the world.

Looking back at the practices of cities and examining the theory of elements as a communication tunnel, there seems to be something missing in organising a fully thought and planned aesthetic outcome. Architecture and urban design have the first say in building the showcase for a city. This is fine, as long as it is not the only say. As we have seen, objects around us can create an aesthetic outcome and can affect the overall image of a city—often subtly, but they still can. Yet, urban furniture is not explored to its full capability by industrial designers themselves.

There can be several explanations for explaining “why designers go astray”.⁶⁰ It seems that design education in this field treats urban furniture as any other industrially designable object, when the case is somewhat different. There is a lot of stress of interests towards creating modular and eco-friendly urban furniture, but cultural research in the design process is the most important tool towards a successful design. It is not enough to just look at the city one designs for, it is important to live in the city and feel the rhythm and pulse of everyday life there.

Another reason that designers miss great opportunities for creating intelligent urban furniture, instead of a generic, characterless, and merely functional objects is that the designer’s clients may not be users.⁶¹ This notion has been presented earlier when speaking about the context within which a designer produces urban furniture. Is it for the company he or she works for, or for the city? Due to time pressure, will the company allow for extensive research or, due to expedience, hasty research will reach only a superficial level?

According to the visible results, designers design for design’s sake, to please either their company or to build an aesthetically pleasing portfolio. However, the most worrying part is that there is no opposition to this. City municipalities wish to recreate their cities and stress the cultural, creative side, yet when it comes to visualising this to every extent possible, industrial design remains a private-sector issue, leaving both citizens and designers as passive observers—receiving what is served in other words.

Reflection

54. Guy Julier, *From Visual Culture to Design Culture*, 2005, p. 66.

55. Ibid, 67

56. Ibid

57. Ibid

58. Ibid

59. Ibid, 75

60. Donald A. Norman, p. 151.

61. Ibid, p. 157



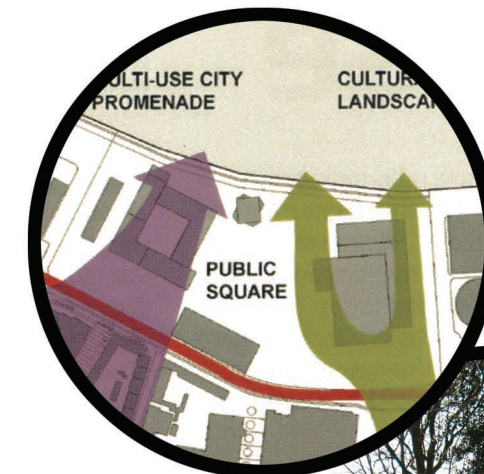
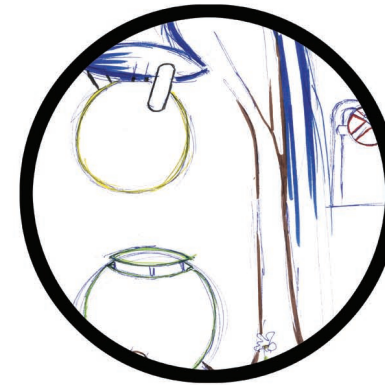
Who is the city for?

Another topic seeking attention and analysis is the matter of the cultural dimension of a city, as it is separated into diverse groups within the whole. When a city decides to brand itself with a specific identity, it is essential to identify from where the financial benefits come, from where the desire for these benefits comes, and how to appeal to those groups while creating a liveable environment for all the rest. As space “serves either as a principle of intelligibility for an observer, or a principle of meaning for an inhabitant”,⁶² a city keeps (whether it intends to or not) the character of its residents, and the changes it undergoes must respect and celebrate this character.

Kevin Lynch asked city residents to draw their routes from home to job and describe their daily routines.⁶³ He obtained valuable information as to how people actually behave in their city regardless of its patterns, and concentrated more time in some places and less in others. This means that no matter how “fancy” and over-designed a city may be, people tend to move according to their sense of comfort. They build habits which no pattern or mapping can enforce upon them. It is extremely interesting to notice how these habits tend to affect the city’s layout. The nightlife of Jomru Ane Gade is for youngsters and students. This was not a plan from the city; restaurants began opening one by one, attracting young people and before they knew it, this street became the centre of Aalborg’s nightlife. Around Danmarksgade (a street stretching from Boulevarden to Aalborg Øst) attracted many immigrants due to the erstwhile low housing costs and is today is the centre for Asian food products!

Diversity and identity can be expressed through visual signs and if it is done carefully, the aesthetic outcome can become equally pleasant as intended, only this time it will have more character. It is not necessary to design hyper-customisable urban furniture, but to give character to the city could be a playful, intelligent way of providing services, orientation and unique character to the total extent of a city.

negotiating the future



62. Ian Buchanan, p. 395.

63. Gitte Marling, p. 15.



**Art has to move you and design does not,
unless it is a good design for a bus.**

David Hockney, artist

Designers gone astray and municipalities adding urban furniture to their shopping cart have suppressed industrial design from evolving its sociological character. Designers themselves have the same attitude and process on most industrial design tasks and inputs mostly concern the technological and production-line fields. As has been shown, there is a major sociological and aesthetical impact of urban furniture and it is up to future designers to enrich “the historical structure of the objects and reveal their various layers of intention.”⁶⁴

As urban furniture is amongst others the physical tool of a system, it is essential to define the actors of this system and through research configure habits, interactions and preferences. Since the functions of urban furniture are pre-determined (to dispose of waste, to sit down, to send a letter, etc.), the aesthetic expression according to the unique culture of each city is the subject under question. If any “artefact is first and foremost the fragile residue of memory crafted into a mental representation by an individual”⁶⁵ and this individual is in this case the citizen of a city, they are to have the first say according to their lifestyle and not an external designer working for a company.

In the environment of an individual’s home, a sofa is a sofa whether that is in England or in Greece and a kettle is a kettle. The different styles of the kettle will find buyers according to their culture and their aesthetics. An industrial designer is very familiar with the design process of objects in general, yet in “the pursuit of urbanism, the ensemble which confronts us is the city and its habits”⁶⁶ and it is wrong to judge from ourselves as we design for mass visual consumption and mass use. Surely enough, many municipalities contract companies of the same nationality or even locality. There, the case is easier since the idea of designing for something familiar exists. Still though, there is no one who can express their needs better than a resident of the city in question.

Ian Buchanan’s term of generic places, that is places that serve no aesthetic outcome and tend only to flatten all diversity and character of space, are “non-places”. They are places where people gather but do not meet, they crowd but do not socialise since their attention is always focused on something else. These places are mostly malls and shopping areas and, according to Buchanan “help to create, and daily reinforce, this individualism by offering a kind of anonymous space that can not be owned, that can not be invested in emotionally, but which is nevertheless able to make one feel modern, important, at home even.”⁶⁷ These aesthetically generic spaces are very convenient to the eye because usually they include very familiar elements (i.e. a McDonald’s restaurant).

