

READY MADE Creative Gymnastic for Designers

READY MADE디자이너를 위한 창조적인 훈련 연구

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(Abstract)

A "Readymade" is an everyday object selected and designated as art. The term was coined by Marcel Duchamp to describe his artistic process based on the attempt to destroy the notion of the uniqueness of the art object: his influence went far beyond the art world affecting all design activities based on creativity.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the ready-made technique from an educational point of view. Starting from Duchamp experience and his further influence on the design world, the study aims to demonstrate the value of the ready-made technique as a basic element in the education of young designers. The research method is based on the empirical observation of the results of the same project assigned to forty different students in different universities. The collected results were grouped in four families according to each specific generative method: constructive, conceptual, aggregative and elaborative.

These four categories, derived by the observation of the results, represent tangible variations of the same disciplined technique. This flexibility demonstrates the value of the ready-made process as a foundation practice particularly indicated for young designers. These are the main skills students developed through its application to design projects: exploring and reconsidering attitude, recycling issues, new identity to familiar objects, focus on ideas.

(要約)

"레디 메이드"(Ready made)란 예술로 선택 제안된 일상의 사물들을 의미한다. 이 용어는 예술적 오브제가 지닌 특수성을 파괴하고자 하였던 뒤샹의 창작과정에서 만들어졌는데 예술세계를 넘어 창의성을 기초로 하는 모든 디자인 영역에 영향을 끼쳤다.

본 연구의 목적은 교육적 관점에서 "레디 메이드"(Ready made)방법 고찰에 있다. 뒤샹의 경험과 그가 디자인 세계에 끼친 영향을 시작으로 본 연구는 교육적인 관점에서 레디 메이드 방법론적인 테크닉을 연구하였다. 이 연구 방법은 서로 다른 여러 대학의 40명의 학생들에게 프로젝트를 임명하여 나온 경험적인 관찰의 결과를 토대로 하였다. 수집된 결과는 구성적, 개념적, 집합적, 정교적, 각각의 구체적 특성이 있는 방법에 따라 4가지로 분류하였다. 관찰의 결과에 따라 나뉜 4가지 카테고리는 같은 방법으로 훈련되어진 기술의 다양함이 실제적으로 표현되었다. 이것은 젊은 디자이너들을 위해 특별하게 제안된 기본적인 연습으로서 레디 메이드 기법이 지닌 가치를 유연성 있게 보여주하고자 하였다. 아이디어에 중점을 둔 일상의 오브젝트의 새로운 정체성과 재활용의 관심, 재인식, 탐구에 의해 디자인된 프로젝트의 관련을 통해 학생들의 중요한 기술이 발전되었다.

(Keywords)

Ready Made, displacement, creative gymnastic.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A "Ready made" is an everyday object selected and designated as art. The name was coined by Marcel Duchamp¹⁾ and his first ready-made, "Bicycle Wheel" (1913), consisting of a wheel mounted on a stool, was his way of protesting the excessive importance attached to works of art. By selecting mass-produced, commonplace objects, Duchamp attempted to destroy the notion of the uniqueness of the art object. While these anti-aesthetic gestures made Duchamp one of the leading Dadaist, and his ready-made technique was adapted by such contemporary artists as Rauschenberg, Warhol, and Jasper Johns, his influence went far beyond the art world. Duchamp's concepts were developed at the beginning of industrialization and for this reason they were considered avant-garde. Indeed during the last century industrial products, made using mostly machine labor, have almost completely replaced all hand made manufactures. These products were able to create a new aesthetic code, and they now provide unlimited material sources to artists and designers. Every design activity (fashion, media, graphic, product, interior, furniture design, architecture etc.) dealing with creativity relies completely on these mass produced sources. In such an industrialized environment designers cannot be classified as craftsmen anymore: they are gifted perceiver whose selection of objects and materials is considered as a creative act. Therefore becomes very important to train these selective/creative skills in order to develop a critical approach to this broad range of sources. In this specific context the ready-made technique becomes a very helpful creative exercise, good for all ages but especially recommended for young designer, because it helps focusing the meditation on the relationship between the external objects and the way we perceive them.

1-2 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the ready-made technique from an educational point of view. Starting from Duchamp experience and his further influence on the design world, the study aims to demonstrate the value of the ready-made technique as a basic element in the education of young designers.

1-3 Scope of Study

Since the concept of the ready made lies not in the work itself, but in the idea behind it, and the emphasis is placed upon the artist/designer not as craftsman, but as gifted perceiver whose choice of an object is seen as a creative act, the scope of this study is very broad, involving all creative based disciplines. Therefore, although

¹⁾ With his "ready-mades" Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) anticipated the movement of "Concept Art", and his later works stand for a radical break with traditional works of art.

the experimental results of this study are based on data collected mostly from interior, fashion and product design students, the entire design community can share its conceptual results.

