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*Contemporary  
hybrids between  
design and art*

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## **Introduction: Contemporary hybrids**

This dissertation explores the phenomena of hybrids, understood as mixtures and transgressions of art and design, which have, within recent decades, been created as a result of interchanges or confluences between design and art. The focal point is on contemporary artists and designers whose practices are placed somewhere in-between or across the two disciplines in different interfaces and points of contact. This blending of elements and influences from design and art generate objects and projects of an unresolved or ambiguous character which seem to transgress, challenge or intentionally disturb categories. Hybridisation or merging of art and design, as well as other creative disciplines, is really nothing new: overlaps and interactions between disciplines is a recurring phenomenon throughout the history of the creative arts. However, what can be considered new about the current situation of hybridity is not only a seemingly intensification of exchange but also the character of, the conditions for and the focus on the contemporary hybrid connections.

Since the late 1990s the apparent intensification in points of contacts or meetings between art and design have been focused not only in cultural circles in terms of numerous exhibitions across design and art, especially in the context of emergent exhibition spaces specializing in this interface, but part of this phenomena has also been the centre of commercial attention within a niche market for so called designart. Overall the emphasis on the different manifestations of overlaps or fusions created a sense of a blurring or melting together of design and art. However, a closer look at the different hybrids which manifest this seemingly convergence reveals that within the overlaps or crossings of art and design there are quite differentiated approaches, practices and objectives to fusing the two. Two passages, crossings or strands appear dominant when investigating into the plethora of contemporary movements and practices in-between

design and art<sup>1</sup>. The one crossing, which has elsewhere been termed 'designart', consists in movements, or transgressions, from design towards or into art, resulting in, for example, hybrid objects blending the element of functionality of design with the element of meaning or content from art. An example of a hybrid within this crossing, which will be analysed further, is *Dust Furniture* by the designer Jurgen Bey: a conceptual piece in-between design and art which consists in specially designed vacuum bags that are transformed into furniture as dust is assembled in them (Fig. 1 p I). The other main crossing consists in intersections or crossings from art into design. Here, the outcomes are works which combine art with, for example, elements of utility and social relevance from design. The artist Michael Rakowitz's *PARAsite* is one of the examples of hybrids from this crossing to be analysed (Fig. 2 p I). *PARAsite* consists in custom made, temporary and transportable shelters that exploit the energy systems of building and combines solution and critique. These two passages or crossings between design and art, which can be said to illustrate two movements going in opposite directions, manifest themselves in quite different material outcomes. However, the commonality across these manifestations is that elements with different origins are blended resulting in different artefacts which will be characterised as hybrids within the context of this dissertation.

In the contexts of exhibitions and recent publications on the topic the contemporary situation of the intermingling of design and art (and related disciplines) has been described with metaphors of border crossing or dissolution of boundaries between two territories (García-Antón, King, & Brändle, 2007; Greff, 2008). The present research should be read as a contribution to a more nuanced understanding of the phenomena of hybrids between design and art. The nuances and precisions relate, among others, to the territories, their borders and the character of the border-crossings. It will not be adequate to describe and explain the phenomenon of hybrids between design and art as the result of an exchange taking place at one location nor to describe it as an equal flow of designers

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<sup>1</sup> This observation is based on different publications and exhibitions on the topic of the contemporary interrelationship between art and design which will be accounted for in the first chapter.

entering, or attempting to enter, the field of art and artists going in the opposite direction. The frontier between art and design is not constituted by one stable and clear-cut dividing line, but it should rather be considered as multiple border areas or points of contact. Therefore the use of the analogy of two territories or fields bordering onto the other poses several challenges. Of importance is also that both the field of art and the field of design appear in a continuous state of expansion into a wide range of territories which only complicates the matter further. As a consequence this research of transgressions or hybridity is based on an understanding of design and art as substances, from separate origins, which may be blurring or merging and producing mixtures, but due to the expansive character of both art and design, these substances cannot be considered as entirely “pure” bases. Furthermore art and design have in common that they border onto other related disciplines e.g. architecture, fashion and craft and, as the following will illustrate, despite the intention to limit the scope to the mixtures of art and design, elements of craft, architecture and fashion are also to various degrees present in the blending.

As for the practitioners, who move across the borders, it is equally complicated, as the individual practitioner, or group of practitioners, may cross or position themselves at several points and at multiple levels according to the character of the work or project. Accordingly the degree of significance associated with the act of transgression itself also varies in selected practices in-between design and art. Whereas the crossing of borders may initially have been considered as transgressive behaviour or as a more “risky” endeavour, practitioners of today appear to move, more or less, freely across the borders (Coles, 2012). In relation to the border-crossing metaphor, the intensification of transgressions across design and art has been described as resulting in an almost dissolution of the boundaries. The premise for my research is, nevertheless, to consider the borders or boundaries between art and design as still existing, although unclear, and as being further pushed and challenged by the hybrids in question.



The territorial map of design and art has certainly become more complex but the continuous existence of borders between them is reflected in the discourses within both art and design. Different forms of critique regarding the mixture of art and design has been raised which points to guards patrolling the borders of both territories (Foster, 2003; Rawsthorn, 2013). Alison Rowley and Griselda Pollock, in their book chapter *Painting in a 'Hybrid Moment'*, provide a sketch of two opposing ways of responding to influences from other discipline:

“‘Hybrids’ would seem to accept a loss of purity, a kind of mutation. At the positive end of the critical spectrum, hybridisation might be seen as a necessary and welcome cross-fertilisation. At the negative end, however, it is merely some kind of horrible miscegenation’ (p 39)

This thesis and research into contemporary hybrids does not aim to neither critique hybrids as a form of pollution nor does it attempt to positively valorise the phenomena as fruitful experimentations and cross pollination. Instead this research has been fuelled by an analytical curiosity about how the potential of instability or ambiguity which appears to be activated in hybrids, is exploited or deployed and to what means. Furthermore the interdisciplinary or composite character of my own academic position should be remarked as it is composed of a background in Art History, Anthropology and Cultural Studies. This research reflects my theoretical interest in the meanings of material culture and design and a desire to combine perspectives from art, design and culture studies to explain and understand the phenomena of hybrids.

### **The scope of the research**

The question is: why have I, from this diversity of practices in-between and across design and art, chosen to focus specifically on the two before mentioned passages or crossings? Certainly other groupings of hybrids, points of overlap and cross influences can

be observed in the terrains of art and design for example the cross field in-between installation art and interior design exemplified by e.g. Tobias Rehberger, Liam Gillick and Jorge Pardo. This grouping which reflect a movement from art towards design in the form of borrowing of elements from design and adoption of a formal language associated with design has been treated by Alex Coles (Coles, 2005, 2007, 2012). It has also been the specific focus of a recent PhD thesis, and resulting book, by Elena Agudio titled: *Designart La poetica degli oggetti bastardi* (Elena Agudio, 2013)<sup>2</sup>. Another grouping of hybrids present in the cross sections between design and art is so called 'critical design'. This is similar to designart in the sense of constituting fields of design practice that 'may be understood to occupy their own critical space between high design and fine art' (Julier, 2014 p 102). Extensive accounts for and discussions of critical design has for example been provided in articles and other publications by Mathews Malpass, Magnus Ericson, Ramia Mazé and Johan Redström (Ericson & Mazé, 2012; M. Malpass, 2013; M. a. Malpass, 2012; Mazé & Redström, 2007). Both mentioned movements between art and design are certainly relevant and of importance when dealing with the contemporary interrelationship between design and art. Actually some of the practitioners dealt with here, for example Jurgen Bey and Marti Guixé, are working in ways that parallels critical design and other researchers have contextualized their practices as 'critical'<sup>3</sup>.

However, my focus is limited to two different and seemingly unrelated crossings of design and art and this choice is based on different deciding factors including personal, analytical interests. When I began this research project I had an initial mental mapping or overview of some of the many positions in-between art and design. In order to gain more knowledge about the practitioners in these cross sections I researched into different articles, publications and exhibitions on the topic of the exchanges or mutations between

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<sup>2</sup> It has not been possible for me to read neither the PhD thesis nor the book by Agudio as my knowledge to Italian is unfortunately limited. I have, however, met Agudio for a talk about the content of her dissertation. Furthermore the catalogue text written for *Totem and Taboo* appears to summarize some of the central points of her dissertation.

<sup>3</sup> Both practitioners have for example been exhibited as part of the exhibition *Designing Critical Design* at Z33 in Belgium in 2007

design and art<sup>4</sup>. These initial investigations pointed, in combination with the attempts to establish a sort of typology of contemporary practices within the literature on the topic of contemporary meetings of art and design, to the existence of two parallel crossings between art and design wherein many practitioners could overall be placed. As already introduced these two crossings consist in: 1) mixing design with characteristics of art such as 'aboutness' and symbolic qualities resulting in ambiguous furniture-like objects and 2) blending art with parameters from design such as use-function resulting in solutions for living and dwelling. The manifestations of these two seemingly opposing movements may at a first glance appear as design mutating into art and art becoming design, however, as the following will show, it is rather, a case of different fusions and cross pollinations generating hybrids which are both/and or somewhere in-between design and art. The two points of overlap I have chosen as framings of the selected cases are quite different in terms of their outcomes, that is terms of the material appearances of the created hybrids and in terms of the transgressions they would seem to reflect. Overall, the hybridisation happening in the first crossing, initiated from design towards art, appears to aspire to release design from its close relation to an everyday context and move it into the autonomous sphere of art - and the more prosperous market here. In contrast the hybridity within the second crossing could be interpreted as part of the ongoing attempts within art to transgress its autonomy and via design have an impact in people's everyday lives. This interpretation of the potential motives for mixing and transgressing will, however, be nuanced and discussed throughout this dissertation.

In light of the differences in approaches and objectives reflected in hybrids from these two distinct passages between art and design it may not seem an obvious choice to unite them in the context of an analytical project. Surely considering just the one intersection of design and art and its outcomes which have been categorised as designart would be sufficient research material as for example Damon Taylor has demonstrated very well in

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<sup>4</sup> The literature and the insights gained will be accounted for in the first chapter which also provides an overview of exhibitions related to theme of the interface of design and art.

his PhD thesis titled *Design Art Furniture and the Boundaries of Function: Communicative Objects, Performative Things* (Taylor, 2011). Nonetheless, the scope of my research includes traffic, or movements, going in both directions in order to provide a more encompassing, although not complete, understanding of the contemporary relationship and cross influences between design and art. A motivating factor was the my initial discovery that few academic accounts have considered both movements even though the two selected crossings have been joined in the contexts of exhibitions. This made me curious about which insights a combined focus on both the “design-art relation” and the “art-design relation” could produce and whether an exploration into both might, despite apparent differences, identify some common themes or parallel traits in the hybrid character of the examples from the two groupings. A common feature within these two specific intersections between art and design is that the hybrids created are primarily material and three-dimensional objects. Within the discourses and practices of both art and design there has, in recent decades, been and continues to be, movements towards the immaterial or intangible in the form of focus on processes, situations and relations. Some of the practitioners in-between art and design which I place in the second grouping of hybrids, for example N55, have been conceptualised as ‘relational art’ and this focus has, in my view, led to a reluctance to consider their material engagement with design (Bourriaud, 2002). Therefore I am proposing that the discussions of these contemporary art practices could benefit from the perspective of hybridity. I am primarily interested in the material outcomes of the contemporary hybridity of art and design because, as Taylor remarks, ‘the world remains resolutely material’ (Taylor, 2011 p 18). This focus is furthermore motivated in the observation that the manifestations of the two groupings have a common theme in terms of addressing material culture through this creation of material objects. In the first selected grouping of cases, the commentaries on material culture are done through different transformative tactics applied to objects, primarily chairs and other furniture. In

the second grouping of cases, the commentaries relate to how we design our dwellings or habitation and the range of material objects included.

Obviously, the different cross sections between design and art to be examined below do not exist in a vacuum. Rather the hybrid practices have in common that they are influenced by different recent currents traversing art, design and contemporary culture more broadly. The hybrids will, therefore, in different ways and to various degrees, reflect working methods and interests that have also been emphasized in various diagnoses of contemporary creative practices. The contemporary tendencies which will primarily be discussed as influencing and framing the hybrids are: 1) the working method of creating on the basis of already-existing objects or works, so called appropriation or postproduction 2) the aspirations to engage users actively in the production or consumption of artefacts, so called prosumption 3) the so called social or relational turn across art and design and finally 4) the open source attitude among creative practitioners towards works and products. I apply two conceptual frameworks to discuss these different undercurrents in the selection of contemporary hybrids: the concept of prosumption as adapted by Seio Nakajima and the concept of postproduction as proposed by Nicolas Bourriaud (Bourriaud, 2000; Nakajima, 2011). These concepts, which are underlying themes throughout the analyses, will be explained further in the following chapter.

### **The conditions and possibilities for contemporary hybrids**

The different examples of hybrids analysed in this research have developed within the last twenty years. In combination with different historical developments, which will be sketched elsewhere, the selected groupings of hybrids relate to specific conditions and possibilities within both the design and the art world. As Alex Coles remarks, the conditions for works engaging several disciplines, what he terms the 'transdisciplinary model', have not before in history been 'ripe for the broader acceptance of the transdisciplinary model' (Coles, 2012 p 10). Coles describes the changes as follows:

‘by the mid 1990s both the intellectual and economic climate of the art world was such that it could nurture these dialogues more effectively – and even fuel them. With the rise of the design gallery and museum, along with the start of Design Miami/ in 2005, the design world could do the same’ (Coles, 2012 p 10).

The present examples which are made by designers creating objects by engaging with art are linked more or less closely with designart and the related niche in the market. The practitioners selected here do, as will be further explained in the analyses of their practices, also work within the broader system of production, distribution and consumption of the design world. The specific context for their contemporary practices is, nonetheless, the market for designart. Designart gathered, according to Julier, ‘pace in the 2000s as the global art market itself went through exponential growth’ (Julier, 2014 p 103). Both Julier and Sophie Lovell point to how the financial boom in the first decade of 2000 meant that collectors across the design and art market were searching for investment opportunities which again had an impact on designart (Julier, 2014; Lovell, 2009). Specialist galleries, auction houses and design and art fairs across Europe, especially in London, and in the US, were exhibiting and selling so called designart. The phenomenon of designart was also given a lot of attention in the media - especially the “flashy” furniture of designers considered to be “hot”, such as Ron Arad, Marc Newson and Studio Job, to mention a few. However, many of the so called “design artists” are to a great extent examples of engaging with art in ways that primarily involves adopting the parameter of creating unique or limited pieces. Therefore these mixtures include fewer substances borrowed from art than the examples I will analyse. There is no question that part of the objects in-between design and art, including my selection of hybrid objects, are ‘a function of a particular commercial circumstance’ to quote Julier (Julier, 2014 p 103). I am, nonetheless, reluctant to explain the wide range of contemporary practices where designers engage with art as merely positioning in relation to a commercial market. This can be supplemented by the observation that while the hype around, and the market for

designart, seems to have “cooled down”, the practitioners are still working and exhibiting across design and art. According to Taylor the historical conditions upon which designart depended ceased to exist on September 2008. Taylor states:

‘The reason why it is possible to be so specific as to when this happened is because Design Art (in its capitalised form) was the brand name, coined by a salesman, for a type of product: idiosyncratic use-objects, mainly furniture and domestic products [...] made in limited editions, exhibited and sold through galleries and auctions houses and collected by rich patrons in the same manner as fine art. This trade, therefore, developed in a specific context which ended at precisely this point, even if many of the participants have still to realise this’ (Taylor, 2011 p 275).

However, besides the more commercial galleries for designart, the platforms for the hybrids within the category of objects range from different exhibition spaces, where quite a few have a special focus on the interface between design and art, to museums of art, including so called applied art and museums of design. The galleries and exhibition spaces for design engaging with art have to some extent been concentrated in London, Rotterdam, New York and Basel, as remarked by Taylor (Taylor, 2011 p 24). However, from my point of view, other metro poles across Europe should be added: for example Berlin, Milan and Paris. Within my own Scandinavian, and more precisely Danish, context, there has not to any similar extent been a commercial market for these hybrids. There are Scandinavian designers working in the cross field of design and art, whose works are also exhibited internationally. As the phenomenon of creating objects oscillating between design and art is international so are the selected practitioners although predominantly from western countries.

The other grouping of hybrids relate mainly to the art world and the global network of institutions such as museums, galleries, biennales and other exhibition spaces. The

selected examples of hybrids, placed somewhere between product design and micro architecture, are predominantly based on public and private funding related with the economy of cultural institutions and less linked with the commercial art market system. The economic “boom” in the art market after the millennium, described by for example Sarah Thornton, have had little influence on this grouping of hybrids as they are, to a lesser degree, the subject of investments by collectors (Thornton, 2009). As some of these examples are not only placed within the museum, but also in the public realm, they are often commissioned as, more or less permanent, public art projects. Furthermore, many of the selected practitioners have occasionally created interior spaces, while combining design and art, such as cafés, bars or lounge areas, which are then commissioned as interior design projects by museums etc.

### **The research questions**

Given the developments in the recent decades of increased interaction, crossing and intermingling of art and design perceived as resulting in blurriness and dissolution of boundaries, it seems necessary to ask if this confusion can be clarified by identifying particular movements or points of overlap. I propose that within this seemingly fluidity or hybridity between design and art, distinctions can be made which are related to the field of origin as well as to the desired destination. To this end I primarily analyse a range of different hybrids which are the outcomes of two, already described, crossings or passages between design and art. Despite the differences between the two case groupings, I am overall framing them as having a hybrid character. As a consequence, one of the questions addressed across the two overall groups of cases, is how the hybridity of these objects is constituted? Rather than asking whether these objects should be considered design or art, I propose that they should be regarded as both/and or in-between – that is as hybrids. Leading from this it is asked: Which elements from art and design respectively are mixed? And as a result of the combination: What characteristics and potential meaning do these hybrids possess? As a mutual characteristic of these hybrids is the combination of own



elements with “foreign” substances and it is considered if and how these elements are added to transgress, challenge or fertilise the discipline of origin.

The examples of hybrids under consideration all appear to be involved with material culture and how we surround ourselves with objects whether it is domestic objects such as furniture or how we design our habitation. But as the examples for analysis are considered as both bearers of meaning and function the question is: How are the elements of design and art combined to create objects which can still be functional while at the same time paying attention to a making commentaries or statements?

Regardless of whether the selected hybrids depart from the practice of design or art, the combination of the two is rooted in an engagement with the material. Accordingly, the examination of characteristics of the different hybrids is addressed by closely studying the material objects. I am advancing the position that a productive way to analyse and interpret these objects oscillating between art and design is to first and foremost focus attention on the hybrids and how they are formed and subsequently relate this to their contextual background and different theoretical frameworks. As the selected examples illustrate a considerable diversity the questions asked in order to pursue the objective of understanding these hybrids varies accordingly.

For the part of the examples grouped as objects, or furniture to be precise, the mixture of design with art is often through formal and material experimentation. One could say in relation to e.g. Bey's *Dust Furniture* that it is aspiring to the status of, as well as challenging the notion of, 'art work'. Following this it is considered whether a concept of 'a work of design' can unfold these hybrids which have been categorised as designart -or “almost-art”. This includes asking how they challenge functionality, if or how they are “about something” and finally if they refer to design. Furthermore, I examine: which different approaches, tactics or productive methods are used? The objects under consideration appear to suggest appropriation as a recurring approach to creating, therefore enquires are made into the different examples of material transformations and juxtapositions of the

plastic monobloc as a case study. How is appropriation used differently as a working method among practitioners in the interface of design and art? How are the adaptations different in relation to usage and how can this difference be interpreted? How do the different appropriations make the object move across the categories of every day object, design and art object? I consider how the examples across the second chapter of hybrid objects enable the practitioners to position themselves or intervene in different fields.

A different set of questions are asked when examining the hybrids in the other grouping of examples where art engages with design in order to create proposals or solutions for dwelling and living. In the analysis it is examined how elements of design and art are combined to create functional solutions while simultaneously addressing ways of living and dwelling. A key question across the examples, often created for a nomadic life either by choice or necessity, is: to what degree do these projects reflect pragmatism or idealism? This means, for example, considering whether an example as Rakowitz's *PARAsite* primarily intend to be a general, practical solution or to provoke thoughts and raise consciousness about social ideals. Many of these examples can be characterised as mobile micro architecture (or design) and positioned intentionally between design, art and architecture while employing the mobility and temporariness tactically. This leads to exploring whether, or to which degree, these cases can be considered as parasites? Or, do these examples reflect ideals about self-sufficient lifestyles aspiring to be becoming independent organisms?

Finally, the question is, after focusing on the differences in practices and their hybrid outcomes in two different points of overlap, if similarities can be found in these practices apart from their simultaneous engagement with art, design and the material? To this end it is asked whether prosumption and/or postproduction are recurrent strategies which are reflected across the examples of hybrids. This question is asked, on the one hand, in order to reconsider the feature of creating on the basis of existing objects. On the other hand, the question of prosumption is raised to address the relationship between object and user in

the hybrids. This relationship can, whether the object is art or design, be more or less physical and more or less based on the need for the user to interact with the object in order to complete it or experience it fully. Given how there seems to be an emphasis on engaging users in social, participatory and open works in contemporary creative disciplines, it is discussed how these broader tendencies are reflected in case of the selected hybrids. I argue that many of the participatory and interactive projects are also characterised by hybridity and despite the extensive focus on open-ended processes the objects are still present. The question is therefore: how are objects parts of these projects and which role do they play as catalysts in engaging the users? What is the degree or character or participation of the user in forming the end “product”? As these final examples reflect the sharing of working methods across art, design and their different interfaces it is asked how the current situation of hybridity is interrelated with inter-, cross or transdisciplinary ways of working.

### **The chapters**

This dissertation consists of five chapters. The first chapter maps out the terrain of and the background for the topic. In the first part of I review existing literature on the contemporary interrelationship of design and demonstrate that the topic has only to a limited extent been examined within the academic discourse, therefore other publications including exhibition catalogue texts will also be revised. From the literature review I extract and discuss the different conceptualisations and definitions of art and design which are activated and challenged by hybrids and a list of parameters related to design and art respectively is generated. I account for characteristics and the terminology used in relation to objects oscillating between art and design provided in the literature which leads to explaining my use of terminology for these phenomena in the form of hybrid and hybridity. The chapter then goes on to sketch the history of the interrelationship of design and art, as I focus on roughly the last twenty years as the background where historic parallels to contemporary hybrids can be found. This is followed by taking different

contemporary framings into consideration such as: conceptual design, or the influence of Droog, critical design, relational art or the social turn and finally appropriation as a working method. The second part of the first chapter accounts for the conceptual frameworks which inform my thinking and the methodological approaches which have inspired my studies and interpretations of hybrids. I consider how to study hybrids as I propose analysing and interpreting the phenomenon through close object-based analyses inspired by a combination of phenomenological hermeneutics and semiotics. My close analysis approach is supplemented with considerations on including the perspectives of the contextual backgrounds of the hybrids. Finally, the chapter ends by sketching the theoretical concepts which the hybrids will be discussed against such as presumption, postproduction and other concepts from art, design and related fields of study.

In chapter two, the focus is on the crossing where hybrids are created which can be placed within the category of objects and furniture in particular. Different examples are analysed and interpreted in order to understand the outcomes of intermingling features from art with functional design objects. The first part of the chapter focuses on case studies from the practices of three different designers: Robert Stadler, Jurgen Bey and Martino Gamper, and investigates how they engage with design through adopting tactics associated with art. This section also asks how to analyse and interpret these artefacts elsewhere categorised as designart and it establishes an approach for doing so in terms of a paraphrase of 'a concept of an autonomous work of design' (von Oppeln, 2011). The second part of the chapter consists of several examples of hybrids by different practitioners, designers as well as artists, where the recurring theme is the appropriation of the plastic monobloc chair. Appropriation is considered as a key tactic or productive method used in objects oscillating between design and art, yet the cases are discussed and compared in relation to how the manifestations of this tactic vary according to both the point of origins of the practitioners and the intended context. Characteristic for the selected appropriations of the plastic monobloc is the material transformation of an

everyday, mass produced object into an “extraordinary” object that generates new meanings in relation to the plastic chair and, as I propose, also provides new biographical possibilities within a culture. Finally, the last section provides a recapitulation and discussion of the questions concerning analysing and interpreting these hybrids as both bearers of meaning and function.

In the third chapter the case studies are all hybrids relating to dwelling: ranging from the category of product design to mobile micro architecture. The selected examples within this crossing, where artists engage with design to create functional proposals or solutions for living, are divided into projects primarily related to a nomadic existence by necessity and projects for mobility by choice. The first section analyses examples of artistic projects, by Krzysztof Wodiczko, Michael Rakowitz and Lucy Orta, among others, intended as both functional proposals for and comments on, or critique of, the issue of homelessness and which are compared to similar design solutions. The second section investigates different cases of mobile micro architecture as reflected in the practices of Andrea Zittel, N55 and Atelier van Lieshout. The examples are considered as potentially functional living units and it is also explored how these cases reflect or articulate certain ideals about living. In order to examine how these cases combine functionality and artistic statements, the examples are discussed against a distinction between being pragmatic or idealistic. I suggest that these artistic projects use the characteristics of temporariness and mobility as a key feature and therefore the question of how they are positioned is discussed through the analogy of parasite vs. organism.

The fourth chapter provides a recapitulation and discussion of some of the key themes identified as recurring in the various contemporary hybrids analysed. Comparisons and discussions are made of the examples across the two movements or crossings by means of the concepts of prosumption and postproduction. This discussion on the theme of creating on the basis of the already existing and the issue of engaging users is taken further by addressing cases reflecting a mutual interest across design and art in ‘the social’ and in

'open source' (Larsen, 2012; von Busch, 2012). This perspectival part illustrates, even though it is not explored in-depth, how many of the selected practitioners are also engaged in projects which combine different aspects of design, art and other disciplines: projects which are characterised by open-endedness and engagement of users. Even though focus in these projects, which are more complex in their hybridity, is often on processes, this section analyses how objects are still present as catalysts in the interactions created or as "tools" provided for users.

The final and concluding chapter discusses how the different manifestations of hybridity may relate to particular working models such as an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary model. This leads to reflections on the understandings and insights about the contemporary phenomenon of hybrids that have been generated through closely examining and interpreting the objects themselves. In particular, I focus on clarifying the findings regarding the hybrid character of the analysed case studies in terms of how their mixture is made up of different components. Finally I reflect upon other potential perspectives and approaches which would further supplement and nuance the understandings generated here.

### **The selection of cases**

My selection of examples have been made in relation to the two overall groupings of hybrids I observed, and chose to focus on, in the cross fields of design and art. For making the selection of concrete case studies, in terms of hybrids and practices, I have found inspiration in the curatorial selections reflected in various exhibitions on the interfaces of design and art. From the exhibitions I looked further into different practitioners and examined the contexts, such as their representation in other exhibitions and galleries, which led to the discovery of other practitioners working in-between design and art. From this quite extensive, although less systematically conducted, mapping of the cross fields, the works and practices of different artists and designers appeared to be recurring more often. The recurrence of specific practitioners turned out to be related to a thorough and

ongoing preoccupation with combining art and design in the case of these practitioners, whereas for others the relationship of design and art seemed a more fleeting interest. My initial selection of practitioners therefore lead to excluding examples of more transient engagements with hybridity and focusing on practitioners reflecting more continuous and ongoing investigations into mixing art and design. As a consequence, many of the selected cases are quite well-known ones, as it has not been an explicit agenda neither to point to any vanguard nor to any undiscovered practitioners within these fields.

Within the grouping of cases in the second chapter I have chosen to focus on the practices of the designers Robert Stadler, Jurgen Bey and Martino Gamper. All three practitioners reflect, in different ways, conceptual approaches to design, which, as a central part of their practices, include investigating or challenging the relationship between design and art. Furthermore, some parallels can, as the analyses will show, be found in both their working methods for creating hybrids and in the fluidity with which they move across disciplines. One of the parallel tactics identified in their works is the working method of appropriation understood as reuse and adoption of already-existing objects. I chose to further investigate this theme of appropriation, which will also be discussed as presumption and postproduction, as it appeared recurring across contemporary hybrid objects, across different examples of re-use and mutations of the plastic monobloc chair. The different examples of appropriations are only a small section of the many cases of designers creating on the basis on the monobloc and these examples are complemented by a few examples of artistic engagement with the plastic chair. The choice of the specific cases of “hybrid monobloc” is again based on the parameter of a certain degree of mixture reflected in the objects and a certain degree of positioning in-between design and art being reflected in the practices of the producers. The practices of specific practitioners in the first grouping led to exploring appropriation as a recurrent strategy in objects in-between design and art more broadly, that is the referring to a theme is generated by the initial selection of primary practitioners. In contrast the key examples

in the second grouping of hybrids were initially chosen on the basis of their relevance for the theme of (mobile) solutions for living and dwelling. However, most of the cases of hybrid dwellings are also chosen from practices where mixing art and design is an ongoing and central issue. Whether the cases are related to a mobile, and potentially minimal, existence of necessity or choice, they have, as the cases in the second chapter, also been chosen based on them reflecting a certain degree of hybridity, or combination of solutions and commentaries. Finally, the last and smaller grouping of examples analysed in the fourth chapter are selected both on the basis of illustrating how different contemporary currents are also influencing practices in the crossings of design and art making the hybrids potentially even more complex. As this chapter is intended as broadening of the perspectives on the hybrids already analysed, the examples of e.g. engaging users in the creation of hybrid objects or projects are primarily supplementary cases from the practitioners already presented in the different analyses.

The selected examples of hybrids cannot provide an exhaustive platform to explore all the issues that are related to the movement or crossing in which they are placed. But these cases are, nonetheless, chosen for the richness and diversity they hopefully bring to illustrating their respective grouping of hybrids. Furthermore, an overall premise for being included as an example of a hybrid is that the mixture is constituted of a blend of at least two or more of what can be characterised as substantial elements, for example function or meaning, of design and art respectively. As a consequence neither examples of so called designart which are fully functional design produced as unique and exclusive objects, for example the furniture by Marc Newson, are included nor are examples of artists, e.g. Donald Judd or Olafur Eliasson, making a chair or a lamp on the side. These cases are within the context of this research not considered sufficiently hybrid, for what interests me are cases of hybridity which is constituted by mixing both the defining characteristics and mechanisms or structures of art and design.





## Outline of hybrids analysed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter

1998	2000-04	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010-14
	<b>Robert Stadler</b> <i>Pools &amp; Pouf, Rest in Peace</i>			<b>Robert Stadler</b> <i>Possible Furniture, Rest in Peace #2</i>	<b>Robert Stadler</b> <i>Tephra Formations</i>	<b>Robert Stadler</b> <i>Monochromes</i>
<b>Jurgen Bey</b> <i>Tree Trunk Bench, Extrusion Bench</i>	<b>Jurgen Bey</b> <i>Do Add chair</i> <b>Studio Makkink &amp; Bey</b> <i>Dust Furniture</i>					<b>Studio Makkink &amp; Bey</b> <i>The Crate Series, Werkstatt Kabinett, Kratkasten</i>
			<b>Martino Gamper,</b> <i>100 Chairs in 100 Days, If Gio Only Knew, Martino with Gio Ponti</i>	<b>Martino Gamper</b> <i>Receiving</i>		
	<b>Tina Roeder</b> <i>White Billions Chair</i> <b>Maarten Bass</b> <i>Where There's Smoke</i>	<b>Sam Durant</b> <i>Porcelain Chairs</i> <b>Superflex</b> <i>Copyright</i>	<b>Campana</b> <i>Transplastic Collection</i> <b>Jerszy Seymour</b> <i>New Order Chair</i>	<b>Maarten Baas</b> <i>Plastic Chair in Wood</i>	<b>Marti Guixé</b> <i>Statement Chairs</i>	

## Outline of hybrids analysed in the 3rd chapter

1988	1992-	1996-98	2000-02	2005-9	2010-14
<b>Krzysztof Wodiczko</b> <i>Homeless Vehicle</i>					
		<b>Michael Rakowitz</b> <i>PARAsite</i>			
			<b>Winfried Baumann</b> <i>WBF 240-H</i>		<b>Winfried Baumann</b> <i>Shopping Cart Metro-400</i> <i>I-H Shopping Cart KOPAIIKA-400,</i>
	<b>Lucy Orta</b> <i>Habitent</i>	<b>Lucy Orta</b> <i>Refuge</i> <i>Wear,</i> <i>Refuge</i> <i>Wear</i> <i>Intervention</i> <i>East</i> <i>London,</i> <i>Modular</i> <i>Architecture</i>	<b>Lucy Orta</b> <i>Body</i> <i>Architecture</i>		
				<b>Zo-loft</b> <i>Wheelly</i>	<b>Ragnhild Lübbert Terpling</b> <i>Urban Rough Sleeper</i>
				<b>Chat Travieso</b> <i>Collapsible Shelter No.3</i>	<b>Swags For Homeless</b> <i>Backpack Bed</i>
				<b>Concrete Canvas Ltd,</b> <i>ConcreteCanvas Shelter</i>	

### Outline of hybrids analysed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter

1992-94	1995-1997	1998-2000	2001-2003	2004-06	2007-09	2010-14
<b>Andrea Zittel</b> <i>Food Group Prep Unit, Cleansing Chamber, Body Processing Unit, Living Unit</i>			<b>Andrea Zittel</b> <i>A-Z Cellular Compartment Units</i>	<b>Andrea Zittel</b> <i>A-Z Wagon Stations, First Generation</i>		
	<b>AVL</b> <i>La Bais-ô- Drôme, Autocrat, Modular House Mobile, Mobile Home for Kröller- Müller</i>	<b>AVL</b> <i>Tampa Skull, Pioneer Set,</i>	<b>AVL</b> <i>Mini Capsule Side Entrance, Maxi Capsule Luksus, Freestate of AVL-Ville</i>			
			<b>N55</b> <i>Snail Shell System, Modular Boat, Floating Platform</i>	<b>N55</b> <i>Micro Dwelling</i>	<b>N55</b> <i>Urban Free Habitat System, Walking House</i>	<b>N55</b> <i>XYZ Spaceframe Vehicles</i>

## Outline of new hybrids analysed in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter

1997-2000	2000-04	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010-14
				<b>Martino Gamper</b> <i>Total</i> <i>Trattoria</i>		<b>Martino Gamper</b> <i>In a State of Repair</i>
				<b>Jerszy Seymour</b> <i>First</i> <i>Supper</i>	<b>Jerszy Seymour</b> <i>Workshop</i> <i>Chair,</i> <i>Coalition</i> <i>of</i> <i>Amateurs</i>	
						<b>Minale-Maeda for Droog</b> <i>Inside-out Furniture</i> <b>EventArchitectuur for Droog</b> <i>Box-o-rama</i>
	<b>FOS</b> <b>Kenneth A. Balfelt</b> <i>The Home of the Men,</i> <i>re-design</i>					
<b>Superflex</b> <i>Supergas</i>	<b>Superflex</b> <i>Biogas</i> <i>PH5 lamp</i>					
<b>N55</b> <b>Solar Power System</b>						<b>N55</b> <i>Spaceplates</i> <i>Greenhouse</i>

## **Chapter one: Framing the investigations and interpretations**

This chapter provides a background for understanding the objects of analysis addressed in this thesis. The chapter opens by a literature review which is a mapping of some of the issues, e.g. terminology and concepts, which should be taken into considerations when studying hybrids. Finally, before we can get close to the hybrids, I consider approaches to studying and analysing these objects in the second part of the chapter.

### **Literature review: characterisations and concepts**

The following takes the form of an examination and discussion of what has already been written on the contemporary meetings of design and art with a specific focus on these main issues: a) the definitions and descriptions of design and art as concepts and practices b) the characterisations, including associated terms and concepts, of the contemporary interrelationship of art and design c) the history of the points of contact between of design and art. The sequence in the literature review is from perspectives on the topic provided from the position of art (art theory and art history), to contributions considering the design perspective on the issue and finally curatorial points of view on the interrelationship of design and art. The review will address what can be drawn from the literature in terms of definitions of the concepts of art and design which will be followed by further reflections on the conceptualisations of design and art. It will also include examinations of how the contemporary meetings between design and art are characterised. Subsequently I will provide a historical background in terms of an overview of the central points in modern history, where design and art, according to the literature, have approached each other. In relation to this history of convergences it will be accounted for which different historical cases can be considered as constituting parallels or precursors to the selected contemporary manifestations of the meeting of art and design. Finally, the last part will consider recent movements, or practices, such as Droog design, critical design, relational

aesthetics and appropriation, where parallels in terms of interests, working methods and objectives may be found to the selected contemporary points of contact between design and art.

### **Alex Coles: from designart, and beyond, to transdisciplinarity**

A central contributor to the definitions and discussions of contemporary interfaces between art and design is Alex Coles with his publications: *DesignArt: On Art's romance with design*, *Design and Art* and *The Transdisciplinary Studio* (Coles, 2005, 2007, 2012). Coles' contributions on this theme were motivated by the frequent occurrence of the theme of the interrelationship between design and art in exhibitions around the year 2000 which according to Coles lacked: 'extended critical commentaries on the trend' (Coles, 2005 p 8). Coles positions his current research as 'drawn to the emergent interface between art, design and architecture', however, the outset for these publications is primarily art theory and art criticism (Coles). This is reflected in the two first publications and their inherent attempts to understand the relationship and interchange between art and design as a way to grasp developments within art. The ambition to characterise a specific field of practice within art, that engages design, is reflected in his selection of practitioners to serve as examples of the crossing of design and art who are predominantly practitioners who depart from art whereas he gives very few examples of designers approaching art. Coles combines his emphasis on movements from art towards design with the agenda of justifying these movements. Especially in *DesignArt*, Coles attempts at showing how design, even though others argue the opposite, plays a central and vital role in relation to art.

Coles writes in continuation of, and against, a discourse throughout the history of art where design is regarded as inferior to art. This discourse about forms of design that accent the ornamental and decorative is addressed by discussing the positions made by Adolf Loos and Hal Foster (Foster, 2003; Loos, 1998). In contrast to these positions, Coles

argues for design being the one of the more 'suitable bedfellows' for art (Coles, 2005 p 8). Consequently Coles presses for more openness and flexible approaches towards design within art through modulating the concept of design (Coles, 2005 p 19). In his argumentation for the fusion and close relatedness of art and design, Coles equates design with 'giving form', but without distinguishing between creating in design or art. Design is considered by Coles as the aesthetic form or shape of an art work and this leads to the following statement: 'all art is designed even if it endeavours to appear otherwise' (Coles, 2005 p 10). Thereby his argument, for design playing a role which is central to the vitality of art, is based primarily on the similarities between art and design such as having sketching, creating or giving form to an object in common.

Overall Coles' attempts at defining design and art respectively seems to emphasize the similarities and close relatedness of art and design. This is, for example, done by referring to the Vilem Flusser's account of the term design where design, machine, technology and art are closely related: one term being unthinkable without the other (Coles, 2005 p 10). The point which Coles makes, through the use of Flusser, is that design as a practice can be defined as forming a bridge between the world of technology and the world of art: 'design indicates the site where art and technology meet to produce new forms of culture' (Coles, 2005 p 10).

Although Coles has focus on how design and art thereby are closely linked, he does, however, also point to some differences such as design being traditionally related to mass production whereas art constitutes an autonomous sphere (Coles, 2007 p 10). The differences also become apparent when he describes the economy of, or the motivation for, exchange between art and design. Coles describes the motivation for artists to engage with design as: 'To artists, design is attractive because it provides a way to make money, to reach a larger audience, to look stylish – not to mention having something to sit on and live in while you are making more designart' (Coles, 2005 p 15). Art, on the other hand, entices designers because it is, according to Coles: 'something you can acquire attitude



from if you want to appear profound while at the same time producing something to go on your wall' (Coles, 2005 p 15). What is interesting in this description is that Coles does not address what it is regarding the content or idea of art or design respectively that motivates practitioners to work across disciplines. Furthermore this description seems to reproduce a discourse based on a dichotomy where design is superficial and profitable, while art is profound – a dichotomy which he elsewhere is opposed to. This focus on the economy and other external factors is also present in the following questions which the commingling of art and design raises:

'What is the precise nature of differences between the two disciplines in terms of the way they are commissioned and contextualized? Why are they valued differently in the marketplace? To what end do interfaces between them occur? And who benefits from them?' (Coles, 2007 p 11).

These questions are, nonetheless, left unanswered by Coles who does, however, also mention other motivations for artists to engage with design. The engagement with design can be part of achieving 'more rigorous composition' and/or 'a new speculative type of work truly somewhere in-between art and design' (Coles, 2005 p 15). The range in motivations for combining design and art is also reflected in the considerations which the meetings generate:

'Is the meeting part and parcel of a revolutionary gusto to change the way we live according to an ideological doxy? Does it regard just bathing every part of an individual's life in opulent decoration? Or is the meeting to do with gently nurturing new ways of living in and around art and design that are as yet unknown through continual experimentation?'(Coles, 2005 p 15).

To summarize, the characterizations, made by Coles, of the contemporary interrelationship of design and art points both to the diversity in ways of engaging art and design. Another aspect which Coles emphasizes in his descriptions of the contemporary

interface between design and art is that the subject of this interface fluid and changing (Coles, 2007 p 15). According to Coles, the practices in the interface between art and design have, in contrast to movements in art history such as e.g. Minimalism, 'not yet been accorded this legitimacy; they form more of a shifting tendency than a fixed movement or category' (Coles, 2007 p 10).

As a way to describe the tendency in recent decades to engage art and design the term designart has, according to Coles, been central in the debate. In relation to the term designart, the three publications by Coles can be considered to form a sequence where Coles first introduces, and argues for, the term and theme designart. Then as the term develops and gains currency Coles gradually rejects designart as a term and the phasing-out appear completed in the latest publication. In the first publication Coles combines the two words design and art to one word: designart and uses the term for the bringing together of the two disciplines. In the second publication Coles separates the words design and art concurrent with arguing for a rejecting of the term designart. The third publication reflects the current position of Coles on the matter, that is designart is considered an 'already aging' term and instead transdisciplinarity is now the concept used to understand contemporary practices combining design and art (Coles, 2012 p 11). But before explaining Coles' reasons for rejecting designart as a term for the phenomenon of convergences of art and design the following will account for what the definition of designart encompasses throughout the three publications.

In his first publication Coles uses design as a broad term for creating, but he also considers design as a specific activity of creating which results in functional objects such as furniture, posters, clothing and other. Following this the term designart characterises when artists are creating objects in these categories or to account for artists who 'have been receptive to or worked with design' (Coles, 2005 p 15). Coles borrows his definition of designart from the artist Joe Scanlan: 'Design Art could be defined loosely as any artwork that attempts to play with the place, function and style of art by commingling it with

architecture, furniture and graphic design' (Coles, 2005 p 14). The choice of this quotation to define designart emphasizes the art perspective on the topic: focus is on the movement from art and within artworks towards design and not vice versa. Another central point in how Coles perceives designart that it is considered as a matter of a simultaneous engagement of art and design, in opposition to perceiving designart as practices that transgresses boundaries (Coles, 2005 p 14). The descriptions made by Coles leave the impression that the simultaneity is not necessarily taking place at a work level but rather in the overall practice of some selected practitioners. These practitioners are characterised as 'flexible regarding the role they play, being content to work as designers and as artists at different times, although not always in the role or circumstance in which they would be expected to do so' (Coles, 2005 p 14).

In the second publication Coles provides some precisions or nuances to the definition of designart although also repeating the definition by Scanlan. Coles adds that designart describes different contemporary practitioners 'whose artefacts, installations and projects engage both art and design simultaneously' (Coles, 2007 p 10). In this way Coles specifies that designart takes place at within a work and project whereas earlier, in his broader definition, designart referred to e.g. artists who would occasionally make design without necessarily combining design and art. According to Coles the theme of utopias and collectives is central in the contemporary design-art relationship and coordinating is considered as key methodology in the work of the many practitioners in this intersection (Coles, 2007 p 11). Following this, Coles points to how the notions of the utopia and the collective has been inherent in art-design fusions at several points in history, but also how the quest for utopia might still be inherent in contemporary examples of engaging design and art. Of specific relevance for the analysis I will conduct, is that here Coles characterises some of the practices which I include as case studies in the grouping of hybrids initiated from art:

'The practices of Lucy Orta, Rirkrit Tiravanija, N55 and Superflex are premised on using design as a tool to organize the collective to achieve particular goals, be they in ecological or everyday design scenarios' (Coles, 2007 p 14). Coordinating as concept is included to focus on the mode of operating among contemporary practitioners who, according to Coles, foreground coordinating diverse aspects of their practice as a strategy (Coles, 2007 p 14).

In Coles' publications the perspective is mainly on the art-design relationship as a movement within art towards design, but in *Design and Art* Coles acknowledges a parallel traffic from design towards art. This is to some degree is relevant in relation to my grouping of hybrids initiated from design. Coles observes that designart is also being used as a term to describe a specific form of contemporary furniture design, or what he characterises as 'arty-looking design or designer-art' (Coles, 2007 p 11). As an example of this type of furniture design he mentions the Rover Chair by Ron Arad which reminds him of sculptural assemblage. Coles thereby points to the use of the term designart in a different context than the context of contemporary art: the context of galleries and auction houses, where designart was used to market specific furniture design. As a consequence of this, the term is, according to Coles, referring to something much more limited in scope, which leads him to suggest the discarding of the term (Coles, 2007 p 11). For Coles, the term designart was apparently not intended for adoption by the design world and some degree of critique is sensed in his summarization of designart in the latest publication:

'In the design world, attempts to account for the interface between art and design have led to a new interdisciplinary hybrid: designart, a way of working which attempts to apply the characteristics of the most traditional type of art – uniqueness, expressiveness, autonomy, eccentricity – onto design' (Coles, 2012 p 16).

In the most recent book, Coles argues that a surpassing of disciplinary boundaries has occurred over the last decade and a half. This has led to: 'artists and designers are now

defined not by their discipline but by the fluidity with which their practices move between the fields of architecture, art, and design' (Coles, 2012 front cover). Therefore we have entered an age in time where we 'find ourselves with a new studio model: the transdisciplinary' (Coles, 2012 front cover). Coles turns towards science to find his definition of the concept of transdisciplinarity as the concept has in the recent decades become more prevalent within sciences for example in the writings of Felix Guattari and Jean Piaget. Transdisciplinary is, according to Coles, defined by its clear distinction from the term interdisciplinary: while interdisciplinary is described as unease in classification and a certain mutation in a discipline, what is characteristic is 'that the disciplines will remain in place – just in an altered form' (Coles, 2012 p 16). On the contrary, transdisciplinary describes, as stated by Coles, a stage superior to interdisciplinary: 'a new space of knowledge that is, he (Piaget) says, "without stable boundaries between the disciplines" – a space that is at once between, across, and beyond all disciplines' (Coles, 2012 p 17).

Coles describes the transdisciplinary studio as: 'a microorganism that actively generates objects across the contexts of art, design, and architecture, and their respective discourses, which is circulated in very different ways' (Coles, 2012 p 13). He acknowledges the historic examples of similar studio models and argues that the transdisciplinary studio is the manifestation of a broader tendency which emerged in the 1990s. Furthermore Coles argues that it was not until the 90s that this tendency was accepted broadly and this acceptance was related to new institutional conditions and opportunities across the art and design world. Additional opportunities emerged also in combining the two worlds and all this has, according to Coles, led to many artists and designers requiring a new studio model and practices to deal with the new conditions (Coles, 2012 p 10). Coles characterises the practices moving across disciplines in the following way: 'their transdisciplinary structure is a fundamental aspect of how they operate' regardless of whether their output is termed as 'the "relational", the "participatory", the "art-

architecture complex” (and) “designart”” (Coles, 2012 p 11). On the part of Coles there seems to be an ambition to replace all these terms, also the term interdisciplinary, with transdisciplinary as a superordinate term. In my concluding chapter I will return to Coles’ notion of a transdisciplinary studio model and discuss the relevance of transdisciplinarity as a way to explain the practices of contemporary artists and designers creating hybrids.