Reflection

64. Jan Michl, *On Seeing Design as Redesign*, 2002, p. 7.

65. Susan M. Hagan, *The Imagined and the Concrete: What is an Artifact?*, 2007, p. 23.

66. Christopher Alexander, p. 16.

67. Ian Buchanan, p. 396.

They yet have lost the personal and unique cultural element of the city they are in, leaving the inhabitants as “an alienated position on the part of the subject.”⁶⁸

When Anne Juel Andersen referred to the new cultural area on Aalborg’s harbour “little Manhattan” and described the entire plan to create a new, modern Aalborg with booming job opportunities, and attractive business and leisure environments sounded very similar to the way companies develop their own projects. It is common practice for companies to “typically expand their product lines when they perceive unexploited opportunities in the market.”⁶⁹ An opportunity had risen with the reformation of the Kommune and they seized it to upgrade the city. Surely enough companies do their research on their field and view trends and tendencies of the market. They form themselves accordingly and the company who predicts and acts ahead of others is a success.

There is a similarity between cities and companies and the most obvious result is “the theatrical nature of our cities⁷⁰”. When a city is leaning more towards being characterised as a student city for various reasons (including capital production), it is only logical that this city will attempt to invest in this part of the population and orient itself in that direction. Yet, some cities “might obviously ‘perform’” even in “the more complicated way that they might open and close scenes, the way they often pretend to be something else”⁷¹ than they are, using funds and setting off projects to change their characters.

From this point on, decisions are made from committees and boards who propose plans and then ask for opinions, organise public debates and present their ideas requesting feedback on behalf of the users. The fact remains—especially today—that “systems are orchestrated and routinised for maximum perceived efficiency, leaving the consumer as a passive participant.”⁷² It has been made clear through various discussions with inhabitants that solutions are presented in a definitive form, seeking approval. To be fair, when feedback regarding decisions whether or not to launch an entire project has been taken into consideration, it has sometimes led to the cancellation of the project in accordance with public will. Nevertheless, as long as there are the funds to support and promote development projects, the decisions are left to the few and are merely announced to the many.

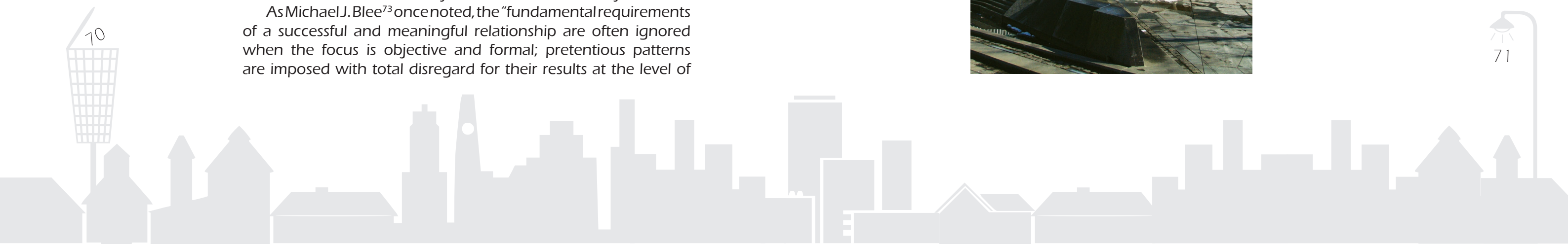
As Michael J. Blee⁷³ once noted, the “fundamental requirements of a successful and meaningful relationship are often ignored when the focus is objective and formal; pretentious patterns are imposed with total disregard for their results at the level of

experience.”⁷⁴ This has occurred in the case of Aalborg when the city bought streetlights designed by Philippe Starck. Although people do enjoy and recognise them, only the designers in the back office who take pride in saying that “We have streetlights designed by Philippe Starck!” People wouldn’t know the difference between a Philippe Starck design and a very accurate (yet cheaper) imitation. While the lamps themselves are truly works of art, how well do they fit into the overall aesthetic of the landscape surrounding them? Would they be better off placed near the new area, by the harbour, surrounded by far more modern materials and colours? They are also part of Aalborg’s diversity as a general image in its central places, yet as noted in the culture probe, many people cannot even identify the rubbish bins matching the lights as objects...



68. Guy Julier, p. 68.
69. Oscar Person, et al., p. 34.
70. Andrea Philips, *Civic Centre*, 2003, p. 357.
71. Ibid
72. Guy Julier, p. 68.
73. An architect born in Brighton, England in 1931, Michael J. Blee practiced in Ceylon and Singapore while traveling extensively in Japan, India and Afghanistan. He worked for the Architects Collaborative in MIT Massachusetts and specialized in environmental structure of primitive communities. He has excessively written essays on interior design.

74. Gyorgy Kepes, ed., p. 79.



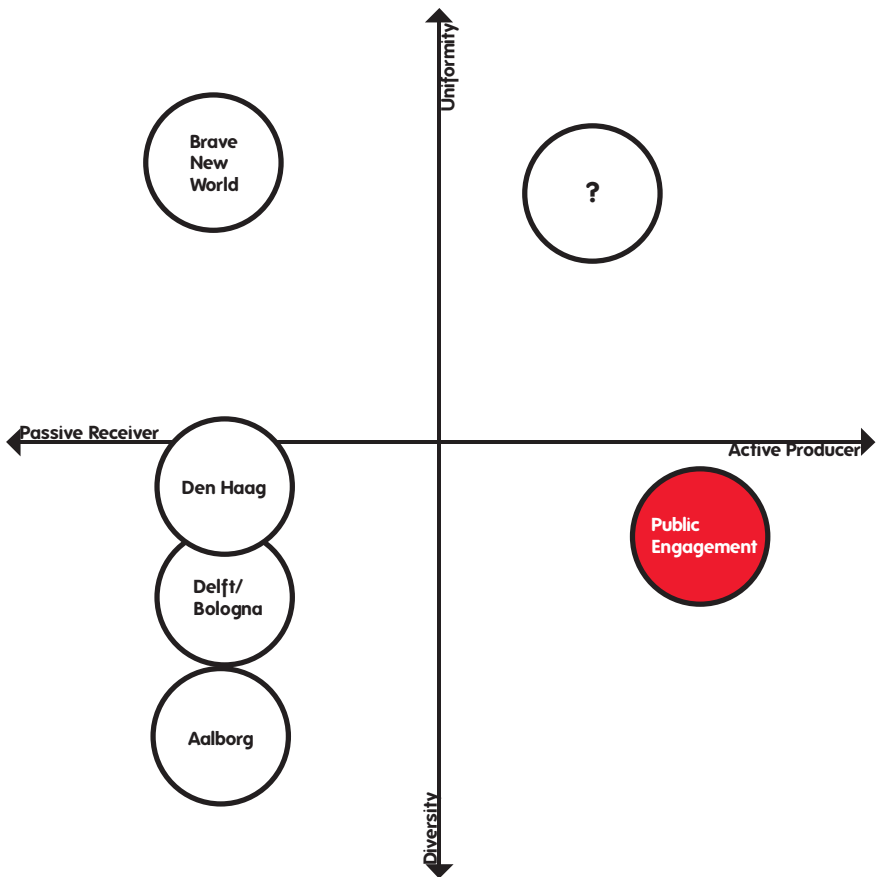
Proposal

As industrial designers are familiar with the concept and process of systemic design, the core attitude to enhance the quality of urban furniture can be drawn from there. Co-design and co-production are terms commonly used and even promoted. As users are in the centre of interest for profit, it is easier for users to accurately point out their preferences and needs. In the cases of cities, inhabitants can be part of shaping the image of their city through their lifelong, intuitive experience with space. The inhabitants are those who have a structured image of their city and maybe it is this “meaningful structure” that can “organise apparent chaos and arbitrariness.”⁷⁵

Actively involving citizens in their environment enhancement is a feasible approach that “borrows methodological criteria from industrial production.”⁷⁶ The cultural research and observation of environments where industrial products will be implemented is part of a design process already being used in both industrial design education and practice. Particularly in a Danish city like Aalborg this “could generate the conditions for a better use of resources within the local system and generate new knowledge and economy of scope”⁷⁷ as it will provide the genuine point of view of the inhabitants and will empower them towards creating realistic solutions.