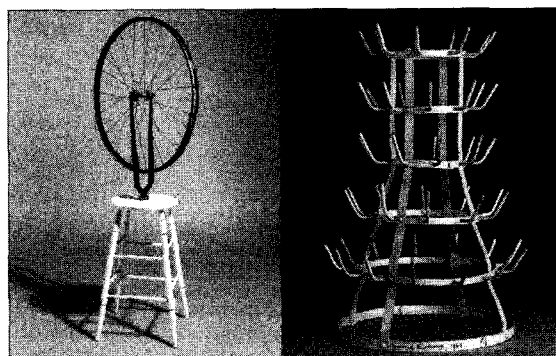
1.4 Methodology

This article defines the main characteristics of ready-mades objects from the origins to some contemporary applications in design. The research method is based on the empirical observation of the results of several experimental workshops held in different Korean Universities: the projects results are used as a case-study with the purpose to demonstrate the benefits of this educational approach.

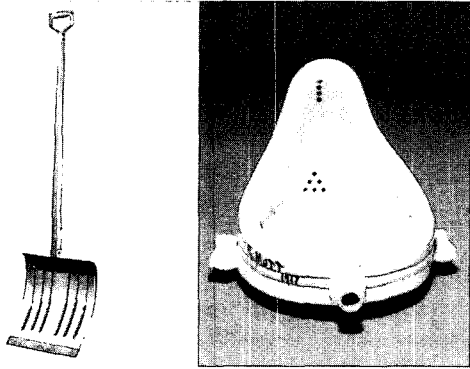
2. READY MADE ORIGINS AND APPLICATIONS

2.1 Duchamp artistic vision

In 1916 Duchamp, in a letter to his sister, used for the first time the word "ready-made" referring to some artworks he left abandoned in Paris Studio: a Bicycle Wheel and a Bottle Rack. [Fig. 1] However it was not until the following year, when he presented Fountain to the New York Society for Independent Arts, that his new concepts were clearly formulated. Fountain was a urinal, the kind of urinal that, when installed in a public bathroom, can only be used by standing urinating man. [Fig. 2] He had bought the urinal and simply placed it on its flat side so that it would stand "erect". The piece never made it into the exhibition: it was left behind a partition wall where he had been waited out for the entire show. But its following repercussions onto the art and design scene were enormous. Submitting an ordinary piece of everyday-life to an art exhibition, Duchamp suggested a new way of understanding and conceiving art. His ready-mades' provocative effort was to eliminate the individual, handmade quality of art, connecting art to the ongoing social transformations, shifting the discussion from the object itself to the way we perceive it. Doing so he gave new dignity to industrially produced objects inviting the public to look for art in their daily life.



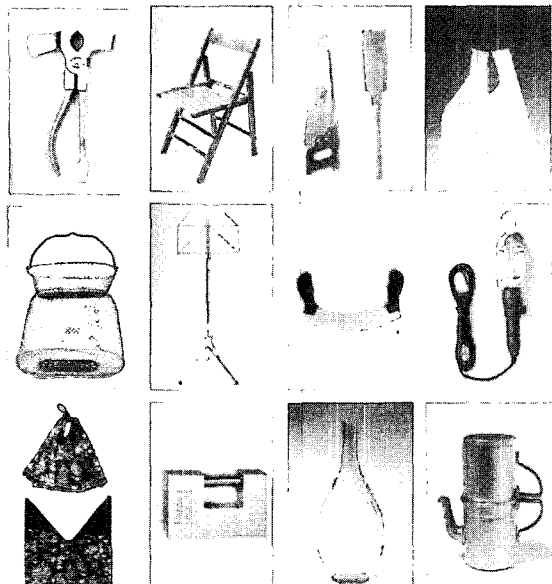
[Fig 1] Duchamp, Ready-Made. Left: Bicycle Wheel, wooden stool, bicycle wheel, 1913 / Right: Bottle Rack, galvanized iron bottle rack 1914/1964



[Fig. 2] Duchamp, Ready-Made. Left: In advance of the broken arm, snow shovel, wood - iron, 1915 / Right: Fountain, porcelain urinal 1917/1964

2.2 Munari educational vision

In 1963 Bruno Munari²⁾ started to gather a collection of products with the purpose to organize a traveling exhibition called "Compasso d'oro to the unknown designer". [Fig. 3/4] The original Compasso d'oro is one of the most important design awards, annually organized by ADI³⁾ it is rewarding products with remarkable and innovative qualities. It has greatly contributed to the development of a mature design culture but, on the other end, it has encouraged the diffusion of the designers "star system". Munari's approach was very different and it was based on a critical reconsideration of existing products.