### **Other perspectives on the interrelationship of design and art**

The relationship between art and design is also the topic of the Swedish two-volume anthology *Design och Konst – texter om gränser och överskridanden* edited by Torsten Weimarck (Weimarck, 2003a, 2003b). The first volume consists of texts from 1700 until 1960 and the second volume, which is considered of primary relevance in this context, consists of texts from 1960 until today. The following will account for the introduction made to the topic of art and design’s relationship by Weimarck supplemented with perspectives from three selected texts from the anthology: *Banalität und Entropie Zwei Grenzwerte der Kunst- und Designgeschichte* by Thomas Zaunschirm, *Die Möblierung der Kunst* by Annegret Gerleit and *Design and Crime* by Hal Foster (Foster, 2003; Gerleit, 2000; Weimarck, 2003c, 2003d; Zaunschirm, 2000) <sup>5</sup>.

Weimarck begins by describing a shift from expressing the relationship between art and design as ‘design or art’ to present day where the relation is articulated as ‘design and art’(Weimarck, 2003c p 11). Earlier the categories of design and art were clearly divided and differentiated as, according to Weimarck, the art world was characterised by pretensions whereas design was ‘anonymous, serving and inferior’ (Weimarck, 2003c p 11). These former distinctions of art and design are also considered unclear nowadays by Foster, who describes the situation as follows: ‘the aesthetic and the utilitarian are not only conflated but subsumed in the commercial, and everything – not only architectural

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<sup>5</sup> The three texts are translated to Swedish in the anthology but they have originally been published elsewhere and I am referring to them in the original versions (and original language).

projects and art exhibitions but everything from jeans to genes – seems to be regarded as so much design’ (Foster, 2003 p 17).

According to Weimarck art and design both relate to, what he terms, the sphere of human creations and within in sphere design and art can be considered as two interrelated and changeable poles (Weimarck, 2003c p 11). He attempts on the one hand to account for the relatedness of design and art, but also emphasizes their differences e.g. by pointing to how design differs from art by having purposefulness, practical usability and social relevance (Weimarck, 2003c p 11). The effort made to tying design and art together is reflected in accounting for how the term design, dating back to the renaissance, relates to the Latin word *disegnare*: meaning to draw, sketch or visually conceptualize something (Weimarck, 2003c p 13). Following this Weimarck places the activity of designing, as understood in the above sense, as a central part of artistic creation. In similar ways Zaunschirm points to the relatedness of design to art through the notion of *disegno*, but also remarks: ‘the search for etymological roots can seldom lead us to the contemporary meanings (of design)’ (Zaunschirm, 2000 p 17).

The central point which Weimarck also makes about the concept or notion of design is that a present-day notion differs from the drawing/sketching concept of the renaissance tradition. Instead today design is characterised by distinctly having a practical and social use-function which art lacks (Weimarck, 2003c p 16). Art, on the other hand is traditionally characterised, according to Weimarck, by its visual, ideal and symbolic aspects (Weimarck, 2003c p 22). A similar distinction is expressed by Foster who differentiates between use-value and art-value (Foster, 2003 p 17). For Weimarck, this difference is, however, somewhat dissolved as he points to how the aesthetic and expressive qualities, which might earlier have been ascribed primarily to art, also have become a part of everyday design (Weimarck, 2003d p 11). Gerleit also focuses on the distinctions between design and art, in terms of considering them as having different aesthetic premises or constituting two aesthetic systems (Gerleit, 2000 p 99, p 100).

Another difference between design and art is described, by Weimarck, as design's closer and less problematic relation to current technology, economy and commercial forces in society. Art is, on the contrary, characterised as having an autonomy which has created a relation to the surrounding society which is described by Weimarck as: 'non-existent, random and indirect' (Weimarck, 2003c p 16). A similar point is expressed by Gerleit, who describes museums as being dominated still by a notion of 'disinterested art' within which formal and stylistic developments occur far from external influence (Gerleit, 2000 p 99). As a consequence, Weimarck characterises contemporary art as having seemingly 'painted itself into a white cube' and therefore the question raised is whether everyday objects with their purposefulness and so called reality principle can be salvaged and inspire or fertilize art (Weimarck, 2003d p 12). Foster, on the other hand, is critical towards the blurring or melting together of disciplines, as it reduces the autonomy or semi-autonomy, although perhaps fictional, which he considers as both distinct for art and periodically useful (Foster, 2003 p 25). The consequences of fusions of art, design and architecture is expressed in the following way by Foster in his critique of contemporary design for not resisting the industry: 'it delights in postindustrial technologies, and it is happy to sacrifice the semi-autonomy of architecture and art to the manipulations of design' (Foster, 2003 p 18). The central point is for him that the present day fusion of art and design, or total world of design, is characterised by being too closely linked to capitalism and consumerism (Foster, 2003 p 18). Therefore attempts should be made to provide contemporary culture with, what Foster terms, 'running-room' which for Foster would be achieved by a greater degree of a sense of disciplinarity (Foster, 2003 p 25).

The present day cross- or intersections between design and art is not characterised in great detail by Weimarck, who mainly observes that the connections between design and art, and the transgressions from both sides, nowadays seem obvious, enlightening and liberating for both parties (Weimarck, 2003c p 11). What has brought about this change is, however, not elaborated further, but the explanations can, according to Weimarck, be



found at various levels relating to needs within design as well as in art (Weimarck, 2003c p 11). The contemporary interrelationship of art and design is characterised in general terms by Zaunschirm: as unclear and open, and focus is mainly on how art as a concept and practice is expanding continually. Since everything can by now be considered as art, the question of whether design is art can, according to Zaunschirm, seem outdated (Zaunschirm, 2000 p 16). But for others design is regarded as an island that has not yet been flooded by the concept of art and perceives it as a rescuing coast line (Zaunschirm, 2000 p 16). Zaunschirm conceptualises art with the notion of entropy, understood as a trend to disorder, and considers contemporary art as all-absorbing and this devouring activity of art leads to all kinds of different definitions, such as kitsch and design, disappearing (Zaunschirm, 2000 p 23). On the one hand, he describes art as transgressing all boundaries, but on the other hand, he describes the interest from art in the 'banal'; kitsch and design, as creating new borders within the art world (Zaunschirm, 2000 p 23). Moreover, borders are, in Zaunschirm's view, a necessity and part of mental hygiene and thereby he expresses a position similar to Foster's (Zaunschirm, 2000 p 18).

However, Gerleit gives some further explanations of how art and design have become interrelated, as she considers that the introduction of ready-mades in the art world has made art unthinkable without design. This development in art is described by Gerleit as the disappearance of objects in painting and the introduction of furniture as the object in art and as 'a furnishing of art'(Gerleit, 2000 p 99, p 105). While mainly focusing on contemporary artists, Gerleit sketches how e.g. Tobias Rehberger, Sylvie Fleury and Andrea Zittel include design as part of their artistic strategies and positioning. This recent direction of art engaging with design is described by Gerleit as a short circuit which results in a linkage of the sign systems of lifestyle and art respectively. Contemporary artists are furthermore, according to Gerleit, acting as designers within the institutional framing of the traditional art world (Gerleit, 2000 p 104). Here Gerleit provides a characteristic of relevance for my grouping of practitioners who are mixing art with

design, as she describes how these artists are pushing the frames or boundaries when they for example create new dwelling forms and act as exhibition designers. As a consequence we are therefore, according to Gerleit, faced with a new type of artists. In the case of contemporary artists, Gerleit mainly describes the interface as a question of furniture being integrated into art works, but does, however, supplement with mentioning that concrete use in some cases, for example in the work of Zittel, is part of the strategy (Gerleit, 2000 p 105). Furthermore it is of specific relevance for my grouping of hybrids which are design mixed with art that Gerleit also observes that parallel to art expanding into, or engaging with design, there is a similar development happening within design: the concept of design has also expanded its boundaries and moved towards media experimentation and transgression of genres (Gerleit, 2000 p 99).

Foster's account is, in contrast to the others, not concerned with an expansion of art into design. Instead it is, according to Foster, design which is expanding and pervading everything including art. The present day situation is described as: 'we live in another era of blurred disciplines, of objects treated as mini-subjects, of total design, of a Style 2000' (Foster, 2003 p 14). Foster characterises contemporary culture as a consumerist world, where the designer rules and where 'the rule of the designer is even broader than before' (Foster, 2003 p 18). It can be discussed how relevant Foster's critical position towards the apparent expansion of design is in relation to the scope of my research. However, the comment which can be made as a response to his perception of a broadening rule of the design is that the designers represented in my analyses can to some extent be considered as attempting to rule in new and different ways.

## **It's not a garden table: Art and design in the Expanded Field**

Another highly relevant publication in relation to the topics of my research is the book entitled *It's not a garden table: Art and design in the Expanded Field* which is based on a symposium following the Prototyp research project undertaken at Zurich University of the Arts (Huber, Meltzer, von Oppeln, & Munder, 2011). The focus is on the special role of furniture in design and art and the themes addressed in this anthology are, amongst others: the issue of the concept of work and how this points to the difficulties of drawing lines between design and art, the borrowing from "high art" and applied art across art and design and the structural frameworks concerning production, reception and display (Huber et al., 2011 p 7). My account of the relevant perspectives in this publication is based on the following texts: *For a concept of the autonomous work in design* by Tido von Oppeln, *From discontent to complexity* by Klaus Spechtenhauser, *Design as Self-Criticism of Art* by Burkhard Meltzer, *Deeply Superficial* by Alexander Garcia Düttmann and *"Sitzmöglichkeiten" and other possibilities* by Jennifer Allen (Allen, 2011; Düttmann, 2011; Meltzer, 2011; Spechtenhauser, 2011; von Oppeln, 2011).

In the introduction to this publication Meltzer and von Oppeln places the book as one contribution among many, both publications and exhibitions, which in recent years have dealt with the relationship between art and design. Meltzer and von Oppeln summarize these contemporary dealings with design and art's relationship as follows: 'In view of a concept of design that has been expanded to include exhibitions scenarios and "critical praxis", and a broad perception of design in artistic works, many observers have focused on the dissolution of boundaries between disciplines' (Huber et al., 2011 p 10).

However, the position taken in their publication is different: 'This publication, on the other hand, wishes to examine the distinctions that continue to exist between them in spite of the points of overlap' (Huber et al., 2011 p 10). As a way to examine the distinctions and characterise the present day state of design (and art), the notion which is applied and recurring throughout the different texts is the notion of expanded field. Thereby the

writers refer to Rosalind Krauss' essay on *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* and her attempt to: 'do justice to a broadening of the sculptural without leaving the historical category of sculpture' (Huber et al., 2011 p 10). The efforts which this publication reflects is a parallel to this in the sense of being attempts to do justice to a broadening or expansion of especially design but also art and thereby make distinctions within the perceived merging or dissolution of the two fields. Overall the different essays in this publication contributes with nuanced, and at times somewhat abstract, discussions and perspectives especially on the position of contemporary design within the apparent intermingling of art and design. These perspectives are of great relevance for my explorations of the engagements of design with art reflected in my first grouping of hybrids and of special relevance is the text by von Oppeln in which he advances the concept of an 'autonomous work of design' (von Oppeln, 2011). I will return to his concept of a work of design in the analyses of the second chapter as I apply it to examine the hybrid objects created on the basis of furniture.

Throughout the essays different definitions of art and design are offered. For example von Oppeln defines design as follows:

'Design is characterized by the drawing up of drafts and plans for objects making its results essentially repeatable. Craft, by contrast, is geared towards unique item [...] design is an entirely new discipline that emerged in the modern age, and it is concerned directly or indirectly with giving form to industrially manufactured objects' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 17).

Meltzer operates with a more expanded notion of design as he considers the expansion of design as comprehensive and touching all areas of life (Meltzer, 2011 p 95). His definition of design is: 'Design, a concept used from the end of the nineteenth century mainly for industrially produced items, no longer refers primarily to a specific category of objects, but also to media user interfaces, aesthetic experiences, and spatial environments' (Meltzer, 2011 p 94).

The expansion of design is, according to Meltzer, related to the ongoing negotiations between the borders between disciplines (Meltzer, 2011 p 93). But not only design is expanding, so is the definition of art. For Meltzer art is understood as permanently expanding, yet without dissolving into design: 'On the contrary: thanks to permanent dialog with industrial design, new spaces, themes and formats for art have opened up' (Meltzer, 2011 p 95).

A similar view of art as expanded is reflected in von Oppeln's essay, as art is considered to have expanded into all areas of life, yet remained autonomous. In his account the concept of the autonomous artwork is central to a definition of art, although this autonomy and/or art's importance to life has been questioned throughout the twentieth century. Von Oppeln states: 'However much a closeness between everyday objects and art objects has been searched for and seemingly found, art depends on the two being kept distinct and separate' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 17). Furthermore art's move out of the museums and galleries and into social life does not, according to von Oppeln, imply a questioning of the concept of autonomy. Instead he considers art to understand itself as autonomous and critical of institutions, as well as practicing self-criticism (von Oppeln, 2011 p 18).

Furthermore the conceptual framework for the work of art is in von Oppeln's account based on an understanding of the status of an art object as a work as being defined as a property of the object. As he states: 'a thing cannot be art per se; instead, art as a property causes it to appear as a work' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 19). The precondition and functioning principle for a concept of the work is, according to Von Oppeln, a circular argument which also includes the following: 'a work is perceived and viewed as art and communicated as such by an author or an institution' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 19). In defining art objects as different from other objects e.g. design objects, Von Oppeln refers to Kant and the distinction between the disinterested pleasure in an art object and the functional and economic interest in a profane product. This distinction between an object of aesthetic

experience with no purpose and an object with profane interest attached to it, is described by Von Oppeln as still serving as a discursive signpost (von Oppeln, 2011 p 20). In a similar way Allen refers in her text to the thinking of Kant from which she considers the distinction between modern art, characterised as form, and design, characterised as function, to originate (Allen, 2011 p 220). Inherent in this division is also, according to Allen, the distinction between seeing and using; or the viewer and the user, and a hierarchical division which places art above design (Allen, 2011 p 225).

In his supplements on what defines the constitutive properties of an artwork, Von Oppeln also considers how Walter Benjamin has influenced the discourses around art in the sense of his concept of an immaterial aura surrounding the work (von Oppeln, 2011 p 20). However, this notion is no longer considered relevant to Von Oppeln, as he states:

‘Having lost its aura, a work no longer leads the viewer to contemplation, it loses its religious impact. No longer personally affected by the work, a viewer is free to look at the world as the work refers to this world. In this way, criticism also becomes an essential feature of the artwork’ (von Oppeln, 2011 p 20).

Following this Von Oppeln takes Arthur C. Danto’s definition of the properties of art into account and refers how a notion of so called aboutness is central in Danto’s conceptualisation of art. In his reading of Danto von Oppeln extracts the following characteristics concerning art works: ‘works have a content or theme that they address; they deal in the broadest sense with our thoughts or living conditions’ (von Oppeln, 2011 p 21). It follows that a work of art is characterised as being “‘about something and is a commentary- or critique “on something”” (von Oppeln, 2011 p 21). Furthermore he turns to the thinking of Martin Heidegger to point to the interpretative context which is a precondition for something to be perceived as a work. This context from within which a work can be understood refers, according to von Oppeln, to: ‘a specialized cultural context, a world of notions concerning what the work is about’ (von Oppeln, 2011 p 22).

The question of the autonomy is also taken up by Düttmann who consider art and design to be defined through their differences in what he terms the 'characteristic combination of "exhibitability" and "untouchability" (Düttmann, 2011 p 173). A work of art can, according to Düttmann, be defined in terms of the value attributed to it as an exhibit and art works are furthermore characterised by an untouchable status (Düttmann, 2011 p 172). Design, on the other hand, is defined by use value and the functional aspect which are intrinsic to design (Düttmann, 2011 p 173). Beside these differences Düttmann reflects upon the idea of participation; to become actively involved, and how the degree or character of participation in art and design respectively differentiates them. He compares design and art in relation to issue of participation in the following way:

'The site of participation in art is the irresolvable tension between thatness, the fact that art exists and touches the viewer without the viewer knowing what art actually is, and whatness, the fact that art is made and that a work can be consciously apprehended or comprehended. Hence, if it makes no sense to speak of participation in design, this is because the design object is not inhabited by such a tension. The design object, unlike the work of art, does not have an enigmatic character' (Düttmann, 2011 p 176).

Düttmann elaborates further on this, as he describes our interaction with art work as splitting, doubling and not-knowing due to the enigmatic character of trying to understand the work and which as a result provides food for thought (Düttmann, 2011 p 178). This participation is, according to Düttmann, in contrast to how we interact with design which is placed in the realm of practical usage and gives pleasure: 'Our interaction with a design object is never split in this way because of regardless of any initial or even lasting uncertainty, we always end up knowing precisely what kind of a thing we are dealing with' (Düttmann, 2011 p 178).

Throughout the selected essays different attempts are also made to characterise the contemporary interrelationship of design and art which overall revolves around the idea

of both art and design as expanding fields. According to von Oppeln, discourses concerning art have become a collection of recurring wishes and utopian scenarios which reflects a claim to produce work about life within the framework of art via the medium of the everyday object (von Oppeln, 2011 p 17). As a consequence of art's expansion into all areas of life, and out of its interest in everyday life, it is, for von Oppeln: 'only logical for art to develop heightened interest in the material world in which this life takes place' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 18). Therefore objects such as accessories and furniture have become components and props of art. Design is, according to von Oppeln, used as a prop in the context of art installations with the function of: 'being a counter-image to a particular set of living conditions, a critical argument manifested in material or object form' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 18).

Furthermore, in his characterisations of the current relationship between design and art, von Oppeln refers to a view recurring in the discourse on this topic that design is merging with art. He is, however, quite reluctant to accept such as merging, as he states: 'the emergence of entirely new objects that are both the one (art) and the other (design) also seems rather doubtful in view of their still separate contexts and object categories' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 24). But he does acknowledge the mutual adoption and borrowing of working methods, creative repertoire, themes and strategies across design and art. The result of this is described as follows: 'Consequently, works – and the work that produces them – have certainly become similar, and in formal terms there is little to distinguish design objects and artworks from one another' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 24).

A similar point is made by Düttmann who remarks the emergence of what he terms 'borderline cases' which challenges the categorisation of objects as either design or art (Düttmann, 2011 p 183). For Düttmann, however, the question to ask is less about the difference between art and design, instead one should ask about the relevance of these borderline practices and whether they have 'a polemic force' (Düttmann, 2011 p 183). Von Oppeln, on the other hand, proposes the concept of a work of design as a way to address



the challenge of characterising these kinds of objects, specifically those which are created from the outset of design, but which borders on art (von Oppeln, 2011 p 18). His definition, and argumentation for the idea that design has brought about its own concept of the work, will be accounted for in detail later, as I apply this notion in my analyses of hybrids in the following chapter.

Meltzer characterises the contemporary relationship between design and art as altered and refers to designart and critical design as terms used to reflect this (Meltzer, 2011 p 105). He understands designart in a dual sense as: 'phenomena in the art context featuring explicit references to design' and 'limited editions or one-off pieces produced for exhibitions at design galleries and museums' (Meltzer, 2011 p 94). Meltzer considers the contexts of art and design to have come very close and an explanation for this is to be found in the observation that installation has become the dominant exhibition format across both design and art. But although common practices in terms of exhibition formats are encountered, the contexts are, according to Meltzer, not interchangeable (Meltzer, 2011 p 94). He states: 'The processes of rapprochement between design and art concern specific themes and presentation formats addressed within each field, but not necessarily these fields themselves' (Meltzer, 2011 p 94). Instead, according to Meltzer, this parallel development of the installation as a presentation format reflects: 'an expanded concept of what constitutes a work in art and the emergence of such a concept in design' (Meltzer, 2011 p 105). Thereby, Meltzer expresses a view similar to Von Oppeln regarding the merging of art and design, as he states: 'It would seem [...] to make little sense to further portmanteau concepts à la Art + Design = DesignArt, nor to speculate on the unlikely absorption of one discipline by the other' (Meltzer, 2011 p 95). Instead Meltzer characterises contemporary practitioners as reflecting self-reflexive separation between the two disciplines. For him it is a central point that, although contemporary artists challenges the conventions of the disciplines and creates works which draws on design, a merging or dissolution of disciplines is not actually taking place. The reason is that a merging would,

according to Meltzer, disable the self-critical conflicts or critical discourse happening within art through the inclusion of elements from design (Meltzer, 2011 p 105).

Spechtenhauser also addresses the contemporary tendency within art and design to make use of each other's procedures, approaches and objectives. This tendency can have a range of motives, but for him it is first and foremost a sign of dissatisfaction, or sign of a crisis, with the possibilities and conventions within the respective disciplines. Spechtenhauser lists the following reasons for artists and designers to interact or engage with the other discipline:

'Artists use design strategies to critique society, to reflect on everyday phenomena, to refine conceptual approaches. And designers, fed up with established market mechanisms and calls for properly and functionally designed products, intervene via their objects in social, political, ethical, ecological, and aesthetic discourse. Or they use these objects to make critical statements on their own discipline' (Spechtenhauser, 2011 p 70).

Spechtenhauser focuses primarily on design which pushes the boundaries of the discipline by creating objects where functionality is challenged and where production methods is harder to identify (Spechtenhauser, 2011 p 83). These pieces of furniture includes, according to Spechtenhauser, varied messages and references: relating back in history but also to the future and operating both within the discipline and outside. In such cases he characterises the design as reflecting an attitude of design as a critical praxis and design which acquires the character of a work (Spechtenhauser, 2011 p 83, p 88). Meltzer also points to this existence of a critical praxis, in terms of Critical Design or what he describes as: 'attempts to establish "inbuilt" self-critical moments in design' (Meltzer, 2011 p 94). Spechtenhauser considers the results of critical praxis as being works of design, in accordance with von Oppeln: 'A work of design, of course, and not an artwork; although – or precisely because- it has productively appropriated qualities, procedures and objectives from the neighboring discipline' (Spechtenhauser, 2011 p 83). As an example of this

distinction, Spechtenhauser gives the example of the chairs and tables of Martino Gamper which do have, what he describes as, symbolic capital. But nonetheless, they 'do not mutate into modern artworks which (usually) rule out ascribed purpose and intended use' (Spechtenhauser, 2011 p 85). Although Spechtenhauser characterises these furniture as resistant to usage, he does, nevertheless, consider them as made to be used. Others have similarly framed practitioners, e.g. Gamper, in-between design and art as critical design, as will be elaborated further in a section to follow on critical design. Here I will reflect on the similarities between critical design and the tactics and approaches reflected in my selection of hybrids as I propose to consider the hybrids as articulating commentaries or meanings which are not necessarily adequately described as critique.

### **Designart or Limited editions in design**

To supplement the perspective on design engaging with art publications from within the design world on the subject of this meeting should also be considered. From a design perspective my grouping of hybrids initiated from design has often been termed designart and limited editions. In the following I will focus on two popular publications, which are both concerned with designart and so called limited editions: *Design/Art: Limited Editions* edited by Karolien van Cauwelaert from 2008 and *Limited Edition: Prototypes, One-Offs and Design Art Furniture* from 2009 by Sophie Lovell (Lovell, 2009; Van Cauwelaert, 2009). Both publications are predominantly visual representations of limited edition furniture of different kinds and attempts to explain or analyse designart as a tendency is somewhat limited in both publications. Lovell does, however, provide some background for limited editions in terms of accounting for the production, manufacturing, commission, and exhibition of design art furniture. The book cannot be described as a critical and in-depth-analysis of the phenomenon even though it has more explanations of the phenomenon of designart than *Design/Art: Limited Editions*. Nonetheless, when it is included it is due to the clear focus on movements within design, which is for example lacking in the publications

by Coles, and the descriptions of types of furniture showing similarities to the cases selected for analysis in my second chapter.

In the book *Design/Art* there are a few explanations and attempts at defining designart which implicitly also makes some characterisations of art. In the introduction it is observed that designart relates to the boundaries between art and design blurring, disappearing or being under review. Van Cauwelaert goes as far as to suggest that the boundaries nowadays 'have even disappeared and been replaced by design/art' (Van Cauwelaert, 2009 p 4). While designart in this publication is linked to limited edition, a more precise characterisation of what the term designart encompasses is not given. The designs of today are described as different to limited editions of furniture in earlier periods in the sense, that now the designers are 'pretending to supply a work of art' and by claiming status of art (Van Cauwelaert, 2009 p 4). What makes a claim to the status of art is described as a question of material or artisan technique as well as the design and autograph of a famous designer or artist (Van Cauwelaert, 2009 p 4). In this way the definition of designart appears to relate to the applying, as described by Coles, of the characteristics, such as uniqueness etc., of traditional art. The introduction poses questions about the status or nature of limited editions, but these questions are quite vaguely answered: 'Are limited editions art or design? If you say art, it means the design pieces are being referred to the galleries. If you disagree, it means the skill of designing is being marginalized' (Van Cauwelaert, 2009 p 5). The text thereby only lightly touches upon a discussion of whether this type of objects are art or design and restrains from looking more in depth on what defining features from art and design are combined in designart. The introduction ends by concluding, though that designart is not art, but a challenge to art: 'Design/art does not really answer to the description of art as such but it posts new boundaries, it blends various disciplines and ideologies and toys with the restraints governing art' (Van Cauwelaert, 2009 p 5).

In *Design/Art* the examples of limited edition furniture are also described as showing different and new aspects of 'functional design' (Van Cauwelaert, 2009 p 4). But how the concept of functionality is challenged is not further elaborated and the following quote only adds to the confusion: 'A lot of the objects that we have incorporated into this book, function in their environment as works of art which have been serially produced, because they are being used' (Van Cauwelaert, 2009 p 4). The explanations of how and why designers are creating these objects, which are oscillating between art and design, points to a dichotomous perception of art vs. design where artists have (almost) unlimited freedom, whereas designers are tied up to production processes (Van Cauwelaert, 2009 p 4). Following this, the motivation for designers to create designart furniture is described as the freer and more "artistic" experimentation it allows them, but a critical discussion of the outcomes of the possibilities 'to experiment more with materials and production methods' is lacking (Van Cauwelaert, 2009 p 5). The other aspect mentioned as an explanation to designart is the opportunities for gaining profit from a lucrative market where there is (or has been) great interest in limited editions. The market for limited editions is described as a 'intelligent market place', consisting of both design- and art galleries and auctions, providing for collectors and others, where quick profits are possible which 'provides new resources to take the development of innovative products yet another step further' (Van Cauwelaert, 2009 p 5).

The approach by Lovell, in *Limited Editions: Prototypes, One-Offs and Design Art Furniture*, is to downplay the topic of designart and the questions whether these examples of furniture are art or not. Lovell does, nonetheless, touch upon the questions regarding which terms should be used for furniture design of the more experimental sort or design 'whose primary purpose is not necessarily functional' (Lovell, 2009 p 111). Lovell gives Alexander Payne, from the auction house Phillips de Pury, the credit for introducing the term design art for this type of furniture design, but also for retracting it due to a tiredness of using the term among designers, gallerists and others. She summarizes the critique of

the term designart as a critique of the commercial interests in adding the word art to design in relation to a specific furniture market. This leads Lovell to argue that emphasis in the discussion should not be on whether this type of design should be called art or not. She states that 'an appropriate terminology is essential if we are to discuss what is happening to design – and yet we are still trapped in a dated vocabulary' (Lovell, 2009 p 115). Lovell seeks to characterise this trend as a movement within – or in the periphery of – the field of design instead of explaining this phenomenon in relation to art. She initiates a discussion of whether limited edition design is an adequate term and what it defines, but this discussion is not conclusive as the following statement exemplifies:

'Limited-edition design really does mean so many things to so many different people. It is no wonder that debate has been slow in coming and that consensus over definitions is hard to achieve. For some it is design; for others, it's art. It is both serious research and creative expression; it is investment, both conceptual and financial; and at its worst it is trophies and fashion, price tags and status symbols' (Lovell, 2009 p 123).

Regardless of the terms used, focus in this publication is on mapping a field where designers seek experimentation resulting in limited editions and/or prototypes and so called one-offs. These designers are working more autonomously and sometimes completely outside the industrial manufacturing. Lovell also provides insight in the structures and dynamics of production, commission, distribution etc. in relation to limited editions. Based on interviews, she tries to give an understanding of the working methods of the designers and their motivation for creating prototypes, one-offs and limited editions. The designers are described by Lovell as explorers:

'(They are) testing the boundaries of materials, process and medium. For them, the product almost seems to be an afterthought or added extra. These designers are committed to experimentation; to exploring not just the nature and forms of what they

produce but also the systems within which they are commissioned, created, received, displayed, appraised and used' (Lovell, 2009 p 7).

In general the designers within this field are depicted as driven by an urge to have design processes which are not restricted by the demands that mass production poses. Creating limited editions becomes a sort of experimental laboratory where their work is self-produced in small quantities. It seems, however, that Lovell has a need to justify these design experiments as she emphasizes that they push the boundaries for what is possible and might result in new techniques and materials finding their way to the mass market. Lovell argues for the importance of these experimental design practices as part of a pluralistic design moment yet seem to want to reassure us by stating that limited edition is: 'a tiny fraction of the realm of design. Mass production is still essential for the needs of mass populations, and most designers still works in this area' (Lovell, 2009 p 66).

Besides the focus on the designers and their reasons for creating limited edition design, Lovell contributes with observations on the market for prototypes, one-offs and limited editions. Lovell places the rise of a market for limited edition design by contemporary, sometimes not yet well-established, designers in relation to an existing market for edition furniture and prototypes which is now supplied with new "classics". Even though she describes to some degree how contemporary limited edition design provides for a group of clients interested in purchasing furniture which are extraordinary and only produced in a limited number, the emphasis is clearly more on the gallerists, curators and patrons who, according to Lovell, are enabling this type of design. Lovell describes these agents as: 'a growing band of gallerists, patrons and curators who are nurturing and encouraging these experiments in the form of one-offs, prototypes or limited editions' (Lovell, 2009 p 7). These new patrons, described as: 'the new encouragers of innovation in design', are overall depicted in a very positive way as they are devoted to experimentation rather than profit and actively working to further developments in design (Lovell, 2009 p 165). They are compared by Lovell to traditional art patrons, as their motivation is: 'a drive to push

boundaries and even make history' (Lovell, 2009 p 165). Nonetheless, these gallerists select and displays limited edition design for sale, but the commercial aspects is somewhat downplayed in her descriptions. The insights provided about the system of galleries, commissions and patrons who may be encouraging innovation is a relevant background or context for the emergence of so called designart. The hybrids analysed in the second chapter relates to the context, of a market and galleries for limited edition design, described by Lovell. However, within the range of so called limited edition design, or designart, distinctions should, as already mentioned, be made as many cases of designart is primarily just adopting the uniqueness from art.

### **The curatorial point of view: exhibitions, symposiums and related publications**

The various outcomes of the interplay, mutual inspiration and transgressions between art and design might not yet be reflected to a great extent in academic literature, but the theme has been the focus of many exhibitions in the last two decades. While these presentations of the meeting and relationship between art and design appeared more frequently in the first decade of this century, the theme continues to occur while new ways to frame the relationship are being explored. As when for example the concepts of *Totem and Taboo* were used to investigate the complexity and relationships between art and design for the exhibition in 2011 at *freiraum quartier21* in Vienna, or when camouflage and disguise was applied as an analogy on an exhibition on the merge and mixing of contemporary art and design at *Kiasma* in Helsinki in 2012. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to account for all of the exhibitions of the last two decades. Despite the variations on the theme of the relationship between art and design, they do also to some degree become repetitive in terms of how this issue is addressed and in terms of the practitioners chosen to illustrate it. The following will therefore only treat a selection of exhibitions on the confluence or overlaps between design and art<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Please see appendix 1-7 for an overview of exhibitions since 2000.



The following will mainly be examples of initiatives from an art context which had an explicit focus on the interface between design and art while including one exhibition which in contrast aims to place this phenomenon within a design context. The catalogue texts that will be discussed are the texts for the following exhibitions: *What If? Art on the Verge of Architecture and Design*, *Wouldn't it be nice? Wishful thinking in art and design*, *Destroy Design*, *Overlap* and finally *Telling Tales: Fantasy and Fear in Contemporary Design*. As with many contemporary art exhibitions today there have been different talks, seminars etc. in relation to the exhibitions listed above. Unfortunately I have not been able to attend these events, but I have visited the exhibitions *Destroy Design*, *Overlap* and *Telling Tales* amongst others.

### **What If? Art on the Verge of Architecture and Design**

A common feature, in the texts for the exhibitions explicitly concerned with the interrelationship between art and design, is the contextual framing in terms of describing our contemporary time as fluid, hybridized and characterized by dissolving boundaries between (creative) disciplines or fields of practice. This is also the case of the introductory text to this exhibition written by curator Maria Lind. Lind characterises the flourishing of hybrids, which spans over broad areas, as a phenomenon which is typical of the present time. The outset of this exhibition is art's interest in design (and architecture) and these cross-over tendencies are described in terms of art "cannibalizing" kindred disciplines. The exhibition is, for Lind, a way of exploring or answering the following question: 'why do they (artists) turn towards architecture and design and what implications does it have' (Lind, 2000 p 173). In her exploration Lind discovers that venturing into design and architecture for artists is not motivated in an interest in these disciplines as such, but it allows for posing new critical questions of (consumer) society and the role of design and art. Instead the combining of art with for example design reflect, according to Lind, a questioning of or interest in our surrounding everyday reality and a seeking to 'make things better' (Lind, 2000 p 175). The so called cannibalism into other disciplines is

motivated by reflections on and critique of the society and is, according to Lind, characterised by affirmation and (re)construction rather than deconstruction. Inspired by Bourriaud and his descriptions of relational aesthetics, Lind characterises the works of contemporary practitioners combining art, design and architecture as 'pragmatic micro-utopias that can be tested in reality' and as 'models, and proposals, scenarios'(Lind, 2000 p 175). Working in this cross over field seems, in Lind's view, to create new possibilities: 'They develop art as a form of reflection and investigation, utilize its relative openness, and sometimes create something that should not be possible within, for instance, architecture and design' (Lind, 2000 p 177). Similar characteristics apply, as analyses will illustrate, to the examples of micro and mobile dwellings which constitute my second grouping of hybrids.

### **Wouldn't it be nice? Wishful thinking in art and design**

A great deal of attention is given to describing the contemporary interrelationship between design and art in both the foreword in the exhibition catalogue for *Wouldn't it be nice* and the publication titled *AC/DC: Contemporary Art, Contemporary Design* from the associated symposium. The phenomenon of 'conjunction, confluence, interference, overlap and even confusion between art and design' is described, in the foreword of the exhibition catalogue, as not a new, but intensified phenomenon (García-Antón, Greff, Brändle, & Schwarz, 2007 p 33). Jean-Pierre Greff states in the introduction to *AC/DC* that the conjunction between art and design is spreading and deepening as the 'contemporary interrelationships between art and design continue to intensify and ramify' (Greff, 2008 p 14). What is new in the current situation is the extent to which the categories have collapsed, boundaries have been erased and territories have merged leading to 'a broad, deterritorialised scene of creation'(García-Antón, Greff, et al., 2007 p 33). This scene of creation is further characterised in both texts as an aesthetic space or field: a shared field of investigation and inspiration, where collaborations and exchange of skills are taking place. These collaborations result in 'the mutual cross-pollination of art and design styles, and

the appearance of a new type of crossbreed practitioners – designer-artists or artist-architects’ (García-Antón, Greff, et al., 2007 p 33).

The exhibition catalogue includes a text by Emily King titled *Wouldn't it be nice* and the text *Performative shifts in art and design* by Katya García-Antón which respectively contextualizes the meeting of art and design in relation to contemporary tendencies within art and design and historical interfaces between design and art. King relates the topic to recurring themes within contemporary art and design, and similar to Lind, she emphasizes the questioning, exploration and engagement with the real world as a theme. Following the exhibitions’ theme of wishful thinking, King points to the exhibited works as reflecting ‘a modest form of utopianism’ (King, 2007 p 45). King sees some common ground even though the works represented cannot be placed within the frameworks of relational aesthetics and critical design. Relational aesthetics is considered as a relevant framework for King due to the inherent characterisations of contemporary artists exploring the everyday and this leading to the modelling of possible universes. Thereby there are similarities in the texts by King and Lind in terms of basing part of the contextualisation of the works in-between design and art on relational aesthetics. Both find the characterisation, proposed by Bourriaud, of works as pragmatic micro-utopias relevant to the hybrids between design and art. The common ground between the exhibition and critical design is, among other things, the questioning inherent in this practice as Kings describes critical design as: ‘A self-reflexive practice that offers a commentary on design and its context, it takes on board the notion of the market, while not necessarily generating products’ (King, 2007 p 46). In relation to critical design King point to an issue which is equally relevant to objects in-between design and art, not categorised as critical design: the issue of whether these objects have a “real” impact on peoples’ lives. King states: ‘It raises the issue of whether design that floats free of the conventional commercial arena still functions as design: however radical or abstract, does it still propose a way of living?’ (King, 2007 p 46).

In the concluding remarks King shortly touches upon the market and/or gallery context for the selected works in the exhibition, while stating that in current times: 'the most forceful move to unite art and design comes from a set of opportunistic galleries, hoping to sell limited-edition collectibles to the wealthy' (King, 2007 p 47). The consequence of this is according to King that the debate about the historical and theoretical backgrounds of art and design tends to get lost. King argues that even though the traditional divides maybe falling away, the understanding of the context for these works are still needed. According to King the exhibition should not be considered as a proposal to destroy the boundaries between art and design, but an occasion 'to explore the nature of that divide in an environment where art asks questions of design and designs asks questions of itself'(King, 2007 p 47). Similarly Greff argues in his introduction for not making a 'hazardous assimilation' of art and design (Greff, 2008 p 15). Instead the interrelationship between art and design should be closely examined and questioned as 'problems in the richest sense of the term'(Greff, 2008 p 15). In examining this problem Greff points to three relevant levels as ways of exploring the interrelationship between contemporary art and design: 1) creation/production 2) distribution (institutional or market) 3) reception (critical or public).

### **Overlap**

The exhibition *Overlap* which was shown at Den Frie Centre for Contemporary Art in Copenhagen differs from the other exhibitions by being curated by two practitioners: Ditte Hammerstrøm and Jørgen Carlo Larsen. This exhibition also aims to focus on the interplay, integration and dependence between art and design. The point of departure in the introduction for *Overlap* is a description of boundaries between disciplines breaking down or of disciplines expanding – a characteristics similar to the introductions in *What If?* and *Wouldn't it be nice?*. Another parallel is how this introduction characterises the practitioners in the points of overlap as having a shared interest in the social space (our surroundings) and the way we organize ourselves. According to the curators, the selected

work all reflect the following: 'Factors that are investigated and viewed from new perspectives in order to suggest alternative ways of establishing ourselves in the shared spaces'(Hammerstrøm, Larsen, & Junge-Stevnsborg, 2011 p 4). In contrast to the accounts by Lind and King, characteristics of these investigations and possible suggestions of alternative ways are, however, not further elaborated.

The motives for the expansion of both design and art leading to the overlap are also only briefly touched upon with the following observation: 'Both disciplines have expanded beyond what used to be described as their primary field of activity in order to develop new languages and expression' (Hammerstrøm et al., 2011 p 4). The focus in the short characterization of the overlap is on how new expressions emerges from it as practitioners 'experiment with form and meaning, and test what happens to our perception of familiar objects and formats when they lose their original function, or assume one that is new' (Hammerstrøm et al., 2011 p 7). The exhibition consists of both international and Danish practitioners and in the text by Kirse Junge-Stevnsborg the experimentation manifested in the overlap between design and art becomes linked with the current developments in Denmark: 'designers are confronting the historical tradition of Danish design, and are now thinking experimentally and in an innovative manner'(Hammerstrøm et al., 2011 p 7). Even though Junge-Stevnsborg observes that Danish designers are increasingly finding inspiration from art, it is not to a great extent manifested within the exhibition itself which only includes a few Danish practitioners.

### **Destrøy Design**

*Destrøy Design* is another exhibition explicitly focusing on the meeting of art and design with humans' relationship with objects as the central theme. The basis for the exhibition is the collection of FRAC which, according to director Hilde Teerlinck, is particular because of its focus on the link between contemporary design and art (FRAC). The FRAC considers itself, in the descriptions by Teerlinck, as contributing to creating awareness for the role

design plays in the evolution of everyday life. The exhibition originates from wanting to launch a debate on our relationship with objects which is aimed for by showing 'artistic creations that question the importance of the designed object' (Teerlinck, 2009 p 1). Besides raising issues concerning the role of (designed) objects in today's world, focus in the exhibition is also on 'the complex relationship between the consumption-based star-status of contemporary designers and artists' (Teerlinck, 2009 p 2). This focus is however only shortly touched upon just as contemporary (consumer) culture is briefly sketched as a context for the exhibition.

As a contextualization Teerlinck points to two current conditions: 1) industrial revolution and the following technological achievements have led to a loss of respect for craft and skills 2) copying products and ideas are very easy on the industrial market of today. This new context results in interpretations by artists and designers that are constructing with reference to the past or as she Teerlinck formulates it: 'they build something new while transforming historical models' (Teerlinck, 2009 p 2). This deconstruction or questioning of old models and existing systems is what is implied in the title *Destroy Design*: as the exhibition should be considered as a selection of artists and designers who share a sceptical approach towards art, society and design (Teerlinck, 2009 p 3). Thereby Teerlinck also subscribes to the view that critique, questioning or investigations of existing systems and ways of living (with objects) is a central concern within the intersection of points of overlap between art and design.

In the other text in the catalogue, titled *Future imperfect; from cannibalisation to ex-design*, Peio Aguirre adds other perspectives to the subject of the relationship between design and art. While considering *Destroy Design* as an expression of contemporary culture, Aguirre points to the contemporary world as being progressively styled and aesthetized. He connects the concept of style to cannibalisation through the reference to a definition by Proust where having style is described as turning something foreign into your own and for Aguirre this translates into cannibalising. The concept of cannibalisation becomes a

focal point throughout the rest of the text as it is used to characterise the practices of contemporary artists and designers. According to Aguirre they are cannibalizing and it has become 'a standard meal for artists and designers believing in recombination and appropriation (a thousand times over) of the aesthetics of the past' (Aguirre, 2009 p 7). Within this cannibalisation he shortly sketches two recent movements: the first movement was artists in the 1990 that cannibalised on design. The second movement is a situation 'where designers have become inter-disciplinary agents together with artists' (Aguirre, 2009 p 8) . Even though this is not elaborated Aguirre also states that the second movement is currently happening with designart and he therefore considers design to be cannibalising on art.

The other attempt at contextualisation of the exhibition consists in relating the theme to the concept of design, while Aguirre defines design as a problem solving activity. The current situation is, according to Aguirre, characterised by design practitioners and a profession which 'appears to be de-linking itself from the very idea that there is a problem to be solved' (Aguirre, 2009 p 7). These developments in the profession of design, where design has been freed from its 'initial problem' has, according to Aguirre, led to design being placed at a crossroad of previously unknown dimensions (Aguirre, 2009 p 7). The design profession is therefore displaced which is reflected in what he terms 'dysfunctional design' or 'art design' (Aguirre, 2009 p 30). These practices have nonetheless broadened the horizons of the discipline and the moving into the field of art has created 'an alternative to self-indulgence' (Aguirre, 2009 p 30). Aguirre describes design as being at crossroads and questions, without giving any answers, whether design has reached a level of autonomy and/or entered a new market.

### **Telling Tales: Fantasy and Fear in Contemporary Design**

The perspective provided by Aguirre on practices in-between design and art as related to developments within contemporary design, is taken even further in the exhibition

*Telling Tales: Fantasy and Fear in Contemporary Design*, curated by Gareth Williams and exhibited at the V&A in 2009. This exhibition is not presented as an exhibition on the interface between art and design, although the exhibition presents contemporary designers who are creating what could be described as designart and working with methods that could be explained as similar to art. Instead the emphasis is on understanding the selected contemporary practitioners within the context of design. Williams has chosen storytelling as a contextual and thematic frame for this exhibition as a deliberate way of avoiding to present this type of experimental, conceptual, contemporary design as designart or to place these practices in-between art and design. With the theme of storytelling and narratives, the objects in the exhibition have been selected for their capacity to tell stories and/or contain narratives, while their function are described as 'evocative and symbolic rather than utilitarian' (Williams, 2009 p 9). In relation to my dissertation, narratives as a frame for these design practices are, not relevant, but he does, nonetheless, provide useful characterisations of the larger context within which these design practices occur.

Though having as a primary focus to understand the exhibited objects as contemporary design, Williams, nevertheless, place these objects in relation to the question of design or art, as he describes them as follows: 'They seem to slip across an arbitrary and invisible line that separates design and art' (Williams, 2009 p 9). In terms of production and distribution these design objects resembles art works, but it is of importance for Williams to stress these objects' place within the category of design. He emphasizes their connection to functionality and the fact that 'in their materials, techniques and style they remain designed objects' (Williams, 2009 p 9). Not raising the question whether these objects are art, but instead having an ambition of containing these objects within design runs throughout descriptions and analyses by Williams of these works. This is supplemented in the introductory video for the exhibition where he also emphasizes that even though these designers appear to be acting rather like artists their objects are first and foremost to be



considered as works of design. Distancing these examples of more experimental design from art is also reflected in his rejection of the term designart: a term which he in the above mentioned video clip describes as contentious and loaded ("Telling Tales," 2009).

The rejection of the term designart to describe these contemporary design practices is further elaborated by Williams throughout his text. He summarizes how the division of the roles between the designer, artist and craftsman have developed to nowadays where the practices of art, craft and design, are according to Williams, approaching each other in different ways. This has led to designers working more freely and autonomously which has been termed designart. Williams considers designart as an ambiguous term and compares it with a leaky umbrella standing over a diversity of examples of similarities across practices in art and design. He succeeds in differentiating between some of the different uses of the term designart: for example distinguishing between designart as a way of describing different art works and designart as describing objects with design as the outset. Art works have been termed designart because they 'take on the appearance of interior designs and domestic objects' (Williams, 2009 p 17). But as he rightfully points to: representing or recreating design objects and environments is different from actually creating design objects in relation to the requirements for design. One way of defining designart is therefore, according to Williams, as modes of practices arising from a larger discourse on art and even though there might be visual similarities between design and these works the creative concepts are quite different.

Williams proposes another definition of designart where designart is characterised as 'a creature of the arts and antiques market, based on connoisseurship and market demand' (Williams, 2009 p 25). He sketches the development of the market that has arisen for prototypes, limited editions, experimental forms etc. and relates it to both an art collectors market and the market for design connoisseurs. The result of this market for designart, 'arisen as an adjunct to the mainstream market for contemporary art, fed by the rivers of corporate and personal wealth that course through art', is according to Williams that some

designers consciously create for an elite market through working as gallery artists and thereby seeking more autonomy (Williams, 2009 p 23). What he also points to is how designers and the galleries adopt ways of presenting and communicating about designart in order to promote it to a receptive market. Williams is sceptical about the mechanisms within this market and criticizes how a very broad range of so called experimental objects are categorized as designart as these objects could be considered as 'a type of design that's not designed to work better, but to cater for a rarefied audience' (Williams, 2009 p 23). Thereby Williams expresses a critical position towards designart and limited editions than Lovell who has a perception of more potential in these practices.