This calls for the condition that the industrial designer will take the role of the tool, the interpreter of the residents’ view over the meaning their city holds. Aalborg is no stranger to collaborative efforts improving lifestyles and addressing everyday needs and problems of the community. The proposal here aims to shift the focus from the user as a passive receiver to an active producer, where inhabitants can provide creative input on the design they would wish urban furniture to have. This can prove to be most useful and educative both for the designer and for the residents, as it can initiate solutions never before conceived and bring to the surface problems never addressed.

75. Donald A. Norman, p. 69.
76. Nicola Morelli. *Social Innovation and New Industrial Contexts: Can Designers “Industrialize” Socially Responsible Solutions?*, 2007, p. 18.
77. Ibid



There are already several strategies from various private and public sector organisations moving towards this direction. Take IKEA for example: their catalogue enables customers to choose furniture according to their particular space requirements and taste. Apart from providing full solutions for empty spaces, their furniture can create infinite combinations due to colour, shape and variety flexibility. This enables their customers to possess a designer function, being able to customise their private space with stylish furniture. Another example is the Kit o’ Part, a matrix created to empower the idea of co-creation through the use of a design tool: it gave the opportunity to express individual desires and aesthetic perceptions and with the use of a pre-defined catalogue that enabled interaction on a basic level. The graphics and overall colouring for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics were created in this way. As the creator of Kit o’ Part, Deborah Sussman puts it, “our real audience includes clients, collaborators, institutions and of course the public. Since they all play a role in the design process, we need to think of them as participants, as well as ‘audience’”.

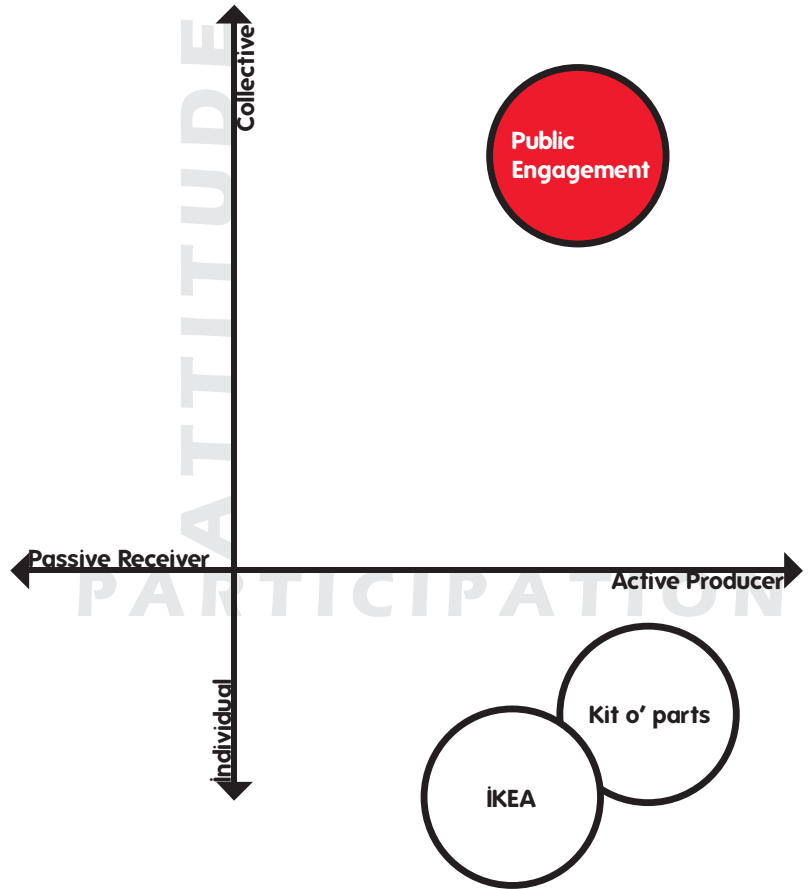


An issue arising here is the use of tools to attract people into co-creating and enabling them to express preferences. People view their time as something valuable and they certainly would not waste it doing something they regard as useless. What could motivate people into leaping from an individualistic, benefit-centred motivation into a collective and collaborative mentality? How to motivate people to take part in this effort to get involved in the aesthetic development of their city through the co-design of urban furniture? The tools that IKEA uses enable customers to co-design their private space with IKEA's furniture, while at the same time it makes them feel important as they are designing their living rooms. Perhaps it would be more appealing to residents of a city if they were able to change areas that directly influence them, such as their street, common garden or nearby park. To animate residents to such a degree requires strong argumentation which needs to appeal to their sentiment of benefit—usually an individualistic one.



To collide with the mentality of a welfare state and the associations (foreningen) citizens form in order to address and solve everyday issues, the municipality could organise and promote the use of brainstorming techniques and inspiration

sessions, practices deeply involved in industrial design processes. The realisation of the final products can be in close cooperation with the residents, as the designer will use technical and aesthetic knowledge in refining the product to its final form. This is in no way trivialising the designer's work, since he or she is able to add valuable technical knowledge to, for example creating eco-friendly urban furniture—an idea already appealing to a large number of designers and eco-sensitive citizens. It is through the citizens' spectrum that diversity and identity can be best captured and the designer can realise this image precisely because of the skills and knowledge he or she has obtained as professionals.