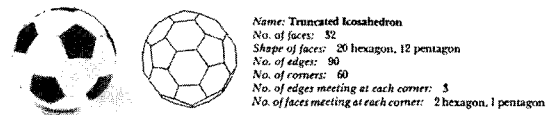


[Fig 3] Bruno Munari, Compasso d'oro a ignoti / Golden Compass to the unknown designer: selected collection, 1960's

²⁾ Bruno Munari (1907-98) never imposed a particular style, but he encouraged people to go beyond conventions and stereotypes by showing them how to widen their perceptual awareness.

³⁾ ADI Associazione per il Disegno Industriale The prize was instituted in 1954 by la Rinascente under Gio'Ponti supervision.

His research aimed to merchantable items that were well designed, whether or not they bear a famous name. These "already made" products were successful because their form followed their function, the materials and manufacturing techniques were appropriate to the purpose, and they offered value for money. In his mind, this ongoing, ever changing traveling exhibition would have gone some way towards restoring an idea of the true value of products.

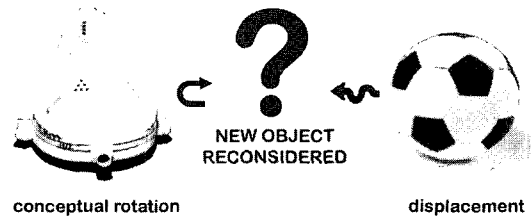


Name: Truncated Icosahedron
No. of faces: 32
Shape of faces: 20 hexagon, 12 pentagon
No. of edges: 90
No. of corners: 60
No. of edges meeting at each corner: 3
No. of faces meeting at each corner: 2 hexagon, 1 pentagon

[Fig 4] Bruno Munari, Compasso d'oro a ignoti / Golden Compass to the unknown designer: soccer ball as truncated icosahedron Archimedean solid, 1960's

2.3 Duchamp / Munari design implications

Both Duchamp and Munari shared a common vision: taking out objects from their original context and present them as if they were being seen for the first time. Duchamp, just flipping the urinal, suggested a new possible use for an everyday product while Munari, with a strong educational purpose, invited use to search for beauty in common products. Duchamp practiced a conceptual rotation of the objects in order to create different perspectives in the observer perception, while Munari cautiously displaced them to initiate the reconsideration process.



[Fig 5] Duchamp / Munari, Reconsidering process

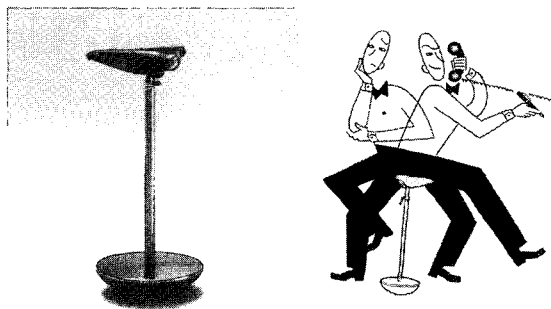
For these reasons Duchamp and Munari influence on contemporary design is still very high. Since their work and research was mainly focused on existing sources, they delivered an echo-compatible message, which can be applied both to design process and space production. They suggested a recycle attitude, at conceptual and material level, which becomes particularly important now that design is more and more influenced by global anonymous trends and empty formalisms. They reaffirmed the power of ideas, but most of all, they encourage us to explore what we already have without any bias. This selective/creative attitude at the base of their creative process is a fundamental feature that needs to be cautiously introduced in any design based educational process.

3. READY MADE IN CONTEMPORARY DESIGN: MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

3-1 Castiglioni brothers' ready-made products

Achille Castiglioni⁴⁾ until 1968 together with his brother Pier Giacomo, designed more than 150 products most of them currently in production and many of them permanently displayed in design museums all around the world. Castiglioni didn't have a style: he refused style all along his career because he tried to give each object he designed a different character. Nevertheless, talking about his work with Paolo Ferrari in his 1984 book, Castiglioni divided his projects into various grouping. One of these groups is the Ready-Made Objects: the main products are the seat Sella (1957), the stool Mezzadro (1957) and the lamp Toio (1962)⁵⁾

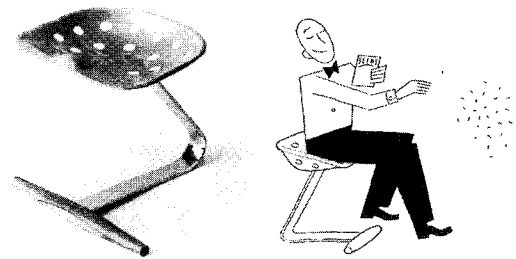
Sella (saddle) [Fig. 6] is an unconventional stool made of a leather bicycle seat, a tubular metal stem, and a rounded cast-iron base. The design inspiration was in this case a new behavior, a deeper and more meaningful consequence of an object's combined form and function, a hybrid between sitting and pacing nervously because, said Achille, "When I use a pay phone, I like to move around, but I also would like to sit, but not completely".