Williams proposes a third definition of designart which he considers as the most interesting and significant. Designart in this definition described as 'the creative outpouring of a new generation of designers schooled in the discipline of design-management but with the creative freedom of artists' (Williams, 2009 p 25). This generation consists of designers thinking and acting as artists while creating statements and idea-based design or what he names manifesto design: 'objects embedded with complicated content, like an argument, proposition or thesis' (Williams, 2009 p 24). He considers the designers who are working critically and conceptually as an important and necessary alternative to conventional design practice. Williams observes the diversity within critical and conceptual design while also arguing for that these practices have a subordination of materiality and functionality in common. Instead focus in these design practices is on the symbolic and emotional qualities and content in form of narratives hence the thematic framing of *Telling Tales*.

In terms of a depiction of the larger context for the design objects in this exhibition, Williams' account is very condensed. Yet he does point to structures and dynamics in relation to designart and reasons for designers to work in this area of design. Furthermore, what is very interesting are the critical questions he asks about the spaces left for working as experimental and innovative designers: designers who 'may not feel sympathy with

industrial design, popular taste or the glitter of the art world' (Williams, 2009 p 24). Although not answering the question of the space for these designers in depth, Williams does conclude that these designers 'inhabit a new place, between the conventional boundaries of art, craft and design, where their eloquent works can speak of the human condition' (Williams, 2009 p 118). Williams provides a relevant perspective differing from the accounts from within the art world in his attempt to outline this new place in relation to the design field.

### **Conceptualisations and definitions of design and art**

The reviewed literature reflects that the discussion of what distinguishes and defines art and design is neither a new discussion nor a debate with the prospect of ending as both practices continue to evolve and have various points of contact. As a way to delimit this potentially extensive discussion of the current status of design and art as concepts, what follows is based on the literature reviewed as it is considered as reflecting different contemporary attempts at defining or characterising art and design. The conceptualisations of design and art which are extracted from the literature will be further unfolded by supplementing them with theoretical and philosophical accounts for art and design. These supplementary positions are overall either related to: a) the philosophy of art, or aesthetic theory, represented by e.g. Morten Kyndrup and Arthur C. Danto, or b) the philosophy or aesthetics of design, represented by Mads Nygaard Folkmann and Jane Forsey. From this discussion I will condense the different parameters or characteristics which are articulated as distinctive features of design and art respectively in a diagram following this section. The pairs of opposites in terms of parameters, characteristics and structural frameworks are, as will be demonstrated, the substances which are mixed and blended in various ways in the hybrids analysed in this thesis.

The following should be considered as an attempt to define the concepts of art and design contextually as a consequence of the complexity, expansiveness and changeability

which characterise these concepts and their use. Defining a concept contextually, due to the concept being loaded with contrasts and complexity, is proposed by cultural theorist Henrik Kaare Nielsen in relation to the concept "culture". In agreement with Nielsen, I consider the concepts of art and design to be contextual, in the sense of being 'relatively loosely defined contextual framework which in practice have the main part of its meanings ascribed from the specific contexts in which the concept is used and applied' (Nielsen, 1993 p 10). Operating with contextual definitions of concepts requires, according to Nielsen, that: 'the analyst must at any time explicitly define what is meant by the concept culture in the specific, concrete context in question' (Nielsen, 1993 p 10). The following will accordingly account for what is meant by the concepts design and art within the reviewed literature specifically on the topic of contemporary meetings of art and design. Furthermore the conceptualisations of design and art will be addressed contextually by examining, throughout the analyses to follow, which aspects of, or different meanings of, art and design that are activated or challenged by the hybrid cases.

The literature reviewed and the inherent attempts to define art and design overall reflect that neither art nor design no longer define a clearly demarcated content, instead both concepts refer to a great diversity or universe of meaning, activities and practices. Regardless whether it is art or design which is considered as expanding into the other field, and potentially into everything else, the different texts are concerned with the continual expansion of the fields of design and art. The consequences of these expanded fields are discussed as leading to boundaries being pushed, dissolved or even maintained and the question raised is whether the broadening of the practices of art and design is resulting in a merging. This ongoing broadening of the fields of activity or practices, which is considered throughout the literature as being the case for both art and design, appears to result in concepts or definitions of design and art which are of an open, extensive and complex nature.

Similar conceptualisations of art and design as expanded concepts can also be found in various contemporary writings. For example Morten Kyndrup, professor in aesthetics and cultural theory, reaches a similar conclusion regarding the expansiveness and openness in what defines art, or constitutes an art work: 'Art works no longer have to be finite objects such as images (...) an artwork can also be a situation, an absence, a gesture, a being/presence – or to put it bluntly: anything'(Kyndrup, 2008 p 111). Similarly what constitutes design as an activity has become more elastic, which is for example reflected in the following observation by Marlene Leerberg: 'the doing and making has become less tangible, and in turn design has become a notion more or less without limits'(Leerberg, 2009 p 4). Leerberg therefore operates with a notion of design that does not only designate material objects but also creations such as interactions, strategies and systems (Leerberg, 2009 p 1). The understanding of design as an expanded concept is shared by Mads Nygaard Folkmann: 'The concept of design has expanded from being associated with products and graphics to areas such as communication, environments, identities, systems, contexts and futures' (Folkmann, 2013 p 13).

While these expansions in the concepts of design and art might make their definitions increasingly difficult and ambiguous, the reviewed literature nonetheless proposes different characteristics or properties of art and design respectively. These definitional endeavours can be summarized as revolving around both the likeness and difference between design and art. Thereby these attempts reflect the following contradiction and duality, which according Barbara Bloemink, is related to art and design: 'that design and art are simultaneously both different and the same' (Bloemink, 2004 p 17). In the literature it is pointed to how art and design are closely related and similar in terms of both being creative disciplines and practices which results in material creations or artefacts. However, within the group or category of creative disciplines, design and art are not alone, as the literature reflects while also taking the relatedness to architecture and especially craft into considerations.

Although the literature reflects examples of pointing to similarities between the disciplines, for example by considering designing as an activity mutual for art and design, these accounts predominantly reflect attempts at defining art and design by pointing to their differences and contrasting features. Craft is also, to various degrees, intermingled in defining art and design as opposites, as it appear as a means to make further distinctions among the concepts. Consequently, despite similarities across art, design, craft and architecture, the following will, based on the reviewed literature, primarily discuss the contrasting features of these concepts and practices. The conceptualisations of design and art, as they are accounted for in the literature reviewed, can roughly be divided, although these aspects are interrelated, into defining a) the distinct properties of design and art and b) the differentiated contexts and conditions for art and design. This account of what is considered to distinguish art and design will enable some working definitions which can provide further perspectives on how and why the hybrids fall somewhere in between.

A recurring notion used, throughout the literature, as a way to define the differences of design and art is the notion of function: that is design is characterised, for example by Foster, Weimarck and Düttmann, as distinct in terms of having function and practical usability. In the attempts at defining design and art a dichotomy is applied: art is characterised as an aesthetic object to be looked at or contemplated whereas design has functional qualities in terms of practical usage. This distinction, between objects of disinterested aesthetic pleasure and objects with a practical purpose, dates back to the aesthetic theories of Kant, as remarked by Allen and von Oppeln (Kant, 2008). The idea, it could be added, of art as defined by the absence of practical purpose is also central in the aesthetic theories by for example Theodor W. Adorno, who argued that art would devalue itself by becoming functional (Adorno, 2004). The reviewed literature reflects the point made by von Oppeln, that distinguishing between use-function and non-function still serves as a signpost, or central difference, in definitions of design and art.

Function as a property defining design will also be a concern within the analyses of hybrids: especially in the cases of design approaching, or adopting from, art, as these examples of furniture-like objects in different ways challenges functionality. The analyses and interpretations of these hybrids will, amongst other issues, reflect upon whether, or in what way, these objects can still be perceived as functional. Thereby the analyses will, to some degree, take the following characterisation of objects in-between design and art, by Folkmann, into consideration:

‘Even experimental design and art design, mostly conceived for circulation in galleries, contain a component of use and function, even if it is in the form of a challenge. By this I mean, that most design objects or design solutions aim at affecting the world they are part of rather than at being objects of disinterested, artistic perception’ (Folkmann, 2013 p 5).

However, regarding defining function as the feature which distinguishes design from art, philosopher Jane Forsey points to that we must be cautious, as she equally considers art as defined by a function. Forsey states: ‘To be contemplated is still a function of some kind and if art is created for this purpose, it is as functional an object as any other’ (Forsey, 2013 p 35). This approach to defining art could be described as a functional approach in the sense proposed by Stephen Davies: ‘The functionalist believes that necessarily, an artwork performs a function or functions (usually, that of providing a rewarding aesthetic experience) distinctive to art’ (Davies, 1991 p 1). Therefore, if we accept art as defined by a function too, although a different form of function, then we need to specify what is meant by function when considered a distinctive feature of design. Forsey defines the functional quality of design in detail:

‘by functional I clearly mean, first, that the designed object must serve a human function, and so be useful for, or suitable to, the very quotidian human purposes and needs [...] Second, I mean that the object must have been intentionally made to serve those needs, rather than simply being found useful to us’ (Forsey, 2013 p 31).

The feature of functionality is not exclusive for design as a practice or concept, as it also characterises craft and architecture, but it is nonetheless often emphasized as a central difference between art and design. The same is, however, the case when making distinctions between architecture and art which are, as Jane Rendell remarks, often differentiated in terms of their relationship to function (Rendell, 2006 p 4). Architecture and design can be said to have function or purposefulness in common as a defining feature in a broader sense, and at a larger scale. Design is, along with architecture, frequently defined as a problem-solving activity which is for example explicitly reflected in the definition of design in Aguirre's essay. Furthermore design as an activity is, throughout the reviewed literature, characterised as having social relevance in the sense that it plays a role in everyday life and relates to, or shapes, our ways of living. The understanding of design as solving problems in relation to human needs and in order to improve things is a longstanding ideal within the discourses surrounding design. This ideal is, for example, formulated by Herbert Simon, in his, frequently quoted, broad notion of design: 'Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones' (Simon, 1981 p 129). Considering design as proposing and creating applicable solutions to improve living conditions and influence human action is also inherent in Folkmann's characteristic of design: 'Even if not all design objects are strictly oriented toward a problem or fulfilling a goal, they normally do relate to basic organizing principles of human life' (Folkmann, 2013 p 5). The distinguishing features of design as problem-solving and engaged with human everyday life is often considered as opposed to the characteristics of art in terms of commenting on or being a critique of everyday life. Again, a parallel can be drawn to the difference between architecture and art, as described by Rendell:

'Unlike architecture, art may not be functional in traditional terms, for example in responding to social needs, giving shelter when it rains or providing a room in which to



perform open-heart surgery, but we could say that art is functional in providing certain kinds of tools for self-reflection, critical thinking and social change' (Rendell, 2006 p 4).

In her accounts of practices between art and architecture, Rendell points to, that contemporary artists are attracted to architecture due to its social and functional role (Rendell, 2006 p 3). A similar point can be made about contemporary artists' engagement with design as it, as for example observed by Lind and Gerleit, is often motivated by aiming for utility, or functionality, and social and everyday relevance. The selected cases of hybrids analysed in the third chapter all relate to dwelling and will reflect artistic practices engaging with design in order to create new dwelling forms or functional solutions or proposals related to living.

Within the reviewed literature different features or functions are identified as distinctive to art: for example art is characterised, by Coles and Weimarck, as having symbolic and expressive qualities. Forsey operates with similar ideas about what distinguishes art, e.g. from design and craft, in terms of art being characterised by expressing something and carrying a meaning. She describes art in the following way: 'Art explores and expresses what it means to be human in all its particularity, and it is this depth of expression we respond to' (Forsey, 2013 p 62). Throughout the reviewed literature there appears to be consensus about defining art as having content or meaning: a content which can have the form of a reflection, commentary or critique of something e.g. society or the human condition. The reviewed literature thereby reflects a perception of art similar to the following description by Kyndrup: 'Art is regarded and perceives itself as a field for exceptional privileged reflection about the human condition, including in particular the awareness of the conditions' (Kyndrup, 2008 p 110). This perception of art relates, as von Oppeln explicitly acknowledges, to the notion of 'aboutness' as a distinct feature of art. Aboutness stems from the theories of art philosopher Arthur C Danto who argued that artworks deal, in theme or content in the broadest sense with our thoughts or living conditions (Danto, 1997).

The consequence of art being considered as having content is that art is characterised as requiring interpretation. This distinctive feature of art is especially emphasized by Düttmann who considers art, in contrast to design, as enigmatic; that is as something we make an effort to apprehend or comprehend the meaning of. The distinction between art and design in relation to content is also central in Forsey's definition of design. Forsey characterises art as striving to achieve a communicative content whereas design is by contrast defined as: "'mere real things": saying nothing and carrying no interpretable meaning' (Forsey, 2013 p 64). Although Forsey considers the majority of design as not having a content or meaning, she does acknowledge that some designs can be about something or include a kind of commentary (Forsey, 2013 p 65). What the analyses to follow will show is exactly design, or objects in-between art and design, which adopts the distinctive feature of aboutness, or content, from art. These hybrids, created from the outset of design, differs in terms of whether, or to which degree, they can be characterised as critical, but they do all appear to address some theme or issue including reflections on design as a discipline. In such cases, where the functionality of design is combined with the content of art, the results can, according to Meltzer and von Oppeln, be considered as acquiring the character of a work and more specifically: a work of design. According to von Oppeln, this notion of an autonomous work of design, which will be applied and discussed throughout some of the analyses of hybrids, challenges the idea that art is distinguished by its autonomy (von Oppeln, 2011 p 19).

The perception of the central difference between art as autonomous from the surrounding society and design as related to society and market mechanisms have been conceptualised as an opposition between autonomy and heteronomy (Perniola, 1997). Although, as Perniola argues for, the distinction between the autonomy of art and the heteronomy of design have been challenged, and maybe even dissolved, in the recent decades, it appears to still operate in the attempts to differentiate design and art. This is reflected throughout the reviewed literature where art is characterised as having

autonomy or as constituting an autonomous sphere, in contrast to design which is considered as closely related, or bound by, industrial mass production and economic and commercial forces. Design is also elsewhere characterised as determined by external factors, for example, in her definition of design as a concept, Penny Sparke points to: 'as a cultural concept design is determined by the outside forces that have shaped it and by the contexts within which it has manifested itself, as well as by the numerous faces it has presented to the world' (Sparke, 2013 p xiii).

Rather than strictly focusing on a dichotomous perception of autonomy versus heteronomy, the difference between design and art could perhaps be more adequately characterised as differences in conditions and contexts. Thereby I consider art and design to constitute different milieus or fields: each with their different conditions, rules, laws and networks. Following this, as remarked by Greff, a way to explore the interrelationship of art and design is to consider three different levels: 1) production or creation, 2) distribution and 3) reception or consumption. These three different levels, where we can observe differences in the external factors in relation to art and design will be central in my diagram of the central differences, in conditions and possibilities, between design and art as practices. In the literature, art is generally associated with the production of unique (or limited) works and creation primarily considered as self-initiated and "free" creativity. In contrast, design is considered as more constrained creativity as it has to meet the requirements of industrial mass production, the needs of the consumer and create products for consumption and practical use in everyday life. Other writers on design have also emphasized design's relation to both mass production and mass consumption and have considered this relation as determining the outcomes, or manifestations, to a great extent (Sparke, 2013; Walker & Attfield, 1989). Forsey also gives attention to the point of creation or production as distinguishing art and design from each other by describing art as an expressive activity which results in 'a uniquely executed "one-off" work' (Forsey, 2013 p 50). Although, the activity of designing is also described as creative and

spontaneous by Forsey, the nature of the production of design differs in various aspects (Forsey, 2013 p 68). Not only does the design process result in multiple objects, the process is also characterised as a more collaborative endeavour and furthermore the designer is, in contrast to the artist, not the product's final manufacturer. Designart and the hybrids from my first grouping of examples are the exceptions that prove this rule.

The second aspect where design and art differs relates to their distribution and circulation. Design depends, as already noted, on mass production and as a consequence has the potential to be widely distributed. This point is, for example, made by Folkmann who characterises design in the following way: 'As a medium with wide distribution, that is, as a part of modern mass culture, design potentially has a massive impact' (Folkmann, 2013 p 15). In the reviewed literature, the wide distribution and great impact of design on our lives is addressed most specifically by Foster who raises different concerns in relation to, what he considers, a contemporary world defined by total design. Art does not in general become as widely distributed as design and is still, despite attempts within art to move out into the social and everyday life, most often circulated in the contexts of museums and galleries. The reviewed literature appear to reflect a perception of art as located, or circulated, within the relatively autonomous sphere of galleries etc. whereas design is distributed, or bought and sold, on the market and located in people's everyday life. Finally, as the reviewed literature also reflects, art and design are considered different in terms of their reception or consumption. The difference in how we consume art and design is, for example, addressed by Düttmann with the terms exhibitability and untouchability. Art works are exhibited for, what Allen describes as, hands-off contemplation whereas design is consumed in concrete usage. This aspect then relates back to the differences in the function of design and art. Design is considered functional in the sense of having practical usability and our reception, or evaluation, of a design object will often relate to the usability and form of the object whereas we might instead consider an art object in terms of form and content. But the hybrids examined in this thesis

challenges exactly this distinction as they are for example cases of works or objects combining functionality, form and aboutness.

The different examples of contemporary meetings or crossings of art and design which will be analysed in the following will reflect that the phenomena of hybrids is not only a question of appropriating the working methods or objectives from another discipline, but also a question of gaining access to the conditions and possibilities of the other field. This aspect is also highlighted within the reviewed literature as, for example, Lovell and Williams observes that by creating hybrid objects, or so called designart, which are produced as unique works or limited edition, the creative practitioner is perhaps able to work more freely or experimental. Creating these objects in-between design and art often means working outside industrial manufacturing and seeking galleries and museums as the context for circulation. Thereby this movement which is one part of the crossings between art and design would be described as a move from the everyday context of design into perceived autonomy of the art and/or gallery sphere, although it should be noted that many of these works are commissioned. This move does, as the reviewed literature reflects, not necessarily mean disengagement for the practitioner from market mechanisms, instead designart relate to a new market, with different mechanisms, for exclusive, "one-off" or limited edition design objects. In contrast to this, the hybrids which are the outcome of art engaging with design, by for example creating functional objects, appear to relate to a move out of the rarefied sphere of art and into everyday life. But what the analyses will, to some degree, reflect is that although the selected works and projects might attempt to move into everyday life via design, it seldom means engaging with the production and consumption associated with design, instead a degree of autonomy, or alternative economy, is maintained by a close relation to the art system.

## Diagram of parameters or characteristic elements related to design and art

Design	Art
<b>Function</b>	Non-function
<b>Practical usability</b>	Contemplation
<b>Using</b>	Seeing
<b>Utilitarian purposefulness</b>	Disinterested, artistic perception
<b>Meaning related to function</b>	Meaning/content Aboutness
<b>Requires understanding of use</b>	Requires interpretation 'Enigmatic' character Symbolic and expressive qualities
<b>Problem solving activity</b>	Problem raising activity
<b>Solutions</b>	Critique
<b>Impact on people's lives/ social relevance</b>	Reflects on human and social conditions
<b>Part of consumer society and everyday life</b>	Commenting on / critique of everyday life
<b>Heteronomy</b>	Autonomy
<b>Close relations to technology, economy and commercial forces</b>	Indirect relation to surrounding society
<b>Constrained creativity</b>	Self-initiated and free experimentation

### Structural frameworks related to design and art

	Design	Art
<b>Production/creation</b>	Industrial mass production Repeatable items Everyday objects	Unique production Singular objects Artworks
<b>Distribution/Circulation</b>	Potential for wide distribution on consumer market → potential massive impact	Circulated in galleries, museums and exhibition spaces
<b>Consumption/Reception</b>	Consumption in concrete usage Reception or evaluation relates to function and form	Contemplation Reception relates to form and meaning/content

### **Terminology: designart or hybrids?**

The examined literature reflects the challenges, not only in conceptualising or defining design and art, but also in describing or terming the results of the overlaps of art and design. The objects and works with the somewhat indefinable character of both/and, or of being in-between, art and design raises question of terminology. Within the reviewed literature the term 'designart' is central as it is used, with various meanings and in relation to different contexts, to characterise my objects of study. Meltzer describes the designart as a portmanteau concept that is a combination or blend of more than one use, or quality, resulting in a word whose meaning derives from these distinct forms. However given the difficulties in defining the terms, or concepts of, art and design separately, the meaning of designart is possibly not evident either. Several writers within the reviewed literature exemplify the observation made by Meltzer that the term designart has a double meaning. Within the literature examined the term describes, at least two, different forms of borderline cases between design and art. The term is used both about artworks which engage with design and it is used as a term in relation to experimental design created as limited editions and one-offs. The development in the use of the term designart is also summarized by art historian and curator Elena Agudio in her text for the exhibition *Totem and Taboo* (Elena Agudio, 2011). Agudio describes how the term 'design art' emerged in the late 1990s to define two different hybrid categories (Elena Agudio, 2011 p 85). In the late 1990s the term started being, initiated by Alex Coles, used to categorize functional-looking objects created by artists (Coles, 2005). In the meantime the term designart was introduced, by the London-based auction house Phillips de Pury to categorise limited edition objects and one-off prototypes, or as Agudio puts it 'arty looking design', created by designers (Elena Agudio, 2011 p 11). While the term might have initially contained a diversity of practices oscillating between art and design it seems to have been "taken over" by the context of specialized designart galleries and auction houses. Gradually the term has therefore become associated with limited edition design and the related

discussions of design sold for inflated prices. This use of designart has also entered the academic discourse (Hayward, 2012; Julier, 2014; Taylor, 2011). Given the differences in meanings related to designart and the discarding of the term by several writers and actors, the term is considered as problematic to use in the context of this research and the term will not be used as a general term to describe my objects of study. This is due to the term now being primarily associated with the above characterised kind of design and this now dominant usage of designart only refers to part of my examples. But, as my research also focuses on art engaging with design that is designart in the now lesser used sense, the term is therefore considered inadequate.

Instead I have chosen “hybrid” to term the selected contemporary manifestations of the points of contact between design and art. Thereby I am using a terminology similar to Agudio in her PhD thesis and following book *La poetica degli oggetti bastardi* (Elena Agudio, 2013). Agudio applies the term bastard objects to characterize the ambiguity of the objects in-between design and art, while primarily focusing on artists engaging with design. Bastard can be used synonymously, and has especially been used in previous times within zoology, to account for a hybrid between two species. I am using hybrid in the basic sense of mixture or blend of at least two different categories which may result in something “third”. Hybrid is within the context of this thesis defined as derived from heterogeneous sources or composed of elements of different or incongruous kinds. The term is chosen to specifically capture the composite or mixed character of the objects in question without placing emphasis on the art- or design element.

The use of the term hybrid and the related terms hybridity and hybridisation does not relate to the dominance of the concept of hybridity in discussions of mixed identities in the field of cultural studies and sociology (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, Held, & McGrew, 1992). I am not arguing, through the use of the term hybrid, that the phenomenon of mixing or combining art and design relates to the evolution of dynamic, mobile mixed cultures described as 'hybridity' in postmodern cultural and sociological theory. The usage of



hybridity relates, within this context, only to the similar meaning of intermingling or mixing implied in sociological usage, but my usage differs by not linking to the wider postmodern theories about cultural identities in the age of globalization. I am not using the expression sociologically, but applying too many biological or zoological referents would also be unfortunate. While hybridisation within biology and zoology may lead to hybrid vigour, that is genetic variation in the offspring and increased growth and resistance, hybrids do, however, also have a tendency towards sterility and uniformity. My use of the term hybrid is, however, not intended to convey the meaning of hybrids as in resulting in sterility or reduced fertility. The usage of hybrid is therefore not related with a judgement of whether these mixes of art and design elements are enhanced or lower quality of design and art respectively. Instead focus is on examining which combinations or mixes of design and art that are articulated through the selected hybrids. I consider the term hybrid as a concise description of the composite and mixed character of these specific artefacts. The term hybrid does not accentuate either the design or the art element and use of the term does not imply any disciplinary inadequacy in relation to neither art nor design. Thus the specificity of the artefacts of a hybrid character is acknowledged and they are understood in their own special right.

### **The history of interfaces between art and design**

My research reflect a specific intention of understanding the current interrelationship of design and art, but obviously, and as reflected in the examined literature, this relationship and the different related conceptualisations relate to the changes in these practices throughout history. The particular focus on the contemporary interface, and the resulting hybrids, is by no means an attempt to represent the subject in an ahistorical way or to argue that these recent hybrids have no precedents in the history of art and design. Rather I consider the phenomenon of confluence or crossing of design and art as it manifests itself in the recent decades as 'produced in part through an historical layering-up of occurrences' (Julier, 2014 p 246). The following will therefore, based on the reviewed

literature, sketch some of the historical points of contact between art and design while elaborating on which points in history that can be specifically considered as references or parallels to the selected contemporary hybrids.

Going back in history, design and art have at different points been closely related, also in terms of their definition. As Forsey remarks, the concepts of design and art and what counts as art or design has not remained stable (Forsey, 2013 p 10). The close relation between the practice of art and design is pointed to by e.g. Weimarck, who goes back to the renaissance and sketches from there on how the creative disciplines gradually became increasingly more separated. Various writers have, in similar ways, described how practices ranging from painting and sculpture to interior design and furniture-making have earlier in history all been considered part of the category of art (Bloemink, 2004; Rawsthorn, 2013). However, as accounted for by for example Bloemink, in the post-renaissance art of the West and especially towards the 19th century so called fine arts became more and more distanced from the decorative arts and the manufacture of functional objects (Bloemink, 2004 p 19). But a widely shared perception within design history, which is for example reflected in the writings of von Oppeln and Forsey, is that design as a discipline and concept emerged in the 20th century in relation to industrialization (Forsey, 2013; von Oppeln, 2011; Woodham, 1997). Therefore the following sketch of points in history of intermingling of art and design, which may have challenged or expanded the concepts of design and art, will consider the relationship as beginning roughly with industrial design in the early 20th century. This is in accordance with the examined literature in which for example Meltzer considers the emergence of industrial design as the starting point for art to engage with design's aesthetic in a way which have 'provoked heated debate over the dividing lines and common ground' (Meltzer, 2011 p 90).

The relationship between art and design, beginning with the very early emergence of design as a discipline, is characterised in the reviewed literature by both divergence and

convergence. Although my research attempts to focus primarily on the interrelationship between design and art, other related disciplines, such as craft and art, are inevitably, and to various degrees, part of this relationship as the historical accounts in the reviewed literature reflect. For example, when addressing the topic of meetings of art and design throughout history, von Oppeln begins by stating that: 'Historically speaking, there have always been points of contact between the fields of art, craft and design' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 16). Von Oppeln describes art and craft as initially related to each other, due to their production methods, and to a pre-modern experience. But what happens, according to von Oppeln, in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and with industrialization is that craft methods are displaced by industrial manufacturing processes which lead to a division into the autonomous artwork and the industrial product (von Oppeln, 2011 p 16). However, as he also points to, there was, in the early days of design, attempts to prevent the distancing between art and craft for example in the Arts & Crafts movement. Von Oppeln describes the work of William Morris as reflecting the ability to: ' (see) links to craft within the discipline of design as a chance to bring art and life closer together' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 17).

Coles also considers the Arts & Crafts movement as a point in history where there has been substantial dialogue between design and art, as he describes the present-day interface as having roots in this movement. According to Coles, John Ruskin and William Morris represented the following perception: 'that the divisions between the arts of the "intellect" – architecture, sculpture and painting- and those of the "decorative" –interior architecture, the crafts- were based on a false presupposition' (Coles, 2007 p 17). The reviewed literature reflects the point, made by Grace Lees-Maffei and Linda Sandino, that significance is often placed on the Arts & Craft movement, because it is considered 'a touchstone of the attempt to integrate design, the crafts and art' (Lees-Maffei & Sandino, 2004 p 209). In their article, *Dangerous Liaisons: Relationships between Design, Craft and Art*, they describe complex history of the affinities between design, art and craft through the

analogy of a ménage à trois (Lees-Maffei & Sandino, 2004). Drawing on this analogy, Lees-Maffei and Sandino argues for the following: ‘design, craft and art can be seen to occupy an unstable territory of permanently shifting allegiances, and this is true both of the histories of these three sets of practices and the three families of discourses surrounding them’ (Lees-Maffei & Sandino, 2004 p 207).

Other historical accounts place more emphasis on the triangular relationship of design, art and architecture. This relationship has for example been studied in depth by Anders V. Munch in both his postdoctoral thesis and the following book *Design as Gesamtkunstwerk: The Art of Transgression* (Munch, 2012). Through the concept of Gesamtkunstwerk, in the sense of the union of all arts and the transgression of art into life, Munch analyses different historical moments, such as Art Nouveau, Bauhaus and post-war Modernism. These are described as moments: ‘where the design, architecture and art have become interwoven on the basis of common visions – but without getting completely dissolved in each other’ (Munch, 2012 p 11). Similarly, Foster also considers the debate of the blurring of disciplines to date back to the movement of Gesamtkunstwerk and Art Nouveau. This period in history is, for Foster, both the starting point of convergences of art and design, or what he describes as total design, and a central point of reference or comparison throughout his discussion. According to Foster, art and design (and craft) became intermingled within Art Nouveau, as designers attempted to infuse art, in terms of ornamentation, into utilitarian objects (Foster, 2003 p 17). The design program of Bauhaus in the 1920s is another example of what he describes as total design. Mutual for Art Nouveau and the Bauhaus was the endorsement of reconnecting art and life: a project which, according to Foster, succeeded over time (Foster, 2003 p 19). The notion of a joining of art and life is also observed by von Oppeln, but he dates it back to the German Werkbund who: ‘favored a joining of engineering and art, of function and form – but one involving industrial mass production’ (von Oppeln, 2011 p 17). Von Oppeln also points to Bauhaus as an example of aspirations to this joining which ‘contrasts with the concept of

the autonomous artwork' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 17). According to Foster, the reconciliation of art and life has been accomplished but the problem is, that it has been accomplished 'according to the spectacular dictates of culture industry, not the liberatory ambitions of the avant-garde. And a primary form of this perverse reconciliation in our time is design' (Foster, 2003 p 19).

In Coles' account, the early avant-garde movements such as Constructivism, De Stijl and Bauhaus are also emphasized as important moments where the issue of bringing the arts together is at the agenda. Coles writes the following about the avant-garde movements: 'In different ways, they responded to the technological and political implications of industrialization by fostering new relationships between the autonomous sphere of art and the mass-produced culture of industrial design' (Coles, 2007 p 10). What the three above mentioned movements had in common was putting forward theories which were sympathetic to the correlation of art and design. Coles overall characterises these movements as: '(pursuing) a much more exacting sense of how correlations between art and design could be pressed into service by utilising a muscular theoretical programme' (Coles, 2005 p 17). In his account, he also mentions especially Bauhaus as an example of unity of the arts, as reflected in referring to the writings of Walter Gropius and his ideals about the coordination of all creative efforts and the collective work of art (Coles, 2005 p 17).

Likewise Spechtenhauser points to an avant-garde movement as an historical example of cross-discipline strategies, but he uses the, perhaps less known, case of Czech Cubism. He describes this movement as: 'a far-reaching attempt by artists and architects [...] to apply to all branches of creative work the artistic innovation of analytical Cubism as developed by Picasso and Braque' (Spechtenhauser, 2011 p 71). The new artistic maxims were, according to Spechtenhauser, transferred to furniture design which due to their shape posed challenges to manufacturing. These furniture were produced as one-off pieces, instead of being industrially mass-produced and therefore they took 'on the

character of the authentic and non-reproducible' (Spechtenhauser, 2011 p 73). Furthermore, what characterised the Czech Cubists was not aiming for optimal fulfilment of purpose: 'instead, they created objects whose practical function was just one function among many' (Spechtenhauser, 2011 p 85). Spechtenhauser sees a link between this historic example and some contemporary designers, exemplified with Martino Gamper. The link is: 'the will to create more than just commercially viable objects for practical use. The positions of these avant-garde designers reflect their inability to identify with the established discipline, their discomfort and discontent, and even their opposition to existing conventions' (Spechtenhauser, 2011 p 83).

Following the avant-garde movements, the issue of bringing the arts together was, according to Coles, put to silence until the mid-1950s where for example the Independent Group returned to the topic again (Coles, 2005 p 17). Overall Coles describes Pop artists as fully embracing an approachment to design which meant that the dialogue between art and design flourished in the 1960s (Coles, 2005 p 10, p 17). Contrary to Pop artists, Coles characterises Conceptual artist of the late 1960s as 'evasive about design' and Minimalists, such as Donald Judd, as applying a 'strategic coyness towards design' (Coles, 2005 p 10, p 13). Going back in the history of art, Gerleit also points to the 1960s as a period of significance for art engaging with design, because in this period furniture was used as component in art installations as a reflection of a desire for bringing art back as an experienced reality (Gerleit, 2000 p 100). The inclusion of furniture design in art in so called 'environments' is, however, characterised by the furniture being considered from the outset as objects to contemplate and not to use: they are sculpture made of industrially made objects (Gerleit, 2000 p 101). Thereby the historic example of a meeting of art and design, as reflected in the incorporating of everyday objects in 1960s art, evolves in Gerleit's account mainly around appropriation or making use of design rather than creating design objects.

García-Antón makes the case for the 1960s and 1970s as a basis for understanding contemporary practitioners in her account of the historical context for the contemporary interface between design and art. Changes happened in art, design, popular culture etc. in those decades which, according to García-Antón, led to intensifications of collaborations and experimentations between disciplines. When García-Antón describes contemporary practitioners, represented in the exhibition *Wouldn't it be nice*, she focuses on how 'they treat their work as an investigative and explorative process, building upon the experimental legacy of 1960s and 70s culture, and questioning in their wake the role and place of design and art today' (García-Antón, 2007 p 61).

The parallels García-Antón draws between the practices of then and today are the degree of experimentation and inter- or cross disciplinary work. Furthermore contemporary practices and design and art from 60s and 70s have an engagement with and questioning of (everyday) culture in common. Another part of the legacy which she considers to be of importance for contemporary practitioners is the notion of performativity considered as the possibility of effective outcomes of activities carried out. This notion of performativity is reflected in contemporary practices that approach social questions through the actions and materials used in the works. Contemporary practitioners have, according to García-Antón, 'been able to expand their field of action by fully engaging with the potential for performance and performativity [...] by working on the potential for action and change' (García-Antón, 2007 p 61). As the following will show, I agree that the 60s and 70s provides a historical background that contemporary practitioners are drawing on because of the increased emergence in these decades of working with cross-disciplinary methods. Furthermore across art and design there was an interest in material everyday life, social engagement and performativity which has just developed further today.

According to Coles, the dialogue between art and design is resumed in the mid-1990s by a new generation of artists. This recent generation is described by Coles as having: 'an

open attitude towards working with different disciplines or the ambitions to create conditions for the viewer to have a truly dialogistic experience' (Coles, 2005 p 13). Similarly Allen also focuses on the generation of artists in the 1990s which she relates to relational aesthetics. She considers their endeavours as challenging, or trying to destroy, the division between form and function and this has resulted in: 'interactive artworks that can be used, and designers (deploying) objects where hands-off contemplation is allowed' (Allen, 2011 p 221). This generation is described by Allen as producing works which merged form and function as these artworks could 'be eaten, taken home, slept in' etc. As a consequence, viewers are, according to Allen, turned into users and design was turned into artworks (Allen, 2011 p 221).

### **The historic parallels to contemporary crossings of art and design**

The contemporary movements between design and art, as they are reflected in the cases analysed in this context, draw on a wide range of elements, and often in somewhat eclectic combinations, from the repository of the history of art and design. It would therefore be misleading to understand these hybrids as a reaction to one specific historical movement or to consider it as merely prolonged postmodernism for example. But nonetheless, overall I propose that my selection of hybrids overall appear to find their inspiration or historical parallels in the more recent history rather than going a century back. Across the examples, the tactics or techniques and ideas expressed can predominantly be traced back to developments in art, design and architecture from the 1960s onwards. The different decades since the 1960s obviously consist of a range of movements in art and design and all cannot be regarded as historical precursors for the selection of hybrids reflected here. The following will therefore sketch the various movements or tendencies which I consider to reflect similarities, in terms of practices or themes, to the analysed contemporary hybrids. Thereby this section forms the background for later reflections on how contemporary hybrids and their specific materiality evoke potential historical references.



For the part of my examples which could be termed designart historic parallels can, in my view, be found in Italian design. This is in accordance with the observation by Hayward, who points to Italian designers in the 1960s and early 1970s as 'one of the closest historic parallels for today's design/art' (Hayward, 2012 p 67). Hayward summarizes three directions in which Italian design was proceeding of which I consider 'the reformist tendency' and 'the representatives of contestation' to have influenced contemporary practitioners working in-between design and art. The manifestations of the reformist tendency, such as the design of Mendini, Sottsass and other designers related to Studio Alchimia and Memphis, have a quite different formal appearance from my examples of hybrids. What these practices nonetheless have in common is the character of experimental laboratories where approaches to design are to different degrees reinvented. Even if practitioners of today are perhaps not as radical, they could to some extent fit the description, by Barbara Radice, of what designers related to Memphis was occupied with: 'breaking ground, extending the field of action, broadening awareness, shaking things up, discussing conditions, and setting up fresh opportunities' (Radice, 1984 p 141). The so called representatives of contestation: groups like Archizoom and Superstudio with their critique of consumer culture could also to some degree be considered as an underlying influence for the contemporary designers whose work I analyse in chapter two. Furthermore their characteristic advocating for 'the possibility of a life without objects' stands out distinctly as a parallel to the hybrids in chapter three of hybrids which are also to some degree proposals for minimal ways of living (Hayward, 2012 p 67). The experimentation, aesthetic convergences and cross-influences begun in 1960s continued in different ways in the following decades leading to the 1990s: a decade where the meetings between design and art appear to become more intensified. Different developments in the 90ties, especially Droog design, critical design and relational aesthetics, have had considerable influence on the points of contact between art and design that I have chosen to focus on.

## **The influence of Droog**

The grouping of hybrids which have been termed designart are undoubtedly influenced by a more recent movement within design, in terms of the Dutch design collective Droog. The first exhibition of the works of different Dutch designers, curated by Renny Ramakers and Gijs Bakker, was at the Salone del Mobile in Milan in 1993 (Simon Thomas, 2008 p 225). This exhibition could, as Damon Taylor remarks, be chosen as an attractive moment to consider as the point of origin for designart (Taylor, 2011 p 43). However, although I acknowledge the significance and influence of Droog on the contemporary hybrids between design and art, I also agree with Taylor in the following observation:

‘The arrival of Droog on the scene therefore provides an attractive point of origin in constructing the history of functional items that seem to have a narrative and emotional charge. However, this moment must be seen as a transitional phase in the design of design art. [...] The appearance of Droog and its subsequent development does not then function as the origin of design art. Rather it marks a key moment of transition in its emergence’ (Taylor, 2011 p 45)

Mienke Simon Thomas also place emphasis on Droog in her account of the history Dutch design, but considers Droog as part of a broader trend of so called conceptual design. Droog would, in her perspective, have been unthinkable without the developments in the 1980s: a decade which she characterises as having witnessed ‘resistance to the impersonal nature of modernism, a struggle for more expression and emotion, the intermingling of design and art, and even a certain degree of conceptualization’ (Simon Thomas, 2008 p 225). Simon Thomas describes how, within a Dutch context, the borders between art, craft and design became blurred during the 1980s due to the influence of Italian postmodernism and, what she terms, designer-makers. These were industrial designers who began making small-scale series or unique objects (Simon Thomas, 2008 p 220). The influence of Italian design groups on Dutch conceptual

design is also considered of great importance by Renny Ramakers who was one of the initiators of Droog. According to Ramakers, the developments in Droog are inseparably linked with the movements in Italian design in the 1970-80s. She states: 'One might even argue that Droog design would not have existed without the pioneering work of Memphis, Alchimia and others' (Ramakers & Bakker, 1998 p 30). In Ramakers account the Italian design groups paved, through their different experiments, the way for a new generation of designers who were now able to work with a freer outlook on design. This was due to the developments in design the 80ties which had, according to Ramakers, the following consequences: 'The arsenal of means and sources of inspiration was expanded considerably, down to and including everyday culture; design dogmas were thrown overboard' (Ramakers & Bakker, 1998 p 33).

The success of, or great attention to, Droog design throughout the 90ties and into the 2000s can, according to Simon Thomas, be explained by two central factors: 1) the great interest in conceptual design within design education 2) the funding structures in relation to art and design in the Netherlands (Simon Thomas, 2008 p 231, p 232). Furthermore Simon Thomas describes how Droog design emerged at a point where there was already a climate welcoming conceptual design in terms of the official art circles that were eager to acquire and exhibit the new cross-border tendencies in design. In this period new galleries also opened for specifically the area between art and design (Simon Thomas, 2008 p 224).

The aims of Droog are described by Simon Thomas as: '(a) radical rejection of aesthetics in favour of an emphasis on the process of conceptualization and design' (Simon Thomas, 2008 p 225). For Ramakers, the works of the selected designers for Droog, exemplified reactions to the following: 'the design profession's emphasis on beautiful materials, careful detailing and a perfect finish, on design with a capital D' (Ramakers & Bakker, 1998 p 52). Many of the first Droog designs certainly had a 'rough-and-ready finish', as described by Ramakers, as the design objects were made from assembled waste materials or existing products (Ramakers & Bakker, 1998 p 52). This was for example the case of Piet Hein Eek's

cupboards, Tejo Remy's chest of drawers and Rody Grauman's chandelier. But, as Simon Thomas, accounts for, the theme changed from the recycling of old products to other foci such as simplicity and material experiments (Simon Thomas, 2008 p 227). Finally in 2000 Droog made the project *do create* which was a collection of objects to be co-created or finished by the user. In different ways, such as hammering or smashing, the user had to engage in some kind of 'doing' in order to have for example a chair or vase.

There are clear parallels between the early Droog design and their assemblage character and part of my selected hybrids, as they also reflect the use of appropriation or "recycling" as tactic. The ambition of Droog of pioneering new directions in design, described as more conceptual or 'meaning-giving', is certainly an inspirational background for many practitioners in the cross field of design and art. Within the context of this thesis, Jurgen Bey relates most directly to the collective of Droog, but the influence can, to various extents, be detected throughout much of contemporary design. According to Taylor the similarity between Droog design and so called designart can be summarized as: 'an examination of what constitutes the boundaries of function as a concept'(Taylor, 2011 p 47). Not only in terms of content but also in terms of methods of production, distribution etc. there is also parallels between the Droog designers of the 90s and contemporary designers in-between art and design as one-offs, and limited editions is more recurring than mass industrial production. Finally in relation to Droog design, or conceptual design, the question whether the objects were art or design was also raised in a way similar to the recent debate concerning hybrids of design and art. However in Ramakers' account, it is important that the work of the designers related to Droog is not regarded as art, instead she positions it within the tradition and context of product design (Ramakers & Bakker, 1998 p 63). Despite this programme declaration many of the works related to Droog certainly display similarities, in terms of their inherent content or critique and status as exhibition pieces, to both designart and my selection of contemporary hybrids.

## Critical Design

Within the contemporary cross fields of art and design there are, as is also observed in the reviewed literature, tendencies to work with design as a critical praxis in the form of design which makes self-critical statements on the discipline and comments on design's role in society. Thereby parallels between the speculative strand of design which have been termed critical design and the hybrids analysed here certainly can be found. As King points out there is common ground between the self-reflexive and experimental practice of critical design and many of the hybrid practices in-between design and art also in the sense of being 'design that floats free of the conventional commercial arena' (King, 2007 p 46). Or, as Julier observes, in making parallels between designart and critical design: 'While being oriented differently towards their audience, both of these may be understood to occupy their own critical space between high design and fine art' (Julier, 2014 p 102).

Critical Design is said to originate from, and is often understood in relation to, the practice of Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby (Dunne, 1999; Julier, 2014; M. Malpass, 2013). From the late 1990s they have been using design to stimulate debate about the social, cultural and ethical implications of existing and emerging technologies (Dunne & Raby). The following definition of this critical practice is given by Dunne and Raby: 'Critical Design uses speculative design proposals to challenge narrow assumptions, preconceptions, and givens about the role products play in everyday life'(Raby, 2008)<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore it is emphasized that critical design is an approach and attitude to design rather than a definitive method: what is essential is to provoke discussion (Raby, 2008).

Critical design is mainly associated with the activities of Dunne and Raby and the design courses in Design Interactions at the Royal College of Art. But according to Matt Malpass the field of critical design is both in flux and encompasses important nuances. Therefore critical practices in design are not adequately described by the understanding of

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<sup>7</sup> The definition can also be found under the heading Critical Design FAQ: <http://www.dunneandraby.co.uk/content/bydandr/13/0>

critical design reflected in the work of Dunne and Raby (M. Malpass, 2013 p 336). Instead as a way to analyse, differentiate and discuss critical design, Malpass proposes making differentiations between what he terms associative design, speculative design and critical design. Furthermore he examines how these various critical practices can be considered as using satire as a device to critique (M. Malpass, 2013 p 343).

Malpass characterises associative design as emerging from designer-maker tradition and drawing on the mechanisms of subversion and experimentation in conceptual art (M. Malpass, 2013 p 336). In associative design there is, according to Malpass, an embedded narrative which subverts expectations of the ordinary and the everyday. The practice is dominated by furniture design and the methods used are for example appropriation of found objects and cut-up. By subverting conventional and known objects, Malpass considers associative design to establish a critical move where the user questions the object. He states: 'It (associative design) challenges embedded assumptions of products, making use of conventional disciplinary frames to assert and subvert norms' (M. Malpass, 2013 p 338). The critique within this practice is described by Malpass as a form of self-critique; that is its focus relates to disciplinary concerns. In terms of satire, Malpass characterises associative design as making use of parody and exaggeration or what he categorizes as Horatian satire. He describes this approach as follows: 'In the Horatian approach, the designer takes either an existing work that was created with a serious purpose, or an object with reputable characteristics, and then makes the work look ridiculous by infusing it with incongruous ideas' (M. Malpass, 2013 p 343).

Speculative design is presented as: 'specifically focused on science and technology, establishing and projecting scenarios of use; it makes visible what is emerging' (M. Malpass, 2013 p 336). Malpass characterises speculative design as situated between scientific discourse and material culture since this design practice questions the role and potential of existing and emergent technology (M. Malpass, 2013 p 338). The *Placebo Project* by Dunne and Raby is an example of this: the project is experimental and conceptual

design which investigates peoples' attitudes to and experiences of electromagnetic fields in the home. The project illustrates the speculations within critical practice linked to the implications of design and technology in the future. Through often interactive designs, the user is, according to Malpass, encouraged to: 'reconsider how the present is "futuring" and how we might have the chance to reconfigure the future' (M. Malpass, 2013 p 340). In contrast to associative design, speculative design is not, according to Malpass, a self-critical praxis, instead the critique or examination is directed towards the appropriation of science and technology in everyday life. However, the speculative design products, or works, are not situated as consumer products for mass production: they circulate in an exhibition context (M. Malpass, 2013 p 340). As satire, speculative design is described as employing a darker form of satire attempting to evoke the following: 'contempt, shock, and righteous indignation in the mind of the user' (M. Malpass, 2013 p 344). Furthermore speculative design aims to change the perspective on a situation for example by separating something from its ordinary context and often by exaggerating or downplaying parts of the problem addressed.