These “co-creative workshops” or “co-design assemblies” could also be implemented towards an even further “customisation” of the city and operate on the level of city quarters or groups with common interests. Different methods of enabling residents could be held to identify and design urban furniture for neighbourhoods along with specific groups of people. Take students for example; a workshop is just one possible way of working towards creating urban furniture reflective of students' aesthetics and movement



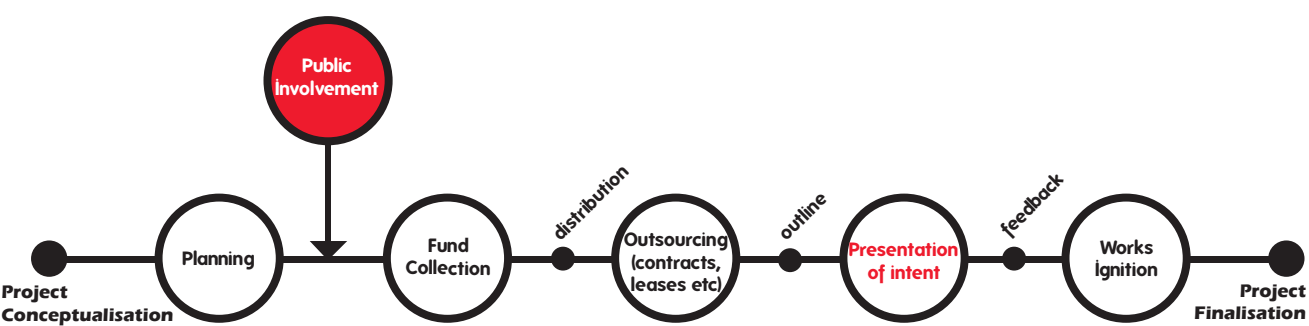
patterns within the city. This could also be done in another way, by focusing on the area of Hals, providing residents with design tools, processes and brainstorming on what they see as the most reflective image of their area etc.

This collaborative attitude for approaching design from a more “democratised” point of view is something that can be characterised also as a strategic curve and can be implemented on a larger scale as it has been stressed more and more recently. Plenty has been written on minimising “over-design” and creating citizen-centre design when it comes to sustainable urban development. Urban furniture can provide and opportunity for industrial design to contribute to a sustainable co-productive direction. When “design takes over human needs”⁷⁸ and the evaluation of a designer’s work is based purely on aesthetic values, cities risk losing their humanity.

Engaging community groups and residents in the physical redevelopment of a neighborhood or a downtown helps create a space that reflects the interests and needs of the community and gives residents a sense of ownership. Communities’ contributions to the look and function of a downtown – including parks, open spaces, lighting and other street amenities, public-art streetscapes, and residential designs – are important factors in redevelopment.

Community participation in the process also fosters individual contributions toward improving neighborhoods. A community that is enhancing its own environment is more likely to attract increased investment through home purchases and complementary business establishments like stores, banks, and restaurants. An attractive and vibrant downtown becomes an advantage in drawing conferences and conventions to the area and in recruiting corporations to relocate there. In these ways, cultural resource investments bring great financial rewards.”⁷⁹

It is important that this is implemented at an early stage of a project’s development line, so that the technical, economic and aesthetic aspects can be defined at an early stage.



This requires a redefinition and a reconsideration of the municipality’s working methods and processes. If the diagram above represents an example of the basic outline the municipality follows to develop the recreation of the harbour, then, according to research results, residents are involved at the very end of the process, just before the project takes off. Instead, public involvement at an early stage can provide commonly accepted solutions and will provide the residents with an active role towards shaping the city, not according to generic aesthetic trends, but tailored according to specific needs and habits.

When speaking of urban lifestyle, the resources are the citizens’ habits and experience of the city they live in. Especially in Aalborg today, introducing these changes mandates respect for the citizens’ wishes, to attract them and to encourage participation in this vision towards an urban-life-friendly environment. As Aalborg takes pride in the sustainable reputation it has built, it is essential to seek sustainable solutions “in order to address the challenges of welfare systems”,⁸⁰ such as the one it currently belongs to.

78. Copenhagen Agenda for Sustainable Cities, September 2007.

79. Roger, Kemp L ed, p. 9.

80. Nicola Morelli, p. 18



Evaluation

Questions not answered

There are several parts in this project that could have been presented more extensively. Unfortunately, the time limitation did not allow for more extensive research. Nevertheless, there are several sections that could have been better explained.

One of these sections is the investigation regarding city practices. The interviews could have aimed to extract the exact justifications why urban furniture is not viewed as important as other design fields to shape the image of a city. If those interviewed could be led to answer precisely why industrial design was not in the process of the re-creation, perhaps valuable information would have been discovered. It seemed that this problem had no solution however, as there is no serious challenge to the status quo of urban furniture today.

The private sector was also not investigated well enough. The knowledge how companies specialise in designing urban furniture is discussed at a superficial level, stemming primarily from personal experience and from interaction in a social circle with ties to the industry. Nevertheless, a substantial amount of time should have been allocated for investigating the companies' approach and the research (or lack thereof) towards addressing all social issue baggage a design process brings with it. The way an international company designs urban furniture may be very different from the way a local company approaches the field.

Another question still lingering even near the end of this paper is whether people are interested or not to take an active role in the shaping of their city. The interview with Anne Juel Andersen showed that, although there have been public debates, people do not express interest. This is a factor that was not examined nor questioned, yet concerning the proposal, it plays an important role in validating the feasibility of the reflection. What could be investigated here is the approach and the promotion of these assemblies and the mentality behind them.

As has been mentioned before, this paper is meant only to provide the starting point for research and the design of urban furniture that visually stimulate and interact with inhabitants. These unanswered questions constitute a separate research paper by themselves.

There are several factors affecting a city's appearance: economical, political, geographical, social, structural, organisational and several other matters, which can complicate processes. These factors were merely mentioned sporadically in the paper and were acknowledged as playing a role in the examined area. Yet, a country's policies can affect the organisational aspects of such efforts, either in their pragmatism or even in their starting points.

Another implication that can occur concerns the finalisation of the recreation plan of Aalborg. It is difficult to organise activities to identify the image of a city from the residents' point of view, while the city is undergoing transformation. Along with the image of the city, so will the living patterns and habits of the residents. It is therefore crucial to calculate the timing of the co-design initiatives. The implication here would be about the enhanced and the existing mental image of the city. It will require time for the citizens to explore and digest the new possibilities their city offers them.

Implications not examined^{vi}

vi. This part is inspired and follows the guidelines of a diagram that can be found in appendix 7.



Conclusion

This project has been an attempt to address the importance urban furniture holds in shaping a city. Everyday living brings us in contact with these objects, subtly taking part in our urban lives. Urban furniture has been characterised as the front office of a municipality providing services to its residents in the public landscape. They are elements of the city's image and sometimes hold an important place in the overall image a city projects to its residents.

In doing so, this paper first investigated the case of Aalborg and then used Den Haag as an example of a city which uses urban furniture to create differentiation between districts. By examining urban design as a communicational tool for cities to express their uniqueness, it has discovered that cities today behave competitively towards one another, in a race to attract prospective residents who will increase their development and prosperity. Aalborg is at a critical time, especially since the recreation project was initiated, a project with the potential to change Aalborg's identity for years to come.

Apart from the urban design of these cities, however, the attitude towards urban furniture was expressed via interviews with officials having an important role in shaping the city's identity. Unfortunately, the result was to discover that urban furniture comes very late in the process of developing a city's aesthetics and is treated merely as a side-project or a decorative element. The case nevertheless, seems to be very different. Urban furniture communicates functions and actions, occupies space in the city's layout and facilitates various municipal services. It also creates a line of forces corresponding to its attributes, constituting some attractive and some not. The visual communication behind urban furniture is a strong attribute which does not seem to play any important role in their design process.