[Fig 6] Sella, Achille e PG Castiglioni 1983 (1957), Zanotta

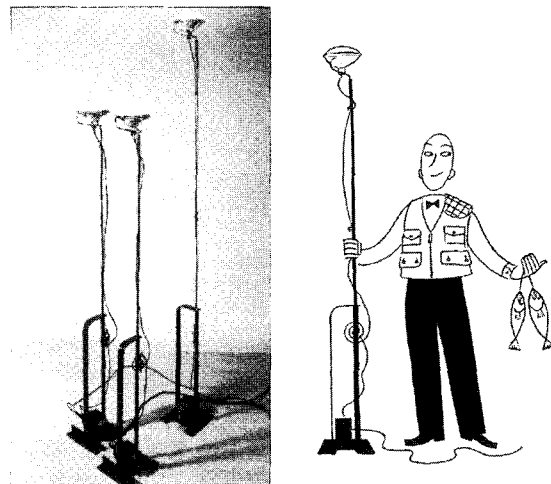
Mezzadro (farmer) [Fig. 7] is a stool made up of four parts: a tractor seat made of stamped and enameled metal sheet; a curved stem of chromium steel, also part of a tractor seat but turned the opposite way for extra spring; a large butterfly nut to join seat to stem without the need of a screwdriver or spanner; a foot made of plain kiln-dried beech-wood, scavenged from demolition of an

old ship and set crosswise at the bottom of the stem to provide the two additional points of support needed to make it stable.



[Fig 7] Mezzadro, Achille e PG Castiglioni 1971 (1957), Zanotta

A 300-watt car reflector imported from the US is both the light source and the inspiration for Toio. [Fig. 8] The transformer for the bulb is located at the foot of the steel plate pedestal and works as a heavy base for the fixture. The hexagonal stem, "as light as a fishing rod", is kept at the desired height by a screw. The electric wire is guided along the stem by three fishing rod rings.



[Fig 8] Toio, Achille e PG Castiglioni 1962, Flos (Left/Right)

These items exemplify very well one of the Castiglioni brothers' characteristic approach to design. They used to borrow ideas from some traditional or industrial item already existing in the material world of objects, and then reassemble it in a new combination suited to mass production: a sort of Dada montage, a poetic of the ready-made, with touches of irony that demystify the excessively solemn and slightly off-putting atmosphere that surrounds the work of many designers. Their Ready-made objects evolve like living things: for example the components of the Mezzadro stool have been updated as the manufacture of tractor seats has changed without damaging the purity of the object. The same concept could be applied to the Sella bicycle seat or to the Toio car reflector.

⁴⁾ Achille Castiglioni, Milan (1918/2002). In 1944 he graduated in architecture from Milan Politecnico, in 1947 he began working with his older brothers Pier Giacomo (1913-68) and Livio (1911-79). He worked with: Flos, Alessi, BBB Bonacina, Bernini, De padova, Gavina, Zanotta, Brionvega, B ticino, Ideal standard.

⁵⁾ The illustrations used to explain Castiglioni's brothers' products' functionality are designed by Steven Guarnaccia. They were part of the exhibition "Achille Castiglioni: Design!", curated by Paola Antonelli, MOMA, New York, 1997.

3-2 Michel Gondry digital ready-made.

Michel Gondry⁶⁾ is a film, commercial, and music video director noted for his inventive visual style and manipulation of mise en scene. Gondry is often cited, along with directors Spike Jonze and David Fincher, as representative of the influx of music video directors into feature film. In his video clips and commercials; he was a pioneer of several new technical features. The video he designed for IAM (Je danse le Mia) was the first video clip using the morphing techniques. And above all he invented the technique of several cameras taking simultaneous pictures around the subject. This technique was used for the first time in a video commercial for an Insurance Company, then in Bjork's "Army of Me" video clip and in the movie "The Matrix" (1999). For the purpose of this study is remarkable to notice that many of his projects are based on the digital manipulation of existing video material that does not include any acted part. A ready-made technique based on conventional existing sources turned into meaningful projects by the selective act of the designer. Star Guitar (Chemical Brothers 2002) is exclusively using video material shot by the window of a moving train cart: there is no acting in the video. The outside landscape images are repetitively cut to follow the beat of the electronic loop: the editing is the key-tool to establish a dynamic relationship between, the otherwise mute images, and the music. In La Tour de Pise by J. F. Coen (1993) his ready-made visual technique is even more extreme. [Fig. 9]