Thirdly, Malpass offers a characterisation of critical design as emerging from developments in the field of human-computer interaction and later interaction design. Central in critical design is the challenging of conventional approaching to designing human-object interaction (M. Malpass, 2013 p 337). According to Malpass, critical design differs from speculative design by focusing on: 'present social, cultural and ethical implications of design objects and practice' (M. Malpass, 2013 p 341). He places great emphasis on critical design's relation to the present, as it he describes how this practice 'scans the cultural horizon today' and 'make striking comment on current [...] concerns' (M. Malpass, 2013 p 341). Nonetheless the differences between speculative design and critical design appear to be rather subtle, as Malpass describes how projects by Dunne and Raby are also concerned with futures in the form of fictive scenarios. Critical design is furthermore characterised as being concerned with reassessing the role of the design

profession in society and thereby the critique is, according to Malpass, directed both towards the discipline, consumers and society (M. Malpass, 2013 p 343). In relation to the question of satire, critical design is also described as evoking dark humour and as relying on antithesis, counter-proposition and allegory as ways to visualize alternatives (M. Malpass, 2013 p 346). This should lead the user to consider beliefs and values and question his or her attitudes.

Finally Malpass differentiates between the three critical practices in relation to their use of narratives: or more specifically 'the use of storytelling techniques to pass comment or inquire through the actions of designing' (M. Malpass, 2013 p 347). For the case of associative design, Malpass considers the narrative, or commentary, to be embedded in the object. Speculative design, in contrast, require detailed supporting narrative to establish their use which is also the case for critical design which establishes 'an extrinsic narrative to establish contexts of use'(M. Malpass, 2013 p 348). However, what seem to unite these practices are the contexts in which Malpass identify them as carried out in. The operating contexts are: self-initiated studio projects, educational student projects, academic design research and semi-academic research (M. Malpass, 2013 p 352).

I began this section by stating, that there are clearly parallels between critical design and the hybrid practices selected for analysis in this research. In terms of the contexts where the outputs of these practices are located or experienced there are similarities, as critical design also often appears in the context of (art) galleries and museums. Economically speaking my cases overall have a parallel to critical design in the sense of not being produced or distributed via the commercial market based on industrial mass production. Some of my cases are, however, in contrast to critical design, part of a commercial market in terms of the high-end market for design in limited editions, while other cases are, similarly to critical design, primarily funded by institutions related to the art system or design education. Furthermore there are parallels in the discussions related to critical design and the cross field in-between art and design in the sense that the question often



asked is whether to consider the outputs of these practices as design or art. However, whereas critical designers, for example Dunne and Raby, clearly expresses a distance to art while emphasizing the close relatedness to the everyday, many of the practitioners selected from the outset of design are in contrast openly and deliberately engaging with art (Raby, 2008).

I consider critical design and many of my examples as having the characteristic in common, observed by Julier, of using design as a language to critique or make a commentary on material culture (Julier, 2014 p 102). I do, however, consider the forms of critique to manifest itself quite differently and the issues addressed differ a great deal too. Some of the defining features of associative design such as appropriation of existing objects etc. are also, as shall be demonstrated, characteristic for the furniture-like hybrids to be analysed in chapter two. But my approach in analysing and discussing these design or works differs from Malpass by not necessarily aiming to place them within the rubric of critical design. Although Malpass makes the case of extending or nuancing critical design, I work primarily with an understanding of critical design which is closely associated with the design practices termed speculative design and/or critical design. Therefore, although many of the case studies in this research reflect aspects of critique or commentary, primarily on design as a discipline, I do not characterise them as critical in the sense of critical design distinguished by its focus on human-object interaction, technology and future scenarios. Instead I propose, in the analyses to follow, to understand my examples of objects in-between design and art as being “about something” and this “something” or content can in some cases be characterised as critical commentaries, but it does not apply to all the content or meanings articulated in these hybrids.

## **Art of the 90ties: relational art or the social turn**

While Droog design and critical design are recent movements within the design field which constitute parts of the background for the hybrids, developments within contemporary art in the 1990s form another influential framework, as for example Lind and King points to in the reviewed literature. Art in the 90ties was characterised by a great diversity in artistic practices, many of which could be considered as further developments of the forms of expression of especially the 60ties and 70ties such as activist art and conceptual art. However, one tendency, or movement, appear to have gained a central momentum in the 90ties: this movement has been described as 'relational art' or as 'the social turn' (Bourriaud, 2002; Larsen, 2012). The term relational art stems from art theorist Nicolas Bourriaud who became highly influential in the discourses related to contemporary art due to his notion of relational aesthetics. With the concept of relational aesthetics Bourriaud attempts to provide analyses of specific strategies within contemporary art practices which are distinguished by having character of interactions, meeting or situations (Bourriaud, 2002). In Bourriaud's understanding art is considered as a place that produces a specific sociability and the art work is characterised as 'social interstice' (Bourriaud, 2002 p 16). It means that relational art is considered to create free areas, in contrast to commerce, and to encourage: 'an inter-human commerce that differs from the "communication zones" that are imposed upon us' (Bourriaud, 2002 p 16). Furthermore he defines relational art as 'a state of encounter' and a 'rich loam for social experiments, like a space partly protected from the uniformity of behavioural patterns' (Bourriaud, 2002 p 18, p 9).

The relational art forms reflects the ideal that art can change the world by engaging or intervening in the broader every day social context. According to Bourriaud, contemporary art continues the fight, or the modern project, of the historic avant-garde movements of 'changing culture, attitudes and mentalities, and individual and social living conditions' (Bourriaud, 2002 p 12). Within relational art this happens by the

modelling of possible universes and through a model which is characterised as experimental, critical and participatory. Furthermore a central point for Bourriaud is that these models of possible universes are not 'imaginary and utopian realities', instead art is actually 'ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever the scale chosen by the artist' (Bourriaud, 2002 p 13). This lead to these contemporary art practices being characterised as 'everyday micro-utopias' whose subversive and critical function consists in 'temporary and nomadic constructions' (Bourriaud, 2002 p 31). To some extent the characteristics of relational art in terms of being models for possible universes and ways of living are also reflected in the cases of hybrid dwellings analysed in chapter three.

As mentioned, a central feature in relational art is the ideal of artistic practices unfolding because of, or as part of, concrete human relations in their social context of everyday life. What is proposed as art works is described as: 'a) moments of sociability b) objects producing sociability' (Bourriaud, 2002 p 33). The creation of relations or social interventions is for example the focal point in the artistic practice of Rirkrit Tiravanija who organizes performances or meals. In order to produce relations or social interaction, the participation or engagement of users, or viewers, plays a central role. Although, as Bourriaud notes, participation is not a new ideal in art, he considers participatory-based practices to be more dominant within contemporary art and furthermore the interaction is distinguished by its inter-human character (Bourriaud, 2002). As a result of this social turn, art became, according to Lars Bang Larsen, a situation or process: 'A work was now a club, a bar, a meal, a cinema, a hang-out, a dance floor, a game of football or a piece of furniture' (Larsen, 2012). This aspect of artists creating functional design is also addressed by Claire Bishop, who observes a trend within the project-based and open-ended art of the 90ties toward 'inviting contemporary artists to design or troubleshoot amenities within the museum, such as the bar [...] or reading lounge[...] and in turn present these as works of art' (Bishop, 2006 p 53). For Bishop the consequences of, what she terms, the 'artist-as-designer' are open-ended, semi-functional art works where function is placed over

contemplation (Bishop, 2006 p 53). These aspirations to engage users actively in works or projects of participatory process character also influences the practices in-between art and design as the analysis to follow will show.

### **Appropriation as a working method**

Another significant tendency in many of the selected examples of hybrids is appropriation, understood as the use of pre-existing objects or images. This tendency, which has also been described as the use of ready-mades, or found objects and assemblage, can within the history of art be traced back to the first ready-mades by Marcel Duchamp in the 1910s. The tactic is also widely used by Duchamp's contemporaries such as the Dadaists and Surrealists and can later be found in Pop art from the 1950s and 1960s. The use of appropriation in design can, as both Gareth Williams and Guy Julier points out, be traced back to the Castiglioni brothers in the 1960s in an Italian context and to designers such as Ron Arad and Tom Dixon in the 1980s in Great Britain (Julier, 2014; Williams, 2006). Other design movements could be added for example the designers represented in the German exhibition of 1986 *Gefühlscollagen: Wohnen ohne Sinnen*. While considering appropriation as a key feature in many of the hybrids it may, as Hayward observes, reflect 'an uneasy relationship to the past' (Hayward, 2012 p 70).

Some of the examples of appropriation I will analyse centres around the appropriation of the plastic monobloc chair. This is a chair that has a history dating back to the late 1960s but it is also very much a product of present-day production-consumption culture. The appropriating of this widely mass produced can overall be considered as referring back to the use of popular everyday objects as reflected especially in Pop art. But in what follows, appropriation is used as a tactic in varied ways and with different objectives and therefore the examples draw on multiple historical references. Overall I consider the selected examples of hybrids to reflect the point, made by Hayward and Julier, that contemporary practitioners in the design field are actively and knowingly using, reinterpreting and

revitalising history (Hayward, 2012; Julier, 2014). Other ways of characterising this tendency are reflected in the proposals of the concepts of 'prosumption', by Nakajima, and 'postproduction' by Bourriaud (Bourriaud, 2000; Nakajima, 2011). I consider these two concepts as useful tools to describe and discuss the hybrids I will be analysing. Due to the relevance of these concepts, proposed as characteristics of contemporary creative practitioners, they will be discussed later as they form part of my theoretical framework for examining hybrids.

### **Conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches for interpreting hybrids**

As a subject matter hybrids between design and art obviously relate both to design history and art history<sup>8</sup>. But being exactly hybrids, and composite in character, these objects somehow seem to fall between, or combine, these two stools or disciplines, which respectively have a focus on either industrially manufactured objects or art objects. Ranging across disciplines this research poses the specific problems characteristic for interdisciplinary research, which according to Bal and Bryson are: 'problems of methodology, which have to do with the status of objects and the applicability of concepts designed to account for objects with a different status' (Bal & Bryson, 1991 p 176). If attempting to account for hybrids taking exclusively a design or art history perspective, this could mean potential biases towards the matter and as a consequence these hybrids would possibly risk being placed at the margins and written off as either "inadequate" design or art. Therefore it has been a central concern how to address these manifestations in-between art and design, which exhibit a certain resistance to tidy classification in a way that embraces the complexity and variety of these hybrids. Just as my objects of study, this research could thereby be considered as demanding a process of hybridization; that is a combination of perspectives from both art and design.

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<sup>8</sup> They could also be the subject matter in Design Culture, Visual Culture and Cultural Studies.

The path taken in this research is, however, not only to take the disciplinary attachments to design and art into account, but also to some degree to free the subject matter from these attachments. The attempts to liberate the objects have meant adopting perspectives and methodologies from the interdisciplinary study of material culture. Rather than placing the hybrids within the object domain of design or art, the experiment has from the outset been to try to consider the hybrids with fresh eyes and see them as things, artefacts or as any other, material phenomenon. The choice of finding inspiration in material culture studies is based on its status as a field of study, however diffuse and diverse in its approaches, which specifically focuses on the material aspects of culture. The potential benefits from a material cultural position is, that this position can empirically, according to Christopher Tilley, involve the analysis of a domain of things which is endlessly diverse (Tilley, 2006 p 3)<sup>9</sup>. Besides considering material culture as providing inspiration in terms of studying cases across a range of object domains, it is of relevance due to the central focus on the material objects and their meaning. My position is based on perspectives from material culture in the sense that I place an emphasis on the interrelationship between materiality and meanings of the studied hybrids. This means that my approach reflects the point of view that in order to understand hybrids a great deal of insight can be acquired by scrutinizing and experiencing objects while situating them within the context of art and design activity and the broader cultural context.

The hybrids selected for analyses in this research reflect, deliberately, a great diversity and they engender a multiplicity of meanings. This makes it difficult to create a cohesive theoretical or methodological model for their interpretations and analysis. Rather than doing so, I have therefore investigated the hybrids with flexibility and included different approaches and theoretical perspectives throughout this research to analyse and understand the various expressions of the confluence of design and art. The thesis reflects a flexible and pragmatic choice of methods; pragmatic in the sense, that I have attempted

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<sup>9</sup> Material Culture studies can however be said to be dominated with everyday objects as the case studies

to use different approaches according to the particular questions and subject matters addressed in the various groups of hybrids. Similarly, the theoretical concepts which I draw on to enrich my analyses are generated from looking specifically at these objects and should be considered as tools to understand them. The same strategy has been applied when attempting to place the hybrids in relation to their context, both their contemporary and historical context; I have included contextual factors considered of relevance to develop more comprehensive interpretations of the specific hybrids in questions.

Overall, the journey undertaken to obtain an understanding of contemporary hybrids reflects bringing out different aspects, according to the special characteristics of the realms under investigation, of my cultural baggage as interpreter. Although, this research has as a consequence taken various methodological paths, the unifying principle is that my endeavours reflects a position where the starting point is close analysis of the objects, leading to interpretations of their meanings and broader contextualisation. My position is overall based on the combination of the scientific theoretical frames, or conceptual frameworks, of phenomenological hermeneutics and semiotics. This combination is motivated in considering phenomenological hermeneutics as an overall framework for my interpretative and analytical thinking which, however, provides few concrete methodological tools that semiotics, in contrast, provides to some extent.

In the following, I will outline and consider how these conceptual frameworks inform my research and relate to the constituents of the methodological approaches. The sequence will be to firstly consider the wider theoretical frameworks which I place my close analysis and interpretation methods within. Secondly, my approach of analysing the objects themselves is supplemented with reflections upon how and to which degree I provide cultural readings of the hybrids; that is how they are placed within a broader context. Finally, this research wants to discuss the hybrids and their meanings against various concepts drawing from contemporary art and design theory and related fields of study. The notions of prosumption and postproduction are, to various degrees, considered of

relevance to all of the analysed hybrids and as a consequence I account for these concepts at the end of this section. The other methods and theoretical concepts, applied for interpreting will also be sketched but they are described and motivated more fully as they occur in the different and specific analyses.

### **Phenomenological hermeneutics**

Phenomenological ideas inform my thinking about the hybrid objects in the sense that I use insights drawn from the close observation of these objects and their haptic qualities as a starting point for a wider argument. Furthermore I consider hybrids as posing a problem similar to the problem related to art works, as described by Nicholas Davey: 'they are not readily intelligible, seem enigmatic and can appear obscure' (Davey, 2002 p 436). I consider the hybrids as, similar to art works, 'addressing questions, that is as offering visual responses to historically evolved themes and subjects matters' (Davey, 2002 p 442). As a consequence I do not merely seek to describe it, but also to interpret and engage with it. Therefore my approach to examining these hybrids is also influenced by hermeneutics understood as a theory of interpretation or a constellation of different interpretive perspectives (Davey, 2002; Smith, 2013). The following will, however, not account for the far-reaching philosophical issues encompassed in neither phenomenology nor hermeneutics. Instead, I will address how the phenomenological tradition, especially phenomenological hermeneutics, can be considered a source which influences my theoretical position and methodology.

By aiming to characterise the hybrids my studies are, to some degree, in accordance with the aim of phenomenology, as defined by Merleau-Ponty amongst others, of description of phenomena (Merleau-Ponty, 2002). My approach to studying hybrids is inspired by the notion formulated by Edmund Husserl of going 'back to things themselves' (Husserl, 2001 p 168). I have, to some degree and at various points in my enquiries, aimed to let the hybrid objects 'talk' for themselves instead of, or before, getting lost in theoretical



speculations or what Martin Heidegger formulates as 'free-floating constructions' (Heidegger, 1962 p 50). This means, according to Davey, that within a hermeneutic position one strives to establish the conditions where the work can challenge our interpretive assumptions, rather than subordinating a work to a theoretical model (Davey, 2002 p 441). So the question which hermeneutics confronts us (theoreticians) with is, according to Davey, whether we are open to being addressed by the work and rethink our presuppositions or 'is the theoretician content to (ab)use the art work as a means to sustain campaigns of methodology which do not directly appertain to the work itself?' (Davey, 2002 p 440). The answer for my part is, partly, in accordance with the hermeneutical thought in the sense that my approach is based on regarding the hybrids as something which demands our attention. The hybrids themselves are considered of primary importance, instead of being rendered secondary to the demonstration of a certain theorem.

As a consequence, and in order to comprehend the characteristics of hybrid objects, I have in my academic studies a prime interest in the way these objects appear and manifest themselves. This means implicitly acknowledging the phenomenological idea that any appearance or manifestation of a phenomena is always a manifestation for someone; that is, the hybrid objects studied are experienced by me as a subject (Zahavi, 2003 p 17). The studies are founded on phenomenology in the sense of considering the phenomena; the hybrids, as things as they appear and by aiming to study and describe them as clearly and undistorted as possible (Husserl, 1980). However, as my analysis will show, my approach far from follows phenomenology as a method for description nor is it limited to 'the study of how things merely appear in experience' (Wheeler, 2014). Rather my position points more towards phenomenological hermeneutics in the sense that my methods are interpretive and based on the Heideggerian assumption that all description is always already interpretation (Heidegger, 1962). This means in the readings of Heidegger by Martin Wheeler that the goal of phenomenology is understood as:

‘to deliver an *interpretation* of Being, an interpretation that, on one hand, is guided by certain historically embedded ways of thinking (ways of taking-as reflected in Dasein’s preontological understanding of Being) that the philosopher as Dasein and as interpreter brings to the task, and, on the other hand, is ceaselessly open to revision, enhancement and replacement’ (Wheeler, 2014)<sup>10</sup>.

The notion of Dasein, understood as the distinctive mode of Being realized by human beings, is for Heidegger closely related to “Being-in-the world” ; that is it is considered an essential characteristic that the individual is situated in the world (Heidegger, 1962 p 84). This “situatedness” of the human being in the world is also an inherent thought in the work of Merleau-Ponty who further emphasizes the embodied or incarnated character of the subject who directs his/her attention to the world (Merleau-Ponty, 2002; Thomas, 2006 p 48). A central part of our human being is to engage in sense-making or interpretation. Davey formulates it as follows: ‘understanding is not what we aim at, it is what we are and do. We seek to interpret because “things matter to us”’ (Davey, 2002 p 438). The point being here, that my analyses and interpretations obviously reflects Davey’s observation that interpretation is initiated as a consequence of considering things to be of significance. Furthermore, I want to explicit that I consider the state of being-in-the-world as the outset for my encounter with the objects studied and as something which cannot, as Julier remarks: ‘lead to any fixed conclusions [...] rather, it is a starting point for enquiry, of making sense of ourselves and the world around us’ (Julier, 2014 p 249).

Central to modern hermeneutics is the idea of ‘the hermeneutic circle’ as introduced by Friedrich Schleiermacher and further elaborated by Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer (Gadamer, 2014; Heidegger, 1962; Schleiermacher, 1998). However, within the context of this thesis the hermeneutic circle does not as constitute a model or method, but rather the

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<sup>10</sup> ‘Dasein’ is in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy explained in terms of two interpretative paths 1) there-being that is Heidegger’s term for the distinctive kind of entity that human beings as such are 2) the having-to-be-open, pointing to openness being a necessary characteristic of human beings that is we operate with the sense-making capacity to take-other-beings-as.

circle should be understood as a metaphor for the process of interpretation inherent in this research. Thereby I acknowledge that interpretation as a process, whether visualised as a circle or spiral, is a cyclical process where one moves back and forth between separate observations and the overall coherence. I am not as such following the hermeneutic circle as an method to interpretation, as for example in Schleiermacher, where: 'the hermeneutic circle was conceived in terms of the mutual relationship between the text as a whole and its individual parts, or in terms of the relationship between text and tradition' (Schleiermacher, 1998; Smith, 2013). Obviously one could argue that when describing and interpreting the hybrid objects I am in a basic sense, moving between understanding the different components, their texture, materiality etc. and interpreting the hybrid object as a whole. However, in the case of my studies of the phenomena of hybrids between design and art, the process of interpretation has been based on a broader conception of the cyclical process of oscillating between the parts and the whole. A more adequate description of the interpretative interplay between part and whole reflected in this thesis is to describe it as a movement back and forth between the individual manifestations, the "category" of hybrids as a whole while also considering the larger cultural context of which the hybrids are part. Thereby I am including the perspective which contemporary hermeneutics, according to Davey, somewhat excludes, of theorizing a cultural phenomenon, such as hybrids, as an expression of zeitgeist or part of a broader historical current (Davey, 2002 p 440). The point is, however, that I have attempted first and foremost to focus my attention on the hybrids in all their different manifestations and from this outset I have applied theories and considerations of the contextual framing as means to broaden my understanding.

Furthermore, inherent in my understanding of the interpretative process is acknowledging the central role of the interpreter, in terms of the interpreter's presuppositions etc., in the hermeneutic circle (Gadamer, 2014; Heidegger, 1962). A defining feature of hermeneutics in all its theoretical variations, is according to Gulddal

and Møller, the perception that the interpretation is contingent on individual and historical positioning of the interpreter (Gulddal & Møller, 1999 p 43). So in the case of this project and put simply: when I am trying to understand a so called hybrid I already have some prior understanding of that object, including its components in terms of elements from art and design and this pre-judgment opens me up to the issue matter. But in the iterative process of understanding and interpreting hybrids, my prejudgement of the phenomenon is hopefully, following Gadamer, revised and new understanding are developed for example by means of closely examining the hybrid objects (Gadamer, 2014).

To conclude, this thesis reflects grounding in phenomenological hermeneutics in the sense that I approach the subject matter through a close examination of the object in question; that is the hybrids. Furthermore, this thesis hopefully reflects that a more profound and encompassing understanding of hybrids as a phenomenon has been gained through what resembles a cyclical process of interpretation. It should, however, be emphasized that I have not assumed that these interpretative endeavours will culminate in clearly and lucidly grasping hybrids between design and art as a coherent whole once and for all and. Neither do I, as in accordance with recent hermeneutics, apply hermeneutics as a reconstructive method seeking to rebuild the historical context of a work or the artist's original intentions (Davey, 2002 p 443). Instead, I acknowledge the possible plurality of interpretations and, following the hermeneutical ideas, I consider my interpretations as an ongoing process which continually is modified in the light of new insights (Gulddal & Møller, 1999 p 43).

### **Semiotics**

Another complementary conceptual framework on which I base my investigations is semiotics understood as a theory of sign and sign-use. As accounted for, by Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, semiotics views human culture as made up of signs which stand for something else and people as busy with making sense of those signs (Bal & Bryson, 1991).

In accordance with the semiotic perspective I consider the hybrid objects and projects examined here as signs or phenomena on the basis of which we can understand or know something more. As signs, the hybrids in question here often have a somewhat ambiguous and composite character and as a consequence the interpretation of their signification is not obvious. When a semiotic perspective is considered of relevance for these interpretive endeavours, it is because semiotics offers a way of addressing the different elements that constitute hybrids and an approach to interpreting their meaning. For, as Bal and Bryson, explains: 'The core of semiotic theory is the definition of the factors involved in (the) permanent process of signmaking and interpreting and the development of conceptual tools that help us to grasp that process as it goes on in various arenas of cultural activity' (Bal & Bryson, 1991 p 174). The following will therefore elaborate on how semiotics is regarded a useful set of tools which has something to contribute to grasping my objects of study.

Within semiotics, and its use across studies of art, design and culture, a range of theoretical approaches exist and some applications of semiotic theories to the study of material objects poses several problems, as these theories are based on studies of language and language systems. Instead of studying the material objects in question here as if they were signs in a language with a specific grammar, my examinations are based on Peircean semiotics. The choice of this conceptual framework is based on the argument that the study of signs is far more comprehensive than the study of language-signs in the work of Peirce. Thereby my position is inspired by e.g. the work of Mark Gottdiener and Carl Knappett who considers Peirce's approach as more suitable for addressing issues of meaningfulness in material culture (Gottdiener, 1995 p 5; Knappett, 2005 p 98). Peirce's theory is considered as providing a broader notion of a sign, which in different readings is seen as originating from his connection to the phenomenological tradition of investigating

the nature of things (Dinesen, 1991; Gall Jørgensen, 1993; Charles S. Peirce, 1994)<sup>11</sup>. The point here is simply that the broader orientation inherent in the semiotics of Peirce makes this framework more adequate for studying the signification processes in relation to the signs in question of a physical and material quality.

As remarked by Bal & Bryson, the semiotic philosophy of Peirce is a complex logical system, much of which is only relevant to specialists (Bal & Bryson, 1991 p 188). The following will not go into the details of Peirce's elaborate theory of signs, but will only account for his basic trichotomy of the semiotic process and the sign typologies of Icon, Index and Symbol as these are considered of specific relevance in my interpretive analyses. The thinking about signs is organised by Peirce in what can be called a triadic unit or trichotomistic structure (Bal & Bryson, 1991; Gottdiener, 1995). His model which accounts for the way signs function, or the process of signification also called semiosis, consists of the Sign or representamen, the Object and the Interpretant. Peirce has the following definition of the sign:

'A sign, or representamen, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the ground of the representamen' (Charles Sanders Peirce, 1994a 2.228)

From this definition we can construe the following conditions for something to function as a sign: the sign stands for or represents something else and the sign should be perceived by someone who creates an interpretant. This semiotic process conceptualised in the relation between sign, object and interpretant is explained by Giampaolo Proni in *Outlines*

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<sup>11</sup> This is seen in for example the introduction to Peirce by Dinesen and Stjernfelt, where the authors considers Peirce's classification of phenomena as phenomenology; that is a theory about how phenomena appear to us (Charles S. Peirce, 1994 p 14-16)

*for a Semiotic Analysis of Objects* (Proni, 2002). Here Proni considers how interpretation can be understood as the process by which a recipient; a cognitive system, produces a response to a sign; this output is called the interpretant, which I understand as association or mental image, which points to the Object understood as its content or idea<sup>12</sup>. Characteristic for this interpretative process or semiosis is, as underlined both in Proni and Bal & Bryson, that the interpretant is constantly shifting in an infinite process that develops along different threads (Bal & Bryson, 1991; Proni, 2002).

Whereas Proni turns the triadic relation of the signification process into a model, which includes using the Peircean terminology, for understanding the meaning of artefacts, I consider it more as a conceptualisation of the process of interpretation or as an underlying framework. Nevertheless Proni contributes with reflections on the applicability of semiotics and a sketch of the elements in performing a semiotic analysis which are considered of relevance here. It should be mentioned, however, that Proni's outline for a semiotic analysis is based on products which perform a practical function, so certain reservations about adopting his outline to my objects of study, which are not "regular" design products, should obviously be taken into consideration.

The parallels which can be drawn between Proni's semiotic approach to analysing objects and my semiotic inspired approach is the emphasis on, and recognition of, the material qualities of our signs or objects of study. As Proni accounts for, Peirce himself points to the physical existence or material quality of the representamen, but Proni elaborates on this material quality as being a distinguishing feature of artefacts considered as signs (Charles Sanders Peirce, 1994b 5.287; Proni, 2002 p 40). In accordance with Proni, the outset for my analyses of hybrids is to consider them as signs where the material plays a major role in interpretation; their materiality are regarded as being 'of consequence' as

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<sup>12</sup> To avoid confusion, I will in the following sections, where I account for Proni and Peirce, use **Object** when referring to Object in the Peircean sense and **object** when referring to an object understood as artefact or thing.

Proni terms it (Proni, 2002 p 40). But, as a consequence of being mainly occupied with products with a function, materiality as a distinguishing character of artefacts is, in Proni's presentation, related to the usage of the artefact. For Proni the practical function of artefacts is the main component of their meaning, although he grants that artefacts also have communicative functions.

The artefacts I am studying do, in various ways, relate to the category of artefacts described by Proni and their materiality, and meaning, is certainly linked to practical functionality. However, as signs hybrids are complex, in the sense that they for example can be seen as challenging exactly functionality through their material qualities. Therefore as signs they are more than a means to perform a function, their interpretant represents more than a function and following this their object or meaning encompasses more than their use. Hybrids considered as signs function in a different way due to their composite character of being both/and or in-between design and art: they create interpretants and hence Objects which relate to a mixture of for example function and non-function. Although I am not consequently applying the terminology of sign, interpretant and object to my analyses, I am basically investigating the signification process of the hybrids while considering how they are composed of different associations (interpretants) and meanings (Objects) which I, to paraphrase Proni, consider always to be realized on a material substrate (Proni, 2002 p 41).

Furthermore, even though I have not explicitly applied Proni's so called grid for the semiotic analysis, constituted of the different stages in an interpretation process, there are similarities to my approach. Parallel to my overall approach; and the phenomenological idea of examining the objects closely, Proni marks the perception of the artefact as a first step in an analysis. In agreement with Proni, I consider 'the artefact as starting data' and the ascertainment 'by careful observation, (of) the perceptive properties of the artefact-sign' of central importance (Proni, 2002 p 43, p 47). Furthermore, Proni argues for aspiring for an, as much as possible, unbiased view or eye:



‘Observation requires an innocent eye: we must drop all our biases and try to use the least cultural or acquired knowledge we can. Of course, we can never erase our education [...]. When we meet an artefact of which we ignore both use and name, our description is necessarily naïve. We must simulate this situation in front of the artefact we analyse’ (Pruni, 2002 p 47).

The point, in relation to how I have conducted my analyses of hybrids, is not to claim that they are artefact of which I ignored use and name, but to emphasize the simulation of naivety in the initial examinations of these objects. It is important also to remark, as does Pruni, that the close examination of objects should not lead to an excessive degree of detail, but account for the most important traits of the artefact while also considering how the parts of the artefact are combined (Pruni, 2002 p 47).

The second step in the semiotic analysis, as proposed by Pruni, is to examine the use and production of the artefact which in its double character constitute the object or meaning of an artefact (Pruni, 2002 p 43). My analyses also reflect that some of the meanings generated by the hybrids; the interpretants created, activate both the production and the use side. Thereby my analyses are loosely based on considering artefact as a part of the chain described by Pruni:

‘Use and production are the two directions of the causal line on which the artefact is placed as a material event. The production is a chain of causes and effects that have brought the artefact into existence. The use is the chain of possible and probable causes and effects in which the artefacts will be involved’ (Pruni, 2002 p 48).

I am using these perspectives of a focus on the production side or use side of the artefacts to various degrees in the studies and analysis of my selected hybrid objects. For example, in the cases of the hybrid objects somewhere-in-between furniture and sculpture with origins in design practice, I take the aspect of production into account in the sense Pruni suggests, that is how the material composition implies different methods of

production and shaping (Proni, 2002 p 50). In these cases I consider this path of analysis important, because for many of the objects in question their production process, e.g. use of handicraft and production in single or limited numbers, strongly influences their meaning as in-between design and art. In other cases, such as the examples of designs for homeless, originating from art practice, the production aspect includes analysing the user-involvement in the production.

With regards to including the perspective of the so called use-program, or the possible interaction with objects, it is in my case more speculative considerations of use. Firstly, because many of the objects studied cannot be touched and handled and secondly because in many of the selected cases it can, and will, be discussed whether the objects are even intended for practical use. But as I consider many of the hybrids of engaging in different ways with functionality, the aspect of analysing the possible uses of these hybrids is of course relevant. Considering the use aspect is done in accordance with Proni, who does not regard artefact as forcing their use. Instead he states: 'The artifact conditions the interaction because of its material structure and shape' and later he continues: 'Artifacts have the additional property of setting the limits to their possible uses' (Proni, 2002 p 48). As artefacts, the hybrids I am analysing, by their challenging of functionality both create possibilities and constraints of interaction and, as will be analysed, this aspect is possibly of central relevance to understanding their meaning or signification.

The third and final step in an outline for a semiotic analysis is the interpretation which Proni also terms the discourse since a focus here is on analysing the interpretants connected to the discourses on the artefact (Proni, 2002 p 51). The aspects included in the interpretations of my case studies are somewhat different from Proni's approach, but nevertheless Proni has observations of relevance here. Proni points, for example, to the interpretation process as constituted as a "dynamic network of content- units" and how any kind of sign can be present in the process of interpretation (Proni, 2002 p 44). Thereby Proni opens up for not only looking at the artefact itself, but also taking e.g. its intertextual

connections and the discourses on the artefact into consideration. In this phase the starting point is still the artefact-sign but more emphasis seems to be on the created interpretants and their relation to the Object. Proni writes: 'When we come to the Interpretant, cognitive relations are at play, which connect the Sign (and indirectly its Object) to socially established cultural units'(Proni, 2002 p 51). The point is, and here another parallel can be drawn to phenomenological hermeneutics, the interpreter has a pre-understanding in terms of culturally constructed meanings related to objects; that is our cognitive system is anchored to our cultural background.

As a consequence and in accordance with Proni, I consider the interpretation of objects to include examining the so called perceived values of the artefact. Proni defines it as follows: 'I call *perceived values* all the properties that the artifact shows besides its mere material description [...] and its use-schemes [...]. Perceived values are discursive properties, that is, they have an intersubjective and socially defined communicative nature'(Proni, 2002 p 52). What is specific for the hybrids I have studied is that their perceived values become a complex mixture of discursive properties as these objects both activate interpretants related to art and design. Therefore the interpretation of these ambiguous and composite objects, that are hybrids, can be considered as a particularly continuous semiosis which, to paraphrase Proni, is infinitely divisible (Proni, 2002 p 45). Following this, the Object; that is the meaning, also becomes especially 'dynamic' in the case of artefacts with a hybrid character.

My overall approach to interpretation has many convergences with the semiotic analytical approach outlined by Proni and my analyses can to some degree be said to evolve through the steps or phases he sketches. In contrast to Proni I am not applying a distinct Peircean terminology throughout the analyses this is motivated in considering the use of too many "technical" terms to hinder the fluent, readable analyses which I aim for. There is, however, one exception: in the analyses of appropriated plastic chairs I am using Peirce's second trichotomy; the distinctions between a sign as Icon, Index or Symbol. As a

consequence I do to some extent use the terms as this specific typology of signs is applied as an analytical tool to identify different aspects of signification. The adaptation of these elements from Peirce's sign theory is based on the material-semiotic methodology formulated by Carl Knappett who in his methodological scheme uses this typology of signs to analyse the associative network of an object (Knappett, 2005).

In my application of considering the iconic as a quality of the sign, it means looking at the relation between sign and Object as based on likeness or resemblance<sup>13</sup>. Bal and Bryson summarizes iconicity in the following way: 'Iconicity is in the first place a mode of reading, based on a hypothetical similarity between sign and object' (Bal & Bryson, 1991 p 189). In the case of studying the appropriated plastic chair by including the aspect of iconicity therefore means identifying how, and to what extent, the appropriations; the signs, has similar qualities with the Object; the plastic chair. As these hybrids use plastic chairs as their material, they obviously have similarities with plastic chairs, but the point here is to question, via iconicity, how the different adaptations and transformations play on, or downplay, the resemblance.

Peirce uses the term Index when the sign is connected to the Object in a causal relationship; the sign has some existential or physical connection between it and its Object (Atkin, 2013)<sup>14</sup>. In relation to the analysed cases of appropriated plastic chairs, indexicality as an analytic points to 1) the production and appropriation-activities resulting in these hybrid objects and 2) their spatial and temporal contexts. Finally, the third category the Symbol is used to account for when the relation between a sign and the Object exist by

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<sup>13</sup> Peirce's definition of an Icon: 'An Icon is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses, just the same, whether any such Object actually exists or not. It is true that unless there really is such an Object, the Icon does not act as a sign; but this has nothing to do with its character as a sign. Anything whatever, be it quality, existent individual, or law, is an Icon of anything, in so far as it is like that thing and used as a sign of it' (Charles Sanders Peirce, 1994a 2.247)

<sup>14</sup> Peirce's definition of an Index: 'An Index is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object. It cannot, therefore, be a Qualisign, because qualities are whatever they are independently of anything else. In so far as the Index is affected by the Object, it necessarily has some Quality in common with the Object, and it is in respect to these that it refers to the Object' (Charles Sanders Peirce, 1994a 2.248)

means of cultural conventions<sup>15</sup>. This means that the symbolic aspect consider the signs which refers to an Object through traditions and convention for connecting certain meanings to certain signs. It is, however, difficult to apply the perspective of the symbolic quality to material artefact considered as sign, because things are seldom connected to a certain Object; one meaning, as a rule or per convention. Therefore this aspect is not explicitly addressed, but implicitly questioned as the interpretations takes the different culturally constructed meanings of plastic chairs into consideration.

### **From close analysis to considering the context of hybrids**

To summarize, the position I am working from is to consider the material and physical manifestations of the exchange between art and design; the hybrids as essential starting points for understanding the contemporary crossings of design and art. The intention in this research is, through selected examples of objects, works and projects in-between art and design, to study closely what characterises hybrids and interpret the various meanings and functions that they may perform. In these object-based analyses I am informed, as accounted for, by a combination of phenomenological hermeneutics and semiotics. The close examination of the features of hybrids obviously also has parallels to the well-established method from art history of formal analysis, as my approach has its starting point in analysing the formal characteristics, identifying specific elements and discussing how they work together (Wölfflin, 1950). My analytical position can overall be characterised as a revitalisation of the traditions both within art and design history to base studies on scrutinizing artefacts. This is for example reflected in my descriptions of the characteristics of the selected hybrids and in the analysis of how the different elements are combined in order to interpret the meaning of these hybrids. When analysing why these hybrids look the way they do and interpreting how they are producing meaning, the key question is how to address their hybridity in the sense that these examples, in various

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<sup>15</sup> Peirce's definition of a Symbol: 'A Symbol is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the Symbol to be interpreted as referring to that Object' (Charles Sanders Peirce, 1994a 2.249)

ways, combine the functionality of design with the notion of the “aboutness” of art. Thereby my analyses are not only based on the formal characteristics of the objects but I also include different concepts or notions to deepen and enrich the interpretations.

I supplement the formal analysis, or object-based analysis, with taking external factors, such as the cultural context or the possible motivation for these hybrids, into account. Thereby my focus on object-based analyses does not exclude considerations about the context or circuit of the analysed objects or works. But the argument is, that by placing less emphasis on the complex web surrounding these artefacts, it allows me to place the hybrids at the foreground for closer and in-depth analyses. I am acutely aware of the observation made by Julier that although a focused attention on things and materiality can provide a productive way into studying aspects of (design) culture, it is just one of the possible iterations (Julier, 2014 p 250). As a consequence, I do, to some degree, attempt to place the hybrids in context in terms of considering how they are “framed” or constituted by for example different discursive practices, institutional arrangements, networks and economies.

Following this, as part of the underlying basis for this dissertation is a position where artefacts, whether categorised as art, design or hybrid objects, are considered as cultural artefacts in the sense of being objects that have been constructed through a range of meanings and practices (Du Gay, 2013). Thereby my position has similarities to the approach, advanced by design historian Kjetil Fallan, of a ‘cultural history of design’ where design is seen as any other cultural phenomenon. Fallan states: ‘design is a thoroughly cultural phenomenon; consequently, design history can be approached as cultural history’ (Fallan, 2010 p 49). I consider objects or artefacts as part of a cultural nexus where they exist as a relationship between different processes within what has been termed ‘the circuit of culture’ or the ‘designer-production-consumption-cycle’ (Du Gay, 2013; Julier, 2014). The emergence of the analysed hybrids is regarded as the outcome of the interaction between different processes, practices, networks and not the least actors.

My primary intention is, however, not to approach hybrids by studying the network of their production, mediation, circulation and regulation. Considerations about these aspects will, nonetheless, throughout the thesis, serve as contextualisation of my close analyses of the selected hybrids.

Analysing the examples of hybrids in relation to the nexus of creation, circulation and consumption as outlined by Julier would pose different challenges. For the examples which relate to the category of designart, one challenge would be, as argued by Stephen Hayward in *Writing Contemporary Design into History*, that designart ‘refers to objects that tend to be limited editions or prototypes, things that barely enter the “production-consumption circuit”’ (Hayward, 2012). Hayward thereby point to something central about designart: that it is somehow at the periphery of the circuit of design. Nonetheless, it is obviously of relevance with analysis of the specific circuit of designart and analysis of how these objects are circulated, mediated and consumed primarily in ‘the rarefied atmosphere of the gallery’ (Hayward, 2012). In including the perspective of a contextual reading, I draw on other scholar who have already accounted for how designart circulates in galleries of both art and design, museums, fairs and exhibition spaces with specific focus on bringing art and design together (Coles, 2007; Julier, 2014; Lovell, 2009; Taylor, 2011).

The perspective of pointing to designart ‘as a function of a particular commercial circumstance’ related to growth in the global art market around 2000 provides, in combination with the mapping of the network of exhibition spaces for designart, a contextual background for designart (Julier, 2014 p 103; Lovell, 2009; Thornton, 2009). In my opinion, this perspective is, however, only a partial explanation of how and why these objects are formed as combinations of design and art. I acknowledge that commercial interests are at stake in relation to designart, which have also been part of the critique. I would, nonetheless, advance the view that a too strong focus on the commercial aspect

tends to reduce the practitioners to being primarily motivated by catering for and benefiting from a market for limited edition design.

Analysing the consumption of these hybrids would also be quite a challenge for at least two reasons. One reason is that it could be argued that these objects are often not consumed in the sense of being put to actual everyday use but instead they exist perhaps first and foremost as exhibition pieces to contemplate. Secondly even in actual use, studying the consumption of these objects would be difficult, as experienced by Damon Taylor in his research. Taylor limited his studies to informal observations of potential purchasers as he ascertained that 'gallerists tend to operate as gate-keepers and are very reluctant to allow access to their main source of income' (Taylor, 2011 p 26).

In her article *The Production-Consumption-Mediation Paradigm* Grace Lees-Maffei argues for the utility of mediation as a specific analytical focus to complement the production-consumption model (Lees-Maffei, 2009). I acknowledge the importance of mediation in relation to their cultural meaning as with the other aspects of the cultural nexus which these objects are part of. There is no doubt that the mediation of these objects, in terms of how they are exhibited and represented both in writing and images, is discursively constructing these objects as for example designart. Within the context of this research I will, however, refrain from placing a specific emphasis on analyses of the mediation of hybrids. This is motivated partly in agreeing with Julier in his view on mediation as being embedded as an ongoing process in all the constituent parts of the nexus of design, production and consumption (Julier, 2014 p 248). Not having a specific focus on mediation is also to a great extent motivated by a desire to "peel off" the layers of meaning already inscribed for these objects in-between art and design by for example mediating them as designart.

I acknowledge the relevance of relating a phenomenon as hybrids to its wider socio-cultural context, by addressing how hybrids are produced, distributed, mediated,



consumed etc. Nonetheless, in my opinion, the focuses on the networks, discourses or cultural circuits in which the objects are placed sometimes results in analyses that eventually lose sight of their initial object and becomes more occupied with the context itself. I am not proposing to abandon the examination of context altogether, but just taking some cautions against giving the contextual framework, regardless of whether it is contemporary culture as a context or the historical context in terms of art and design history, pivotal significance in the explanation or interpretation of hybrids. Some arguments for exercising caution when interpreting a cultural artefact, in their case a work of art, on the basis of contextual factors are provided by Bal and Bryson (Bal & Bryson, 1991). As Bal and Bryson remarks:

‘When a particular work of art is placed “in context” is it usually the case that a body of material is assembled and juxtaposed with the work in question in the hope that such contextual material will reveal the determinants that make the work of art what it is’ (Bal & Bryson, 1991 p 176).

Regardless of character or amount of the so called contextual material which we take into consideration, I agree with Bal and Bryson in their observation, that ‘it cannot be assumed that ‘context’ has the status of a given or simple or natural ground upon which to base interpretation’ (Bal & Bryson, 1991 p 177). Instead context should also be considered as a product of interpretive choices and as something which can potentially be augmented by including more contextual factors in the descriptions or interpretations. The point is that I will supplement the interpretations with various descriptions of context as a way to make the analyses more complete although the context is not considering as providing “closure”. Besides regarding the context as also being in a process of mobility, as is the case of the semiosis related to the hybrids, I consider the objects and their context as interdependent. Thereby I share the views expressed by Julier that the contextual factors, which in his account are the three nexi of designers, production and consumption, inform each other in an endless cycle of exchange and influence the forms of objects (Julier, 2014 p

15). But as, Julier adds: 'these (the objects) in turn are not neutral: they play an active role in influencing or making sense of the systems of their provision' (Julier, 2014 p 16). This point will also be reflected throughout the selected cases as the hybrids and the contextual factors will be considered as reciprocally influencing each other. To summarize, I do include considerations about contextual factors such as e.g. production and consumption, but as perspectives on the interpretations resulting from the attempts to linger with the objects and looking closely at them. Thereby I am primarily interested in what Bal and Bryson describes as: 'lines of signification opening out from the work of art, in the permanent diffraction of reception' (Bal & Bryson, 1991 p 179).

### **Theoretical frameworks**

Following the various lines of meanings generated in the different hybrids I draw on different concepts or notions to enrich and broaden the interpretations. My case material reflects great variety and due to this the different hybrids require to be discussed against different theoretical concepts instead of one exclusive theoretical framing. My application of theory is the result of combing two central concepts; prosumption and postproduction, which to various degrees are activated throughout the thesis, and different concepts used for the discussion of specific groups of cases. The concepts of prosumption and postproduction relate, more or less, the totality of analyses and will be introduced in the following sections. Characteristics related to prosumption and postproduction runs like a red thread through the analyses to follow but they will in particular be discussed in the fourth chapter where these concepts are discussed in a comparison of the two groupings of hybrids. This will be followed by the presentation of different concepts or notions, which relate only to parts of the analyses. These concepts will be accounted for and motivated in detail as they occur in the analyses.

## Prosumption

The concepts of prosumer and prosumption primarily relates to discussions within sociology, marketing and consumer research (Nakajima, 2011; Ritzer, Dean, & Jurgenson, 2012; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). However, the adoption of the concepts of prosumer and prosumption, for discussing contemporary practices between design and art, will be based on the article *Prosumption in Art* by Nakajima. The term prosumer is attributed to Alvin Toffler who used the term, in *The Third Wave*, to describe someone who blurs distinction between a producer and a consumer (Toffler, 1980). Following this idea of a blend of the consumer and producer, sociologist George Ritzer defines a prosumer as 'one who is both producer and consumer' and prosumption as 'involving a combination of production and consumption' (Ritzer et al., 2012 p 379). These definitions of prosumer and prosumption are adopted by Nakajima who applies them to different forms of simultaneous involvement in production and consumption in art (Nakajima, 2011 p 552). Of relevance in the context of this thesis is Nakajima's description of two different, yet related, processes of prosumption in art: a) prosumption used as a concept to characterise artistic strategies including for example appropriation b) prosumption used as a concept to characterise artistic strategies where viewers are actively engaged in the work.

Nakajima's central argument is: 'especially since the 1990s [...], the process of prosumption in art has moved to the center stage of artistic creation and contemplation' (Nakajima, 2011 p 554). For Nakajima contemporary art practices are primarily characterised by prosumption in the form of co-creation of artists and viewers whereas he considers the processes of prosumption such as ready-made, pop art and appropriation as 'past attempts to blur the strict demarcation between production and consumption in art' (Nakajima, 2011 p 554). I agree with Nakajima's observation that ready-made and appropriation are important precursors of the emergence of contemporary prosumption, in the sense of users becoming prosumers, but I do not, however, regard these creative strategies of being only of the past. Instead, as already described, I consider this form of

prosumption which includes for example the appropriation of already-existing components, as a central feature within the contemporary cross field of design and art. The second form of prosumption which could be characterised as participatory and process-oriented is of equal relevance for the characterisations of my case studies. As a consequence both forms of prosumption will be applied as ways to describe and discuss the different working methods, or creative tactics, reflected in the various examples of hybrids.