Cities today stress more and more their uniqueness due to their historical, aesthetic, economic, cultural and political identity. Urban design already has an important role in creating or even reflecting this character by mapping the city and creating living patterns around it. It places and shifts focus from some areas to other areas and with the help of architecture in the role of creating status and stylish façade, these two design fields shape the end-form of urban living. Industrial design through urban furniture is left behind even of its own accord. There is a prevailing belief that urban furniture as objects are to be designed according to the same processes domestic furniture are designed, leaving a gap in design research for expressing the uniqueness of a specific city's character.

As urban furniture is placed in a city, it is important that it interacts with the city's landscape. Since cities are the physical expression of a social whole, diversity is a common and unquestion-

able feature. Yet, industrial design clings on designing according to one mind or according to a company's market positioning. Cultural research is a valuable information source which has the potential to trigger innovation and inspire designers to create intelligent urban furniture, while reflecting and respecting a city's image and identity.

Nevertheless, even within a city there are a variety of groups sharing mutual goals and common interests. The environment surrounding them tends to be shaped according to their unique lifestyles and habits. To include these groups in the design process can prove to be most illuminating both for the designer and the residents themselves. Municipalities tend to leave residents out of the development processes and when they finally include them, decisions have already been made. This inclusion merely serves the purpose of requesting approval, without actually considering public preferences at an earlier stage—when processes could have been formed in a user-friendly way.

In short, the goal is to create user-friendly solutions. It is the designer's obligation to design for the users and not for self-serving purposes. It seems, however, that styling maintains a dominant role in urban furniture and the user becomes a passive observer and consumer.

The tools to avoid such an outcome exist. There are several ways a municipality can empower and encourage residents to give their perspectives and express their preferences. By adopting time-saving and attractive co-production methods, the insightful input of residents (towards maintaining and expressing a city's identity, diversity and aesthetic character) can be used to great effect. The internet provides design tools that can be tailored to fit the municipality's needs in creating a matrix, an interactive "catalogue" providing quick solutions that correspond to specific groups and environments. Workshops can provide insightful vision and brainstorm sessions are a valuable tool to glean intuitive information from the residents' perspectives.

To create socially responsible design solutions is to respect the end-users of the design product. The vicious circle of designers producing and users consuming, requesting change, redesigning and reserving, degenerates the field of design where the potential is vast. Interdisciplinary design has become commonplace; what if these interdisciplinary collaborators are the users themselves? The designer can become a unique means of expression, something that would require not only excellent technical knowledge but also advanced social and communication skills. It is not only logical but socially responsible to assume that when designing for the public, the public must take a decisive role in the process of designing objects to be placed in public view.



Illustration List

All pictures and illustrations in this report are the work of the author with the exception of the following pages, and unless otherwise noted:

Page 11: *The Craft of Research*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. 58)

Pages 25, 47: *Creative Stad Den Haag*. Gemeente Den Haag, December 2007, p. 66.

Pages 44, 45: - *Global City by the Sea: Spatial Development Strategy the Hague 2020*. Facility Department, Multimedia The Hague, May 2006 , p. 46.

Page 47: Caballero Fabriek (flyer cover)

Pages 37, 38, 67: *Program for Musikkens Hus Området og Karolinelundskilen*. Aalborg Kommune, 2006, p. 11, 18.

Page 44: *Global City by the Sea*, Municipality of Den Haag, 2005

Page 45: flyer-mapping of Den Haag

Page 51: Lucia Marghueritini, 2005
bolognadailyphoto.blogspot.com

Page 55: www.allenfriends.com/books_sale.jpg

Page 59: *Northernmost Barcelona? A Critique of Mediterranean Public Design in Northern Europe*. (Beirut: The 22nd Conference on Passive and Low Energy Architecture, 2005.)

Page 54: *From Visual Culture to Design Culture*. (Massachusetts: Design Issues, 2005.)

Pages 33, 34, 35, 39: From the official website www.aalborgkommune.dk

www.aalborgkommune.dk

www.aalborgplus10.dk

www.aau.dk

www.mainstreet.org

www.denhaag.com

www.caballerofabriek.nl

www.cityinterface.com

www.shared-space.org

www.archi-europe.info/archinews/022007/newsletter02_en2.htm

www.surveymonkey.com

www.wikipedia.org

<http://www.designtaxi.com/features.jsp?id=100192>

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,921760,00.html?promoid=googlep>

Bibliography

Webpages



Articles

Buchanan, Ian. *Non-Places: Space in the Age of Supermodernity*. (London: Social Semiotics, 1999.)

Crowe, Norman. *The Nature of Design: Ecology, Culture and Human Intention by David W. Orr*. (Massachusetts: Design Issues, 2006.)

Dorst, Kees. *Design Research: A Revolution Waiting To Happen*. (London: Elsevier, Design Issues, 2007.)

Friedman, Ken. *Behavioral Artifacts: What is an Artifact? Or Who Does It?* (London: Routledge, Artifact, 2005.)

Hagan, Susan M. *The Imagined and the Concrete: What is an Artifact?* (London: Routledge, Artifact, 2007.)

Julier, Guy. *From Visual Culture to Design Culture*. (Massachusetts: Design Issues, 2005.)

Lenzholzer, Sanda. *Northernmost Barcelona? A Critique of Mediterranean Public Design in Northern Europe*. (Beirut: The 22nd Conference on Passive and Low Energy Architecture, 2005.)

Marling, Gitte. *Understanding and Mapping Large City Scapes Outside In – Inside Out*. (Aalborg: Nordark, 2007.)

Michl, Jan. *On Seeing Design as Redesign: An Exploration of a Neglected Problem in Design Education*. (Oslo: Scandinavian Journal of Design History, 2002)

Mieke, Bal. *The Commitment to Look*. (London: Journal of Visual Culture, 2005.)

Morelli, Nicola. *Social Innovation and New Industrial Contexts: Can Designers "Industrialize" Socially Responsible Solutions?* (Massachusetts: Design Issues, 2007.)

Peeters, Miranda A. G. and Van Tuijl, Harrie F. J. M. *The Development of a Design Behaviour Questionnaire for Multidisciplinary Teams*. (Massachusetts: Design Issues, 2007.)

Philips, Andrea. *Civic Centre*. (London: Journal of Visual Culture, 2003.)

Person, Oscar, Schoormans, Jan and Snelders, Dirk. *Should New Products Look Similar Or Different? The Influence of the Market Environment On Strategic Product Styling*. (London: Elsevier, Design Issues, 2007.)

Ramirez, Rafael. *Value Co-Production: Intellectual Origins and Implications for Practice and Research*. (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 1999.)

Rutsky, Randy. *Pop-up Theory: Distraction and Consumption in the Age of Meta-Information*. (London: Journal of Visual Culture, 2002.)



Books

Alexander, Christopher. *Notes on the Synthesis of Form*.
(Boston: Harvard Paperbacks, 1964.)

Banham, Reyner. *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*.
(Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1960.)

Booth, Wayne C., Colomb, Gregory G. and Williams, Joseph M.
The Craft of Research. (Chicago: The University of
Chicago Press, 2003.)

Crow, David. *Visible Signs*. (Lausanne: AVA Publishing SA,
2003.)