[Fig 9] "on fera des voyages mon amour si t'es sage, je suis ton Romeo & tues ma Juliette dans les films les heros" La Tour de Pise-Jean Francois Coen 1993, Ready-Made built in Karaoke

The video is a built in karaoke. But instead of using captions superimposed to the video coordinated with the music, Gondry used street signs captured in the streets of Paris. The editing of the images follows the text of the

⁶⁾ Michel Gondry, France 1964, directed about 40 music videos and won several awards (Cannes Lion D'or for Levi's commercial) In Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, released in 2004, Gondry used many of the digital manipulation techniques tested in his music videos. (Best Story Academy Award in 2005.)

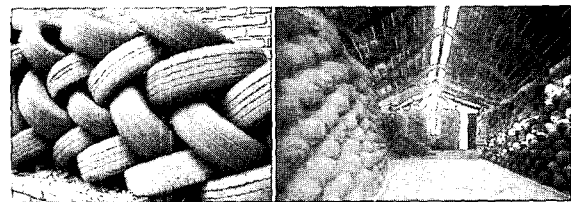
song creating a new scenario made by familiar images: a digital application of the ready-made technique.

3.3 Ready Made in small budget interior and architecture projects.

The vast majority of the projects most architects and interior designers are normally undertaking are always dealing with small budgets and tight schedules. It is a natural and necessary condition in our profession but at the same time a quite challenging situation in terms of design. Differently from what happens in product design, in architecture and interior design there is no time or budget to develop custom made prototypes: designers have to rely almost completely on market sources to give shape to their projects. Therefore the ability to look through a huge source library with critical / creative eyes becomes a basic skill for every designer. Unconventional interpretation of existing materials, a basic feature of the ready made process, becomes a powerful resource to give identity to low budget projects. This re-considering process happens at two different levels: constructive and conceptual

3.3.1 Constructive level

Materials are selected from the market or recycled from different productions and then assembled in a new and original way. Their function is completely reinvented but their performances are very similar, and sometimes better, then conventional materials. The Yancey Chapel by Rural Studio⁷⁾ and the 101 Bike shop by Elastico⁸⁾ share the same constructive use of recycled tires.



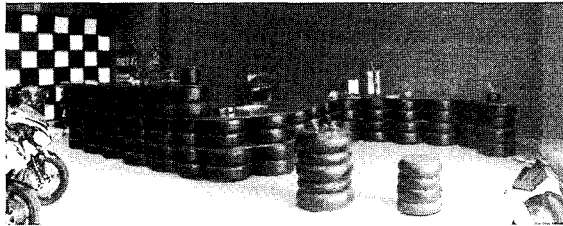
[Fig 10] Yancey Chapel, Rural Studio, Hale County, Alabama, 1995

In the first case [Fig. 10] the tires are filled with soil, covered with metal mesh and then plastered: they are not recognizable anymore as independent objects under the thick layer of mortar, but the geometry of the walls still reveals its construction process. The same effect would

⁷⁾ Rural Studio was founded by Samuel Mokbee and D.K. Ruth in Alabama's Hale County. For more then ten years, with their students from Auburn University, they created inexpensive building using cheap and recycled materials in alternative and creative ways.

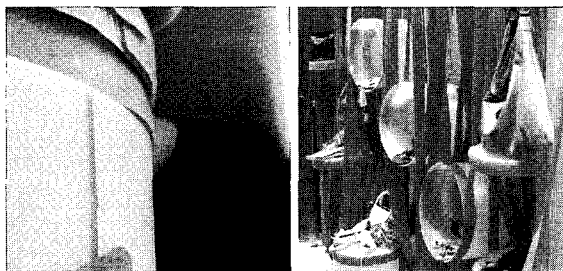
⁸⁾ Elastico (95-05), architecture office based in Torino, Italy and Seoul. In 2004 part of New Trends or Architecture In Europe and Asia Pacific III www.architecture-trend-press.net/Exhibition/Enter.html

have been very difficult to achieve with orthodox materials. In the 101 Bike shop [Fig. 11] tires are exposed and regularly arranged as if they were bricks. They support the counter and they divide the working area from the showroom. The source is made very visible in order to strengthen the relationship between the material (car and motorcycle tires) and the space function: motorcycle retail and tuning shop.