In my view, a central difference between the two forms of prosumption is who constitutes the prosumer. I propose that the artist, or designer, is the prosumer in the first mentioned process of prosumption, whereas the viewers or users are the prosumers in the second process. In the first process, the concept of prosumption describes the artistic and designing process which incorporates already-produced objects. The process certainly leads to blurring the lines between production and consumption, which I regard as happening on the part of the designer or artist. Thereby I do not completely agree with Nakajima in arguing that this form of prosumption as also leads to blurriness between artists (producers) and viewers (consumers). According to Nakajima the use of ready-made results in a focus on 'the core essence of art practice that is, naming and judging art as art' (Nakajima, 2011 p 554). The argument is that especially in the case of use of ready-mades both artists and viewers make judgment whether an objects is art: 'Artists consume found objects and produce readymades. Viewers consumes readymades and produce judgments on art' (Nakajima, 2011 p 555). The process of producing judgments on art is, in my opinion, always taking place in encounters with art, or design for that matter, and I therefore regard the concept of prosumption as being stretched to far here. Instead I consider it as more relevant to distinguish this form of prosumption in terms of being primarily characterised by the artists, or designers, being prosumers. In contrast, the second form of prosumption is distinguished by the users being engaged as prosumers at a physically active level.

In the analyses to follow, the various analysed examples of the appropriated plastic monobloc can be described as cases of prosumption in the form of the artist as the primary prosumer. These various examples are all examples of hybrids created on the basis of already-produced objects and thereby they reflect a process of prosumption where the creative practitioner produces through consumption. As shall be demonstrated, many of the examples of the prosumption of the plastic monobloc have a DIY character which creates the association that we as users or viewer could engage in a similar tactic. The users are, however, not invited to participate in the process in the examples of re-use of the plastic chair instead the act of prosumption is for the designer or artist exclusively. The different examples will demonstrate that they fit very well to the description, provided by Nakajima, of the characteristic of appropriation as a method. He writes: 'Appropriation art, however, explicitly and more openly "steals" other works via the process of sampling, cutting up, and remixing' (Nakajima, 2011 p 556). As a consequence of the use, borrowing and copying of existing works, serious doubts are, according to Nakajima, cast on the notion of original creation. The relevant point made by Nakajima is that the notion of originality is further challenged by the form of prosumption, where viewers, or users, become actively part of the production to a degree where creation can be understood as collective action (Nakajima, 2011 p 557).

The form of prosumption where the creative practitioners are co-creating with consumers, or users, is also relevant to many of the examples of hybrids to follow. Thereby the examples reflect a parallel to Nakajima's characteristic of relational art in the sense that co-creation is clearly foregrounded (Nakajima, 2011 p 559). As will be demonstrated, this applies for example for the *Homeless Vehicle* by Krzysztof Wodiczko and *PARAsite* by Michael Rakowitz. In both projects users are engaged actively in designing, or creating how the final product, the vehicle and the tent, should be. Also throughout the other examples in the third chapter, the involvement of users, or at least aspirations to engage users, is a recurring theme. However, it can, and will, be discussed whether these practices

foregrounds the participation of prosumers to the same extent as in relational art. According to Nakajima relational art aims to make the process of prosumption itself an art in the following sense: 'what artists produce are relations between artists (i.e., producers) and viewers or audiences (i.e., consumers), as well as relations and discussions among the viewers or the audiences, with the art object being a kind of catalyst' (Nakajima, 2011 p 559).

### **Postproduction**

The concept of postproduction, as formulated by Bourriaud, is another way to characterise appropriation, or the similar process of prosumption on the part of the artist or designer. The notion is presented in the book *Postproduction* which, like *Relational Aesthetics*, presents an analysis of the contemporary art (Bourriaud, 2000). Both books revolve around the art practices of the 90ties, but the specific focus in *Postproduction* is on the analysis of a set of modes of production. These different modes of production are brought together under the notion postproduction: a technical term which is adopted from the vocabulary of film- and TV-making, where it refers to the set of processes applied to the recorded material. The term is used to describe the themes or principles of citation and recycling which Bourriaud proposes as a common denominator in contemporary art and as 'constituting the "engine" of new artistic practices' (Bourriaud, 2000 p 9). He speaks of an art of postproduction which characterises the 'ever increasing number of artworks (that) have been created on the basis of pre-existing works; more and more artists interpret, reproduce, re-exhibit or use works made by others or available cultural products' (Bourriaud, 2000 p 7). Parallel strategies can, as already remarked, be found in practices between design and art and therefore the notion is adopted to supplement the usage of concept of prosumption in the analysis of the hybrids.

Bourriaud does not specifically use the term prosumption, but parallels to this notion can be detected as he also points to 'the eradication of the traditional distinction between

production and consumption, creation and copy, readymade and original work' (Bourriaud, 2000 p 7). The concept of prosumption, as proposed by Nakajima, opens up for examining two forms of prosumption: the artist as prosumer and the users as prosumers. In Bourriaud's account of the working methods described as postproduction, there is mainly focus on the activities of the creative practitioners and less emphasis on the aspect of a potential postproduction by users. However, postproduction is understood to form part of an emerging 'culture of use or activity', based on the ideal of sharing, which would appear to include the active participation of users (Bourriaud, 2000 p 13). This is also reflected in Bourriaud's perception of the exhibition as 'a place of production' and 'a space of cohabitation' between artists and users (Bourriaud, 2000 p 63). Postproduction thereby has a parallel to the interactive element emphasized in relational art and another similarity is the open-ended character of relational art works, as Bourriaud describes artworks within the mode of postproduction as temporary terminals. He states: 'Likewise, the contemporary work of art does not position itself as the termination point of the "creative process" (a "finished product" to be contemplated) but as a site of navigation, a portal, a generator of activities' (Bourriaud, 2000 p 13). Furthermore these post productive activities are described as generating behaviours and potential reuses which Bourriaud considers to challenge 'passive culture, composed of merchandise and consumers. It makes the forms and cultural objects of our daily lives *function*' (Bourriaud, 2000 p 14).

In the analysis to follow, some of the hybrids display the characteristics of postproduction with their character of interpretations and re-use of already produced objects. Take for example the works by Robert Stadler: even though he does not physically incorporate already produced objects, his series of furniture have the characteristics of being created on the basis of something already existing (Fig. 7, Fig. 9). The practice of Stadler, and other practitioners, reflects a working method which fits the following description by Bourriaud: 'It is no longer a matter of elaborating a form on the basis of a raw material but working with objects that are already in circulation on the cultural

market, which is to say, objects already informed by other objects' (Bourriaud, 2000, p. 1). This description also fits the practice of Martino Gamper whose signature seems to be the collecting, gathering and working with already existing objects (Fig. 16-17). In many ways the practice of Gamper, as will be demonstrated, appears to exemplify the observation made by Bourriaud: 'the artistic question is no longer: "what can we make that is new?" but "how can we make do with what we have?"' (Bourriaud, 2000 p 17). Describing Gamper's practice as "making do" would however be a simplification, but as the analysis will show, the productive method of appropriation, or postproduction, does seem to be a way of producing singularity and meaning from, what Bourriaud describes as, a 'chaotic of objects (...) that constitutes our daily life' (Bourriaud, 2000 p 17).

Furthermore the analyses will not only reflect postproduction as a re-emergence of appropriation, but some of the case studies will also be discussed as examples of postproduction in the sense of being a deeper re-examination of the notions of creation, authorship and originality through the use of cultural artefacts (Bourriaud, 2000 p 9). This is for example a recurring theme in the works of Superflex whose project *Copyright* is a modification of design by Poul Henningsen as I shall later account for. Here I would instead mention another similar project where Superflex makes use of chairs by Jean Prouvé and Gerrit Rietveld in their work. In both cases the chairs have been copied and reproduced by local craftsmen in Congo and on Zanzibar respectively, thereby challenging the authorship of these furniture designs. The examples of projects by Superflex will be considered as usage of cultural artefacts in a way where Bourriaud's defining characteristic of postproduction is very apposite. They can be described as: 'going beyond what we call "the art of appropriation", which naturally infer an ideology of ownership' (Bourriaud, 2000 p 9). In the analyses it will be further elaborated how their practice instead, as well as the practice of N55, reflect an ideal of openly sharing.



## **Other central concepts from art, design and related fields of study**

The overall perspective throughout the analyses of is to examine how hybridity, through a range of examples is constituted as different mixtures of components of design and art. This perspective is supplemented by the underlying threads of prosumption and postproduction. Furthermore I am drawing on different concepts and analogies as tools to enrich my object-based analyses. In chapter two I apply the concept of 'a work of design' to account for the blends of design and art of the specific cases created within three different designers' practice as it is proposed that these hybrids represent attempts to create autonomous works of design (von Oppeln, 2011). In relation to the other group of examples in the second chapter, hybrids including plastic chairs, I consider appropriation, understood as a method of adopting and re-using existing elements in the creation of new work or objects, as a central concept. Furthermore for this group of hybrids I apply the notion of the 'cultural life' of objects as a way to examine the transformation of status and the mixing of opposite structures and mechanisms related to design and art (Appadurai, 1986; Knappett, 2005; Kopytoff, 1986). Following the analyses, and as a way to open up my interpretations or "dialogues" with the hybrids, I discuss Damon Taylor's perspectives on interpreting objects of this type (Taylor, 2011). Another perspective is provided by including the notions, and working methods, of bricolage, hybridity and circularity as accounted for by Catharine Rossi (Rossi, 2013).

In chapter three the cases are hybrids placed somewhere between product design, micro architecture and art with cases specifically related to living and dwelling. As a theoretical tool to understand how these cases are hybrids in the sense of combinations of functionality and artistic statements I apply the distinction between 'pragmatic and idealistic architecture' (Ibelings, 2003). Furthermore due to the temporary and mobile character of many of the selected cases, the notion of nomadism occurs throughout the chapter including a recurring distinction between whether the nomadic life proposed in these solutions is by choice or necessity. Analogies to parasites and organisms respectively

will be used as in the characterisations of and distinctions between the examples, as many of these projects articulates ideas about living autonomously, yet to some degree “feed off” existing structures (Ibelings, 2003). These notions are therefore ways to explore how or whether the opposite parameters of heteronomy, associated with design, and autonomy, related to art, are mixed in these hybrids.

In the fourth chapter I reconsider the relevance of the notions of prosumption, postproduction for analysing and explaining all of the reflected practices in-between and the resulting hybrids as a way to revisit the different cases analysed in this research (Bourriaud, 2000; Nakajima, 2011). Furthermore, different examples are discussed in relation to broader interests or tendencies, such as a ‘social turn’ and an ‘open ideology’, which seems to be recurring across design, art and the points of their overlap (Larsen, 2012; von Busch, 2012). Finally in the fifth and concluding chapter I include and discuss the perspective of ‘transdisciplinarity’ as introduced by Coles as a way of analysing hybridity through looking at the related studio models (Coles, 2012). This approach, which is quite different from mine, to studying practitioners who move between disciplines, such as art, design and architecture is included as a means to discuss and reconsider what my primarily object-based approach to studying hybrids have provided for the understanding of the phenomenon of overlaps between art and design.

## **Chapter 2: Hybrid objects**

The following chapter investigates hybrids that can be placed within the category of objects and which predominantly are the result of a move from design towards art. Within this category, furniture and other domestic elements, particularly the chair, seems to be the preferred choice for designers and artists creating artefacts in-between art and design. Even though it could be argued that there are enough chairs in the world, the presence of chairs is nonetheless noteworthy not only within design but also in art – and within the points of overlap between the two. One of the reasons for this omnipresence of the chair is to be found in the chair's status as a basic object within design making. The chair is an archetype: an unavoidable object for almost all designers. Since around the 1980s and onwards within furniture design furniture of a more “expressive” character has been occurring: making it more and more difficult to distinguish, in terms of form and style, whether these furniture-like objects are design or art. In recent decades the amount of hybrids between design and art created on the basis of furniture, and especially the chair, appear to have increased. The following will, through selected examples of hybrids, demonstrate how the chair and other furniture become objects or mediums of investigations and experiments of both material and conceptual character.

### **Distinguishing the hybrids: the concept of “a work of design”**

The intensification of this tendency has, as treated elsewhere in this thesis, led to the category designart as referring primarily to designers creating objects that merge design and art. While the examples of hybrid objects created in the interface between design and art may to some degree reflect the borrowing of these described characteristics from art onto design, these hybrids cannot merely be dismissed as “almost-art”. The following is an attempt to create a more in-depth and nuanced analyses of such objects of an “in-between character” while at the same time clarifying how these objects may considered to be more than just design attempting to be art. Informed by the publications and exhibitions engaging with the cross field of design and art, my initial perception was that the

boundaries between art and design were being dissolved as a result of the manifestation of hybrids. However, following my overall positioning within phenomenological hermeneutics, this presupposition of a merging of design and art was challenged in the cyclical process of interpreting the hybrids in question. Openness towards, and close examinations of the, hybrids objects gradually meant replacing the idea of merging with attempts at understanding the diversity of the manifestations of the overlap of art and design.

To give an example, when comparing e.g. Florian Slotawa's work *KS028* and *Chest of Drawers* by Tejo Remy which are joined in the context of the exhibition *Destroy Design*, it becomes apparent that even though both works relate to furniture, they constitute quite different takes on including or interpreting objects (Fig. 3-4, p II). These differences could possibly be explained by the disciplinary outset of their creation and their intended context of display or use. *KS028* can be described as an assemblage of different objects which are joined, strapped together to be precise, in a way which renders any use of the included objects impossible. *Chest of Drawers* on the other hand is also made up by gathering found objects, but these objects are all drawers joined by a large strap and still functioning as a chest of drawers. My point is that while these two works may have visual similarities and both reflect a tactic of using found objects but a closer look will reveal their differences as well. Therefore these works can be seen as examples of design and art respectively investigating their borders through borrowing from the other discipline, rather than art and design becoming "the same". I would argue that most often works created from the origin of art, exhibited as manifestations of the interface between design and art, could very well be investigating the limits between artworks and utility items. Some of these works may even question design but it does not mean that they become design – or even hybrids between design and art. The appropriation of chairs and other domestic objects in art reflects a wish to create a connection to everyday life and to comment on the ways material culture, including design, and our surroundings influence

human existence. As von Oppeln states, out of arts' interest in everyday life 'it is only logical for art to develop a heightened interest in the material world in which this life take place' the result being that 'furniture and other fragments that represent domestic life become (...) components and props of art' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 18). According to von Oppeln the appropriation of for example furniture reflects: 'a claim to produce work about life within the framework of art via the medium of the everyday object' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 18). I agree with von Oppeln's observation that design in art works has 'the function of a counter-image to a particular set of living conditions, a critical argument manifested in material or object form' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 18). However, what I would also emphasize, as the following analyses will show, that some design artefacts serve a similar function and consequently art and design do come rather close.

In contrast, the following will demonstrate, that the design objects in this interface can be characterised as hybrids as they combine the functionality of design and include features related to art. Further explorations into this group of hybrids pointed to a commonality in terms of how these objects appeared to approach or resemble art, but while still being distinguishable as design, or created from the outset of design. As a way to characterise and discuss these hybrids, the concept of an autonomous work in design is adopted from von Oppeln (von Oppeln, 2011). Von Oppeln examines the issue of the concept of a "work" in relation to art and design and proposes and defines a work of design. This concept will in the following, with some elaborations, be applied to my examinations of the objects which have been described as design manifesting itself as art, or designart, in order to hopefully nuance and specify some of their characteristics.

In his text von Oppeln discusses the developments in design over the last 25 years and how its relationship with art has changed in ways that has led to an understanding of the merging of art and design. In opposition to the idea of design and art as merging, von Oppeln argues for defining a concept of 'a work of design'. He characterises it as follows: 'A work in the sense I intend here is associated with the idea that design has brought forth

its own concept of the work. The autonomous status of such works is as established in standard praxis as it is in art' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 19). While it is perhaps debatable whether the autonomous design work is as established as praxis as the autonomous artwork, I agree with von Oppeln that one could speak of '*design for design's sake*' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 19). While I apply the concept of a work of design, as something distinguishable from an artwork, I will also later discuss whether the concept of a work of design will prove useful as a way of describing these hybrids.

According to von Oppeln the work of design shares structural similarities with an artwork and three central characteristics of the work of art constitute the defining elements of a work of design. The first characteristic is: 'The work can be described as resistant to usage, being marketed, and the purely functional quality of commodities' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 30). The second defining quality is: 'A work is "about something" and can be a commentary or a critique of that something' and finally a work is 'self-referential and refers to its own world, a world it creates for itself' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 30). The *Tree Trunk Bench* by Jurgen Bey serves as an example of a work of design which von Oppeln interprets as the reflection of 'design's engagement as a discipline with its own history and essence (Fig. 5, p III). The piece's resistance to usage and commodification is, according to von Oppeln, a clear indication of it being 'a work "about" the history of furniture' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 25). Von Oppeln argues that with this bench Bey is more concerned with the "aboutness" than functionality which brings it closer to being art, but he emphasizes that describing the bench as a work of art 'seems to make little sense of account of its lack of reference to art' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 25). Another example mentioned by von Oppeln is *If Gio Only Knew*: a project by designer Martino Gamper, where a series of design classics by Gio Ponti are destroyed and reassembled into new pieces in front of a live audience (Fig. 6 p IV). According to von Oppeln this approach brings together many design references and comments on design history. Furthermore, even though Gamper, through the organisation of events that seemingly create a need for the furniture, it is rather the

case of a performance staged around furniture than actually following the logic of demand etc.(von Oppeln, 2011 p 26). These two cases are well-chosen by von Oppeln as examples of works of design which challenge functionality, as they are to some extent about something and are self-referential in the sense that the works engages with and reflect the history and discipline of design.

Of course what the concept of a work of design would not be adequate to describe is the examples of art which are “almost design” or art works including design (objects). The use of the concept is, however, motivated by the observation that within the cross section between art and design the major part of hybrids, in the category of objects, are cases of design approaching or borrowing from art. Obviously many examples can also be found of artists creating objects in-between design and art. But, as already argued, the largest majority of the art works, which can be said to be bordering on design, actually include design objects without approaching design or being hybrids. Often in art design, objects are included to challenge the art institution and to discuss the status of art in ways similar to when everyday objects are appropriated in art.

### **Applying the concept of a work of design**

Some supplemental comments and precisions should be made before applying the concept to the analyses. Firstly, I would propose small adjustments to the defining properties of the work of design in form of the resistance to usage, being marketed and the purely functional quality of commodities. A modification is to exclude or reformulate the characteristic of being resistant to marketing. This is based on the observation that even though works of design are not created to be produced or mass distributed as other commodities, they are very much marketed to gain customer (or manufacturer) interest: perhaps not in buying the specific work of design, but it creates interest in the designer and in his/her special creativity. The resistance to usage and functionality could also benefit from some precisions in the sense that although functionality is not the primary

concern often the works of design are still having a function. Usage and functionality are often intentionally downplayed and discussed, which von Oppeln rightfully points to, but I would prefer to formulate the characteristics as follows:

A design work challenges use and functionality and is resistant to becoming mass produced.

The defining qualities, expressed by von Oppeln, regarding aboutness in the sense of articulating commentaries or critique will be uncontested. As a supplement to von Oppeln's characteristics of design of this kind, the characteristics of what Anne Strange Stelzner formulates as 'radical contemporary design' could be included (Strange Stelzner, 2005). In her article Strange Stelzner describes the aboutness addressed by von Oppeln in a slightly different, yet similar, way: she points to these objects as having a 'conceptual core' in the sense of that it is characteristic for them to be preoccupied with passing on ideas and messages (Strange Stelzner, 2005 p 27). Strange Stelzner defines concept as being pivotal and therefore the accent on usability of the design object is shifted towards the conceptual layers of the object instead (Strange Stelzner, 2005 p 27). What Strange Stelzner alludes to, as an interesting elaboration of aboutness, is that it reflects design's wish to participate in more conceptual issues, in ways similar to art, and to not only serve a practical function in the world but also reflect and debate our being in the world. Gareth Williams has also pointed to these characteristics within contemporary design practices while terming them conceptual or manifesto design. With these terms he aims to account for 'designers who value ideas above technique, or style or function' (Williams, 2006 p 118). According to Williams, these so called manifesto designers 'create objects embedded with complicated content, like an argument, proposition or thesis' (Williams, 2006 p 118). While the aboutness addressed by Williams is often of a critical character, the content in the examples to be analysed below may not necessarily be critical. But many of the following cases will reflect that works of design are often about consumer culture, in a



more or less direct way, while others questions the status of everyday-, design- and art objects.

The second defining characteristic is accordingly as follows:

A work of design is about something and can be a commentary or critique of that something.

Finally the definition of a work of design as self-referential and referring to its own world, which it has created for itself, will also be used in my analyses with the following precisions. It will be considered how the work of design refers to itself in the sense of the work referring to design as a distinctive object and /or discipline. Works of design can also often be described as “meta-design”: that is “design about design” in the sense that the work of design is debating or reflecting upon the very foundations, methods and utility of design. The idea of meta-design encompasses both how works of design relate to their own world in terms of the design discipline as its own context and a work of design is about something.

Von Oppeln defines the world that a work of design refers to as a world it has created for itself since the entry of design into museums has led to the creation of an (interpretative) context in which a work of design can be perceived as work. In her analyses Stelzner also remarks that a characteristic of this kind of design is how it relates to an institutional context to a degree where the becoming part of a museum context seems incorporated in the design. However, I would argue that, as von Oppeln also points out, in the case of works of design these do not only refer to a world in the sense of the museum context but they also relate to a market context with design fairs and limited edition design. Furthermore, it could be added that while a work of design refers to a design context, when placed in an art context it will at the same time relate to the art context by its presence as “non-art” or “almost-art”. By being design in that context it points to design and challenges art and therefore also refers to the context of art.

Consequently, I would formulate these third defining characteristics as:

A work of design is self-referential and relates to the contexts created for it.

In addition to these defining properties of a work of design, the analyses will reflect various supplementary characteristics which have arisen in the close studies of how the hybrids manifest themselves. As already accounted for, many of the examined hybrids reflect the use of already-existing objects and therefore appropriation or postproduction will be a theme. Furthermore, as will be demonstrated, these works of design often have, what Stelzner describes as 'a transformative appearance of form', that is they appear "unfinished" and in a state of becoming (Strange Stelzner, 2005 p 27). In my opinion this indefinite character of such works relates to two other often occurring characteristics: an interactive and an experimental quality of the works of design. By interactive quality I mean the way works of design attempt to engage the viewer/user to actively participate in the work and become part of its creation. This aspiration to engage users to participate will, as already accounted for, also be addressed as a form of presumption. By experimental quality I am referring to the way many works of design appear to be works "in process": in the sense of testing new materials, techniques and shapes which may include elements and references to craft. The interactive and experimental qualities can, in different ways, be seen as approaches aimed at challenging functionality and articulating a critique or commentary within the work of design.

The concept of a work of design will enable, throughout the analyses, addressing different manifestations of design bordering on art while combining so called internal and external readings of the works. With the concept of the work of design both the material/formal qualities and their potential meaning, which relate to an internal reading, are addressed as well as the external factors in terms of the influence of the context of the work. A work of design can, therefore, be said to conceptually encompass the importance of the interrelationship between a work and its context as constitutive. The analysis will

explore how methods and mechanism from art are adopted in these works of design and it will be discussed whether the concept is comprehensive enough to describe these objects and their diversity.

### **Case study: Robert Stadler**

The *Pools and Pouf* from 2004 by designer Robert Stadler consists of different three-dimensional objects, which differ in size and shape (Fig. 7 p V). As the illustration shows the five different, almost sculptural, components are all upholstered with black buttoned leather and tufted details similar to those of a Chesterfield sofa. The different components are placed on the floor and the wall and arranged so that they relate to each other and the surrounding room. An object resembling a small stool is placed in the corner of the room and up against the wall where the largest object resembling a sofa is also placed. The three other elements appear as fragments and are placed as either carpet-like object on the floor or, in the case of the smallest component, fixed to the wall without any apparent functionality. While the objects are placed in a formation similar to a living room ensemble with a sofa, chairs and possibly a coffee table, their functionality as such is not completely apparent. Rather it seems to be the case of referring to a sofa set and challenging the expectations of usage and functionality of the combination of a sofa and armchairs. The component resembling a sofa is, despite the visual references to a Chesterfield sofa, no ordinary sofa: the wooden or steel frame, normally supporting a couch, does not seem to be there and the sofa seems reduced to a large seemingly soft kind of cushion or pouf. The Chesterfield, which the component refers to, affords a specific way of sitting, due to the height of the seat and the shape of the sofa back, and allows only to a limited degree the user to lie down on the sofa. In contrast, this object seems to invite the user to relaxation and a less constrained way of sitting. The smaller components on the floor bearing visual associations to small pools of liquid are even more open for interpretation of their functionality. In terms of the use-program of *Pools and Pouf* it seems for the user to decide how they could be used for sitting, lying down etc. and how they could be placed in

relation to the other components. The placement of these three components directly on the floor, without legs underneath to position them at the normal sitting height, challenges the users and seems to invite them to lounge, just as the larger sofa-like component seems to be lounging against the wall. The almost fluid shapes of the components combined with their material and tactile qualities in terms of the tufted leather which makes them appealing and seem comfortable, makes this sofa set intentionally inviting to a different experience and functionality than a more traditional sofa suite.

Commenting on and challenging established furniture types such as the sofa, armchair, pouf etc. continues in other projects by Stadler for example the *Tephra Formations* (Fig. 8 p VI). These formations with their sculptural qualities, organic form and associations to rocks, though soft and rounded, has, due to the use of a similar leather material (here in grey) and the specific handcrafting technique, the same references to specific types of furniture as *Pools and Pouf*. Both projects could be interpreted as referring to and commenting on the traditions and history of furniture design. Both of these works relate to the history of furniture and design in at least, two ways: 1) with references to the classic Chesterfield sofa made through the use and buttoning of leather 2) with references to time periods, for example the 60ties, where experiments in furniture were seen which attempted to create more “free and relaxed” ways of sitting etc. Combining references to the Chesterfield and to “experimental” furniture is combining contrasting references. The Chesterfield, dating back to the late 1700, is related to wealthy and bourgeois homes and still regarded as a luxurious, exclusive and classic item. It is a piece of furniture intended for sitting upright (in comfort) in contrast to the ideas of the laid-back lounging expressed in the furniture from the 60ties and in the components and formations by Stadler. By contrasting these furniture ideals a commentary or possibly critique seems to be stated regarding how furniture influences our behaviour and sociality.

*Pools and Pouf* and *Tephra Formations* are objects or components best described as fusions, somewhere between furniture and sculpture. In *Monochromes* Stadler continues the mixing

of categories of objects: this time creating a fusion between painting and furniture (Fig. 9 VII). This leather furniture comes in a black and a blue version with slight variations in shape and both bring associations to a painting on a wall melting into a sofa or a sofa climbing up the wall. In the blue version the visual reference to monochrome painting is further emphasized by using the same, or similar, colour as the Yves Klein Blue. Thereby the furniture relate not only to the history of design but also to art and to minimal art in particular. In their shape and form the monochrome sofas are also rather minimal themselves in their appearance: constituting one undivided component with padding hidden inside and only very few details in terms of quilting which discretely highlights the joining of the back and the seating of the sofa and the armrests. Both versions can be considered functional and usage might also be rather comfortable, however, this furniture attempts to be something more. This something more in the form of a mixed-up painting and sofa is, as the other examples by Stadler, created as limited editions due, amongst other things, to the handcraft techniques involved making them resistant to becoming mass produced.

The minimalistic appearance is even more prominent in another project called *Possible Furniture* which consists of different sized white and grey elements in regular shapes with rounded corners. The elements resemble flat stones and are piled in, what seems, a rather random way (Fig.10 p VIII). *Possible Furniture* bears even more resemblance to sculptures or an art installation than the other projects and its potential as furniture is not its most striking feature. Rather the piled components are puzzling since it is not immediately possible to understand how to use and interact with these objects which also seem as though they may potentially fall down at any moment. This unbalance in the composition of the elements perhaps triggers the viewers/users to rearrange them and combined with the components' character of building bricks this furniture-sculpture condition or invites us to engage in creating what may be considered the possible furniture. Similarly to *Pools and Pouf*, but perhaps more emphasized, *Possible Furniture* contains two of the additional

characteristics of works of design, which were earlier described: the experimental quality and the interactive quality. Experimental in the sense that *Possible Furniture* are elements somehow similar to small carpets, mats of thin cushions and appears as an investigation into reducing furniture into its most basic and minimal forms. The project seems an experiment in material and form while the intended use and functionality of the component appears to require the active participation of the user in what could perhaps initiate other bodily experiences than “regular” furniture. In that sense the *Possible Furniture* could be seen as creating an antidote to or commentary on how furniture in general define our ways of sitting and our environments by instead being a kind of furniture where we can shape our experience and surroundings. Thereby the furniture could be interpreted as aspiring to make the users into prosumers who complete the work by creating new formations according to needs.

A recurrent theme in the above described projects could be summarized as mutation, fusion or mixing since Stadler makes objects which combine different categories such as furniture and painting and furniture and sculpture. In addition, Stadler visually mutates the furniture with forms and shapes seemingly inspired by nature e.g. rocks, cliffs and pools of water/liquid. I consider Stadler to be creating hybrids, in accordance with the way the term is applied in this dissertation, that is, his objects are composed of elements of different kinds resulting in hybrids with an in-between character. For the following reasons I would argue that it also makes sense to characterize these projects as works of design. With his investigations into different furniture typologies and combinations with other categories of objects, functionality cannot be considered as the primary concern in the works of Stadler. Thereby the meaning, or Object, of these hybrids consists no longer of the practical function as the main component, but their meaning appear more complex as all the above described projects challenge use in various ways. The elements in *Pools and Pouf* placed on the floor and on the wall seem especially open for interpretation in terms of usage and similarly the way *Possible Furniture* functions is not immediately

apparent either. Functionality overall seems downplayed or challenged in these projects just as mass production of the furniture does not seem to be the intention.

The projects are made in limited editions and three of these projects involve, to different extents, the use of a special upholstering technique manually done. The buttoning of the leather is to a lesser extent used in *Monochromes*, whereas it is much dominant in *Pools and Pouf* and *Tephra Formations* resulting in stronger visual associations with the Chesterfield in these furniture objects. Overall in these cases the use of the leather material, their sculptural shapes and the handcrafted techniques involved add an exclusive character to the furniture components which emphasize their resistance to mass production. *Possible Furniture* is somewhat different in the use of materials and appearance: though the elements are upholstered (some are lacquered) as well, the involved technique seems less demanding and the elements could possibly be produced in large quantities but *Possible Furniture* could still seem resistant to mass production due to the unique character of the formations of elements made by Stadler. Thereby the materiality of these hybrids must certainly be regarded as playing a role in their interpretation as their materiality points, not only, to their production side but also activate different perceived values such as “exclusivity” or “luxury”.

To various degrees these analysed projects are also works of design in the sense of being about something. Stadler’s working method, or mode of production, to create ‘aboutness’ can partly be characterised as postproduction. He does not include already-existing objects but “citing” or making references to already produced objects, such as the Chesterfield sofa and the works of Yves Klein, is central in these hybrids. The different ways of post producing relates to the conceptual issue of each project: in *Monochromes*, for example, the idea of mixing up categories is addressed while the three others projects, comment in an abstract way on how furniture defines spaces and the possible ways of interaction. Consequently the works of Stadler are to be considered as meta-design: it is design reflecting how design objects influence our surroundings and proposing new forms of

utility. The projects can also be described as works of design because they, with their character of sculptural installation and the staging of the components, create something which appears an independent work: this is especially the case of *Pools and Pouf*. The defining quality of self-referentiality in a work of design is another feature which is part of these projects as they refer to (furniture) design as 1) a discipline: in investigations of its typologies and 2) its history: by references to “bourgeois” furniture and its contrast in terms of experiments in furniture. The staging of these projects as almost art installations relates to the contexts which are created for these kinds of furniture hybrids, that is the ‘white cube’ in terms of museums and galleries for contemporary design and art.

### **The context of the works of Robert Stadler**

Robert Stadler’s practice as a designer takes place between design and art and in his biography it is stated that he ‘intervenes in very diverse fields, obliterating all hierarchies between free proposals, industrial and public commissions’ (Stadler). What is characteristic for his practice is the diversity of works and projects and the many different fields or spheres of design and art that they relate to according to type of work or project. The analysed examples relate to the representation of Stadler by galleries: the Carpenters Workshop gallery and Galerie Triple V. The Galerie Triple V in Paris is an art gallery and The Carpenter’s Workshop is, with its staging of exhibitions, its presentation of the gallery etc., also very similar to a gallery of art – just with its specialty in showing the convergences between art and design. The gallery is, according to the presentation on the website: ‘known for its discovery of bold and iconic design-art’ (Carpenter’s). The gallery exhibits a considerable amount of different designers and artists and the gallery presents itself as a patron for artists and the gallery owners see the gallery as ‘presenting works of deep contemporary significance’ (Carpenter’s). With the emphasis on showing works of “importance” and in alluding to how the gallery contributes to the art design debate, the gallery must overall be said to define itself in relation to an art discourse. The relatedness to the art world is also reflected in the descriptions of Stadler: his practice is characterised



an 'oeuvre (which) is a questioning of objects' established identities' and he creates 'furniture works (which) at once convey and destroy pre-conceived notions of what an object should be' (Carpenter's). The earlier analysed projects by Stadler are all available for sale at the Carpenters Workshop gallery (just as several other projects by Stadler) and in accordance with their status as works their price is disclosed upon enquiry.

As many other designers (and artists) in the cross section of design and art Stadler has several works represented in private and public collections for example at MAK, Vienna, the Centraal Museum in Utrecht and FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais. While some design-artists seem to create solely for galleries and museums, Stadler's design practice is, as described in his biography, diverse and also includes a wide range of commissioned projects by both industrial and public clients. As his portfolio reflect the projects categorized as limited editions are dominant in number, but Stadler has also a significant number of projects categorized as "unlimited works", including a contribution to the *Do Create* project by Droog design . Consequently Stadler cannot be said to position himself as a designer only in relation to the "sub-field" of the art and design interface, but instead he acts on different platforms using different strategies accordingly. In terms of production methods Stadler also displays a great variety in his practice ranging from industrial production methods to manual manufacturing, but should however not be considered as a 'craft designer' (Thackara, 1986). Rather it is the case of collaborations with craft persons as the *Tephra Formations* and the involvement of craft that is emphasized in the presentation of the project with visual documentation on the process.

### **Case study: Jurgen Bey and Studio Makkink &Bey**

The *Tree Trunk Bench* from 1998, made in collaboration with Droog Design, seems a starting point in the career of designer Jurgen Bey who with this furniture attracted media attention to his conceptual design (Fig. 5 p III). The combining of nature and culture, in terms of a tree trunk and classical chair backs in bronze, points both to the conceptual

approach and the use of recycled or found objects which are recurrent themes in Bey's practice. Furthermore, the *Tree Trunk Bench* involves engaging the user actively since the bench is an unfinished product that the user has to complete by acquiring a log of tree on which to place the chair backs - only the chair backs are for sale. As Tido von Oppeln exemplifies in his analysis of this bench as a work of design, the bench is not primarily concerned with comfort nor functionality and is resistant to commodification, instead it engages with design as 'a discipline with its own history and essence' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 25)

Similarly to the *Tree Trunk Bench*, the *Extrusion Bench* or the *Gardening Bench* from 1998 could also be described as a work of design (Fig. 11 p IX). The *Extrusion Bench* consists of a bench in hay, and/or other materials from nature such as leaves, which are pressed out and shaped from the white container. Waste or rubbish from gardens or parks can be placed in the extrusion container resulting in a bench of various lengths from natural waste. Being of organic material the bench is a potentially short-lived piece of furniture which will naturally decay, while the extrusion container can potentially be reused again and again. The *Extrusion Bench* challenges the concept of a garden bench as a piece of furniture, made from weather-resistant material, we would normally place and use for sitting in gardens or parks. The bench can be characterised as a form of presumption as the user have to actively generate a bench through filling the extrusion container so the creation of a bench becomes dependent on nature's cycle. The resulting bench would have a short life-cycle making it quite resistant to mass production or commodification. The extrusion container provides the user with a tool for making a do-it-yourself bench by recycling organic waste and thereby proposes an alternative to either durable wooden garden furniture (which often needs maintaining) or less durable garden furniture such as plastic chairs and tables. However, as the bench is somewhat demanding in terms of usage, the bench is potentially more conceptual than functional. The combination of the extrusion container and the resulting bench create the meaning or idea of a sort of

furniture producing machine: transforming nature into an object of culture. The bench apparently addresses the opposition between nature and culture and could be interpreted as a commentary on furniture production. Accordingly the bench could be described as a work of design about design which questions the longevity of furniture and on a conceptual level addresses the idea of recycling. The *Extrusion Bench* is, furthermore, a self-referential object which critically engages with the context of the discipline of (furniture) design and relates, with its character of statement, more to a discussion of design than to actual production.

An investigative and critical approach to design is also seen in *Dust Furniture* from 2004 (Fig. 12 p X). The *Dust Furniture* consists in vacuum bags shaped as chairs: they come in two different versions, which can be attached to vacuum cleaners. As the bags fill up with dust the chairs provide seating and dust is turned into a useful material. *Dust Furniture* proposes new functionalities in combining seating with vacuuming and, similar to *Extrusion Bench*, experiments with the idea of making use of a material otherwise considered as waste. In terms of actual use, or prosumption, this furniture requires time (and patience) since the needed amount of dust to make the chairs comfortable would only accumulate over some time in a normal household. As in other works by Bey the user should play an active role in completing the product: the vacuum bags created by Bey are only transformed into furniture through the user's vacuuming activity. However, the practical use of a chair filled with dust is rather questionable and the chairs appear, as also described by Makkink & Bey, to be the turning of 'thought experiments into objects' (Makkink&Bey). This furniture seems to question our everyday surroundings and to consider the possibilities or potential functionality of a material we normally try to make disappear. What is characteristic about these pieces of furniture is not their actual usability but rather how they point to the process of investigating and questioning things. The object results from asking: what if dust was considered valuable? Perhaps it reflects an approach to design which not only attempts to understand the world but also to

constantly question it. The *Dust Furniture* can be considered a humoristic commentary on the designer's ideal role of searching for new ideas and possible solutions to improve our lives. The furniture can therefore also be characterized as a kind of meta-design referring to design as a profession where, according to Makkink & Bey, 'farfetched connections between seemingly unrelated things can lead to an endlessly rich archive of new ideas and possibilities' (Makkink&Bey).

Other examples of projects by Makkink and Bey which could be described as works of design are the *Crate Series* from 2010 and *Kratkasten* from 2012 (Fig. 13 p XI, Fig. 14 p XII). In these projects wooden containers or (shipping) crates, normally used for packaging goods, are re-used and transformed into new objects. As the writer for Wallpaper, Apphia Michael, remarks: 'there's no denying the obvious practicality of crates (...) Studio Makkink & Bey transformed these trusty (if a little unglamorous) packing and re-cycling all-rounders into art pieces worthy of their own exhibition' (Michael). I agree that through their transformation the crates no longer just have the function of containing goods but another usage and status is proposed by these creations, but I do not completely agree that the crates become art pieces. The crates are turned into different types of cabinets and furniture-like object and thereby new objects are made out of these containers normally considered by-products. In the *Crate series* the crates are combined with different found objects from the home and transformed into downsized household units with a specific function. The different units are: *VacuumCleanerCrate*, *BathCrate*, *ClockCrate*, *VanityCrate*, *BedCrate* and the *Blue Cabin*. In the *VacuumCleanerCrate* a vacuum cleaner is integrated inside the crate along with a tea set and a small roller table, making the ensemble mobile. This crate reflects an approach quite often seen in the works of Makkink & Bey: of combining different elements, or signs, which creates interpretants, or associations, leading to unexpected meanings or Objects. In this piece, work and activity, represented by the vacuum cleaner, is combined with taking a break and enjoying refreshment, represented by the tea set. In another of the objects from the *Crate Series* the crate is

combined with a small table, a mirror and different combs and a bucket for water, creating a small personal beauty or wash unit. The different versions of crates in the series seem to both hide the included household objects and pieces of furniture while at the same time to create a frame for these objects: staging their functions. The work of the *Crate Series* consists in the totality of all the crates which becomes a context in its own with the different units referring to this context.

By using the crates, normally used for protection and packaging, in new ways the lives of the crates are to be extended. The *Crate series* and *Kratkasten* can therefore be interpreted as works which rethink the use of products and by-products by proposing supplementary purposes of these storage and freight containers. According to Makkink & Bey 'the result plays with our ideas of value; the container becomes the content, a by-product is metamorphosed into the product' (Makkink&Bey). I would, accordingly, characterise the *Crate series* and the *Kratkasten*, which serve as boxes hiding furniture away, as works of design in the sense that they reflect on a conceptual level the playing with ideas of value, purpose and functionality of what is otherwise considered as packaging and by-products. The inherent working method of prosumption in the form of making use of all materials available including crates could, furthermore, be a commentary on the contrast between societies with or without abundance of material wealth. As Makkink & Bey remark in their description of *Kratkasten* the project was inspired by the way crates, in an Indian context, were used as mobile shops and workspaces. These inspirations led to the *Werkstadt Kabinett* which combines the re-use of the crate with the idea of creating a closed, private and individual workspace. Whereas this project and the *Crate Series* could point more to actual usage, the *Kratkasten* does not have an obvious practicality. All of these objects, revolving around the crate, seem, however, sketch-like in their appearance rather than finished products and are to be considered more conceptual works: pointing to the idea of and investigations into rethinking the by-product's possibilities. These works all relate to

the context created for it: in the sense of relating to the exhibition spaces for contemporary art and design such as Spring Projects where the *Crate Series* was exhibited in 2011.

### **The context of the works of Jurgen Bey and Studio Makkink & Bey**

As a designer Jurgen Bey does not himself explicitly position his practice in-between design and art and the cross field is not formulated as a specific focus area for Studio Makkink & Bey either. Their design studio works on a wide range of projects ranging in scale from urban planning to products and including both commissioned and self-initiated projects. Depending on the character of the project or product Bey and the studio operate and exhibit their work in many different contexts and related markets across art, design and architecture. The following will, however, focus on which specific contexts the projects analysed as works of design relate to and circulate in.

Initiated originally for the project *Couleur Locale*, *Droog Design for Oranienbaum*, the *Tree Trunk Bench* and the *Extrusion Bench* were created by Bey for the landscape garden Oranienbaum in collaboration with Droog Design. The *Tree Trunk Bench* has ever since been part of Droog's products and is furthermore part of the permanent collections at several international art and design museums. The *Extrusion Bench* is not sold as a Droog product but was exhibited along with the other concepts by the involved designers in the *Couleur Locale* project which was shown at Spazio La Posteria in Milan in 1999 and in Oranienbaum later the same year. The *Tree Trunk Bench* has become widely known and has almost gained status as an "icon" of contemporary (Dutch) furniture design. In 2010 it was remade as limited edition called *Tea Scenery Deluxe* (Fig. 15 p XIII). The *Tea Scenery Deluxe*, which is a limited edition of eight (plus four artist's proof), has, in addition to the original bench, a tea set standing on a small chest with one drawer, two chair backs and a grey wooden box. This special edition of the *Tree Trunk Bench* was created for a selling exhibition by the auction house Sotheby's: an auction house which as many others had discovered the market for collectable design and so called designart.

The *Dust Furniture* was first exhibited in 2007 as part of the exhibition Designing Critical Design at Z33, House for Contemporary Art, in Hasselt, Belgium. Bey was invited for this exhibition along with Marti Guixé and Dunne & Raby to each have a solo exhibition showing their respective, critical position towards design. In this context Bey is placed within the category of critical design which according to Z33 relates to Z33's mission of exhibitions with 'strong social orientation, addressing topical themes from various artistic standpoints with a critical eye' (Z33). In addition to being exhibited as critical design the idea behind *Dust Furniture* of discovering unexpected qualities in dust was continued by Bey in the flooring he developed for the range Marmoleum Dutch design. Bey developed it for the company Forbo who describes the process as follows:

'For his Marmoleum, Jurgen invited Forbo employees to bring in the contents of their vacuum cleaner bags. They served as reference for the development of an entire range of grey colour samples. Jurgen then created a marbled dust floor, composed of dozens of different greys. The ultimate dusty floor, the ultimate camouflage for new dust that may stay on the floor, enjoying the beautiful world of grey' (Forbo).

The *Crate Series* is made as a limited edition of three plus two which are artist's proof. Thereby not only the format of limited edition is chosen to give the objects unique and valuable status but also artist's proof, and consequently considered by art collectors to have higher value, is adopted as format. The *Crate Series* was exhibited in 2009 at the design festival DMY in Berlin. In 2011 the series was exhibited at the London based gallery Spring Projects which aims at showcasing 'innovative contemporary pieces and installations by internationally recognized artists and designers' (SpringProjects). Later in 2011 the series were also on shown at the Design Miami/Basel as the exhibition of Spring Projects at the fair in Basel. The Design Miami/Basel is an international design show/fair held every year in Miami and Basel since 2005 and running parallel with the Art Basel and Miami shows. It is considered prestigious to be exhibited there since it means being present at 'the premier venue for collecting, exhibiting, discussing and creating collectible

design' (DesignMiami/Basel). The *Kratkasten* have been included in different exhibitions on Studio Makkink & Bey. These series also exemplify how an idea and/or material, in this case of using crates for new purposes, continues to be further investigated, developed and combined with other elements in various ways in the practice of Makkink & Bey. Overall their practice seem to exemplify a working method of creating different self-initiated projects which often bears the characteristic of works of design and have the function of an unfinished model that reflects different possibilities, thoughts and ideas. These models are then circulated in different exhibition contexts across contemporary design and art and later on these projects may, or may not, later "translated" for the market.

### **Case study: Martino Gamper**

Having studied both art (primarily sculpture) and design, Martino Gamper has the educational background for being positioned in-between design and art (2007, p. 212). In his project *100 chairs in 100 days* Gamper created a chair each day for a hundred days: chairs made of discarded and rejected chairs which were disassembled and reassembled into new chairs (Fig. 16 p XIV-XV). This project, which will be treated later, encompasses many of the characteristics recurrent in Gamper's works namely the working methods of appropriation or postproduction. His hybrids often consist in already existing materials/furniture, often both "anonymous" design and design classics, which are cut-up and combined in new ways. Since this, and other projects, is based, on the presumption of already existing chairs etc. they naturally include a variety of references to (furniture) design history. While the *100 chairs in 100 days* was based on found chairs, and therefore the references to design history were somewhat random, Gamper has, in other projects, worked specifically on the translation or remake of the furniture of known designers such as Gio Ponti and Carlo Molino.

As earlier mentioned Tido von Oppeln characterizes Gamper's work as works of design, using the examples of *If Gio Only Knew* and *100 chairs in 100 days*, where Gamper brings



'together many design references and comments on design history' (von Oppeln, 2011 p 26) (Fig. 6 p IV). While I agree that this project and other projects by Gamper could be described as works of design what I especially want to discuss in the following, by analysing different examples, is the question or degree of aboutness in relation to the Gamper's works. His approach in the abovementioned two projects and *Receiving* from 2008, which will be analysed in the following, consists in using found objects to create new pieces of furniture (Fig. 17 p XVI). As in *If Gio Only Knew*, where Gamper as a performance sawed up and thereby modified the hotel furniture by Gio Ponti into reinvented versions, *Receiving* also took place as a performance where the audience would observe Gamper creating in the workshop. The series *Receiving* was created as a series of furniture for the auction house Wright on the basis of 'cast-off shipping materials, crates, and discarded furniture and objects found in Wright's warehouse' (Gamper).