Kemp, Roger L., ed. *Cities and the Arts: A Handbook for
Renewal*. (London: McFarland & Company, Inc.,
Publishers, 2004.)

Kepes, Gyorgy, ed. *The Man-Made Object*. (New York:
George Braziller, 1966.)

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*.
(Abingdon: Routledge, 2007 ed.)

Norman, Donald A. *The Design of Everyday Things*.
(Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002.)

Rifkin, Jeremy. *The Age of Access*. (London: Penguin, 2001.)

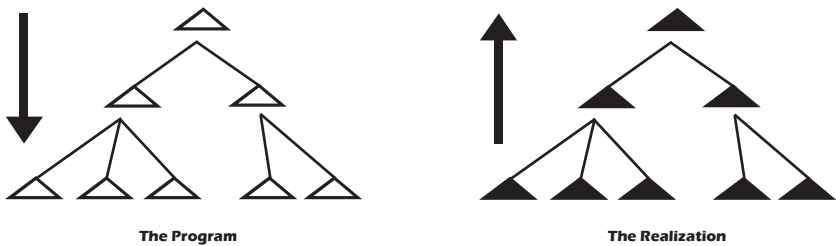
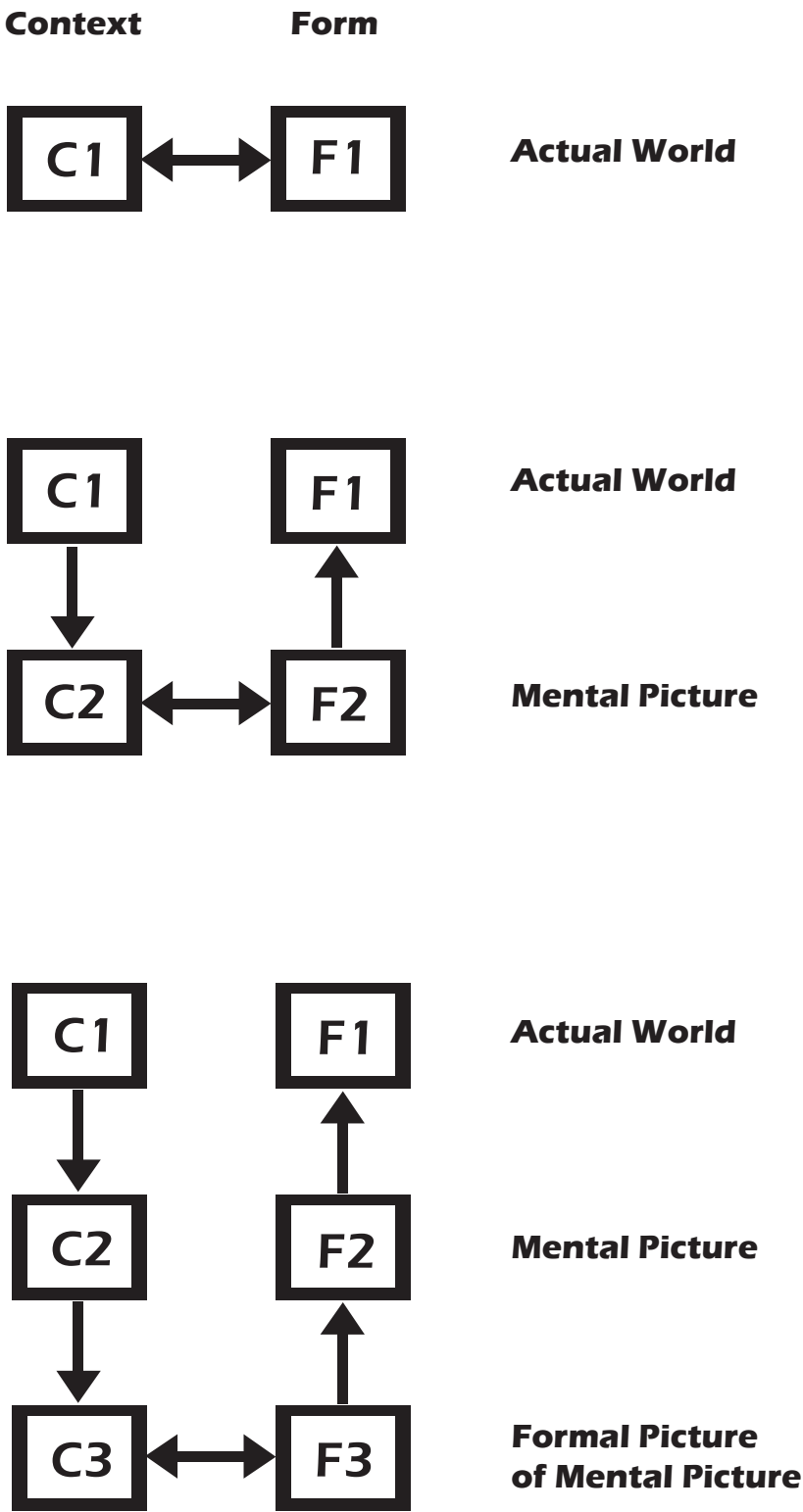
Ulrich, Karl T. and Eppinger, Steven D. *Product Design and
Development*. (Singapore: McGraw-Hill, 2004.)

APPENDICES



Appendix 1:

Alexander's
Context-form
scheme



: Appendix 2

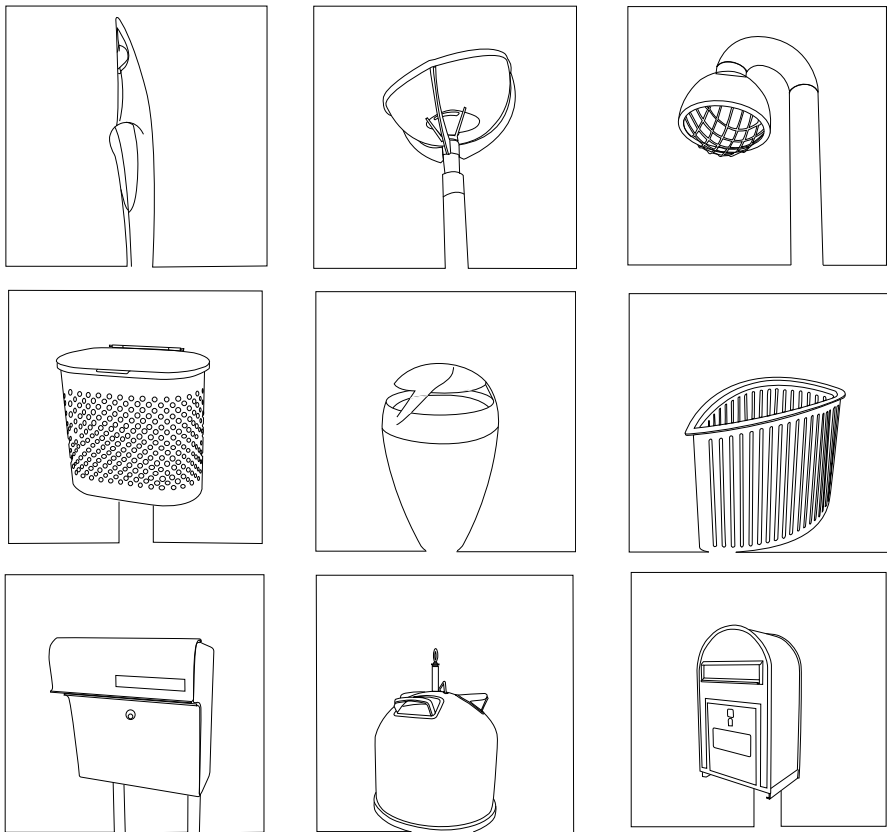
Alexander's
Approach
methods

It is easy to bring out the contrast between the analytical nature of the program and the synthetic nature of its realization. As we see on the left, the tree of sets is obtained by successive division and partition. The tree of diagrams, on the right, is made by successive composition and fusion. At its apex is the last diagram, which captures the full implications of the whole problem, and is therefore the complete diagram for the form required.