[Fig 11] 101 MotoShop, Elastico + C. Carena, Trofarello, Italy 2004

In the Duemio⁹⁾ shop by Elastico the main source is Velcro. [Fig. 12] Velcro is mostly used in fashion and furniture design as a flexible connection between elements; nevertheless Velcro is a very sophisticated material developed by NASA to fasten objects in zero gravity conditions. In some cases it can be as strong as bolts and screws but in its commercial application is usually very loose. In this shop Velcro is used as a construction system to support the items display: a continuous curtain of female Velcro offers infinite connection to the shelves wrapped with male Velcro edges. The system proved to be extremely flexible, the shelves can be arranged in any desired position, and economically extremely convenient due to the unconventional exploitation of a very inexpensive source.

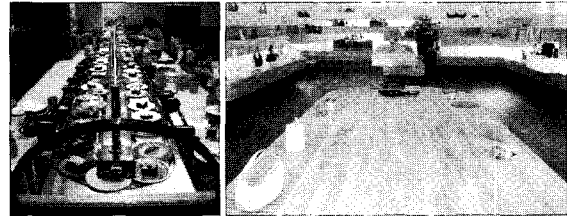


[Fig 12] Duemio, Elastico, Seoul, South Korea, 2004

3.3.2 Conceptual level

In this case the ready made process is applied to existing items eradicated from their original context, installed in a new environment and then used to perform functions different from the original use. The item often remains the same but the context around it radically changes creating

a quite surprising displacement effect. It is the case of Louis Quatorze Flagshiptore¹⁰⁾ by Elastico. [Fig. 13] A sushi conveyer belt is mounted in the interior of a luxury fashion store but instead of carrying food is moving around bags and merchandise. Customers stand still while bags are passing by. It gives a deja-vu feeling to customers that figure themselves in an Airport lobby, waiting for their bags in front of the baggage claim conveyer belt.



[Fig 13] Louis Quatorze Flagship Store, Elastico, Seoul, 2004

4. READY MADE AS EDUCATIONAL TOOL

4.1 Educational experiments.

From an educational point of view this selective-creative exercise, which is the basic feature of the ready made technique, proved to be quite useful for young design students: it is a sort of preparatory gymnastic you have to go through before undertaking more challenging projects. It is somehow very similar to the horizontal and vertical sticks that, as an elementary student, you have to draw on a white sheet of paper before learning how to write the letters of the Roman alphabet. If you succeed doing so your writing will be fluent and clear. As any other skill it needs to be carefully developed and then constantly trained in order to keep imagination in a good shape. In the past two years I have been teaching a Basic Design class in several design school in South Korea: one of the projects proposed to the students was a ready-made. The theoretical foundation of the exercise was based on Duchamp and Munari research followed by example derived from fields different from interior and product design (mostly art and media examples) in order to provide the students only with a conceptual understanding of the ready made technique. With a very limited budget, 15.000 Won, and a tight schedule, three weeks, each student explored off line and on line markets in search of cheap products suitable to be transformed into design objects: the final target of the project was to reinvent new items changing use and meaning to the original sources.

4.2 Ready made families

Considering the limited design experience of all the participants, the results were really surprising proofing, once again, displacement as a very effective tool to give familiar feelings to new items. Among the forty projects developed

⁹⁾ Duemio: SPACE #439 South Korea, June 2004, pp. 158/161

¹⁰⁾ Louis Quatorze: SPACE #436 S. Korea, March 2004, pp. 176/79

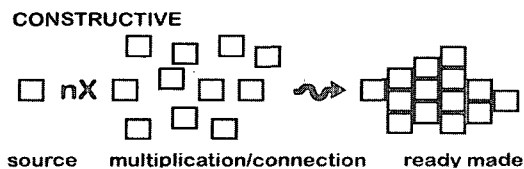
during this educational experiment and used as a case study for this article, is possible to individuate several common elements based on the same design process.¹¹⁾ I will define these groups as families since they share an independent creative line derived by an original interpretation of the sources. The first two are very similar to the one described in the previous paragraph, constructive and conceptual; in addition to those we can consider some other families of ready made objects: the aggregative and the elaborative. The following are few selected examples from each group.



[Fig 14] Ready made family diagram

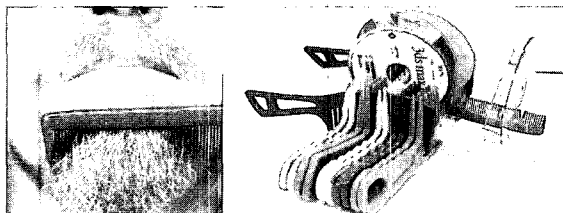
4.2.1 Constructive

Sources become the main construction material for the realization of new objects. This procedure takes full advantage of the limited cost of the single unit to repeat it indefinitely. Sources are used as modular components and in most cases no other material is involved in the process: the connection between the different parts is included in the features of the original piece. The final result retains some of the qualities of the sources but the new combination shows them to us under a brand new light. Most of these items could also be indefinitely extended without affecting the power of the original idea.