The *Wendy Chair* is an example of the furniture created for the auction: two of the legs and the seating consist of cut-up crates in plywood while the ornamentally carved back of the chair and the other two legs are of a dark seemingly exclusive wood species (Fig. 17 a p XVI). Later additional furniture to the series was made as for example the *Tagliata Arne* chair in 2011 where the cut-up shipping crates are combined with the seating from the iconic chair series 7 (Wright) (Fig. 17 b p XVI). These two chairs thereby consist of contrasting materials: the modern, cheap crate parts and in one case the traditional manually carved chair and in the other case a modern classic. Even though these combinations may be visually challenging their functionality appears intact. Similarly, Gamper combined cheap and exclusive materials in *100 chairs in 100 days*, consequently mixing styles and references to the history of furniture design, while overall maintaining and only slightly challenging the functionality of sitting. With the unique character of the chairs both *Receiving* and *100 chairs* display a resistance to becoming mass produced.

Whether the described works by Gamper are about something is, in my view, very open to interpretation: the use of discarded furniture and other objects could be considered a

working method rather than necessarily implying a content or commentary. The *100 chairs in 100 days* project does involve the re-use and recycling of chairs and accordingly the prolonged life of the chairs could possibly be considered a critique of a “throw-away” consumer culture. However, the possible critique or commentary does not seem strongly articulated and instead the project appears more concerned with the formal and structural issues related to the chair as a furniture typology. The difference in content between this project and the *Martino with Gio Ponti* and *Martino with Carlo Mollino* is that whereas *100 chairs* is based on, more or less, randomly collected discarded chairs, the Ponti and Mollino projects are both based on using specific design furniture considered modernist classics or icons. These translations or modifications of the furniture by Ponti and Mollino do not appear as critique of the modernist design: rather they are transformed and re-invented but in ways where the play with and the re-invention of their formal language makes up their aboutness. *Receiving* is perhaps about creating or inventing from what is at hand, but rather than doing so out of necessity (or commenting on having to be inventive out of need) it becomes about ‘experimentation, spontaneity and interaction’ (Gamper). The project could be said to be about the creative process of Gamper, which is further emphasized by the on-site studio making the creation of the furniture into a performative act. In my view it’s questionable whether the works of Gamper can be defined as works of design in the sense that they have a theme or content they address: conceptual or critical statements do not seem to be intended. Even though they may be about formal experimentation they do still mainly appear to be concerned with serving the purpose of sitting.

Whether Gamper’s use of already existing furniture and materials: objects with historical significance and objects possibly pointing to consumerism, automatically implies content or aboutness is open to discussion. The references automatically conveyed in these projects by using furniture classics do, however, relate to the history of design and therefore the works of Gamper can certainly be defined as self-referential. The use and

translation of furniture of highly estimated designers, also in economic terms, could also be said to relate to the contexts, and the included audience. As Tido von Oppeln describes, a work of design needs a context (just as an artwork) from within which the work can be understood. Accordingly the works by Gamper are dependent on a context where the works are perceived and communicated as works of design. The relatedness to the history and discipline of furniture design seems pivotal in the definition of Gamper's design as works of design and therefore the works could be said to demand an "educated design audience". These works require that the audience has knowledge about the historical references and appreciation of the re-invention made by Gamper. Thereby there is a tendency in the works to appear intended as 'production for producers' and/or for a collector's market (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993) .

Another aspect which emphasizes that the projects of Gamper become works is the staging of their creation as a performance. While the working method of creating in front of an audience and under time pressure obviously constitutes a challenging limitation, it also adds status to the work of design in the perception of an audience presumably interested in the process of creating a unique piece. The event-character of the works of Gamper also relates to the contexts in which they are exhibited: contexts where the designer to some extent is marketed with a status similar to the "artistic genius" and a context where the audience has an interest in seeing the process of experimentation. The performance and exhibition format chosen for the presentation of the works of Gamper relates to the contexts of design fairs, galleries, auction houses and the market for limited editions.

### **The context of the works of Martino Gamper**

Many of the works by Gamper are created as unique pieces, which in some cases are, of course, conditioned by the way they are created, while others are commissioned as limited editions by the Nilufar Gallery in Milano. The gallery has been cooperating with Gamper

since 2007 where they showed the *If Gio Only Knew* at Design Basel. Here Gamper, according to Nilufar, 'shocked the audience sawing the furniture' (Nilufar). The same performance, or what Nilufar Gallery termed 'Action Design', was repeated later the same year in Milan for the exhibition *Onehundred* (Gamper). The Nilufar Gallery combines what they term 'historical design' with 'the evolution of contemporary design, above all within that more learned, poetic and visionary area shifting between production and contemporary art' (Nilufar). Besides presence at the prestigious fair Design Miami/Basel the gallery has also been exhibiting at PAD, Pavilion of Art and Design, in London and Paris. PAD describes itself as a venue of 'prominent international galleries' that 'offer an exceptional panorama of the most coveted and iconic works available on the market today. PAD is a place to discover and acquire pieces of museum quality with a distinct history' (PAD). Presenting the projects of Gamper in these contexts indicates that they are perceived as works, either works of design or maybe even art, since for example the *Martino with Carlo Molino* project was exhibited by the art gallery Salon 94 in the context of the Frieze Art Fair in London in 2008.

The self-initiated project, *100 chairs in 100 days*, was exhibited for the first time at Cromwell Place in London. Following this the project has been exhibited at different occasions: in 2009 it was exhibited at the NRW-Forum in Düsseldorf as part on an exhibition on the blurring boundaries between design and art titled *UFO. Grenzgänge zwischen Kunst und design*. The same year the *100 chairs* were exhibited in the context of the Triennale Design Museum, Milano, in combination with another project. The project was furthermore exhibited at the TechnoCRAFT exhibition at the YBCA in San Francisco and as part of the Cite du Design Biennale Internationale de Design de Saint Etienne. The different exhibition contexts for this project are rather consistent with the practice of Gamper who, on his website, is described as 'working across design and art venues' while being a 'specialist in one-off commission' (Gamper).

The making of one-off commissions is recurrent in the practice of Gamper by repeating either the working method of using existing chairs which are cut-up and re-combined, as in 100 chairs, or for example in re-interpretation of the Thonet chair commissioned by Conran and the recurrent tactic of, on the basis of existing materials, creating in front of an audience as in the *Receiving* project. In 2008 the furniture pieces of *Receiving* were created for the auction house Wright in Chicago which specializes in modern and contemporary design. The auction house markets itself as 'the premier auction house' and as having 'pioneered whole fields of collecting and transformed the market for modern design' (Wright). When asked in an interview about the format of one-offs Gamper explained: 'The one-off commission pieces enable me to try out new ways of making and producing. This gives me the possibility to realise projects that might otherwise always remain ideas' (García-Antón, King, et al., 2007 p 209). I am not questioning this as motivation but what the *Receiving* works and other works exemplify is how there is also a market for the one-offs and limited editions. This market may potentially at times limit the degree of experimentation and instead lead to a repetition of the realisation of certain ideas.

### **The appropriated monobloc: appropriation as a recurrent tactic**

Now turning from the analyses of the different practices, modes of production and the resulting objects or projects by Robert Stadler, Jurgen Bey (Makkink & Bey) and Martino Gamper, to focusing more explicitly on appropriation which has emerged as a recurrent tactic or productive method across contemporary art and design. Within studies of design and material culture the term appropriation refers to how users appropriate objects and artefactual environments (Miller, 1988). Within the context of this research, the use of the term refers to the understanding within art history and should be understood as the technique or working method of adopting, borrowing and re-using existing elements in the creation of a new work (MOCA). As already accounted for, the production mode of working with objects which are already in circulation on a cultural and consumer market, will also be discussed as prosumption and postproduction (Bourriaud, 2000; Nakajima,

2011). The succeeding analyses of appropriation as a productive method to create objects oscillating between design and art will focus on the appropriation of a specific and well-known object: the plastic monobloc chair. In general, prosumption or postproduction can, as approaches, in this case be said to reflect an interest in investigating, interpreting or commenting on our everyday material (consumer) culture. The appropriation of the plastic monobloc chair, with its status as a widely distributed commodity, reflects how the “anonymous” objects in our surroundings become part of the range of objects to re-use (Erlhoff & Marshall, 2008) .

### **An “anonymous” every day plastic chair**

The plastic monobloc chair is the chair produced in the largest number in the world - and possibly produced in the largest quantities in history. The chair is distributed, used and well known all over the world. Yet the degree of expansion and popularity of plastic monobloc chairs does not mean that the monobloc is considered as *the* chair in terms of aesthetics nor ergonomics: it is widely criticized for being ugly and providing insufficient sitting comfort, so the reasons for its success is related to other features. The plastic monobloc chair is a single-form, injection-moulded chair, mass produced since the early 1980's from only one material type (nowadays most often polypropylene). The chair comes in a variety of colours (predominantly produced in white) and models may also vary in terms of armrest and the shape of the back. All monobloc chairs are stackable, portable, light weight and, due to their hard and smooth plastic surface, easy to clean. Finally, in addition to its functional qualities, the chair is very cheap. The plastic monobloc chair is, at least in a western European context, considered as garden furniture, yet the chair is used globally in a variety of contexts from patios, outdoor cafés etc., campgrounds, parks, beaches, retirement homes to public events.

Due to the extent of production, which amounts to billions and the consequent widespread distribution the plastic monobloc chair is visually present to a sometimes

overwhelming extent, yet it can be considered 'anonymous design' and has been largely ignored by design historians (Rawsthorn, 2007) . Over the last couple of years the plastic monobloc chair has received increased attention as contemporary designers and artists are now using the chair in their work: as a material to be adapted, transformed, customized or commented upon. The recurring interest in the plastic monobloc chair is also reflected in different online design magazines, blogs and in the publication *The Infamous Chair: 220° Virus Monobloc* edited by Arnd Friedrichs and Kerstin Finger (Chairblog; Designboom). The reasons for the large number of artists and designers appropriating the plastic monobloc chair, of which the following is just a minor selection, could overall be seen as related to the chair's ambivalent status as being widely distributed, ignored by some and hated by others. What I aim to illustrate by including the following examples is how the motivations for and ways of appropriating the same plastic chair vary and as a result the use of the monobloc generates a diversity of meaning.

The chosen examples for analysis are: *Statement Chairs* by designer Marti Guixé, artist Sam Durant's *Porcelain Chairs* which will be compared to *Plastic Chair in Wood* by designer Maarten Baas, *100 Chairs in 100 Days* by designer Martino Gamper, the *Transplastic Collection* by designers Fernando and Humberto Campana, the *New Order Chair* by designer Jerszy Seymour and finally a comparison between the *White Billion Chairs* by designer Tina Roeder and *Rest in Peace* by designer Robert Stadler. The chosen examples are mainly works by designers, yet in order to compare approaches to appropriation of the monobloc chair examples of works by artists are also analysed including comparisons to the work *Copyright* by the artist group Superflex. *Copyright* is included even though it does not involve appropriation of the plastic monobloc chair, but here chairs of a similar status (in terms of being mass produced, cheap etc.) are used as material.

## **A material culture approach to analysis of the appropriated plastic chair**

Below the different examples of the re-use of an everyday object, in form of the plastic monobloc chair, will demonstrate different material features which are related to various tactics, intentions and possible meanings. These different cases of appropriation all play on and reflect the existence of various categories within contemporary culture such as everyday objects, art objects, design objects etc. Taking an “ordinary” object as the plastic chair and through minor or major transformations turning it into something “extraordinary” emphasizes the fluidity between the registers or categories of objects. In order to grasp this and the relations between the material object, the plastic monobloc, and its transformations and meaning a material culture approach will be applied in the analyses. More specifically the succeeding analyses will be inspired by the material-semiotic methodology formulated by archaeologist Carl Knappett in *Thinking Through Material Culture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Knappett, 2005). Although applied by Knappett mainly in relation to everyday objects, with examples of both archaeological and present day objects, Knappett provides a useful approach to analysing the different appropriated plastic chairs due to his focus on the relations between the formal characteristics, the functionality and the various meanings of objects.

The methodological scheme developed by Knappett consists in focusing on the physical affordances, constraints and the associative network of an object and will function as a framework for the analyses. The affordances of an object describe, according to Knappett, how an object visually and physically manifests its properties and functionality. Constraints on the other hand account for the physical, cultural and logical constraints to our use and perception of an object. These aspects of an artefact are also addressed by Proni who considers objects to condition their possible uses according to their material form (Proni, 2002 p 48). To analyse the final aspect: the associative network of an object, Knappett adopts elements from the semiotic approach formulated by Peirce. What Knappett primarily includes from this approach to signs and signification processes are



the categories of icon, index and symbol. Of most relevance in this context is analysing the iconicity and indexicality of an object. When regarding an object's iconicity focus is on the physical similarities of an object to other objects. The examination of the indexicality perspective makes it possible to analyse how the works are 'an index for various other objects, activities and thoughts' (Knappett, 2005 p 114). Symbol

Knappett's scheme will work as a tool to describe how the different examples relate to the functional aspects of the chair: how the affordances of the chair are challenged and how different constraints may be intentionally applied. In describing the networks of meaning in which the examples are entangled, especially through the appropriation of the plastic monobloc chair, it will be useful to treat the objects from the perspective of iconicity in order to account for the different visual similarities and the following interpretants, or references, which are created and intentionally articulated in the different works. The indexicality of the plastic chair can point to the production side, the activities of appropriation, leading to the resulting objects as well as point to spatial and temporal contexts. Finally, the aspect of 'the mutability of objects': the possibility that the meaning and status of an object may shift (over time), seems a useful aspect to consider in relation to these works as the mutation of the plastic monobloc chair is central to all of the examples (Knappett, 2005 p 116). By considering this aspect the analyses aim to reflect how the transformations may limit the functionality of the chair but add "conceptual content" and thereby create Objects, or meanings, which are composite. The various approaches to mutating the plastic monobloc (from mass produced to unique) will be discussed as different tactics to change the status, the potential use-program and the meanings of the monobloc chair.

## Statement Chairs by Marti Guixé

The first time I came across an adaptation or re-design of the plastic monobloc chair was at the exhibition *Destrø Design* curated by FRAC. At the exhibition where design objects were, as the title perhaps indicates, being questioned, challenged or even destroyed, the *Statement Chairs* by (ex-) designer Marti Guixé seemed evident as a comment on the exhibition theme (Fig. 18 p XVII). The *Statement Chairs* are a series, limited edition, of 10 white plastic monobloc chairs onto which Guixé has, in different ways, applied paint in red, gold and blue as well as written a statement on the chairs with large black or red letters. On the chairs exhibited at *Destrø Design* the text applied on the back and the seat of the chairs read: 'Stop discrimination of cheap furniture', while a later series of *Statement Chairs* has the statement 'Respect cheap furniture' written on them. In both series the statements are painted with capital letters in a slightly individual way on each chair.

If we look at Guixé's versions of the plastic monobloc chair in relation to the concept of affordances understood as 'the potentialities held by an object for a particular set of actions', Guixé does not change the physical affordances of the chair in such a fundamental way that the object's potential for seating is diminished (Knappett, 2005 p 45). The chair would, most likely, still be perceived as having the functionality of a chair, or in other words as a sign the chair still creates interpretants associated with function and use. The changes made by Guixé are related to the surface or skin of the object. What he adds is an extra painted layer, which makes the surface of the chair act as an interface or media for communicating a statement regarding the object on which the statement is placed. By not transforming the chairs physically or functionally Guixé keeps his versions very close, in terms of physical resemblance, to the original chair. It is – to put it very simple – just the cheap plastic chairs that he has painted on, but they are, by this action, now limited edition designs by Marti Guixé. The text painted on the chairs bears some visual resemblances to graffiti or similar types of statements which can be seen written on urban walls or posters and this relates very well to the activist slogan character of the

written statements. Exactly this gesture, or change in materiality in the chair, has consequences in terms of the associations and following meanings which are created: the Object is now also a commentary on the chair.

Guixé's use of the plastic monobloc chair, combined with the statements and their appeal for respect, can be seen as an index of both the production of the cheap mass produced chair and its perceived value of being of very low status among a design audience. Guixé comments on this perceived status and furthermore aims at assigning the chair more status by creating his versions in limited editions. What is not visible on the images shown here of the two different series are the labels placed on the back of each chair with his signature, a text stating 'Limited editions' and the assigned number out of ten. The addition of these signature labels is an index of the activities of Guixé in terms of transforming the status of these plastic monobloc chairs: from everyday objects to design- and/or art objects, moving them from the context of the everyday to the museum or gallery and potentially changing them from being an object of use to an object of "contemplation". Through his adaptations Guixé creates a series of chairs that are, at the same time, associated with the cheap plastic chair and with objects of another category: limited editions.

By creating the chairs, which are – needless to say perhaps - not constrained from being mass produced, as limited editions Guixé seems to be making an ironic commentary on limited editions in design or maybe even a 'parody of "designart"' (Rawsthorn, 2007). If Guixé's *Statement chairs* are regarded as a parody of designart, it is interesting to note that the *Respect Cheap Furniture* series were exhibited by Helmrinderknecht gallery: a gallery exactly for designart (Helmrinderknecht). The example of Guixé's versions of the plastic monobloc chair illustrates the mutability of the object and how the meaning and context of use of the monobloc chair is changed through the transformations made by Guixé. By elevating the plastic monobloc chair to limited editions assigned with authorship Guixé changes the original intentions with the chair, as being cheap and accessible to everyone,

and moves it from the category of anonymous everyday object to design- or art object while requesting more respect for the plastic monobloc chair.

### **Porcelain chairs by Sam Durant and Plastic Chair in Wood by Maarten Baas**

While Guixé uses the plastic monobloc chair as the direct material, the artist Sam Durant and the designer Maarten Baas use the monobloc chair as the source for different reproductions of the chair in other materials than plastic (Fig. 19 p XVIII, Fig. 20 p XIX). In the interpretations of the monobloc chair by Durant and Baas quite similar approaches, yet with some differences, seem to be applied and comparisons between their works will be made in the following. The chairs made by Durant and Baas obviously bear a great degree of visual resemblance to the original as they are made as copies of the plastic monobloc chair. Yet, at a second glance one discovers that the chairs by Durant are made of porcelain in different bright colours and Baas' chair is made from dark brown wood.

By creating the chairs in porcelain, yet visually resembling the plastic chair, Durant plays with our perceptions of the chair and its affordances. We expect the chair to be an object for sitting on, but by changing the material to something as fragile as porcelain Durant intentionally imposes a physical constraint to his versions of the chair: they cannot be sat on, only looked upon. The porcelain chairs are, as mentioned before, still visually similar to the plastic monobloc chair, but due to the porcelain material and texture they also have physical similarities to other objects in porcelain or ceramic. Durant's use of another material to make the monobloc chairs creates new associative networks, in terms of the perceived values related to porcelain, yet at the same time it also refers back to the "original" chair – and its life story, production and status. The use of porcelain points to the concrete production of these chairs and the production methods involved more generally. The chairs are, according to the descriptions of the work, indexes of the production by hand of nine unique porcelain chairs made by crafts people in Xiamen, China (Durant). The manufacturing process of Durant's monobloc chair is obviously very

much in contrast to the mass production of the original chair. Yet the two different production methods are both present in the work: physically the chairs are indexes of a craft process while visually they bear references to industrial production and furthermore both production methods relate to a Chinese context. There are similarities in the reproductions of the plastic monobloc chairs created by Durant and Baas in the sense that in both cases the chairs are made of materials whose perceived values, as opposed to plastic, are properties such as exclusivity and craftsmanship.

The reproduction of the plastic monobloc chair by Maarten Baas entitled *Plastic Chair in Wood* obviously has visual similarities in form and shape to the original chair. Its physicality and appearance is, however, due to the wooden material changed to a degree, which means that the chair by Baas would probably first create interpretants such as modernist wooden chairs and then secondly associations with the plastic monobloc chair. By making the chair in elm wood Baas takes a similar approach as Durant in terms of creating a chair in a material considered much more exclusive than plastic. Yet Baas' approach is, due to the choice of material, quite the opposite of Durant's approach. While Durant, by making the chair in porcelain, makes an exclusive and non-functional chair, Baas also adds exclusivity to the chair through the use of elm wood, but functionality is not reduced rather it might even be enhanced. Baas' *Plastic Chair in Wood* does not make significant changes to the affordances or physical constraints related to the chair. However, the wooden version can indirectly be said to reflect on some cultural constraints related to the plastic monobloc chair which, due to its non-exclusive status, might be considered "inappropriate" in different contexts, whereas the *Plastic Chair in Wood* would be accepted due to its perceived exclusivity in terms of material and crafted qualities.

Baas' chair has a similar duality as Durant's versions of the chair in terms of its iconicity; since the visual features relate both to the monobloc chair in plastic but also to wooden chairs and might have similarities to a wooden garden chair from the 1940s or 50s which

the plastic monobloc chair presumably is modelled on. Whether this return to the “real” original chair, on which the plastic monobloc chair is possibly based, should be seen as an intended remake by Baas is unsure. However the choice of wood as material is a reminder of the origin and life story of the plastic monobloc chair. The elm wood as material is an index of the production side and the activities that caused the chairs’ final form. Furthermore the commission of this work, by Contrasts Gallery in Shanghai, to be produced in collaborations with Chinese producers, is part of the causal line resulting in this chair as a material event. The *Plastic Chair in Wood* is the result of the collaboration between Baas and Chinese woodcarvers and an index of a combination of Western design and traditional Chinese techniques (Baas). Baas’ chair has an indexical relation with the manufacturing processes which, again similarly to Durant’s chairs, are quite the opposite of the mass production of the plastic monobloc chair. This is further emphasized by the fact that the wood carved reproduction of the monobloc chair is made as a one-off. Both Durant’s and Baas’ reproductions of the monobloc chair point to China as a context for production; a country which we normally associate with mass production, but here evoked with the intention of pointing to craft techniques and thereby challenging the perception of ‘made in China’ as synonymous with cheap and low quality (Durant).

Though similar approaches are found in these works by Durant and Baas in terms of the inherent contradictions between craft techniques and limitless mass production, differences may be seen in terms of the intentionality behind the chairs. Some of these differences are reflected in the way in which authorship is addressed in the works: in both cases the plastic monobloc chair is borrowed, or appropriated, and the works are therefore based upon an object, which neither Durant nor Baas have created originally. Furthermore their reproductions of the monobloc chair are the results of a process where they act as producers of the work, but the concrete fabrication is made by the crafts people involved. Durant challenges the perception of an artwork with, what is described as ‘a case of “outsourced” fabrication’: by basing his work on an everyday object and by not making

the work physically himself (Durant). The names of every one of the crafts people involved in the manufacturing process are part of the full title of the work of Durant. In contrast the woodcarver remains anonymous in the work of Baas. Baas does not challenge concepts of design by handing over the manufacturing process to the woodcarver, but initiates a collaboration, which is common between designer and manufacturer, but the way Baas challenges design is by not designing a “new” object and by making the chair as a one-off.

Central to the reproductions of the plastic monobloc chair by both Durant and Baas is the change of material and the resulting changes in associations related to the objects. Even though the chairs bear references to the mass produced plastic chair, they have a different status due to the choice of material and production methods. The choices made by Durant and Baas, of material and manufacturing, do not only reflect intentions of addressing mass production vs. unique production, but also point to changes in terms of the intended context for these reproductions. The transformation made by Durant of the plastic monobloc chair is to take a pragmatic everyday object and transform it into an art object with different layers of meaning, but no, or reduced, functionality. With his *Plastic Chair in wood* Baas transform the same everyday object into something different, but in contrast to Durant’s reproductions the chair made by Baas is still a pragmatic object and fully functioning as a chair. Baas creates a design object, which somewhat aspires to be art - partly due to the conceptual aspects of the work, which, as earlier described, contain similar references and associations as the work by Durant - but maybe mainly due to the chair being an unique and exclusive object. The work by Durant consists of several chairs which in total form an installation of non-usable chairs intended for an art exhibition, whereas Baas’ work is commissioned for a designart gallery.

## 100 Chairs in 100 Days by Martino Gamper

The plastic monobloc chair, or parts of it, is also incorporated in four different chairs by Martino Gamper with the titles: *Sonet Butterfly*, *Two-some*, *Cathedra Rassa* and *Mono Suede*. The four chairs are all modified chairs and have been assembled by partly using the monobloc (Fig. 16 p XIV). Despite the assemblage character of these chairs, they maintain the physical properties and affordances for sitting of a chair. Even though Gamper's four different chairs based partly on the monobloc chair are fully functional as chairs, the transformations made do result in physical constraints compared to the "original" plastic chair: for example, the functionality of being stackable is to some degree limited. By creating chairs which combine, for example, a plastic monobloc chair and a wooden chair – as with the *Sonet Butterfly* and the *Two-some* – Gamper not only combines different types of material but also the iconicity of the chairs thereby creating a dynamic between the plastic, the wood and the related iconic references. Furthermore, with their composite character the chairs in their totality have visual similarities not only to other chairs by Gamper, but also to other objects for example art objects which, termed as assemblages, combine, ready-mades etc., are also made from existing artefacts.

When the assembled character of the chairs is considered as an index of activity the chairs point to an activity of deconstruction and recombination from which unique chairs are made. The plastic monobloc and the other chairs used become a material to alter and combine as desired in the working process resulting in the chairs. While it is visible in Gamper's chairs that they are combined of parts from different chairs, and to some degree it might also be visible that they are used chairs, the meaning, or Object, behind their making is not completely visible. The chairs are, as indicated in the title *100 chairs in 100 days*, the results of a working process where Gamper set out to make one chair every day consecutively for a hundred days.

The materials used in this process are discarded and used chairs which Gamper had collected from friends and from the streets of London over a period of two years. The



whole, which the individual chair refers to, in terms of the project, is therefore a collection process leading to a systematic and continuous making of chairs by combining elements from other chairs which varies in style, material, status etc. The resulting chairs seem to point back to a process of revision or analysis of chairs while splitting up the discarded chairs into functional elements such as the back of the chair, the seating, the legs etc. Every day this was followed by recreating a chair from the found materials, often combining materials, textures and shapes in a seemingly eclectic way. The totality of the chairs becomes an index of consistent investigations into the chair as an object while experimenting with making many different variations in a process described by Gamper as a 'three-dimensional sketchbook' (Gamper).

The different elements used for these chairs by Gamper evoke associations to different contexts of use and in the combination of elements different associations and life stories (of the objects used) are mixed. The chairs can be interpreted of both past and future use-programs. The choice of making chairs from already existing and discarded furniture may be seen as an intention from Gamper to not only analyse and divide the chair as an object into elements, but in doing so also implicitly to point to, or comments on, past use and consumer culture more generally. The activity of making chairs from discarded chairs could also express an intention of revitalizing the chairs and prolonging their "life". Thereby the chairs reflect the proposal of a new use-program while they at the same time reflect a life already lived. However, their prolonged life might possibly be less as objects for use as objects for contemplation.

### **The Transplastic Collection by Fernando and Humberto Campana**

The combination of different types of materials and the contrasts of nature versus plastic is central to the project *Transplastic Collection* by designers Fernando and Humberto Campana (Fig. 21 p XX). The collection consists of 31 prototypes which vary in sizes and colours but are all made from joining plastic monobloc chairs and wicker, which originates

from plants. The *Café Chair* in the collection exemplifies this principle of combining wicker and the monobloc chairs: the back and part of the seating of the chair (sometimes the legs and the armrest too) are present as reminiscent of the plastic chair, which is otherwise encapsulated by the wicker material (Fig. 21 a p XX). The *Café Chair* has the affordant properties for sitting as any other chair, but in the case of some of the other prototypes in the series the affordances are developed further due to their design.

The *Una Famiglia* chair is, for example, three plastic chairs placed with the back against each other and joined by wicker: creating a seating arrangement for three persons not facing each other, but facing in three different directions (Fig. 21 b p XX). This chair, therefore, conditions a different way of sitting and accordingly human interaction, as this sitting furniture relates to a group of people, but in its design constrains the interaction between them. The idea of grouping several plastic chairs is recurrent in the project, for example by placing three black plastic chairs as though they were steps on a ladder, facing in the same direction and thereby creating a chair where the sitters are placed at different levels and neither in front nor behind the other persons. Another example is a grouping of about eight green plastic chairs: all joined by the wicker material again creating a sitting arrangement, where the sitters are not oriented inwards toward the group but instead face the exterior. The formation of the chairs points to a dynamic inherent in *The Transplastic Collection*: interpretants are created which are related to garden and outdoor furniture by using signs such as the plastic material and the wicker material. While this type of garden furniture is often associated with a social interaction, where people are placed in groups, often around a table, the grouping of chairs by Campana changes the interaction normally afforded by garden chairs. Instead the grouping of chairs in *Una Famiglia* and other examples afford ways of sitting which could be compared to benches in public spaces, where the sitters are most often facing towards by passers and the surroundings.

Another inherent dynamic in *The Transplastic Collection* is at the level of materials and in the contrasting of a hard, smooth material such as plastic and the textured, nature material

of wicker. The plastic parts obviously have iconic relations to the plastic monobloc chair, which has a modern, industrial production side which is combined with its opposite, the wicker material, which relates to very old traditions of handcraft. The wicker material points back to earlier times' use of wicker for garden furniture and at the same time, when combined with plastic, points to the present predominant use of plastic as material for outdoor furniture. Traditional and modern materials are joined in these chairs in a way where the growing or melting together of contrasting materials seems intentional: the plastic chairs appear mutated into the cocoon-like structure of the wicker. The use of the plastic monobloc chair in these different prototypes seems to be subordinate to the intention of focusing on the wicker and thereby the revitalization of the technique of manual wicker braiding. With the plastic chairs created as though the wicker is growing out of them, the meaning could be interpreted as wanting the organic material to overtake and replace the more practical, but less ecological plastic chairs. The use of wicker also points to the Brazilian context within the two designers work: it is indexical of the chairs being handcrafted with the Brazilian fibre apui and the collaboration with crafts people (Campana). The *Transplastic Collection* is an example of a recycling of plastic monobloc chairs in order to both re-use this chair, but even more to re-use and revitalize the wicker chair (and the crafts involved). Furthermore, through the formation of the chairs the idea of sitting arrangements in groups, and the associated sociality, is reinterpreted.

### **The New Order Chair by Jerszy Seymour**

The *New Order Chair* by designer Jerszy Seymour is a modified version of the plastic monobloc chair, where the chair has been cut up and reassembled while adding a skeleton-like metal reinforcement at the back of the chair and foam padding on the arms, seating and on the added headrest (Fig. 22 p XXI). Seymour's transformations of the plastic chair do not change the transparency of the chair's functionality for sitting. However, placing the free-formed and amorphous blue foam material, which almost seems dripping from the seating and armrests, may create a degree of uncertainty or

reticence towards using the chair as it creates uncertainty regarding whether the blue foam material is dry or sticky. By adding the foam material in its undefined shape The *New Order Chair* activates hesitations, or interpretants, that the regular monobloc chair would not activate. However, the modified plastic monobloc chair also announces other physical and functional properties because of the metal structure connecting the back of the chair, the armrest and the seating of the chair in a combination of metal and an elastic band. The metal reinforcement and the resulting modifications of the functionality of the plastic monobloc chair are visible in a way that highlights the affordances of this chair, in terms of announcing its range of possibilities. By emphasizing the adjustments and possible improvement of the plastic monobloc chair Seymour seems to offer a critique of the comfort, functionality etc. of the original monobloc chair.

The intention of improving the plastic chair is also present at the iconic level of The *New Order Chair* in terms of the visual features which since it is based on the plastic monobloc chair obviously have similarities to this chair. Because of the metal structure the chair also has visual similarities to an office chair with flexibility and the added headrest places The *New Order Chair* in an iconic relation to ergonomic chairs. The blue foam material is, however, more ambiguous in its iconicity: because of its somewhat random and blurry application it can be associated with other fluid textures and a possibly uncontrolled process, whereas if the foam had been applied in a more defined shape it would have had more visual similarities to a soft kind of padding. The chair has an inherent dynamic: the modified shape is both defined and “rational” and undefined and random and the textures combined are hard (the plastic and the metal) and soft (the blue foam material). With his version Seymour challenges the one material, one production step character of the plastic monobloc chair.

With its somewhat unfinished character the *New Order chair* seems indexical of an experimental process: of testing, finding critical points and making improvements. Being intentionally an unfinished chair The *New Order Chair* is to a great degree a way of

pointing to or illustrating Seymour's design practice, which has been described as 'a return to the zero degree of design, the primeval soup' (Borka). The use of foam or wax material on the chair places *The New Order Chair* in the totality of the practice of Seymour due to the recurrent use of coloured scum, foam or wax material in his work. The mutability of the plastic monobloc chair which is displayed in *The New Order Chair* is not, as in some of the other examples, so much a case of the object moving between the category of everyday and art objects. Rather the chair is, through the visible modifications and its "unfinished-ness", moved into a category of prototypes or experimental objects, which, interestingly, are part of a category of (and market for) limited edition design. This leads to another aspect: the indexicality of the chair relates to its production as the chair is a result of collaboration between Seymour and the design and furniture producer Vitra. This is also indicated in the full title of the chair: *New Order – Vitra Edition Project*. The chair is therefore pointing to *The Vitra Edition Project* which is a sort of laboratory provided by the company Vitra for selected designers to experiment: experiments which are exhibited and sold as limited edition design. While this collaboration has not for Seymour led to a production of a stackable plastic chair by Vitra, it is interesting to note that Seymour's work with the monobloc chair has been followed by the production of a plastic monobloc chair by the company Magis. Thereby Seymour's practice does not only engage in a critique and altering of a monobloc chair but he also engages in creating what he considers as a new and improved version of a plastic chair.

### **White Billion Chairs by Tina Roeder and Rest in peace by Robert Stadler**

An attempt at changing the status of the plastic monobloc can be seen in the *White Billion Chairs* by Tina Roeder, who transforms different, though all white, versions of monobloc chairs by perforating them with a large amount of holes (Fig. 23 p XXII). The *White Billion Chairs* are, at first glance, perceived as the monobloc chair with its affordances for sitting but this perception is quickly challenged by the presence of the closely placed holes in the chairs. The perforations of the chairs create associations to objects which are

deteriorating or infested with termites, however, the very systematic application of holes seems to indicate a human activity. In Durant's versions of the monobloc chair the movement of the objects from a category of use to non-use is made by making the chairs in a material too fragile for use and in similar ways Roeder's transformations of the chairs into non-usable is also made by making them more fragile. This is, however, in the case of the *White Billion Chairs* not done through using a more exclusive material but by removing material. Yet the process of perforation is stopped at a point where the chairs would probably still function. The activity of perforating the chairs could, nevertheless, be seen as an index of adding value or status to the chairs and this intention is also reflected in their limited number (numbered and limited edition of 33).

A similar approach, in terms of removing material from the plastic chair by perforation, is seen in the *Rest in peace* chair by Robert Stadler although the perforations made by Stadler have a different character than the holes made by Roeder: equal in size and consequently applied all over the chair (Fig. 24 p XXIII). In contrast the perforations in Stadler's version are more amorphous in shape and more extensively and randomly permeating the chair. The chair by Stadler seems, in comparison to Roeder's, even more fragile and to a higher degree challenges the affordances for sitting: the chair creates interpretants such as a skeleton at the point of deterioration or breakdown and this activates hesitations towards using the chair. The more extensive and damaging perforations could indicate an activity intending to destroy or make the chair vanish completely, which is also indicated by the title of the work. Yet at a point the process of vanishing has been stopped and the remains of the chair point to the act of destruction and/or the potential meaning in terms of a desire of making it disappear.

The perforations of Stadler's chair seem, in comparison with the chair of Roeder, indices of a differently motivated "destructive" act than Roeder's, which is more of a subtle destruction of the chairs. The critique of the plastic monobloc chair, as a type of chair and the associated status, which appear inherent in Stadler's appropriation, is much more

accentuated in the first version than in the second. The second version, which is cast-aluminium, seems an attempt at recreating the process of making the chair vanish; however its appearance is less deteriorated and has more decorative qualities to it. The 'statement' seems stronger in the first version whereas the other version is stronger in terms of functionality and thereby Stadler seems, through his adaptations of the monobloc chair, to remove it from use to contemplation with the first version and back to use again with the second version. The *White Billion Chairs* are more ambiguous and to a higher degree combines use and contemplation perhaps reflecting an opposite intention, than Stadler's, to transform or question the status of the plastic monobloc chair, rather than a critique.

The interpretations of the plastic monobloc chair made by Guixé, Durant and Baas seem to activate different layers of meaning by the transformation of material or the added layer of text. These meanings relate both to the status and life story of the monobloc chair itself and to contexts outside the object. The *White Billion Chairs* can be seen as a similar tactic: the change in the materiality of the chair, through the perforation, changes its possible meanings. However, Roeder's approach could be described as more subtle and poetic. Whereas the versions made by Baas and Durant have inherent references to the context in terms of production of both the monobloc chair and their own version, Roeder seems more occupied with the plastic monobloc chair per se and how it may change appearance and status through the individualizing activities made by hand. The appropriation of the monobloc chair could be interpreted as questioning categories of objects and how status or value is assigned to them, and this is done in a very minimal and conceptual way by using only white chairs. The questioning of status assigned to objects is in the project of Roeder done by considering the relationship or dynamic between the limitless (the mass produced plastic chair), the unique (the chair individually perforated and sanded by hand) and the limited (the series of 33 individually made chairs). At the same time Roeder seems to be combining two tactics; taking an anonymous, everyday object and, through modification,

changing the perception and status of the object while also staging the modified plastic monobloc chairs in a series and with character of installation.

### **Copyright by Superflex**

Though not using the plastic monobloc chair but instead cheap replicas of lacquered plywood shell chairs, which also originate from a modernist outset, Superflex appropriate and modify another widely mass produced chair in their work *Copyright* (Fig. 25 p XXIV). The chairs used are replicas of the *Ant Chair* and/or *Chair No. 7* by Arne Jacobsen: mass-produced imitations of a design classic which are sold in different versions by large warehouses and furniture stores at twenty times less than the prize of the original Jacobsen chair. The work *Copyright* has been created and exhibited in a white and a coloured version. Each work is an installation of 80 chairs, placed in eight rows of ten chairs. In the coloured version the chairs are of six different pastel colours. The copy chairs in the original state have visual similarities to the *Chair No. 7* while through the transformation done by Superflex they acquire visual similarities to the *Ant Chair*. Indices of the process of manually modifying the chairs, in the attempt to correct and make them more similar to the original design, are visually present in the work through cut off parts and the sawdust from the process which is lying on the floor. The transformation and partly destruction of the chairs therefore seems central to the work, but the transformation does not seem motivated by a desire to improve nor to challenge the functionality of the chairs. Rather Superflex use the chairs as elements and create interplay between the chairs which are present, the chairs they are referring to and the indices of the destruction of the chairs in the installation.

By choosing the cheaper imitations of shell chairs with their visual references to the chairs by Arne Jacobsen which have become design icons, Superflex seem to intentionally comment on (Danish) modernism and functionalism. The work reflects on a life story of a chair which has become an image of Danish design and the inherent ideas about



democratic design. Nonetheless, the chair is, after all, not accessible to all and it has instead become a status symbol, whereas mass production of the cheap replicas has made an imitation of the chair quite affordable. By transforming the cheaper versions into the original Superflex is commenting on the differences in status between the original and the replica. The modification, which is emphasized by the cut-offs, can be interpreted as intending to question and subvert the laws of copyright, but can also, through the transparency in the process, be considered a possible invitation or manual for users to take similar action. While *Copyright* points to Arne Jacobsen and the laws of copyright it also points to the work and projects of Superflex in general, where copyright is a recurrent theme as they have also addressed in relation to other modernist designers such as Poul Henningsen.

It is interesting to compare the use of a design classic as a readymade (or in this case the imitation of a design classic) in *Copyright* with the *Where there's Smoke* series by Maarten Baas (Fig. 26 p XXV). The *Where there's Smoke* series is also based on already existing furniture: design classics by Rietveld, Sottsass and Eames which are burned and preserved in their carbonized state with a clear epoxy coating. Since the chairs are assigned with icon, design classic and/or collector's item status, their appropriation and almost destruction potentially mean something quite different than the appropriation of a mundane, every day and mass produced object such as the plastic chair. The many appropriations (and destructions) of the plastic monobloc chair probably does not offend anyone. In contrast Superflex actively destroys the ambiguous shell chairs and makes us ask: are they originals or the copies? Baas' work may, in comparison, offend more people: taking a chair assigned with high status and monetary value, almost destroying it and letting the destructive activity constitute a design by Maarten Baas. With their appropriation of design classics Both Superflex and Baas are, just as in the examples of appropriated monobloc chairs, commenting on the history of design and the issue of how

some objects become culturally marked as certain kind of things and assigned with status of “high design”.

*Copyright* reflects a critique of the biography of the shell chairs by Arne Jacobsen: by becoming a design classic (and due to the related copyright) the potential of the chair as being accessible to everyone has not been realized. While the work of Superflex revolves around the democratization of design, the appropriation of the design classics by Baas can be interpreted in quite the opposite direction. By his transformation and symbolic destruction the objects become even more elitist and exclusive. Just as Stadler’s appropriation of the plastic monobloc chair has indices of a destructive act and the intention of making the chair vanish, so is the activity of burning the furniture and thereby deleting them the central concept in the work of Baas. The burning act and following preservation as a statement could be interpreted, as Williams also remarks, as a way of making a clean slate or drawing a line under the history of design (Williams, 2006). However the deconstruction is not completed and the *Where There’s Smoke* series becomes, like the *Plastic Chair in Wood*, yet another appropriative approach by Baas that involves the mix and re-use of objects.

### **Changes in the biography of the plastic monobloc chair**

Following the description and analyses of different adaptations and transformations of the plastic monobloc chair this it would be interesting to supplement with another perspective on the changes in its status meaning. Therefore in the following the plastic chair will be discussed as having, as any other object or commodity, a ‘social life’. The notion of social life of objects is proposed by anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (Appadurai, 1986 p 3). In the anthology, *The Social Lives of Things*, the anthropologist Igor Kopytoff provides another, but similar, proposal of analysing the entire trajectory or ‘social life’ of a commodity to understand its value and meaning. With his cultural biography of things, Kopytoff offers a way of investigating how things become culturally marked as certain

kinds of things through the different ages and classifications of a thing or object (Kopytoff, 1986 p 64). Doing the biography of things includes: 'A culturally informed (economic) biography of an object would look at it as a culturally constructed entity, endowed with specific meanings, and classified and reclassified into culturally constituted categories'(Kopytoff, 1986 p 68). This perspective on looking at the biography of things will serve as an inspiration for adding a different perspective on the various tactics of appropriation of the plastic chair. Supplementing with the biography perspective will not, however, result in a close examination of the biography of the plastic monobloc chair as such. Instead it will be another way of addressing the transformations of the plastic chair while arguing that the appropriations can be considered as intentional changes in the life or biography of the monobloc chair.

According to Kopytoff one of the questions to ask when doing the biography of things is the following: 'What sociologically are the biographical possibilities in its "status" and in the period and culture, and how are these possibilities realized' (Kopytoff, 1986 p 66). Answering this question in relation to the appropriated plastic monobloc chair involves considering both the biographical possibilities in the 'original' monobloc chair and the possibilities of the appropriated versions which relate to the production and use side of these objects. In answering this I will not go into the details of all the different adapted plastic chairs, but focus on general changes in the biographical possibilities through appropriation. The plastic monobloc chair is as such very accessible in terms of worldwide distribution and low price and its biographical possibilities spans over a wide range of different contexts of use. This is reflected in the photo documentation in *The Infamous Chair: 220° Virus Monobloc* which illustrates the great variety in contexts of use and the creativity of the everyday users in their appropriation of the chair. However, the low price and extreme mass production of the chair means that it has the status of a cheap, mundane and common object (a very saleable commodity) and this status also excludes the chair from specific contexts. Through the different designer's' and artists' act of appropriation

the chair gains access to contexts of use or biographical possibilities which it was otherwise excluded from such as the context of art. Whereas the “original” plastic monobloc chair would normally have a career as outdoor furniture used in a group of other plastic chairs and tables in for example a private garden or as café furniture in a public square, the appropriated monobloc chairs career in terms of circulation and context of use is somewhat different. Through the different examples of appropriations by designers and artists the plastic monobloc chair is suddenly the object of attention in different media concerned with art and design, such as design blogs for example, which would not otherwise be preoccupied with mundane and anonymous objects such as the monobloc chair.

The “original” plastic monobloc chair is not intended for a long life but rather for using and throwing away. Once the plastic surface is affected by time, has “scratches” or is broken, the chair would normally not be repaired to prolong its life but it would easily be disposed of and replaced. The chair is, due to the materials it is produced in and its cheapness, culturally marked as disposable (at least in a western context). The different appropriations of the monobloc chair might be said to, more or less explicitly, comment or reflect on the disposability of the plastic chair while prolonging or changing the career of the chair by appropriation. In Maarten Baas’ version the material of the chair is completely changed and thereby also the longevity of the chair and possible career (Fig. 20 p XIX). The *Plastic Chair in Wood* has references back to the mass produced monobloc chair but here the biographical similarities in end: Baas’ version is intended as an exclusive design object, exhibited as a one-off and sold expensively. Baas creates an object which refers to a common commodity, but The *Plastic Chair in Wood* is itself in the sphere of the singular expensive due to its status of uniqueness, the status assigned to it through being a chair by Maarten Baas and its career of being exhibited and circulated in terms of the gallery context.

The *Statement Chairs* by Guixé also moves the chairs from the commodity sphere to the sphere of limited editions and design objects displayed in specialized galleries (Fig. 18 p XVII). While the proclaimed intention with his appropriation is to recreate respect for the plastic monobloc chair it is debatable whether this can happen by changing the biography of the chair into a career of limited edition and exhibition object, circulating in the context of an “educated” design and art audience. Jerszy Seymour can also be said to move the plastic chair out of its life as a mass produced chair by moving it into a design laboratory (Fig. 22 p XXI). Here the career created for the chair through appropriation consists in becoming an object for analysis possibly leading to the further development of a chair which optimizes the status and biographical possibilities of the plastic monobloc chair. However, the concrete chair used ends its life as an exhibition object rather than an object of use. The project of Martino Gamper reflects the disposability of the monobloc chair and what happens to it when it reaches the end of its usefulness: as the chair (often) occurs among the discarded chairs on which his project is based (Fig. 16 p XIV). In his appropriations of different plastic chairs the chairs are combined with other chairs creating new objects where the life of the monobloc chairs, (or at least parts of it), is perhaps prolonged by being re-used and moved into another context. In different ways all of the appropriations of the plastic monobloc chair could be seen as reflections of an ongoing debate within design concerning enduring design versus disappearing design.