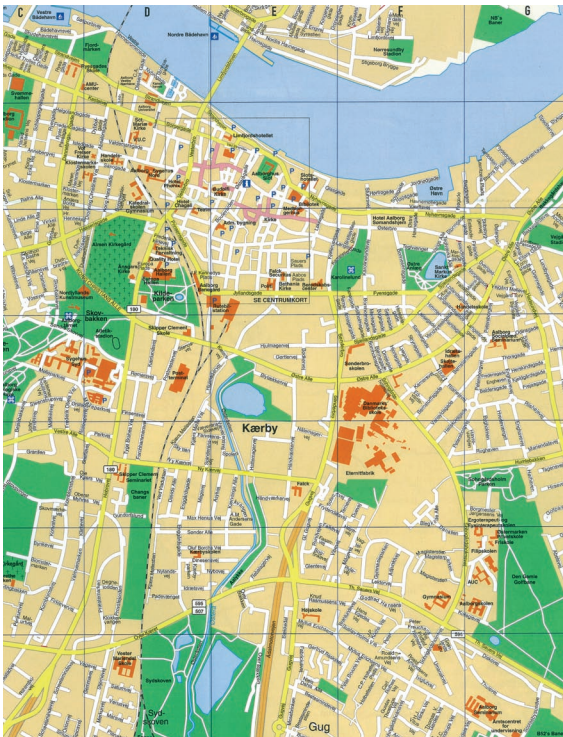


Appendix 3:

Cultural probe



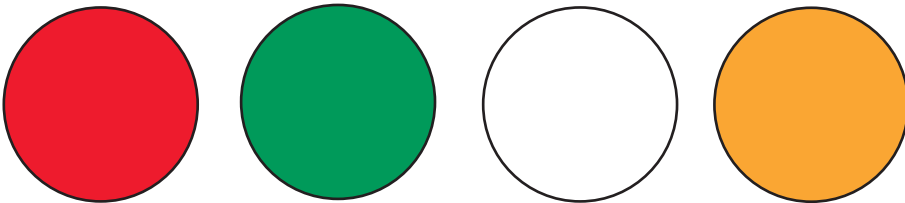
Volunteers were asked to identify what and where these objects are in the city (here, sample of urban furniture).



Volunteers were asked to draw the route they enjoy taking when cycling or simply for a stroll.

In another page, they were also asked to mark on this map the locations of recycle bins and post boxes using green and red stickers.

Volunteers were asked to take out the pre-cut stickers they thought showed the most characteristic buildings and locations of Aalborg and place them on a separate page.



Volunteers were asked to choose a colour most representative of Aalborg's atmosphere (here, sample of colours).



Volunteers were asked to choose a logo they would relate to Aalborg.



Appendix 4:

Interview with Anne Juel Andersen

1) What are your duties in the Kommune?

I have studied Urban Planning and to the Kommune I am a planner and a project manager. I am also part of the coordination committee, where for projects I coordinate the Traffic, the Environmental and the Planning departments.

2) What type of city would you say Aalborg is?

I would say that this is a transition period turning Aalborg from an Industrial to a living city. At the same we are trying to transform Aalborg from a car-city to a public transportation one, while working towards creating more pedestrian streets for strolling and trying to motivate more people into using bicycles.

3) Are there areas particular to specific groups of people?

Well, immigrants (mainly from Somalia) have mostly gathered in the area of Aalborg Øst. The percentage of all immigrants in Aalborg is 5%-10% and they mostly gather there or in Nørresundby. Another popular group is the students who, apart from the obvious collegiums near the University, live all over the city, there is no particular concentration anywhere.

4) Does the character change much from quarter to quarter?

Yes, some have a stronger character than others. Take Kærby for example. It is built on a below-sea-level area and that is what forced it to have this character; or Hasseris, the “posh” area of Aalborg. When changing the city it is very important to identify this special character. It is this character that sets the rules for change in those areas.

5) What are the aesthetic restrictions for building in Aalborg?

They are not that strict, really. There is a vision to keep some sort of uniform character but this really depends on the character of each area.

6) Where are the main industrial areas in Aalborg and where will they be after the renovation?

They were mostly around the harbour area due to the export and import needs. This has led to a polluted coastline, something that is now taken care of. Once this area is renovated the industries will mainly now be in Svenstrup, Aalborg Øst, Havn Øst Portland and Rohdahl. These areas are on the other side of the curve and pose no threat to the harbour anymore. There will also be some industries further in the mainland in Aalborg Øst.

7) When planning the renovation, what are the main considerations?

Public opinion/ feedback?

Of course we consider public opinion and we encourage residents to take an active role in the shaping of the city by organising public debates. There, we inform and update citizens on the Kommune's plans and we are more than happy to receive comments, positive or negative. Unfortunately the attendance in those meetings is scarce and it mostly consists of University factors as opposed to residents.

Around central spots?

Yes, the development begins from there and expands to other areas.

Exceeding a fixed budget?

There is a fixed budget within which we have to plan and calculate and this does indeed limit some choices.

8) What is the purpose of the renovation?

The purpose is to give a new function to Aalborg, not for it to be an industrial city anymore. The goal is to unify the city, so that residents will use the entire city as living space. If you noticed, the area after the mall Sailing was dark and people would come from Nytorv, expecting life to continue. Suddenly, they found themselves in a dark area and just turned back. This time, we want to make Aalborg a place where people enjoy living.

We wish to transform the area right next to the harbour into a Mini Manhattan. That is to say, have a mixture between business and housing. Keep in mind, that Aalborg's economy depends a lot on Aalborg University and IT companies. The character will have something from an industrial touch and we will try to maintain the historical air of Aalborg. However, there is no intention of copying or transporting the city form one place to another. We want to create some new and greener!

Appendix 5:

Survey

Behaviour in the City

Exit this survey >>

1. Default Section

1. Do you notice the urban furniture in your city?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Some yes, some no

2. Is it easy to find the corresponding object to the function you want to perform in the city (i.e. post box for sending a letter)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ I always use the same one

3. Which of the objects listed below are the easiest to spot in your city?

☐ Trash cans

☐ Post boxes

☐ Recycle bins

☐ Bus stops

☐ Other

4. What is the element that is so characteristic concerning the answer you gave above?

☐ Colour

☐ Shape

☐ Placement

☐ Other


Next>>

Behaviour in the City

Exit this survey >>

2. Visual communication in cities

Here is a photo of a city.