[Fig 15] Constructive ready made process diagram

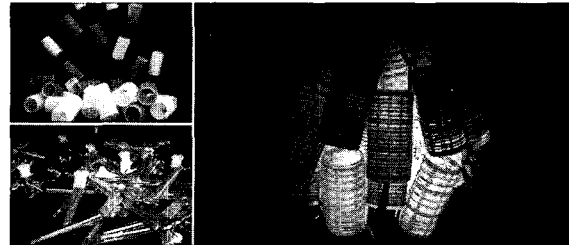
CD Holder - Combs are connected are connected together without using any other material. The compact disks are clipped between the combs ribs and the new piece can be used in many different positions, both vertically and horizontally.



[Fig 16] Park Yu-Jin, CD Holder, combs, 2005

¹¹⁾ The research method is based on the empirical observation of projects results. The families' names have been selected to express their generative method. Constructive="construere", heaped together. Conceptual="concupere", conceive. Aggregative="ad" (towards) + grex (flock), herded together. Elaborative=e (out) labor (work), work out.

Hair roll light - Several hair rolls are placed around a regular fluorescent light: they stick together partially because of the Velcro surface which are made of, and partially using regular hair pins. The item is exploiting the rolls translucency to produce a soft toned ambient light.



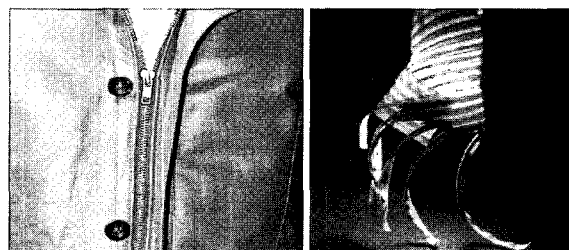
[Fig 17] Kim Woo-Suk, Light, hair rolls, hairpins, light, 2005

Bottle holder - Several scotch rolls are connected together by the same scotch tape: the item comfortably fits regular wine bottles and can rotate in different position without losing his functionality.



[Fig 18] Kwon Hyun-Jung, Bottle holder, scotch rolls /tape, 2005

Zipper light - Many zippers are connected using the same kind of thread used in clothing. They are used as a screen for a hanging bulb offering many possibilities to filter the lighting source.



[Fig 19] Ko Hyun-Dong, Light, zippers, 2004

4.2.2 Conceptual

In this case objects are extracted from their original context and re-located in a completely different one with minor variations. Few elements are added to guarantee the functionality of the new item. This process takes full advantage of the evocative qualities of the source: once displaced and reconsidered the new objects are immediately able to establish a sympathetic relationship with the viewer.

CONCEPTUAL



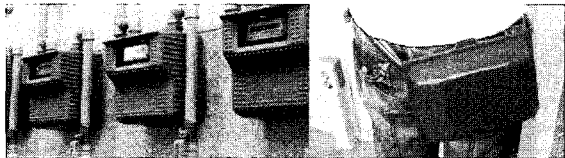
source conceptual rotation ready made
[Fig 20] Constructive ready-made process diagram

Utility pockets - Inexpensive italy towel gloves are applied with safety pins to any sort of outfit. They provide additional utility pockets, particularly handy when working with interchangeable tools.



[Fig 21] Han Na-Ra, Utility pockets, italy towel, pins, 2005

Hip sack - Straps and a safety lock are applied to a recycled gas box containers used as a hip sack. Opening and closing device are perfectly functioning as part of the original object.



[Fig 22] Lee So-Jin, Hip sack, gas box, belt, safety lock, 2005

Sexual pillow - A generously stuffed bra is used as a pillow for dozing users. Instead of working as an intimate active support it becomes a public passive receiver of dreaming attentions.



[Fig 23] Choi Kyung-Woo, Sexual pillow, bra, fabric, 2004

4.2.3 Aggregative

Multiple sources are used to produce this kind of item. The target in this case is to produce a conventional object but the way to assemble it is completely original. All the different parts are substituted by existing products, very similar to the original parts, but not specifically designed to perform the same function. Therefore the main quality of the final item is to be found in the hybridization of its

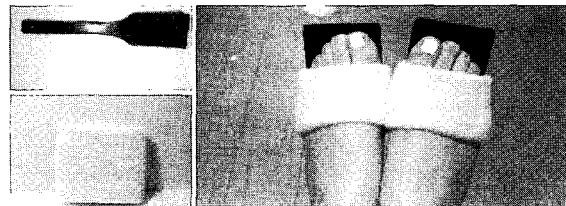
basic components.