Common features in the appropriations, as mentioned above and also in the examples by Roeder and Stadler are the ways these adaptations and transformations of the plastic monobloc chair gives it new biographical possibilities which are realized in the context of galleries and museums (Fig. 23 p XXII, Fig. 24 p XXIII). In order to gain access to this context the plastic monobloc chair needs exactly the transformation, from common and everyday object to uncommon, singular (or limited) design and/or art object, which happens through the different appropriative tactics. The transformation process or move from one category to another could be described with Kopytoff’s concept of

singularization. Singularization refers in his accounts to the opposite of commoditization: whereas commoditization makes items exchangeable for other items, singularization means setting objects apart as exclusive or culturally marking them as sacred (Kopytoff, 1986 p 73). Some of the ways to singularize objects are, according to Kopytoff, to pull objects out of their usual commodity sphere or by restraining their commoditization to a narrow sphere of exchange (Kopytoff, 1986 p 74). Drawing a parallel to the appropriations of the plastic monobloc, one could argue that a process of singularization is happening as a result of the chair as a commodity is being pulled out of its commodity sphere. However, it is not only the moving of the chair between spheres (which are normally isolated from each other) that creates the singularity of the appropriated chairs. Through the adaptations and changes in materiality and shape the appropriated versions of the monobloc chair all have “apartness” from the common plastic chair. They all have the qualities of being singular and unique as a result of creative, appropriative acts as opposed to the machine mass-produced chairs.

The example of the *White Billion Chairs* clearly illustrates how the appropriation of the plastic chair intentionally aims at assigning singularity and a change in status and value (Fig. 23 p XXII). By making holes in the chairs by hand the monobloc chairs are transformed from the common chair and instead assigned with ‘rareness’ and designer authorship. The chairs are no longer just mass produced chairs, but the result of a creative and manual process with an inherent idea or intentionality of examining the status of the object through the transformation. This example also illustrates Kopytoff’s point that a way of singularization is through restricted commoditization: not only is the common object transformed into an uncommon object, but this is also emphasized by its status as limited edition. The status of limited edition is furthermore connected with a narrow sphere of exchange, in terms of design or designart galleries, to which its circulation and distribution is confined. In relation to singularity Kopytoff questions whether singularity automatically guarantees “sacralisation” in the sense of being more singular, more special

and in high regard (Kopytoff, 1986 p 73). Similarly, if sacralisation is understood more broadly in the sense of to treat as or make something with “elevated” status, one might also question whether singularity achieved through these appropriations guarantees status of art for the resulting objects.

### **Is appropriation a tactic to approach art?**

The analysed examples of appropriated plastic monobloc chairs are all to various degrees examples of objects oscillating between everyday objects, design and art as these transformations of the monobloc chair may reflect different attempts at approaching art and/or questioning art and design. In the examples of appropriation from the outset of design practices, which may be interpreted to be approaching art or reflecting a desire to assume art status, the move towards art takes place at different levels that could be described as an “external” level and an “internal” level. By the external level I mean the adoption of the outer characteristics which traditionally distinguish art from design: in the sense of the works being created as unique or limited pieces and being first and foremost intended for an exhibition context in terms of galleries and museums. The advances towards to art at an internal level can be understood as the attempts to add more ‘conceptual’ layers: in these cases for example in questioning design and its role today. The examples also show how the moves towards art takes place at a material level. In most of the examples of the transformation from a mass produced plastic chair to a ‘rare’ or singular object, the addition of manual and material qualities which add authorship and apartness is also inherent.

A common feature in the examples of the appropriation of the plastic monobloc chair is that by appropriating exactly this chair in particular comments on contemporary material and consumer culture is automatically articulated in the works. Several of the examples analysed could therefore be interpreted as being about something and works of design. In different ways the appropriation of the monobloc chair can be seen as an inclusion of an

anonymous but also detested object into both the sphere of design and/or art. This inclusion thereby reflects the hierarchies between everyday objects and objects of design and/or art. While appropriation as a tactic, which challenges the status assigned to objects and questions authorship, might have a shorter history within design it has a long tradition within the history of art. As Williams, amongst others, notes, in *The Furniture Machine*, appropriation is not a new approach but has been seen in art ever since Duchamp in 1917 moved a urinal from the sphere of everyday objects into the context of art (Williams, 2006 p 20). Appropriation has in a variety of ways been used to challenge the category of art and to incorporate elements of and references to both high and mass culture. Within design appropriation started occurring from the 1950s with the examples, already described, of the Castiglioni brothers' use of ready-mades such as a bicycle and tractor seat. Designers have ever since picked up on appropriation as a working method for different reasons. In the analysed examples of appropriating the plastic monobloc chair different references to specific examples of the use of ready-mades and everyday objects could be pointed out, this has, however, not been a focus in these analyses. Rather the analysis has aimed to demonstrate the specific contemporary modes of production and in particular to show the case of appropriating a very familiar object, such as the plastic monobloc chair, as recurring within hybrids of design and art. What the different examples have in common is the appropriation of a much known object: taken for granted by many and detested by others. Through the appropriation and transformations of the chair, it is possibly seen anew and the meaning ascribed to the monobloc chair is perhaps manipulated.

Even if the artistic and design based appropriations of the monobloc at many levels seem quite similar, differences relating to the outset of the practices and the context of reception can also be observed. In the works of Durant and Superflex, who place their practice within art, the appropriated chairs are not intended for use (Fig. 19 p XVIII, Fig. 25 p XXIV). This is especially the case of the *Porcelain chairs* by Durant, but the chairs are



part of an installation commenting, in different ways, on copyright, consumer culture and production methods of today. The examples of appropriations of the monobloc chair by the different designers also hold inherent comments on consumer culture etc. and, furthermore, an element of irony and, what could be described as, 'professional self-mockery' may be said to figure to various degrees - perhaps most obvious in the chairs by Guixé (Ramakers & Bakker, 1998 p 60). However, what seems to distinguish the appropriations by the designers is a stronger connection, even if this connection is somewhat challenged, to functionality and thereby a possibility for the appropriated monobloc chairs of a "double career" – as both objects of use and contemplation.

Even though most of the appropriated versions of the plastic monobloc chair remain functional their career will, nevertheless, be quite different from the mass produced chair in terms of the sphere or context in which they circulate. Seymour's *New Order Chair* is, as already mentioned, part of the *Vitra Edition 2007* which is described as: 'a collection of extraordinary objects representing some of the most advanced positions in contemporary design' made available to collectors as limited edition which 'guarantees the aspect of rareness' (Vitra). The *Statement Chairs* by Guixé was a part of the exhibition *Destroy Design* and later a similar series of chairs were exhibited at the Berlin based gallery Helmrinderknecht gallery. The works by Sam Durant and Superflex are exhibited and circulated in an art context of galleries and museums. All of the analysed examples of monobloc appropriations are exhibited in galleries for contemporary art or galleries specialized in contemporary design of a more "experimental" character and produced in limited editions and/or as one-offs. Observing where the analysed cases circulate and are consumed reflects that the platforms for exhibiting design, which may be said to comment on design, are mainly placed within the art world, but also within various exhibition spaces for contemporary design.

## **Interpreting hybrids: combining focus on meaning and function**

The challenge in analysing the hybrids considered in this chapter has been to grasp the complexity of these works that reflect a combination of the defining qualities of art and design in terms of potentially being both bearers of meaning and function. As already mentioned in the first chapter, Taylor has also taken on the task of explaining works like these 'which combines a materialological and formal inventiveness with an appeal to a certain conceptual weight' (Taylor, 2013 p 359). In a recent article, *After a Broken Leg: Jurgen Bey's Do Add Chair and the Everyday Life of Performative Things*, Taylor condenses his perspective on the issue through a case study of the *Do Add Chair* (Fig. 27 p XXVI). Taylor summarizes the two dominant perspectives, in recent years, on works of the type analysed in this chapter, as designart and critical design, while criticizing both perspectives.

'Both perspectives consequently tend to emphasize the communicative function of such design, the effect of its semantic operation, its work as a bearer of meaning; they characterize such things first and foremost as a form of statement to be pondered upon and decoded. This concentration on meaning, however, does seem to neglect the defining quality that distinguishes design from art: that to one degree or another it must function' (Taylor, 2013 p 359).

Taylor's overall argument appears fuelled by the intention to inscribe and justify the existence of this type of works in the context of design and, furthermore, to place them within everyday life through thinking of Bey's work as a use object. In comparison, my position of not placing or defining these objects in one or the other category, but instead describing them as hybrids, may seem somewhat vague. This choice has, however, initially been motivated in consciously wanting to maintain openness towards the objects resulting from the points of overlap between art and design. By not defining these objects as a specialized form of neither art nor design, but as hybrids, I have attempted to account for their specific composite character. I acknowledge Taylor's convincing argumentation for considering objects such as *Do Add* as a prototype and 'specialized form of product

design that concentrates on function' (Taylor, 2013 p 357). Nonetheless, my argumentation throughout this chapter has aimed to show that these hybrids can be considered to operate not only in-between design and art but also within both fields – activating different responses according to context.

By applying the concept of a work of design, from Von Oppeln, I have tried to avoid reducing these hybrids to artistic statements by also focusing on these works' relationship to function. When it comes to maintaining these objects as hybrids and in an undefined, in-between position, one could, however, argue that my explanations end up defining them primarily as design. The concept of a work of design has nevertheless been the departure point for analysing the practices and works of Stadler, Bey (Makkink & Bey) and Gamper, motivated in how this concept provides a multi-faceted perspective on their work. With the adjusted characteristics of a work of design, the analysis has focused on the ways analyses have been made of how these works challenge use and functionality. Though not making functionality and use the core issue, as Taylor argues for, I would argue that I have, through my analyses, demonstrated how the different tactics of addressing and destabilizing functionality are a central concern in these works. What I have also aimed to illustrate is how the concrete altering of the functionality of these objects is closely related to commentary or critique which may be articulated through a work of design: the aboutness of a work is expressed through its materiality.

From Taylor's perspective, with his emphasis on use and argument that objects like these are 'to be used in the performance of the practices of everyday life', my argument that these works' resist use and mass production might be criticized (Taylor, 2013 p 359). I recognize that in contrast to Taylor I have not reflected upon how these objects may be circulated and used in an everyday context. Taylor on the other hand considers objects like these, with *Do Add* to exemplify his point, as prototypes 'for something that will be actually used' (Taylor, 2013 p 361). In considering the consequences of accepting *Do Add* as a use object, Taylor concludes that Bey with this chair 'has changed the way anybody

might be able to live with such a thing, and thus changed the very conditions of being and becoming made available by it' (Taylor, 2013 p 360). Having the objective of arguing for Bey's work as a specialized form of product design logically implies relating the object to a context of actual everyday use and arguing for its potential production. While I might sympathise with this position, I do, however, question whether objects like *Do Add* and some of the objects analysed in this chapter are actually implemented in everyday life.

My position therefore differs somewhat from Taylor's: it could be argued that these hybrids are considered as removed from a context of use as a consequence of by analysing them as works of design. However, I am not arguing that the characteristics of these works as being "about something" exclude them from a context of use, but I would question if they are intended for use. Instead I would overall argue that these types of objects could be considered experiments – borrowing from art, challenging functionality and commenting on design. Although they relate to a context of everyday use, I would conclude, based on what the examples have demonstrated, that these works are primarily self-referential and relate to the contexts created for them in the form of museums, galleries and specialized fairs. I acknowledge the context which Taylor points to namely the economy of design and that 'the power structure of this form of culture is encoded in the potentialities of use afforded by the objects produced in such circumstances' (Taylor, 2013 p 360). Nonetheless, in my view, these hybrids or works of design reflect practitioners who intentionally operate in fields where the potentiality of use of their objects is less emphasized: reflected both in the making of limited editions and the mediation of these objects.

Many of the examples of appropriating the plastic monobloc display the characteristics of a work of design. In these examples functionality is challenged while modifying a mass produced commodity: creating works which are about something and refer to the contrasting production modes of mass vs. limited production. It could, therefore, be argued that the concept of a work of design could potentially have been used throughout

these analyses as well. However, instead of the continued use of this concept I have chosen to include a material-semiotic approach inspired by Knappett supplementing with the perspective of the cultural biography of things as proposed by Kopytoff. This combination has made it possible to account for the way the plastic monobloc has been altered and how these alterations in its physical qualities have affected not only the use of these objects but also their signification. The perspective gained by looking at the biography of things has enabled me to account for how these appropriated monobloc, even though they could still be considered as inhabiting the category of use objects, gain access to other categories of objects e.g. art and thereby other spheres or contexts.

The question remains whether these appropriative tactics lead to the objects becoming art or if appropriation 'is a practice that has brought artists and designers close together' as argued by Williams (Williams, 2006 p 20). This suggestion is criticised by Taylor for being 'something of a conflation' (Taylor, 2013 p 362). He argues instead that even though appropriation across design and art may share certain tactics they serve very different strategies. Taylor states: 'Despite their apparent similarities, the act of appropriating ready-made elements as part of the design process is demonstrably different in ontological terms to that of using a found object in art' (Taylor, 2013 p 362). Although I agree with Taylor in pointing to the distinctions regarding how appropriation as a tactic is manifested differently in art and design practice, I do find his demonstration of this argument somewhat problematic. He chooses to compare the appropriative tactic employed by Bey in *Do Add* with a work of Duchamp as 'it is commonplace to relate all acts of appropriation back to Duchamp' (Taylor, 2013 p 362). What Taylor then goes on to show is how a comparison to Duchamp's ready-made, *In Advance of the Broken Arm*, 'demonstrate quite clearly that such practices in design today are not analogous to what was effected in art nearly a century ago' (Taylor, 2013 p 362). I am not contradicting the difference pointed to by Taylor between Duchamp's unassisted ready-made, transmuted into art by an act of designation and Bey's physically altered object. However, what I question is the choice of

the object of comparison: appropriation as a tactic has evolved in various ways within art since Duchamp and in contemporary art appropriation is seldom manifested as the use of unaltered ready-mades. Therefore, while Taylor convincingly argues for the differences between the tactic of Duchamp and Bey, it would have been more interesting to compare Bey to other contemporary approaches to appropriation within art. This would potentially have undermined the argumentation though, as comparisons to examples such as Superflex and others would display a larger degree of analogies. The discussion by Taylor would have been more nuanced if he had distinguished between the tactic of using ready-mades and appropriation: as appropriation, I would argue implies modification or altering of the object.

I have deliberately compared contemporary examples of the appropriation of the plastic monobloc from the outset of both art and design instead of going all the way back to Duchamp. In the different analyses and comparisons attempts have been made to demonstrate both the shared tactics and the distinctions between them. Taylor concludes that Bey has neither transmuted the object into art nor has the intervening attempted to 'cause the user to reflect and decode the meaning, but rather altered the affective potentiality of its functioning' (Taylor, 2013 p 370). Contrary to Taylor, I do not consider the examples of appropriative tactics analysed in this chapter as an either/or in the sense of the projects being either for contemplation or use. I acknowledge the diversity both in tactics and in the strategies that the appropriation serves whether it is done by an artist or a designer. Nevertheless, I would argue that my analyses demonstrate that by using appropriation as a tactic hybrids are created and through this fusion of art and design they should rather be considered as both/and.

Another perspective on the examples analysed in this chapter is provided by Catharine Rossi in her article entitled *Bricolage, Hybridity, Circularity: Crafting Production Strategies in Critical and Conceptual Design*. Rossi, who in her research on craft and design has earlier focused on Radical Italian Design, in this article relates the thread of 'attending to

production and appropriating the handmade' to contemporary practices within design (Rossi, 2013 p 69). Rossi focuses on practices categorised as critical and conceptual design, but that several points made by Rossi can in a useful way contribute to the final discussion of several of the cases of this chapter. Rossi argues for the pre-eminence of manual production across contemporary design practices while practitioners are characterised as 'the designer as a maker' who makes 'objects informed by the productive methods of bricolage, hybridity and circularity' (Rossi, 2013 p 69). In the following these three craft-related approaches to production pointed out by Rossi will be discussed in relation to different of the examples previously analysed.

In her account for bricolage as a working method, Rossi describes it as 'the minimal elaboration of found materials' and, with reference to Levi-Strauss' definition of bricolage, the use of 'what is available at hand, remixing the pre-existing into new' (Rossi, 2013 p 73, 75). By quoting Victor Buchli, Rossi characterises this reworking of already existing products, as 'a persistent but dynamic activity' related to being anti-modern 'because it accepts the world as it is and reconfigures it, rather than anticipating a new world and inventing it' (Rossi, 2013 p 75). Bricolage, as it is described by Rossi, has many similarities to the working methods described in this context as appropriation, presumption and postproduction. So the question is how the notion of bricolage can supplement my analyses.

When reconsidering the practice of Robert Stadler, the productive method of bricolage can actually not be said to characterise his overall way of working despite his having appropriated a plastic monobloc. While his appropriation of the monobloc can be considered a reworking of an already existing product and using something that already has uses and meaning, it can, however, not be regarded as a case of 'making do' as the term bricolage implies in Levi-Strauss' theories. Instead the plastic chair is used and destroyed to articulate a critique and the result of this destructive act later becomes a new object in the form of the 2nd version of the *Rest in Peace* chair (Fig. 24 p XXIII). Rather than

bricolage as a working method what makes more sense in relation to Stadler's works is the 'emphasis on production methods associated with craft' also pointed to by Rossi as being a common interest across contemporary design practices (Rossi, 2013 p 72). By appropriating the upholstering technique of the Chesterfield sofa in several of his works, Stadler includes visible crafted qualities which Rossi would describe as 'evidence of the maker's hand' (Rossi, 2013 p 70) (Fig. 7 p V). Even though the craftsman is not Stadler himself, including this specific craft of upholstering creates objects which are, as opposed to mass produced objects, indexical of a manual process. By including this crafted quality the objects may, according to Rossi, be considered more "endearing" and thereby using craft is 'a way to bond the user emotionally with the product and so encourage slower rates of consumption' (Rossi, 2013 p 70). Yet while this might be the case, I would also argue that the crafted qualities of Stadler's furniture also add to the uniqueness and singularity which is required within the market for limited editions and /or fine art where Stadler also operates. So while using bricolage does not add substantially to the characteristic of Stadler's practice, focusing on how crafts are included provides a needed supplement to the defining characteristics of his works of design.

In relation to the analysed works of Jurgen Bey (and Makkink & Bey) applying craft is not a central issue, but the productive methods of bricolage, hybridity and circularity are all of some relevance to explaining his works. In *Dust Furniture* and especially in the *Crate Series* Bey is in some sense doing bricolage by remixing the pre-existing and creating new meaning through these new combinations (Fig. 12 p X, Fig. 13 p XI). The different works based on crates, e.g. shipping crates for transport and protection also have a slight appearance of 'making do' with what is available at hand. These works were created on actual examples of making do in India: 'While travelling through India, Rianne Makkink noticed how Indians use very basic crate houses as mobile shops and workspaces' (Makkink&Bey). However, the difference here to bricolage, as defined by Levi-Strauss, is that the inspiration comes from making do, but the objects are not actually made out of



necessity. For Rossi Bey's approach would possibly be described as an 'embrace of the idea of restraint, of existing within limitations' which 'translates into a visual and cultural hybridity' (Rossi, 2013 p 77). Hybridity is used differently by Rossi and does not, as in my use of the term, relate to the fusing of art and design, but to other combinations of two different elements e.g. advanced technology and nature (Rossi, 2013 p 79). The *Extrusion Bench* could, accordingly, be interpreted as the hybridization of technology and nature as it consists in a technology transforming nature's waste into benches (Fig. 11 p IX). According to Rossi the bench also reflects the idea of circularity and sustainable production which she points to as the third mode of manufacturing among designers. The benches exemplify this circularity by being 'returned to nature as they decompose, and therefore only temporarily interrupting the natural process of decay' (Rossi, 2013 p 83). Used in this way circularity proves useful as a specific way to describe the "aboutness" of not only *Extrusion Bench* but could also apply the *Crate Series* and *Dust Furniture*.

As the analyses of the works of Martino Gamper showed, creating on the basis of already existing objects and products is a recurrent theme in his practice. Bricolage is, therefore, relevant as a way to describe the production method used by Gamper even though some further precisions need to be made. The *100 Chairs in 100 Days* appear as bricolage in the sense of making out of what is available at hand: collecting the discarded furniture and remixing them into new pieces (Fig. 16 p XIV). However, again it is not bricolage in the meaning 'making do': these 100 chairs are not created out of necessity, but instead motivated by investigations into the typology of chairs and the creation of a collection of chair sketches or prototypes. While the *100 Chairs in 100 Days* project might also reflect our contemporary culture of consumption and production and even though Gamper's recycling of the thrown-away chairs might prolong their longevity, circularity is not realised as a productive method to the extent described by Rossi. In the other works analysed by Gamper, which may be characterised as bricolage because of the remix of the pre-existing such as design objects by Gio Ponti and Arne Jacobsen amongst others,

appropriation would again be a more adequate term to describe the method of production (Fig. 6 p IV). These examples can hardly be characterised as using what is available, instead what is significant in these works is the re-use of objects that are not easily obtainable but which are objects of a certain status. Whether these cut-ups and new combinations of so called design classics are considered provocative or not, what becomes central in these works is how they are indexical of manual processes by Gamper – further emphasized in the reworking of the objects as performances.

In similar ways, as demonstrated in relation to the analyses of the working methods of Stadler, Bey and Gamper, attending to production by the methods of bricolage, hybridity and circularity could also have supplemented the different analyses of the appropriated plastic monobloc. However, I would argue that throughout these analyses I have demonstrated how the issue of the handmade or crafted object in contrast to the mass produced object have been addressed in various ways in for example the appropriations by Durant, Baas, Roeder and the Campana brothers. Bricolage could have been used as a different term to describe the tactics applied, but due to the inherent definition of 'making do', appropriation has been more comprehensive in these cases – whereas examples of everyday users' repairs and re-use of the plastic chair could instead be characterised as bricolage. None of the appropriations of the plastic monobloc can be considered to be informed by the productive method of circularity, but instead they can overall be said to comment on or critique an unsustainable mode of production and consumption. Some of these cases could potentially have been characterised as reflecting a visual and cultural hybridity, in the sense described by Rossi, by their combinations of heterogeneous elements. My focus, though, has specifically addressed how they could be considered as hybrids between design and art.

### **Chapter 3: Hybrid Dwellings**

The following chapter focuses on hybrids placed somewhere between product design, micro architecture and art with cases specifically related to living and dwelling. In this point of overlap, characterised mainly by moves from art into design, practitioners are investigating and commenting, through proposal and solutions for dwelling, on how we design our physical surroundings and the influence it has on living. Within the cases to be analysed architecture inevitable also becomes a component and the following hybridization has character of a more complex mixture. What makes it complicated is that while art can be considered as different from both design and architecture, due to their functional role, design and architecture are closely related practices both concerned with designing and therefore more difficult to differentiate. An unravelling of their similarities and differences are, however, beyond the scope of this dissertation. Of relevance in this context is simply stating that the design of shelters, living units and other forms of dwelling, which the following will be examples of, is a mutual concern across design and architecture. What places the following cases as much within design as architecture is their scale because these examples are all for the largest part so called small-scale or micro architecture. Characteristic for these projects, besides not being architecture at a large scale, is their temporary and mobile qualities. Consequently, it will be considered throughout this chapter what specifically makes different types of mobile and micro architecture interesting to work with for practitioners combining art and design. The examples will illustrate how the choice of mobile micro architecture does not only reflect the proposing of alternatives to how we organize our ways of living, but it also reflects a reluctance to engage with the kind of restraints and control to which permanent architecture is subject. These analyses are, like the analyses in the previous chapter, generated by closely examining the materiality of the dwellings analysis but the following will, however, focus less on explicating the formal features of the cases of mobile and micro architecture. Instead emphasis will be on illustrating and comparing the recurrent traits and themes across the different projects.

Many of these projects can be regarded as supplements to existing architecture and they can therefore to some degree be described as 'parasites': as organisms living in, with or on architecture. Describing these cases of micro mobile architecture as parasites is inspired by the publication *Parasite paradise: a manifesto for temporary architecture and flexible urbanism* (Ibelings, 2003). The theme of this book is small and mobile architecture defined as parasites: in the sense of structures that fed off existing infrastructure. Besides documenting 23 projects, the publication consists in different contributors considering the potentials of mobile and temporary forms of architecture. What is also examined is the historicity of mobile architecture and whether these so called parasites should be considered as art or architecture. Of relevance for the following is especially the article *Mobile Architecture in the Twentieth Century* where Hans Ibelings not only sketches the history of mobile architecture but also characterizes it as 'relocatable, mobile, demountable, lightweight, portable, temporary, variable, movable and/or flexible' (2003 p 148).

### **Spaces for living**

Within these hybrids there is a, as already mentioned, preoccupation with investigations into spaces for living which could be described as basic living units, 'micro-environments' or capsules in the sense of a micro habitation unit . Besides often being created to take up very little space what often characterizes these different living units is their mobility and flexibility. The concept of mobile micro-architecture, as exemplified in these projects oscillating between art, design and architecture, relates back to modernist projects. However, as the following will illustrate, contemporary practitioners are interpreting the capsule, the living unit and the container in new ways. These reinterpretations or new approaches to living units are investigated by Bradley Quinn in his book *The Fashion of Architecture*. Even though Bradley primarily focuses on the contemporary relationship between fashion and architecture, he also addresses examples of relevance in this context and therefore provides a useful perspective on the design of flexible and portable units.

Quinn describes the units created by contemporary practitioners as: 'these are mobile environments that take shape architecturally as hermetically sealed dream domes, simplified domestic spaces, inflatable structures and tent-like pavilions, or assume fashion characteristics as environmental suits and wearable structures' (Quinn, 2003 p 148).

In order to analyse different examples of so called mobile architecture I will, as a supplement to the interpretation of their meanings, apply a pair of opposites sketched by Ibelings. The pair of opposites consists of two paths running throughout the history of mobile architecture in the 20th century whose characteristics are also relevant for my selection of contemporary manifestations of mobile micro architecture. According to Ibelings, the pair of opposites, or the two basic strands, within mobile architecture are: 1) the idealistic strand and 2) the pragmatic strand. The idealistic strand, including examples of mobile or quasi-mobile architecture canonized as such in the history of architecture, is according to Ibelings characterised by projects which were 'never put into practice or got no further than the prototype stage' (Ibelings, 2003 p 150). The strand encompasses projects which were too ambitious or too remote from reality: projects that Ibelings describes as 'more illustrations of mobility than concrete steps towards mobilizing architecture' (Ibelings, 2003 p 150). Within the pragmatic strand, on the other hand, are the examples of mobile architecture that has actually been built. This strand encompasses concrete mobile architecture which is 'informed not by noble ideals but much more by motives of practicality' (Ibelings, 2003 p 150). Furthermore Ibelings makes the following comparison between the illustrations of mobility and concrete produced mobile architecture: 'These forms of mobile architecture satisfy real functional needs without involving exalted ideals for a future society where – as has been proclaimed for the past three quarters of a century or more – we shall lead a nomadic and flexible existence of our own free will' (Ibelings, 2003 p 153). Ibelings' distinctions between idealistic and pragmatic architecture are relevant perspectives for analysing the projects, although the aim here is not to evaluate the different projects as functional architecture (or not).

As the examples to be analysed in the following will show, and as Ibelings observes, micro mobile architecture is undeniably linked with the notions of nomadism, a self-sufficient existence and a life without possessions. In a semiotic sense, the following examples will demonstrate the signification, or meaning, of mobility - but not only in a functional sense, but also as meaning in the sense of certain ideals about a nomadic life. Within this idea of being mobile and nomadic there are, however, also distinctions to be made: basically whether the nomadic life is by choice or necessity. Ibelings distinguishes between, what he terms, the nomadic 'haves' and 'have-nots': 'The pleasure-loving hotel nomad represents one extreme of the spectrum of travelling light: the other is that of the homeless who often have little more than a sheet of cardboard or a blanket as a shelter' (Ibelings, 2003 p 162). The projects to be analysed, whether created for the nomads by choice or the nomads by necessity, either manifest a state of emergency and/or a desire for freedom. The interpretations of the examples of micro mobile architecture will be based on observations of the material and perceptive qualities and how these create interpretants which activate both the production and use side. Combined these aspects will address the various meanings, related to a nomadic life and freedom, generated in these projects.

The projects will also demonstrate that the urge for freedom is not only reflected in the inherent ideas about possession-less lives as liberating, but this urge is expanded to the idea that: 'they (people) are freer still if they have no need to stick to rules and regulations' (Ibelings, 2003 p 161). Freedom in the sense of 'non-observance of rules and regulations' as a theme has, according to Ibelings, seldom taken on an architectural dimension, but in projects from the recent years this has changed, as some of the following projects will reflect (Ibelings, 2003 p 161). Even though mobility and freedom are central issues in these projects, comfort and the desire for safety are also important aspects. This is according to Ibelings one of the paradoxes of mobile architecture: that despite being mobile and targeted at people at home everywhere, these capsules also offer warmth, comfort and security and not least domesticity. Ibelings therefore concludes: 'Within the avant-garde

vision of radically transforming man and architecture by letting them escape from their own inertia and disengage, there resides a thoroughly human desire for safety and security that is evidently the destiny of us all' (Ibelings, 2003 p 166). The need and desire for security and safety in the form of shelter is very much addressed in the projects concerned with the unwillingly mobile which will start off the analyses of projects creating spaces for living.

### **Designing for homeless**

The main examples of addressing the theme of homelessness, and subsequently designing for homeless, as manifested in art projects to be analysed will be *Homeless Vehicle* by Krzysztof Wodiczko, *PARAsite* by Michael Rakowitz and *Refuge Wear* by Lucy Orta (Fig. 28 p XXVII, Fig. 29 p XXVIII, Fig. 30 p XXIX). These three projects all have the situation of being homeless and the related needs as their outset although different in shape and form. These projects handle the creation of a private space: a flexible and temporary home for the unwillingly mobile, while at the same time aiming to generate debate on a social problem. Mutual for the three projects is, in a semiotic sense, that their semiosis is generated by the projects being combinations of conceptual and symbolic provocations, or statements, and functional design solutions which places them as hybrids between design and art. These projects could be said to fuse idealistic and pragmatic architecture since all three projects are to some degree informed by ideals, or a social commentary, but also satisfy practical needs. However, in the following the opposition between pragmatic (or functional) and idealistic (or symbolic) are underlying perspectives used to characterise how these works oscillate between art and design. Furthermore comparisons will be made between these cases and examples of design solutions such as the *Urban Rough Sleeper* and *Backpack Bed* in order to specify their distinctions (Fig. 31 p XXX Fig. 32 p XXXI).

The *Homeless Vehicle* is designed as a cart in metal, with resemblance to both a shopping cart and a food vendor cart, and with multiple functionalities. The cart has a room below for storage of personal belongings and collected bottles and cans. When these storage facilities are included, it is motivated in the observation made by Wodiczko that many homeless have developed a means of economic sustenance by 'collecting, sorting and returning cans and bottles to supermarkets' (Wodiczko, 1999 p 81). The point of departure for the design of the vehicle is therefore 'the strategy of survival that urban nomads presently utilize' (Wodiczko, 1999 p 82). Other than bottle storage the vehicle is also intended for personal shelter. The vehicle is foldable into a cart which the user can push and move about but the vehicle can also be extended into "sleeping mode" position, where additional wheels and stopping blocks ensure its stability. In its extended position the vehicle consists of three sections of which the middle section is covered while the two others are transparent or semi-transparent. This way the cart combines the need for privacy and visibility while the transparency provides security for the user. The metal nose of the vehicle combines the needs for washing and cooking: when down the metal nose can be used as a wash basin or a barbecue. Furthermore the metal nose also functions as an emergency escape.

Besides the material qualities and different functional elements which relates to the usefulness as a personal and transportable shelter, the vehicle also has features which appear more to articulate an inherent social protest. The pointy metal nose combined with the warning tape in yellow and black creates associations to weapons or some kind of military inventory. This somewhat aggressive symbolic related to the vehicle could point to the *Homeless Vehicle* as having a composite Object in the sense of combing the meaning of being an act of protest and, at a more practical level, the function of signalling the presence of the vehicle. The resemblance to a weapon is explained as follows by Wodiczko: 'In our view, the movements of carts through New York are acts of resistance, opposing the continuing ruination of an urban community that excludes thousands of



people from the most meagre means of life' (Wodiczko, 1999 p 83). Whether seen as loaded with significance or not, the vehicle must be said to have been designed intentionally to be visible and draw attention to a situation with people living on the street. This is also mentioned by Wodiczko: 'The signifying function of the vehicle is as important as its strictly utilitarian purpose' (Wodiczko, 1999 p 83). Yet the signifying function is double: not only should the vehicle signify resistance but should also 'create a bridge of empathy between homeless individuals and observers' (Wodiczko, 1999 p 83). This is attempted by making a vehicle that has resemblances to shopping or food vendor carts and which as a consequence potentially creates interpretants, or associations, to well-known everyday situations.

While drawing attention to homelessness the vehicle is also a concrete mobile solution, or at least a proposal for a solution to this problem. As a proposal it is based on tests by its users and following this adjusted to their demands. The circumstances, needs and challenges related to homelessness which are summarized as: 'Problems of garnering food, keeping warm, remaining safe from personal harm and relatively undisturbed during sleep' (Wodiczko, 1999 p 79). Following this, a functional and symbolic program for the vehicles is formulated which includes the aspects of mobility, safety and variants. The design of the vehicle is developed in relation to the needs of a specific group of people, strong and masculine users, and adjusted accordingly to their input. This vehicle may therefore not be convenient for other groups of homeless people, but the intention of making variants responding to various users and other functionalities, however, remains an unaccomplished idea. But perhaps the project should not be valued as a finished product since it is intended as an initial proposal: 'it is conceived as a starting point for further collaboration between skilled designers and potential users' (Wodiczko, 1999 p 82). The *Homeless Vehicle* can be interpreted as prosumption, in the form which engages users, and the participation of users in the development, adaptations and construction of the

vehicle is motivated in making the vehicle belong 'to its users, rather than merely being appropriated by them' (Wodiczko, 1999 p 82).

Although the *Homeless Vehicle* is a functional and pragmatic solution, and the result of involvement of users, the project is somewhat idealistic too. The vehicle does satisfy real functional needs but the design never developed beyond the propositional phase and was not implemented more permanently into everyday use. The carts were used in an initial period after the creation of the vehicle, but the vehicle only seems to have been borrowed to homeless people for a period of time in order to function as urban interventions and then returned to the context of art where it has been circulated as an illustration of a mobile solution for homeless people. Thereby the signifying function of the project could be interpreted as dominant, in the sense that the project has continuously been exhibited as a proposal and protest – but not further developed and implemented.

### **Instant Housing**

Using the shopping cart, and other carts, as the base for a mobile home for homeless people or so called urban nomads is also a recurrent tactic in the works of Winfried Baumann. The works in the project *Instant Housing* that appear as a product range of industrial design solutions in terms of different small mobile shelters or homes, could be regarded as further developments of Wodiczko's proposal for a vehicle (Fig. 33 p XXXII. 33). *Homeless Vehicle* combined the "industrial design look" with features related to potential symbolic significance. In contrast the different mobile shelters by Baumann have, through the dominant use of the aluminium material and different PVC tarpaulins, a much more cleanly industrial appearance. These different mobile living systems, which are not only for homeless people, appear due to their material qualities somewhat clinical and futuristic in a way where they resemble a lot of contemporary industrial design. The *Homeless Vehicle* was not further developed into other versions of the vehicle, but Baumann has in his project more than 30 versions of different *Instant Housing*. These different

versions are all variations of a cart on wheels: combining in various ways the use-program of a metal box, which can expand, and a tent structure.

Within the wide product range of *Instant Housing* it would be possible for different users, both homeless and urban nomads, to find the version most suited for their needs. Choices can be made between the version for couples, the luxury version called *Hedone* or the version for autonomous activists. Homeless people are mentioned as users of these carts which are designed 'for the special living circumstances of their users' (Baumann). But homeless people are otherwise absent in the visual and textual presentation of the project. The *Homeless Vehicle* was based on involvement by homeless people in the development of its design. In the design by Baumann there is no documentation of user's engagement or any indications of actual usage of these shelters by homeless people as a group – or any indications of how it would be possible for people with no means to acquire these carts. Interpreting the different versions of the carts in *Instant Housing* is complicated by the fact that it is difficult in most cases to differentiate whether the various versions are intended for the willingly or unwillingly mobile –or both. The carts are created on the basis of different already-produced objects and these included elements create interpretants and thereby meanings which goes in different directions. An example of where confusion, or dynamic, arises is in the *Shopping cart Metro-400*. This cart has visual resemblance to a shopping cart, obviously, but in particular it creates associations to the use of shopping carts by homeless people as it contains sleeping bag, blankets, clothes etc. (Fig. 33b XXXII). However, this shopping cart is improved with an additional bed which folds out and in the unexpected addition of a laptop, solar power cell and a small satellite dish. So, the question arises if we are to interpret this as the imagined minimum equipment for a homeless person, or if it is proposed as a design appealing to the so called urban nomad? The different versions of *Instant Housing* all appear as "real" industrial design in terms of both their formal qualities and functionality and thereby the carts in this project bear some resemblances to the look of "finished" product design in the works, to

follow, by Orta. Another feature that the *Instant Housing* project has in common with several of the garment-shelters by Orta is, as will be demonstrated, how they seem to be intended for some undefined state of emergency. Finally the last point in common is that neither the projects by Baumann nor by Orta does, however, seem to be activated in real crises instead they circulate across exhibitions as art projects.

### **PARAsite**

In comparison with the works in *Instant Housing* which have a convincing industrial design character and functionality, the inflatable shelters created by Michael Rakowitz in his *PARAsite* project do not at all have the same character of finished product design (Fig. 29 p XXVIII). Mutual for these tents are that they are made from transparent plastic bags combined with water proof tape and custom made to individual specifications. An underlying theme in the *PARAsite* project is user participation: the design of the shelters is based on talks with homeless people and customized according to their requests. The *PARAsite* is much simpler in its construction in comparison with both *Homeless Vehicle* and the different versions of *Instant Housing* and it is made from materials readily available on the streets (or possible to purchase at a low cost) (Fig. 28 & 33). The tents thereby reflect a working method of bricolage which resembles the “making-do” solutions applied by homeless people themselves: using the found materials such as card board boxes etc. at their disposal to create shelters. *PARAsite* appears, just as *Homeless Vehicle*, inspired by already existing solutions but could nonetheless be regarded as an improved design addressing the needs of homeless people. An improvement is for example that all of the *PARAsite* shelters or tents have a sort of adjoining tube which can be connected onto the heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning system of a building. The following inflation does not only shape the tent but also potentially heat up the tent. The tent is temporary, mobile and adaptable to different buildings while “parasiting” on the surplus energy of the host building. When collapsed the *PARAsite* can be easily transported allowing mobility and flexibility in the choice of host buildings. While the inflatable structure

allows the tent to be heated, the transparent material allows, as was the case also with *Homeless Vehicle*, visibility and security for the user - even though this also means being visible.

Similar to the project of Wodiczko which was a response to the lack of shelters and destruction of habitats in city parks, the project of Rakowitz could also be seen as a kind of “counter-design” or “tactical response”. By this I mean that the project could be interpreted as a counter-strategy to the different designs aimed to hinder homeless people to sleep on benches etc. in public spaces such as parks and stations. With the *PARAsite* Rakowitz proposes, instead of an independent, mobile unit (such as the *Homeless Vehicle*) a unit which is mobile and adaptable, but also highly dependent on a host building. The parasite tent can, by being adaptable to different buildings benefit from existing architecture in a very temporary way and thereby avoid overstaying. Yet the connection and relation between the tent structure and the building must be said to be the critical moment of the project. The different versions of tents in this project do not only reflect the adaptations to users and buildings but are also modified according to rules and regulations concerning public and urban space. An example of this is the shelter made for the homeless man Michael M. which was a response to a law in NY prohibiting structures of a specific size on city property. The solution was to design a shelter ‘to be closer to the ground, more like a sleeping bag or some kind of body extension. Thus, if questioned by the police, he could argue that the law did not apply because the shelter was not, in fact, a tent’ (Rakowitz).

Over thirty custom built shelters were made from 1998 and onwards functioning as a temporary place of retreat, the *PARAsite* shelter was, according to Rakowitz, not intended as a solution (MOMA). Not being a proposal for affordable housing the project seems instead to present a symbolic strategy of homeless existence within the city, amplifying the problematic relationship between those who have homes and those who do not have homes. The parasite with all its implied significations such as the parasite exploiting

energy etc. from the host is, in relation to this before mentioned relationship, a thought provoking way to address the issue of a nomadic lifestyle by necessity. Even though the project could be said to be of a symbolic or idealistic character, it has circulated as well as a functional solution due both to its pragmatic qualities and potential as a protest device.

### **Garment shelters**

In her projects *Refuge Wear*, *Body Architecture* and *Modular Architecture* amongst others, Lucy Orta also addresses the willingly or unwillingly mobile nomad (Fig. 30 p XXIX, Fig. 34 – 35 p XXXIII). Similar to Rakowitz's project a tent-like structure as a shelter is a recurring component in Orta's projects. What is significant in Orta's works is the fusion of tent and clothing resulting often in a kind of garment, or as Bradley Quinn terms them: 'garments-cum-shelters' (Quinn, 2003 p 157). These garments are combining the functionality of a shelter, a sleeping bag and an outfit. In *Habitent* for example, which is part of the *Refuge Wear* project, the tent structure dominates the garment (Fig. 30 p XXIX). The waterproof tent shaped as an igloo has with small alterations such as a hood, pockets and holes with zippers for the arms been made more coat-like. In this way the *Habitent* appears to be intended for both being on the move, which is also emphasized by the added whistle and compass on the front, and for sleeping or resting. The idea of a portable minimum personal space and temporary shelter is further developed in the other examples of *Refuge Wear*. In for example the garment titled *Refuge Wear Intervention London East End*, the tent structure is minimized in size making it a portable tube-like tent fused with clothing for one individual (Fig. 30 p XXIX). This individual garment-cum-shelter, resembling something between a high-tech sleeping bag and a one-person tent, allows the wearer to carry his/her belongings and the temporary emergency "house".

Some of the other versions have less visual analogies to a tent and resemble more a sleeping bag turned into a bodysuit, but what is mutual for the garments in *Refuge Wear* is the concept of personal shelter and protection while also making the wearer visible. The

design of these garments is intentionally made to bring attention to the wearer. Orta explains: 'As an artist I define the visual aspects of the work to transit a message from the wearer to the on-lookers or passers-by. Whether or not they have "noticed" the homeless before, they can no longer ignore them when they wear the pieces I designed' (Quinn, 2003 p 159). Working with visibility aims not only to point to the user of the garment: the garments are also designed to provoke some sort of conscious awareness of social issues in society (Quinn, 2003 p 157). By using high performance materials and textiles Orta combines the functional advantages of these materials with highly visible colours and their potential associations to a state of emergency and displacement.

Even though Orta also addresses the needs of displaced and homeless people, what seems to differentiate her projects from the projects of Wodiczko and Rakowitz is the degree of engaging users and whether creating is for a specific group or an universal user. It would appear in the case of the projects by Orta as though homeless people and their needs and fears have been the outset for the some projects while focus is on homeless people in the sense of refugees due to war, famine and other crises in other projects. The *Refuge Wear* does not seem to have had an actual and practical use for the people the garments might have been intended for, despite how functional it may be as a solution for different groups of people needing shelter under different conditions. The *Refuge Wear* has, opposed to *PARAsite*, instead primarily been used in interventions. Quinn notes: 'Through a series of installations, exhibitions and social interventions that put her garments to practical use, Orta has consistently addressed the social conditions that condemn an existence on the margins of society' (Quinn, 2003 p 157). But this somewhat limited practical use relates to circulation within the art world, being part of performative acts and interventions, and not to practical use for those actually condemned to the margins of society. According to Quinn, *Refuge Wear* had the potential to provide vital mobility waterproof shelter and temporary protection for different groups of people in

need (Quinn, 2003 p 163). I would, nonetheless, argue that this potential remains untapped and the ideals of the project are not turned into pragmatic and concrete use.

The idea of creating personal and portable shelters is continued in other projects by Orta where it is furthermore combined with the idea of creating small communities. Orta addresses the human need for belonging to and having the security of a community with projects such as *Body Architecture* and *Modular Architecture*. *Modular Architecture*, for example, consists of individual body units which allow the users to travel independently. These individual shelters can then be attached to for example a centrally placed tent or combined in different forms. By connecting the units a small community is created where body heat and protection is shared and where space may potentially also be shared depending on the formations of the modules. This idea of profiting from surplus energy or heat is similar to the project by Rakowitz, but whereas the homeless person stays independent while using the heat from buildings, instead of other people, the surplus energy in *Modular Architecture* is created through the interdependency between people.

Creating these proposals for environments for living which form small communities are, according to Quinn, based on Orta acknowledging 'that individuals or small tribes often form communities of their own – cardboard cities are often the most tangible example of these – but recognizes that they seldom empower the homeless with means to move beyond them' (Quinn, 2003 p 158). Orta works in her different projects with developing different structures that potentially join people and provide them with a social network as the need for being part of a community is her point of departure. Orta's projects, however, become (even) more symbolic than functional in the move from individual shelter-garments to communal modular habitations and their meaning can be interpreted as an appeal for solidarity. This idea of a collective dwelling made up by joined shelters is also articulated in the similar project *Prefab Coat* by Takehiko Sanada. The coats by Sanada are created in recycled polyester, they are all black and have much less details than the garments by Orta, but they have similar functionalities: when unzipped the coats turn into



a tent supported on poles and two or more persons can zip their coats together to form a larger coat house. But I would characterise this work as relating less to creating a functional shelter proposal and more to visualizing or symbolising a search for a community in societies of individualized selves, as it is also the case of the latter projects by Orta.

### **Are these projects pragmatic solutions or idealistic proposals?**

None of the analysed projects by Wodiczko, Rakowitz and Orta are articulated as solutions, but instead they are formulated as proposals and social commentaries. One might argue that even though these projects engage with the functionality of design and architecture, they are possibly first and foremost intended as art projects and therefore should perhaps be regarded as such. Nevertheless, in my views, what is interesting is not to define or label these projects as art, design or architecture as the defining feature of these works are that they are the results of a fusion of the, traditionally divided, non-functional and critical role of art and the functional role of architecture and design. Therefore I have instead proposed analysing these projects as both functional proposals and as artistic statements. These projects can therefore not be labelled either as pragmatic or idealistic, in the oppositional way described by Ibelings, but they are to various degrees informed both by ideals (or critique) and pragmatics. In the following comparison of the projects I will argue that their potential realization as concrete solutions possibly has less to do with the physical and functional characteristics of these projects. Instead the explanation could be found in the context which they are distributed and circulated in.

Before discussing how these projects function as art or design or both, it would be interesting to compare them to a couple of products or projects for homeless people intended and presented as design. Housing of refugees and other homeless people is a popular project amongst students, as architectural author Ruth Slavid remarks in her book *Micro: Very Small Buildings* (Slavid, 2007 p 100). With the project *Urban Rough Sleeper* the

Kolding School graduate designer Ragnhild Lübbert Terpling has designed a tent for homeless people and so called urban campers (Fig. 31 p XXX). The tent designed for one person folds into a light rucksack affording the user with a portable and mobile “home”. The *Backpack Bed* is in many ways a similar project and product even though it is not a design student project. This backpack combined with a tent and a bed is designed by two “non-designers” in Australia who have founded the charity *Swags for Homeless* (Fig. 32 p XXXI). The *Backpack Bed* has been produced, sold and distributed in thousands to homeless people since around 2010, but the graduate project by Terpling has not yet come into production,.