1. Can you identify the city above?

☐ Paris

☐ Chicago

☐ London

Here is an image of a mailbox.




2. Can you tell where this mailbox is?

☐ New York

☐ Houston

☐ San Francisco

This is a very "stylish" recycle bin!



3. Where would you have to be to throw something in this recycle bin?

☐ London

☐ Berlin

☐ Paris

Page: Default Section		
1. Do you notice the urban furniture in your city?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	60.5%	26
No	11.6%	5
Some yes, some no	27.9%	12
answered question		43
skipped question		1

2. Is it easy to find the corresponding object to the function you want to perform in the city (i.e. post box for sending a letter)?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	63.6%	28
No	25.0%	11
I always use the same one	11.4%	5
answered question		44
skipped question		0

3. Which of the objects listed below are the easiest to spot in your city?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Trash cans	29.5%	13
Post boxes	20.5%	9
Recycle bins	13.6%	6
Bus stops	75.0%	33
Other	6.6%	3
answered question		44
skipped question		0

4. What is the element that is so characteristic concerning the answer you gave above?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Colour	36.4%	16
Shape	25.0%	11
Placement	61.4%	27
Other	6.6%	3
answered question		44

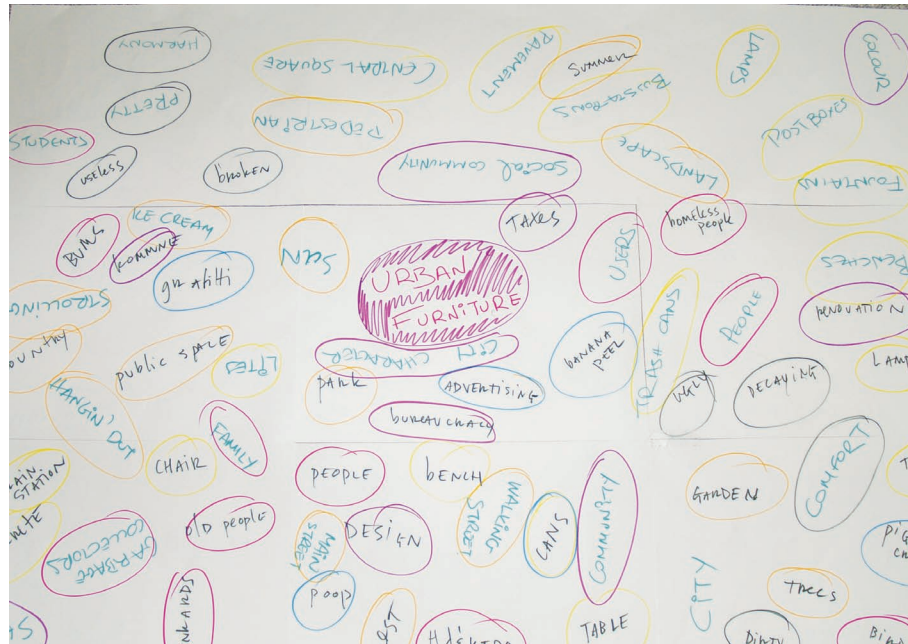
Page: Visual communication in cities

1. Can you identify the city above?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Paris	0.0%	0
Chicago	4.5%	2
London	95.5%	42
answered question		44
skipped question		0

2. Can you tell where this mailbox is?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
New York	40.5%	17
Houston	28.6%	12
San Francisco	31.0%	13
answered question		42
skipped question		2

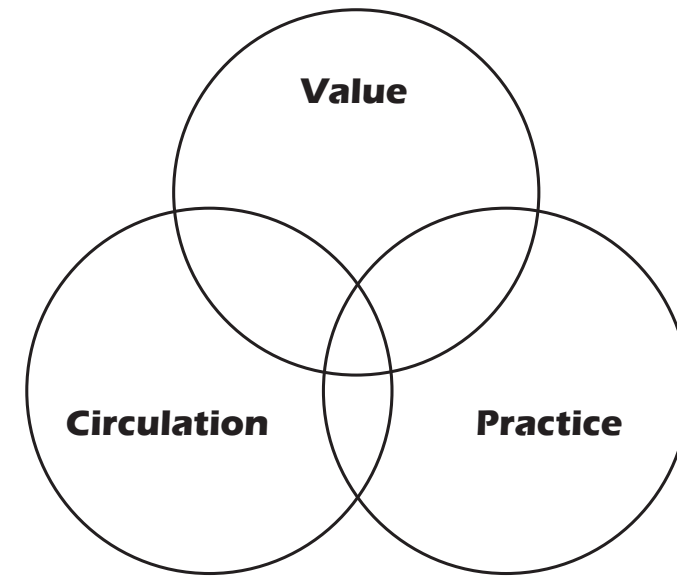
3. Where would you have to be to throw something in this recycle bin?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
London	11.6%	5
Berlin	72.1%	31
Paris	16.3%	7
answered question		43
skipped question		1

Brainstorm



: Appendix 7

Guy Julier's Diagram



Value. The designer's role is in the creation of value. This most obviously is commercial value, but also may include social, cultural, environmental, political, and symbolic values. Clearly, it is not restricted to notions of "good design" as value.⁴⁵ It involves the origination of new products and product forms, but also their value augmentation. It is an expanded field of activity that orchestrates and coordinates material and nonmaterial processes results. A key feature of this value creation is the reproduction of "product nodes," whereby cultural information is filtered through a range of platforms and moments. The establishment of multiple coordinates for the networked reproduction of this cultural information might be termed a "designscape." Creative action may indeed originate, position, and differentiate, product forms and "product nodes" to increase value. But systems of measurement and accountability are also embedded in this domain.

Circulation. A range of straightforward elements underpin and shape the productive processes of design culture, including available technologies, environmental, and human factors. But nonmaterial elements such as existing knowledge networks, legislation, political pressures, economic fluctuations, and fiscal policies are also contextual factors that these draw on. Beyond design manufacture or production issues whether we are talking about material or information products—"downstream" flows of product information and distribution are channeled, formatted, interrupted, or facilitated to influence their movement and/or reception through the system of provision. Within this, the specificities that create a "fit" or disjuncture of global/local nexus invariably play crucial roles.

Practice. The engagement of design products, processes, and systems in everyday life is not merely a function of consumer culture in its traditional sense. Beyond individual, privately-orientated activities of use, ownership, and maintenance focused on the domestic sphere are layers of socially-constituted activities in which individuals are carriers of collectively held practices, and may comprise sets of conventions and procedures.⁴⁶ Alternatively, practice may be conceived as specific types and ranges of activities that Bourdieu termed as “fields.”⁴⁷ Here, different practices are governed by their specific, respective rules. Practice involves routinized behavior that is both individually enacted but also socially observable. Consumption, therefore, is a part of practice. Things are bought and put to use, environments are visited, Websites are perused in fulfilling practice.