AGGREGATIVE



source1 + source2 connection ready made
[Fig 24] Aggregative ready made process diagram

Slippers - A wrist band and a wooden rice spoon are connected in order to create a unique pair of slippers: they can be hung to any metal hook recalling the previous function of the spoon.

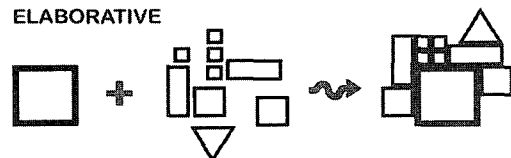


[Fig 25] Kim Li-Na, Slippers, wood spoon, wristband, 2005

4.2.4 Elaborative

The main characteristic of this specific group of ready made is the elaboration that is necessary to apply to the original source in order to transform it into a new object. In this kind of process the source is usually a very flexible item, able to perform several functions. The further elaboration applied to it gives to the objects a strong personality, partially hiding the characteristics of the original element. Among all the ready made families, this is the one that requires the highest amount of work to give new meaning to the reconsidered initial object.

ELABORATIVE



source complementary elements ready made
[Fig 26] Elaborative ready made process diagram

Hunchback backpack - An acryl hemisphere is covered by a fabric top, connected with straps and used as a backpack. The translucent part allows to check the items on the inside of the bag generating immediate curiosity.



[Fig 27] Lee Kwang-Hoon, Hunchback backpack, acryl hemisphere, fabric, clips, zipper, 2005

Wine holder - A traditional laundry stick offers the support to a crafted wine bottle holder structure. The grip remains the same but the use is completely reinvented.



[Fig 28] Park Ki-Yong, Wine Holder, laundry stick, wood, 2005

5. CONCLUSIONS

"I realized very soon the danger of repeating indiscriminately this form of expression and decided to limit the production of "Readymades" to a small number yearly. I was aware at that time, that for the spectator even more for the artist, art is a habit forming drug and I wanted to protect my "Readymades" against such a contamination"¹²⁾ Duchamp himself was aware of the danger of the readymade, and, as he affirmed in this interview on 1964, he limited the production to few pieces per year to prevent any sort of abuse in the use of such a creation technique. As a premise to the conclusions of this study, we share the same recommendation for all users. Ready-mades are one of the possible ways to carry on design projects, but not the only one. Its positive effects are mainly related to the conceptual approach to design that the ready-made implies: for these reason they are particularly indicated as a foundation practice for young designers. The following are the main conclusion drawn by this study

-Exploring/reconsidering:selective/creativeprocess. Encouraging design students to work on a ready made project it is the first step towards a reconsidering attitude, which is a basic feature of every good designer. In design nothing should be given as granted: designers must be able to look at the world without any bias in order to produce original work. This selective/creative process allows exploring existing sources with a creative attitude, taking them apart to put them back together in a different way. Conceptual deconstruction, material reconstruction.

-Recycling attitude. Our industrial contemporary society set a quite unremarkable record: we are the biggest waste producer in the history of mankind. It has become a necessity, and not just a trend, to elaborate convincing recycles strategies to overcome this global situation. The ready made process has a built in recycle attitude at the base of his selective/creative process. Its purpose is to turn a necessity, to be economical, into virtues, good design. Therefore it is delivering a quite positive message to young designers encouraging them get the best results

out of any time and budget limitations.

-Familiar identity for unconventional objects. The ready made outcomes are usually unconventional items. Nevertheless they carry most of the qualities of the original sources and for these reasons they offer a very familiar image even to people completely unaware of design. There is always a touch of irony in all the ready made projects that, like in the Castiglioni's work¹³⁾, helps to lighten the very formal atmosphere that surrounds the work of many designers. Irony becomes a useful tool to help placing projects in a much deeper perspective.

-Focus on ideas The main positive aspect of the ready made process is its extreme concentration on ideas. When exported from the conceptual art field to the practical design world, the ready made process starts immediately to deal with all the technical problems that are part of every design project. Since the main goal is to find a successful idea, it becomes very difficult to "cheat"using stylish solutions to turn conventional projects into convincing presentations. It goes deep to the problems' core, leaving no room for uncertainty: good ideas succeed, bad ideas fail. This extreme condition makes it particularly appropriate as an educational tool: it forces students to seek for inspiration in everyday objects, which can be found in every home and most of all, to concentrate on ideas avoiding fashion fads because, as Munari used to say, "nothing goes out of fashion as fast as fashion itself".

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¹²⁾ Interview with M. Duchamp:Apropos of 'Ready mades', (1961)

¹³⁾ "There has to be irony, both in design and in the objects. I see around me a professional disease of taking everything too serious. One of my secrets is to joke all the time." Achille Castiglioni.