The *Urban Rough Sleeper* is in its design as a tent and in the shape somewhat resembling a body cocoon rather similar to the tent-garments by Orta. But where Orta’s tents are highly visible due to their colour composition, this tent is very toned down: with its sand brown and greyish colours it resembles any other modern tent within the current range of outdoor products. Similarly the *Backpack Bed* also appears as any other product for camping etc. due to its shape and the strong and durable-looking fabric in a military green colour. The *Urban Rough Sleeper* has the same feature as Rakowitz’s *PARAsite* that it folds into a rucksack but in the design of this tent bag a more durable (and more expensive) choice of material has been made. The choice of materials and functionalities appear, however, related to a potentially more advanced use-program in the *Backpack Bed*: for example the chosen fabric is wind- and waterproof, fire retardant and resistant to mildew. This backpack folds into a tent which includes an insulated fire retardant mattress, mosquito mesh vents, and built-in storage pockets and can also convert into a sun shelter using built-in ropes. As *Swags for Homeless* describes it, the *Backpack Bed* ‘is ready for rugged outdoor living, providing protection against the elements’ and it is easy to assemble and disassemble (SwagsforHomeless). What *Swags for Homeless* furthermore emphasizes in their description of the design, besides the industrial strength, comfort and functionality, is the following perceived values: ‘portability with dignity – looks like a

Backpack but converts to a bed' (SwagsforHomeless). The *Backpack Bed* is described as an intervention coming out of asking the question how one would want to be treated if homeless and needing shelter and the possibility to carry ones belongings. In a similar way the *Urban Rough Sleeper* comes out of identifying needs that 'builds on the experiences of homeless people living on the street' (Ragnhild Lübbert Terpling, 2013) . What the two similar solutions furthermore have in common is that besides being intended for homeless people, the tent-bags are also designed for a general public. The *Urban Rough Sleeper* has from the outset been intended for both homeless people and what Terpling terms urban campers: people putting up a tent in urban or other spaces by choice. The *Backpack Bed* was originally just to be distributed to homeless people but due to demands it is now possible to buy for the general public.

Both the *Backpack Bed* and the *Urban Rough Sleeper* address the same needs as the analysed art projects: the needs for storage, mobility and shelter. Mutual for all the shelter solutions is how they, in various ways, offer the needed protection in relation to staying outdoor for example in the use of waterproof materials. The issue of staying warm is solved in different ways: in the case of *PARAsite* for example it is through the possible connecting to heating vents and in *Refuge Wear* through the use of high performance materials (Fig. 29 & 30). The different shelters are all mobile and therefore make it possible to dwell temporarily at different locations. The tents by Rakowitz, Orta, Terpling and *Swags for Homeless* are much more light weight and portable in comparison to the vehicle by Wodiczko. Intended to combine the need for shelter with the need for means of sustenance the *Homeless Vehicle* affords both a sleeping unit and storage of personal belongings or bottles and cans whereas the *PARAsite*, the *Refuge Wear* and *Urban Rough Sleeper* only have room for a limited amount of personal possessions. Regardless of these minor variations all proposals, both the art projects and the design project, generate meanings related to an existence without possessions: of travelling light by necessity or by choice by so called urban campers.

The question of safety is in some of these proposals solved by creating visibility both in the sense of affording a view for the user and in the sense of the user being easily noticed. In contrast the case of *Urban Rough Sleeper*, where the need for security is designed into the tent with the small eyeholes placed so the user can see anyone coming, it is not the case of making the user noticeable. The tent designed by Terpling does not appear to be designed to attract attention, as already mentioned, but rather seems designed to blend in which is also very much the case with the *Backpack Bed*. In the art projects the state of being visible for onlookers is, as it has already been noted, not only a question of a pragmatics but also related to intention of creating awareness about lives at the margins of society. In comparison the *Urban Rough Sleeper* tent bag does not in the same way appear to articulate a commentary or critique of the issue of homelessness. While aiming the tent bag at two groups, the willingly urban nomad or camper and the unwillingly mobile, the design of the tent has to appeal to both groups which have been solved in creating a tent which does not “signal” or create awareness of the homelessness of its users.

Design is used as a medium for social commentaries or protest in the project originating from a position within art, whereas emphasis in *Urban Rough Sleepers* and *Backpack Beds* is on design of functional products to be used. Both the *Backpack Bed* and *Urban Rough Sleepers* project do also call attention to the issue of homelessness but it happens at the level of mediation of the project rather than creating objects that make the issue and the homeless person very visible in urban space. Actually by creating a product, as Terpling does, intended potentially for both urban campers and homeless people, one might even argue that what is attempted is to “normalize” sleeping in the streets and other public spaces instead of raising it as a problem. One could, from the outset of the homeless person’s perspective, discuss whether the inherent social critique in the artistic projects is the artists’ or the homeless person’s need or intention. Following this, I do not consider that *Urban Rough Sleeper* critically engages with homelessness as a social problem instead it supports, and to some degree improves, the current situation of those living in the street.

This appears to be the very intention with *Backpack Beds* or as *Swags for Homeless* states: 'to save the lives of homeless people turned away from shelters' because of lack of beds (SwagsforHomeless).

In comparing these different solutions, I would argue that the design results of addressing the problem of homelessness are not all that different whether created as design or art (or both). In terms of the working methods or process the projects are very similar too: a need and a potential problem to solve are identified, adjustments are eventually made in relation to feedback from users. These processes have resulted in different proposals for shelters. Where the design projects in principle differ from the art projects is in terms of the cycle of production, consumption and mediation that these tent bags are intended for. Both the *Urban Rough Sleeper* and the *Backpack Bed* are made as tent bags which are first and foremost functional solutions and more than a statement about homelessness. They are also conceived for a general audience: and more specifically the target group for the *Urban Rough Sleeper* is described as young and urban campers. By aiming to sell the tent bag to other users than homeless people an attempt is made to solve the problem of how those in need would be able to acquire the tent though in different ways in the two projects. As proposed by Terpling the idea is that the urban campers' purchase of the tent will finance the tents for the homeless: '10% of the profit goes to an *Urban Rough Sleeper* for the homeless. Thereby the homeless share their experiences from life in the streets with the young campers, and the young campers make it possible for the homeless to get the *Urban Rough Sleeper* for free' (Ragnhild Lübbert Terpling, 2013). Two different target groups have thereby been identified: one group, the willingly mobile urban campers, enabling the other group, unwillingly mobile, a place to sleep. The same idea of the resourceful target group providing, or partly providing, a tent bag for homeless people is also central in the *Swags for Homeless* project. What differentiates *Swags for Homeless* from proposal by Terpling for a business strategy is that 100% percent of profits from sales go to homeless projects. *Swags for Homeless* is established as a national

accredited charity and a social enterprise which through donations and the purchases of *backpack beds* by the general public distribute the tent bags to homeless. Furthermore *Swags for Homeless'* distribution of backpack beds happens in cooperation with welfare agency partners whose social workers do not only identify the homeless people in need but also conduct surveys, collect stories and follow up (as much as possible) on the users of *backpack beds*. In the *Urban Rough Sleeper* project it is, however, not described how distribution to users in need would take place.

In comparison the *Homeless Vehicle* and *Refuge Wear* do not include many considerations about production, distribution etc. but appears instead as ideas or prototypes for others to develop further. While the *PARAsite* shelter is not designed with the same potential longevity as the other projects, it has instead advantage of being cheap, accessible and easily appropriated by potential users. By the choice of cheap and available materials some considerations about the production, distribution and accessibility for the users of the *PARAsite* tent appear to be part of the project. The tents could potentially be industrially produced and sold at a low cost but instead the tents in use seem to have all been customized and provided free of charge (presumably made possible by art funding). The *Urban Rough Sleepers* differs by being produced as a prototype in cooperation with a local Danish manufacturer of tents. Thus a potential industrial production has already been tested in a company that has the production system and possibility to produce it. However in contrast with *Backpack Bed*, the *Urban Rough Sleeper* has not yet come into production.

The production and free distribution of the *PARAsite* tents is enabled outside the "system", via art as an alternative economy, but the project by Terpling is intended for production within the system. Instead of funding, "the socially conscious" or "the ethical other-oriented consumer" will enable those in need with tents free of charge. By socially conscious or ethical consumer I mean that Terpling is targeting the *Urban Rough Sleeper* at a segment characterized by valuing the experience of ethical value in consumption.

Buying the tent combines, what in consumer research is termed, the 'self-oriented versus other-oriented value', as formulated by Morris B. Holbrook, in the sense that besides the value the tent provides the owner, the tent also holds a source of value in the hope of helping homeless people through the purchase (Holbrook, 1999). The *Backpack Bed* is similarly targeted at an "ethical consumer", but by not basing the project on the general audience's purchases exclusively but also on donations, one might argue for a greater viability of this project. What is interesting is that these solutions does not try to end the problem of homelessness but rather accepts it as condition although the tent bags are targeted at the ethical other-oriented consumer in both projects. In that sense the approach is different than in the art projects where the creation of shelters and tent-garments appears to be, as Rakowitz expresses it, intended as 'an intervention that should become obsolete (...) These shelters should disappear like the problem should. In this case, the real designers are the policymakers' (MOMA).

The character of *Homeless Vehicle*, *Refuge Wear* and PARASite as temporary social commentaries or protests intended not to solve the problem of homelessness could explain why these projects are not developed in relation to a production and distribution system although created as functional proposals. The conceptual point, of not being intended as solutions, does only partly explain why these prototypes are not further developed. The explanation should also to a great degree be found in the non-existing connection between the art world and the production system. The projects reflect one of the defining characteristics of art, or the art world, that it still to some degree defines itself as autonomous of commercial interests and the production system. Therefore developing an idea or concept from an artwork to a product or solution is, despite the great level of exchange between art and industry nowadays, not a given. Where the art projects clearly differ from the design projects is in not attempting to initiate the further development of these proposals: instead the projects circulate in an art exhibition context as ideas and potential starting points for others to develop. However, one might argue that it is

questionable whether these prototypes would actually be picked up in the context of art for either further development by any potential producers or as solutions to appropriate by potential users. The art projects could perhaps have been realized if the attempt to engage with design also included crossing the border into design completely by developing the projects further into actual products. At least the *Backpack Bed* example shows that design solutions originating from nonprofessional designers can come into production and also gain recognition within the design world.

As earlier mentioned, housing of refugees and homeless people is a popular design or architect student project, but it is also a recurrent theme in recent years among established designers and architects. Slavid criticizes overall student projects for being 'far too elaborate' and not grounded with 'harsh realities' (Slavid, 2007 p 100). Projects by established architects and designers do also vary in terms of their degree of being conceptual and idealistic or pragmatic and realizable for production. Many of the examples of prototypes created by architects and designers revolve around similar solutions combining mobility and shelter by means of a kind of cart and/or a variation of a tent. This is for example the case with *Wheelly*, designed as a large wheel which folds into a shelter by the architecture and design company Zo-Loft, and the *Collapsible shelter No.3* by multidisciplinary artist and architectural designer Chat Travieso (Fig. 36 p XXXIV, Fig. 37 p XXXV).

Projects like these, falling under a category of social design in the sense of design with a specific agenda to improve life or human well-being, exist to a large degree as also proposals even though created and mediated within a design and architecture context<sup>16</sup>. Despite initiatives like the design prize *Index Award* with the over-arching theme 'Design to Improve Life', these projects are not necessarily any close to coming into production (Index). Nevertheless a nomination for the Index Award obviously creates attention for

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<sup>16</sup> Attempts to advance the understanding of design from the perspective of social responsibility goes, for example, back to writings and activities of Victor J. Papanek (Papanek, 1970).



and recognition of a project. An example of this is the *Concrete Canvas Shelter* project which was a nominated proposal for emergency housing now being realized (Fig. 38 p XXXVI). *Concrete Canvas Shelter* differs from the other projects described in not having the mobility of a tent but is instead a fast erected and permanent alternative to tents. What seems to have realized *Concrete Canvas* into production is not only due to the concept of 'a building in a bag that requires only water and air for construction' but rather to the involved material technology which allows for new uses of concrete (ConcreteCanvas). What this example shows is, regardless of the innovativeness and degree of "good design", how projects with a social agenda are dependent, as other design projects or products, on the dynamics within production and consumption cycles to be realized. The fact that it is a company like IKEA that launches flat-pack modular refugee shelters in cooperation with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is indicative of the many stakeholders, interests and forms of funding that are combined when designing and implementing design solutions for crises (Popupcity).

### **Living-units**

After these analyses of designs for the "nomadic have-nots", focus in the following is on other examples of micro or small-scale architecture as reflected in the works of Andrea Zittel, Atelier van Lieshout and N55. What runs across these projects are the explorations into minimal, mobile and often modular units for living. The succeeding will show living-units which in their material shapes do not only reflect pragmatic solutions for minimal living spaces but also generate meanings related to ideals about more autonomous ways of living. What overall differentiates these projects from the projects relating to the homeless is how they seem to relate more to ideas of voluntary nomadism and deliberate choices not to be tied down although these projects may to some degree also relate to a state of emergency. Furthermore they reflect various degrees of independence from society while aiming for self-sufficiency. What is interesting is how these projects, with their temporary and "parasitic" character, challenge or negotiate existing structures while

also articulating self-sufficiency as an ideal. Consequently these will be considered as either a) “organisms”: in the sense of being individual living entities, a system with many parts that depend on each other and work together or b) “parasites”: organisms living in, with, or on another organism. The analysis of the project will be related to this distinction between organism and parasite while also analysing the proposed relationship of the entities or units to total systems or society. Furthermore, many of these projects can be defined as ‘micro’ in the sense defined by Slavid: ‘the architecture of the really small, of the building that either serves a single function , or does something more complex in an unexpectedly small space’ (Slavid, 2007 p 5).

An on-going theme in the practice of artist Andrea Zittel is investigations into compressing the basic functionalities of a house or home into a minimal space are. In the beginning of the 90s Zittel started creating works called units, ranging from the so called living units containing kitchen, bedroom and bathroom etc. facilities within the unit to smaller units separating a part or function from the whole for example the *Food Group Prep Unit*, the *Cleansing Chamber* (Fig. 39 – 40, p XXXVII). Other variations have combined a few functions such as toilet and kitchen facilities as for example the *Body Processing Unit* (Fig. 41 p XXXVIII). What these units have in common, whether they are living units or single-function units, is that they are constructed as steel framed wooden boxes or containers on wheels.

Take the *Living Unit* from 1994 as an example: the unit consists of three main modules which are divided in two smaller sections with shelves, drawers etc. (Fig. 42 - 43 p XXXIX). This unit, and the other units, has the same features as collapsible furniture: the three main parts fold into the compact shape of a rectangular closed box. Once opened the box unfolds into two areas: on the one side the seating and kitchen area with a folding table and a cupboard that opens to a sort of bath room area. This area functions at the same time as a sort of wall to the other area which is the sleeping area consisting of a narrow bed with the length of the box. In these units Zittel does not only scale down the different

functions to take up as little space as possible but she also appears occupied with reducing or illustrating existence to a minimum of activities related to hygiene, food and rest. While these units may comprise singular or several functionalities related to existence and a habitation unit, they do not constitute self-contained units. Instead they appear somehow as the interior taken out of a caravan which can be placed within different already existing architectural structures. Thereby if the units were to be imagined into concrete use, they would depend on a hosting building as seen in the example of how a unit was customised into an apartment. The appearance of the units as pieces of furniture to be placed in an existing room relates less to being parasitic and relates more to their intended use as being primarily for exhibition in an art context.

In various works of AVL, and especially in their early projects, the idea of a living unit, or as their works are often termed, “capsules” have also been explored. Similarly to Zittel, AVL’s works includes both capsules and units, often on the basis of a container. These containers either contain all basic functionalities within the same unit or are intended for a single purpose. *Tampa Skull* is an example of compressing the facilities of kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, office, and living room into a very minimal living unit (Fig. 43 p XLI). In contrast to the units or capsules by Zittel which due to the material qualities have a very “clean” and functional appearance, the capsules by AVL often include more expressive, or symbolic, qualities. This is for example reflected in the material shape of *Tampa Skull* where the aspect of micro is exaggerated to the point of claustrophobia. Another difference is in terms of content or intended use of the capsules: in the case of AVL the units intended for a single purpose are not only concerned with the needs for cooking and washing, instead they often relate to the needs for sleep and sex. For example the *Mini Capsule* and the *Maxi Capsule Luxus*, are a sort of mobile hotel rooms in a container which may be open for interpretation in terms of which activities they facilitate (Fig. 44 – 45 p XLII). The interior design of the work *Bais-o-drome*, which include a soft-looking bed area, a table covered with a sheepskin rug and alcohol bottles mounted on the wall, does create

more explicit interpretants in the direction of 'relaxation, enjoyment and sex' for which use it is custom made according to AVL (AVL) (Fig. 46 XLIII).

The described units by Zittel are isolated boxes or containers which can be transported and placed within different rooms or spaces. In contrast, the compressed functionalities of a home are often built into either a portable container structure and/or a variation of a mobile home in the projects by AVL. *Autocrat* for example resembles a semi-trailer or large container to be transported by a lorry or other vehicle with an interior, mainly made in wood, including a kitchen and a sleeping area (Fig. 47 p XLIV). The mobile home or caravan has been taken up in several projects by AVL. Two examples are the *Modular House Mobile* which basically has the functionalities of a mobile home in a slightly adapted way and the *Mobile Home for Kröller-Müller* (also titled the *Master and Slave Unit*) which to a greater degree subverts the functionalities and aesthetics of the caravan to a greater degree (Fig. 48 p XLV, Fig. 49 p XLVI). This mobile home is designed as a unit, shaped as a large container with five holes or windows onto which smaller units can be attached. Within the smaller units, which all have different forms, the functionalities such as bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and office are placed and these units can be moved from one hole to another thereby allowing flexibility in the layout. In comparison with the living units by Zittel which has a fixed form and no excess of space, this unit by AVL is alterable and includes a large open room which use is not completely predefined.

Micro architecture is also explored in several projects by N55 but in quite different ways than by Zittel and AVL. The before mentioned projects by Zittel and AVL are created on the basis of a rectangular box or container, but N55 create their different structures using different geometrical shapes as the outset such as the triangle or octahedron. By using these forms N55 are "post producing" as they base their works on elements from the geodesic dome structures central in Buckminster Fuller's architectural work<sup>17</sup>. However,

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<sup>17</sup> Influenced by Fuller, building shelters out of domes was proposed as DIY architecture by Lloyd Kahn in *Domebook One*, 1970, and *Domebook 2*, 1970.

the inspiration or reference does not dominate all of their units or structure. This is for example the case with the *Snail Shell System*, which is their proposal for a *micro dwelling* unit for one person, is constructed as a cylindrical plastic tank (Fig. 50 p XLVII). As is the case with this unit, and other units by N55, very little is actually designed in terms of the interior and instead the units appear as rather open structures. Different functionalities are included in *Snail Shell System* by attaching devices to the lid, one of the flat sides of the cylinder, whereas the inside is empty besides a small box. The functionalities of a kitchen and a bathroom are compressed into the equipment in this box containing: 'a torch, hoses for the pump, kitchen pan, kettle and alcohol burner, foldable water containers that can be used for ballasting as well as for shower and drinking water, and plastic bags'(N55). Cooking does have to take place outside the tank due to it being in polyethylene. The unit could be described as both a potential parasite and organism in the sense that it can both be connected to, and thereby parasite on existing structures for energy, electricity etc., but could also supply its own energy with solar power devices for example. Furthermore, as is an overall concept in the works of N55, the unit can be joined with other units and form a larger organism or community. Thereby many of their projects reflect an ideal, similar to Orta's *Modular Architecture*, of solidarity or collectivism. The idea of a unit or module to be combined with other modules is further explored in the project *Micro Dwelling* proposing minimal and low cost housing (Fig. 51 p XLVII). *Micro Dwelling* consists of equally sized octahedrons and can potentially be expanded but could also exist in the most basic form of one module. However what N55 proposes in their manual to the *Micro Dwelling* is a dwelling consisting of three modules which would allow separating the functions of eating, shitting and sleeping. In this way the concept of micro is combined with the idea of the modular: the concept of housing the functions of a building in the number of modules required per function, which has been a recurring agenda within architecture since around the 1920s.

## Explorations of the module

Running through several of the projects by Zittel, AVL and N55 is exactly explorations and re-interpretations of the modular. This is reflected both in the sense of constructing and combining standard units within the living unit and in the sense of the living unit, the container or the module being regarded as a part which can be connected and combined with different other parts. Working with modular constructions is, however, done in quite diverse ways: ranging from leaning on or interpreting the module as developed in Modernist architecture to broader uses of the modular. The modernistic module is constructed on the principle of using a single shape and size to construct a building and this also the principle in N55's practice in for example *Micro Dwelling*. In contrast the projects by AVL are not necessarily based on a uniformly shaped model and instead units appear fitted together despite radical material differences. But in one project, the *Mini Capsule Side Entrance*, the units or modules are completely identical and stacked upon each other – creating an overall resemblance to a Japanese capsule hotel (Fig. 44 p XLII). The stacking of modules is also recurrent in Zittel's practice in for example *A-Z Cellular Compartment Units* which is composed by ten interconnected rectangular boxes of the same shape and size (Fig. 52 p XLVIII). Within this compartment unit each different unit is, according to Zittel, 'dedicated to the satisfaction of a single human need or desire from sleeping to eating to reading to watching TV'(Zittel). '

These explorations into the modular, and the dividing of a home or house into functions, could be regarded as related to the space-saving idea of a micro house, but also relates to the more overall investigations into living and habitation which are central themes especially in the practice of Zittel and N55. More than being realistic design proposals these works could be characterised as explorations into human needs and the compartmentalization of related functionalities. The concept of repeatable standards and the flexibility in terms of enlarging or minimizing according to needs seem convergent

with what appears as a desire to create a modern day version of a “machine for living”<sup>18</sup>. However, these works are not just a continuation of functionalistic ideals for the organization of all aspects of human life, but also include elements and facilities which question these ideals.

### **Temporary and mobile architecture**

Another characteristic in common for these projects is that they are to various extents mobile and/or portable. Mobility is in these projects deployed tactically and not only related to the mere capacity of movement. Being mobile and therefore only temporarily situated and located in a place creates other possibilities than permanent architecture. Across the projects the idea of mobility means integrating transportation and habitation in new interpretations of the mobile home or recreational vehicle, while in other projects the issue of mobility is addressed in alternative ways. Many of the works of Andrea Zittel revolve around the idea of transportable boxes or units, but their mobility is only proposed and not an integral part of their design. The different versions of living units all require a means of transport to fulfil their purpose of being portable. Take for example the *A-Z Wagon Station*, consisting in a series of wagons, which title on the one hand with 'Wagon' indicates a four-wheeled vehicle and on the other hand a place, position or stopping place with 'Station' (Fig. 53 p XLVIX). While the *Wagon Station* may have its inspiration in a wagon, the very essential part of a wagon in terms of the wheels is missing and its actual transportation requires an additional vehicle to be resolved. The *Wagon Station* bears very little resemblance to a wagon of the kind used for example by pioneers to cross the American Midwest. This interpretation of a wagon actually has more character of a slightly transformed container with a curved roof or a metal version of a bivouac or shelter. The wagon stations are designed to be easy to collapse, reassemble and transport. The *Wagon Station* have circulated as exhibition objects and some of them have also been

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<sup>18</sup> The notion of a 'machine for living' was proposed by Le Corbusier, in *Vers une Architecture*, who challenged conventional notions of home by advancing a vision of the modern house that embraced prefabrication, mass production, technological advancements, new materials etc.

customized for different users who have stayed in them for periods of time at Zittel's base A-Z West near Joshua Tree in the Californian Desert. The wagons now form an encampment where guests can experience 'off the grid living' and are encouraged to 'step outside of their every-day patterns and routines, and to open themselves up to new possibilities and ways of living' (Zittel). This way the work offers the possibility for viewers to engage physically with the work and test living with less in a minimal space. This should supposedly lead to: 'a heightened focus, as ingrained assumptions about needs, values and social norms come into question' (Zittel).

Since the *Wagon Station* appear now to stay in the same position, their eventual character of being mobile wagons is even more downplayed, but their potential portability actually seems to serve another purpose. For with their small size and temporary, mobile character these structures evade the normal restrictions and codes for permanent buildings. Described as "Small Liberties" by Zittel they are examples of employing mobility tactically: being temporary and mobile makes it possible to place a dwelling or sort of building structure on the land without permission from authorities (Zittel). The design of the *Wagon Station*, as well as other works of Zittel, resonate of modernistic ideals of minimal functionalism, the wagons, by being termed wagons and placed in the desert, but also has references to pioneers and their migration to new areas. Somehow the *Wagon Station* signify a present day pioneer's desires to explore new frontiers in the sense of living relatively isolated from the rest of society and create a new form of community. The encampment could be interpreted as a modern laager: the wagon fort often formed as a circle which the pioneers would join at night for better shelter. This way each *Wagon Station* could be regarded as both an independent organism and part of a larger organism, in sense of the encampment, where communal facilities and the specific habitat of the desert is shared.

In comparison with the projects of Zittel, which are portable but often not mobile in themselves, mobility is implemented as a key parameter in almost all of the constructions



or systems by N55. In many of their projects transport and habitation is integrated while basing the transport of their micro living structures on one person being able to move it to a new site. In other of their larger projects demanding vehicles to be transported they have developed different means of transport while advocating for non-polluting transport of people and goods. The *Snail Shell System* is an example of a unit which one person can move around and thereby change locations and be able to live in various environments. The system is designed to be mobile on both land and water while the pace of its movement is limited for as N55 explains: 'One person can move it slowly, either by pushing it like a wheel, walking inside it or on top of it' (N55). In similar ways another project the *Urban Free Habitat System* is also constructed to be transported to a new site by one person as this open structured steel frame can be moved 'simply by rolling it like a ball' (N55) (Fig. 54 p L). With the *Snail Shell System* other ways of transport are however also suggested as it can 'be rowed (on water), moved by a kite or hooked up to a vessel, for example a ferry' (N55). In this case the use of fossil fuels is to some degree accepted as when the *Snail Shell System* can hook up to, or parasite on, a ship as a means of transportation.

The issue of energy and minimizing impact of the environment is solved in *Walking House* by basing it on solar and wind energy (Fig. 55 p LI). The *Walking House*, which is inspired by traditional Romani horse carriages or wagons, consisting of a modular dwelling system placed on six legs, moves at a quite slow pace (max speed 60 kilometres per hour). According to N55 the *Walking House* is constructed to move at a speed similar to human walking speed motivated in the following statement: 'It is a common fact that walking often helps a person concentrate their thoughts and creates a mental state that enforces mobility of the mind' (N55). This statement underlines the ideas about nomadic life as emancipatory which seems part of the ideological outset of N55's projects combined with the concept of self-sufficiency e.g. reflected in the use of alternative energy sources. *Walking House* furthermore reflects that mobility is connected with a desire to live in

remote places or off the grid and thereby parallels can be drawn to Zittel's Wagon Stations. In the description of *Walking House* it is emphasized that '*Walking House* is not dependent on existing infrastructure like roads, but moves on all sorts of terrain'(N55) .

Mobility is somehow addressed in all of N55's projects by means of lightweight modular systems, which can be dismantled and re-erected, but not all of their projects integrate habitation and transport within the unit. However in the cases where the unit is not mobile in itself means of transport can be supplemented with either the *Spaceframe* vehicles or the *Modular Boat* (Fig. 56 p LII, Fig. 57 p LIII). The living unit *Spaceframe*, with the shape of a truncated tetrahedron, is for example a movable construction which is intended to be transported on the *Spaceframe* vehicle. This vehicle, which is basically a recumbent bike type based on aluminium tubes, comes in three different models: the one-seater, the two-seater and the cargo-version. At the same time the *Spaceframe* is not only intended for staying on land but also for staying on water and is therefore combined with the use of the *Modular Boat* and the *Floating Platform* (Fig. 58 p LIV). The *Floating Platform* constitutes a foundation for the *Spaceframe* and is a modular system of pontoons which as other N55 Systems must be assembled and can be extended with additional modules. The *Modular Boat*, designed to transport persons and goods, can according to N55 be moved by using paddles, sails or various motors. In accordance with the concept of using alternative sources of energy The *Modular Boat's* motor is powered by electricity and the batteries are charged by solar panels.

### **In search for a liberating and self-sufficient lifestyle**

These projects often reflect ideals about certain lifestyles, besides being functional solutions addressing basic needs in the form of proposals for living in mobile micro architecture. Overall many of the projects revolve around an idea about a nomadic, possession less lifestyle as being freer and potentially liberating for humans. Part of this is expressed in the preoccupation with being self-sufficient which is reflected through the

attempts at minimizing the use of materials and energy: e.g. by recycling, and by using solar power and other alternative sources to generate energy for the living unit. In many ways the different examples of mobile micro architecture proposes alternatives to existing economic structures to various degrees. But these projects do not only propose alternatives to existing economic structures: elements of these projects challenge social structures and norms as well. The suggestions of different ways to form communities and social relations are perhaps most explicitly articulated by AVL but it is also an inherent part of the works of N55 and Zittel. A desire to be far from civilization, or at least somehow removed from society, seems articulated through the mobile character of these living units. This can for example be seen in the preoccupation with the forest, the desert, the island and the sea as potential topi for dwelling. A longing for going back to nature and living in remote areas is especially occurring in projects by Zittel and AVL while N55 appear more preoccupied with creating alternative spaces and types of dwelling from within the city.

What these different analysed examples of mobile architecture have in common is, whether placed in an urban context or in nature, how they address ways in which one can live independently from the outside world. The ideal articulated is an existence with the minimum influence from the outside, and relying entirely on one's own resources. Autarky is for example a central ideal in the works by AVL as seen in the mobile farm *Pioneer set*: a prefabricated farm consisting of several units to be packed and transported all over the world in a 40-foot shipping container (Fig. 59 p LIV). The *Pioneer Set*, which consists of a farmhouse, a stable, a rabbit hutch, a chicken coop, a pig pen, several tools, equipment and fencing, enables the following according to AVL: 'individuals and groups can travel around the world, set up the farm at any location and live self-sufficiently' (AVL). The different small units in the set are designed in a way making the stable and the farm house very similar in size and aesthetics, however, as noted in the description by AVL, 'the farmer's house does come with some extras: a multi-woman bed, a wood stove and a kitchen' (AVL). The detail about the multi-woman bed is somewhat typical for the

projects by AVL: the desired independence or freedom expressed in the works is not only from economic pressures but also from social norms too.

The ideas articulated about living in an autonomous and self-supporting way were further explored by AVL in the project *AVL Ville* in 2001 which incorporated the Pioneer Set and expanded even more on the central pig farming concept (Fig. 60 LV). The village, free-state and open-air museum *AVL Ville* existed for one year in the port of Rotterdam, with its own currency, flag and constitution. The village was made possible with funding related to Rotterdam being European Cultural Capital that year. *AVL Ville* was based on the participation of users as people could live, work and build houses on the premises: the residents were, however, not everyone but limited to employees from AVL studio. Organic food was produced at the farm while the village also provided workshops for producing art works, alcohol and medicine. As part of *AVL Ville* the *Hall of Delights* was built which functioned as a large canteen for the inhabitants of the village and as a restaurant for visitors thereby creating some income for the *AVL Ville*. For having electricity, water and heat, energy resources were created within the *AVL Ville* making the village independent from external resources. The energy plant was based on solar energy, wind mills and, putting the pig farm to optimum use, biogas made from pig excrements.

In this way, as Gijs van Oenen remarks about *AVL Ville*: the free-state 'militated against (...) "the state monopolies" (...) also on more mundane matters such as waste disposal, the provision of energy and sewerage' (Van Oenen, 2003) . The self-sufficiency in terms of food could also be said to be challenging existing structures in terms of the market system. The different types of mobile architecture built in the "free state" appear to some degree to have been temporarily exempted from normal regulations but were also a case of AVL improvising and not waiting for permits. On the question of Dutch laws having jurisdiction over *AVL Ville*, Joep van Lieshout replied:

'We're subject to Dutch laws, but we're not interested in respecting them. Right now, we're trying to get a blank building permit. We could wait for approval, but we decided to keep on building. If we already have ten buildings, then it'll be difficult for the city to stop us. That's why we get so much done. We don't secure things; we simply do them. Later we see if it gets approved' (Allen, 2001).

This alternative community with the inherent concepts of self-government and self-sufficiency (including organic food and alternative energy sources) to a large degree has resemblances to hippie ideas of living in domains free from society's pressure, but what differentiates AVL is the inclusion of weapons and bombs. In *AVL Ville* and other projects weapons are linked to the concept of autonomy: living a primitive outlaw existence requires according to AVL means for self-defence. Thereby, as Gijs van Oenen points to, when van Lieshout 'fitted a machine gun on a Mercedes pick-up, warlord style' it becomes very apparent that the so called free state of *AVL Ville* is 'a state too, with its own rules, borders and means of enforcing order'(Van Oenen, 2003). The temporary free-state *AVL Ville* could be regarded as a sort of Utopia in the sense of being a place which represented an alternative to and a proposal for change in society, however it is largely due to state funding that this autonomous state was able to exist. Being independent and still within society is expressed as a central tactic for AVL. Van Lieshout is often quoted for not believing in Utopia but in realism or what he terms "solivism": 'If you are too utopian, you place yourself outside society where things can't be realized' (Van Oenen, 2003).

In a sense AVL's tactic could be described as oscillating between to some degree adapting to a system and at the same time subverting it. *AVL Ville* is perhaps an example of, as formulated by Gijs van Oenen: 'a modern utopia (that) does not feel the need to isolate itself from modern society and its emancipator tendencies' (Van Oenen, 2003). *AVL Ville* combined many previous solutions and concepts by AVL and could therefore be seen as a culmination of the works AVL had done before. After the project's closure it was continued in different "franchise" or satellite versions e.g. at the Venice Biennale, in Park

Middelheim in Antwerp and the AVL Suisse for the Expo '02. Whatever the context or location what is characteristic for *AVL Ville* and its later franchise versions is that they alternate somewhere between being a parasite or an organism: both living on but also to some degree independent from existing structures. The project thereby reflects the following characteristic of utopian as formulated by van Oenen: 'Utopians apply for subsidies, engage in fundraising, or work from commercial basis the way van Lieshout does' (Van Oenen, 2003).

### **Mobile and minimal existence**

The cases analysed in this chapter are quite different, although they all relate to dwelling in a broad sense. In my account of what differentiates these projects from each other I have chosen to distinguish between proposals or solution for nomadic haves or have-nots. There are similarities across these proposals, despite the differences in the solutions made for the involuntarily and the voluntarily nomads. What the projects for homeless have in common with the other type of projects is that they are intended for being on the move – the difference lies in whether the temporary and mobile dwelling is by choice or necessity. In a way these creations of mobile micro architecture, whether in the form of tents, shelters or living-units all relate to an existence on what could be described as the margins of society. At the same time what the projects also have in common is addressing existence at a minimum. Whether or not these different proposals for minimal dwelling are in use or not, they make us consider how much it is possible to live without. These considerations are evoked through physical and concrete solutions where living and dwelling have been reduced into their most basic elements such as facilities for sleeping, eating and washing. But still there are the differences between what are pragmatic solutions created for an actual situation of having to live in the most basic way and what could be considered illustrations of how minimal we could ideally live as reflected in say, for example, the difference between the functional *Backpack Bed* and the idealistic *Snail Shell System*. I would argue that while the projects for the nomadic haves

make us consider or ways of living e.g. could we possess less etc., the projects for the nomadic have-nots raise awareness about existence in a quite different way as they address the fear of most people of not having a home. By this I do not mean to pass any value judgment on one or the other type of projects, but just pointing to the distinctions reflected in the analysed cases between being actually exposed to a nomadic life without possessions on the margins of society and the idealized perception of nomadic life as liberating.

The comparisons between the various vehicle, tent, shelters and back pack beds showed different approaches to addressing the specific needs relating to an existence on the streets. Whether created as art projects or as product design what the examples have in common is that these solutions provide cover, security and a temporary residence. The different types of shelters have in their design, to various extents, been adjusted and customized to the specific needs of their users taken for example the need for storage of personal belongings into account. As already analysed the different solutions involve more or less the same functionalities, but where they really differentiate is in how much the solutions draw attention to the users. *Urban Rough Sleeper* and *Backpack Bed* are intentionally designed to resemble any other tent or bag within the range of outdoor products, and thereby not the aim is to not make the users stand out. In contrast, *Homeless Vehicle*, *PARAsite* and *Refuge Wear* are designed to make the users more visible in the urban context in order to create aware of the issue of homelessness. All of the analysed projects are generated from a social engagement but what fundamentally differentiates them is how much emphasis there is on a pragmatic solution or if emphasis is on raising awareness of a problem, homelessness, that ideally should not exist. The *Backpack Bed* was included as an example of a solution that is actually put in practice in order to improve the living conditions of homeless people in contrast to the examples which may also be informed by motives of practicality but have not gone further than the prototype or art project stage. Regardless of the degree of implementation of the different analysed

examples into everyday use, they do, in contrast to N55, Zittel and AVL, engage in a social problem. Somehow it would be interesting to see what happened if these practitioners also contributed towards improving the lives of the unwilling nomads.

Instead of mobility caused by necessity, the examples of micro mobile architecture by Zittel, N55 and AVL address mobility as a basis for providing a wholly self-sufficient existence. The different capsules, living-units and micro-systems created have, as Ibelings points to, a range of precursors in the history of mobile architecture. The different examples of units for living, analysed here, do all, to some degree, relate to the idea of capsules which, according to Ibelings, is linked to the influence Space Age had on architecture and design throughout especially the 1960s (Ibelings, 2003, p. 157). As capsules related to space age referred to 'the most advanced and innovative form of mobility of the day', they became the inspiration for mobile architecture (Ibelings, 2003, p. 158). Certainly parallels can be drawn between, for example, different projects by Archigram, the experimental architecture group from 1960s, and the selected analysed here. The *Living Pod* which was a proposal for a living-unit based on light-weight, modular technology and mobility encompasses many of the same ideas as reflected in the micro mobile architecture by Zittel N55 and AVL (Fig. 61 LVI). Another example to which parallels can be drawn is the *Capsule Homes* (Fig. 62 LVII). The different capsules by AVL have, with their character of container shaped capsules, a great deal of resemblance to the *Capsule Homes*. But the capsules by AVL differ by not always being cases of compressing all facilities into the capsule instead many of their capsules are just for the purpose of sleep, relaxation or sex. There are more references between the living-units of Zittel, the different micro units by N55 and *Capsule Homes* in the sense of compressing facilities into the unit or capsule. I consider the different capsules or living-units, whether by Zittel, AVL or N55, to be interpreting the idea of the capsule, as reflected in for example the project by Archigram and doing so quite differently both in relation to the design of the capsule and the ideals related to it. Furthermore *Capsule Homes* has the explorations of the



module in common with different projects of these practitioners, as the capsules can be joined together in similar ways to for example *Micro Dwelling* by N55.

Finally parallels can be traced between the *Cushicle* by Archigram works by AVL, N55 and Zittel (Fig. 63 p LVIII). The parallels are perhaps even more obvious between PARAsite, the different garments by Orta and the *Cushicle*. Another project, the so called clothing for living in, *Suitaloon*, addresses the ideas of merging clothing and habitation which reemerges as a theme in the practice of Orta. The *Cushicle* is a design for a personal, individual and portable dwelling unit which may be 'worn' for transport and unpacked for occupation. This project is a proposal for enabling a person to carry a complete environment on his/her back including food and water supplies. When needed, it inflates out to a complete nomadic unit. So, although the *Cushicle* was a speculative design which became less materialized in comparison to the examples of PARAsite and the different garment-shelters by Orta. But the *Cushicle* does anticipate the theme of carrying one's habitation on the back which the different analysed examples, also *Backpack Bed* and *Urban Rough Sleeper*, have addressed in various ways.

### **Alternative ways of living**

The last perspective to consider in relation to the different examples of micro mobile architecture is the aspect of how they articulate ideals about certain ways of living. Across the different examples of solutions for living there is certainly inherent dreams and ideas about life, as have been addressed throughout the analysis, but do these ideas have character of ideals about the perfect society or Utopia? Especially since the Modern Era this question about utopian desires has been asked in relation to architecture, art and design, I will, however, not go into lengthy discussions of the different concepts of utopia throughout history or the philosophical discussion of the possibilities of utopia. I would argue that the different projects of AVL, Zittel and N55 do express ideals about living and proposes to some degree alternatives to society. But their projects differs from utopia if

utopia is considered as an imaginary or impossible place as these projects are realized and tested in the context of art and functioning in the lives of the practitioners. Different projects by N55 addresses the ideals of doing more with less (material) as reflected in the architectural ideas and practice of Buckminster Fuller. The references to the geodesic shelters by Fuller and the inherent ideas of energy efficiency in a dome are, as already mentioned, visible in many of N55's projects, most clearly articulated in *Urban Free Habitat System*.

The project of *AVL Ville* might be interpreted to tend towards the utopian but in that case I am not sure I could subscribe to this vision or other of AVL's visions, e.g. *Slave City*, for that matter. Instead of considering *AVL Ville* as a vision of utopia in the sense of a place in which government, laws and social conditions are perfect, I would characterise this project, as well as projects in general by AVL, as proposing questions about living rather than answers. Perhaps the projects by AVL, Zittel and N55 could instead be regarded as 'microtopias' in the sense proposed by Bourriaud (Bourriaud, 2002). These projects would appear, to some degree, to be microtopias because they do not reflect an utopian agenda related to the future but they are instead attempts to create provisional solutions in the present moment and furthermore their projects can even be said to be micro-utopias in terms of scale. Another way to characterise the practices of Zittel, N55 and AVL is by the notion 'practical utopianism' as formulated by Gijs van Oenen. The following description certainly fits their projects quite well:

'Common to practical utopianism and mobile architecture is that they construct tangible, serious yet not top-heavy parameters/parasites for alternative habitats. In that sense, they are both light: like modern life generally they have moved beyond ideology, are fleeting, indicative and suggestive rather than normative or binding' (Van Oenen, 2003).

## **Chapter four: Reconsidering hybrids, processes and materiality**

This chapter will open by making comparisons across the two groupings of hybrids by reconsidering the examples in relation to the concepts of prosumption and postproduction. Throughout the analysis I have, more or less explicitly, taken the characteristics of prosumption in its two different forms, in terms of the engagement with the (already existing) material and the engagement with users, into consideration. Prosumption has in this context, in one form, been applied to characterise when creative practitioners are prosumers, in the sense of producing on the basis of already-existing objects. I have also described this working method or process as appropriation and postproduction. The other applied form of prosumption concerns when users become prosumers through their active engagement in the production of the work or product which has parallels to relational art. Prosumption and postproduction are not relevant to all the examples analysed, but the following will, nonetheless, elaborate more specifically on how, or to which extent, these production modes can be seen as recurring through many of the hybrids.

This discussion is taken a step further by also considering the possible connections between the examples of hybrids and the broader currents within contemporary creative disciplines tendencies in terms of socially engaged practices and open source attitudes (Bourriaud, 2002; Larsen, 2012; van der Beek, 2012; von Busch, 2012). The following will conclude that my cases studies do, to some degree, reflect aspirations to engage users and even, as a recent development of this engagement, the ideology of providing works as “open source”. However, the emphasis on co-creation and sharing with users is much stronger in various contemporary practices in-between design, art and other fields. Within the context of this thesis it has unfortunately not been possible to account for what could be considered yet another grouping of hybrids, but analysis of a few these projects will, nevertheless, be included as perspectives on the shared interests, across design, art and other related disciplines, in the themes of open ideology and social engagement.

Many of the hybrids analysed reflect, as will be demonstrated, prosumption and postproduction as methods applied by the creative practitioners, or producers, in terms of creating through re-use. But there is also a tendency across contemporary art and design practices to extend this into making designed objects or works accessible for users to prosume or post produce. This phenomenon of providing works as “open source” for users to adapt and complete has by design and fashion theorist Otto von Busch been termed ‘open ideology’. In his article, *Generation Open: Contested Creativity and Capabilities*, von Busch argues that this tendency has, over the last decade, gained momentum within creative industries to a degree where ‘open is the ideology of our time’ (von Busch, 2012 p 456). Related to this open ideology, which von Busch sees as manifested in so called open design, are ideas about participation or co-creation, sharing and through this empowerment of users. This characterisation of contemporary culture as marked by an open source attitude has some parallels Bourriaud’s perception of a present-day culture of use and ideals about sharing. As a perspective on the post productive methods reflected in my case studies I will discuss a few examples of how an open ideology also appears to influence the cross sections of art and design.

Prosumption in the form of engaging users as active producers has, as already pointed to, parallels to the recurring focus on participation and relations within contemporary art which has been described as a shift to ‘relational art’ or as a ‘social turn’ (Bishop, 2006; Bourriaud, 2002; Larsen, 2012). According to Sanne van der Beek, a similar shift to practices which are open-ended, participatory and relational can be observed in contemporary design as well. In her article about open design, she states:

‘Nowadays, design is no longer the static production, distribution and consumption of an object. Design practice has become a process, or performance as Blauvelt and Oosterling outline it. ‘Performance’ is not a new term; it is one that is well known in the arts. What is new though is that it is increasingly used outside the discourse of the arts’ (van der Beek, 2012 p 427).

This social turn, which is observable in both contemporary art and design, also influences practices combining design and art (and architecture). In the following, I will distinguish between two different, although often interrelated, ways that this focus towards the social and the relational is manifested. In my view, contemporary creative practices, including practices in-between design and art, reflect a social turn in either aiming to create a social interaction or relation, and/or in engaging in social issues such as improving living conditions. The social turn: in terms of creating situations and interactions which resulted in artists creating more or less permanent platforms, such as bars or cafés, to enable meetings, has not been as specific focus in the context of this research. Consequently the following is not a continuation of the discussion of relational aesthetics per se, but rather considerations of how the (re-)emergent focus on the relational and participatory is nonetheless to some degree reflected in the hybrid practices already analysed - and in a few supplementary examples. Within the hybrids analysed here, the social turn is primarily manifested in the projects combining art with design in relation to social problems such as homelessness. A few supplementary examples of hybrid practices with a social focus, in the form of e.g. concrete improvements of physical surroundings and as tools to better living conditions, will be compared to the already analysed case studies.

### **Producers and users as prosumers**

Overall the case studies of the second chapter can predominantly be characterised as prosumption in the form where the designer/artist/producer is a prosumer, or post producer, and to a lesser extent they are cases of prosumption in the sense of users being engaged as prosumers. However, the following will show that aspirations to both forms of prosumption do, to some degree, seem to be an undercurrent in many of the examples.

In relation to the works of design by Stadler, the notion of postproduction appear most appropriate as he intentionally integrates defining features of already produced objects and works as for example the Chesterfield sofa and the paintings of Yves Klein. As already

mentioned, Stadler does not physically re-use Chesterfield sofas, but he makes use, for example in *Pools and Pouf* and *Tephra Formations*, of the significant holstering technique and leather material associated with this sofa and thereby the meanings of these works becomes influenced by these references. This reference is also activated in his Monochromes which furthermore cite the work of Yves Klein, most articulated in the version in the colour of International Klein Blue. In contrast to these examples of prosumption or postproduction, Stadler appropriated an already-existing object in a more physical and concrete sense in *Rest in Peace*. In the first version, Stadler engages in prosumption and/or postproduction in the sense that he creates a work by appropriating and transforming a plastic monobloc chair: a chair which is in widespread circulation on the market. Stadler creates a second version of this work which can be characterised as a continued prosumption or postproduction for what Stadler does is to mould a chair on the basis of the transformed plastic chair. So *Rest in Peace* #2 is based on an already produced work which again is based on an already produced and circulated object. Besides reflecting a kind of double postproduction something interesting happens from the first to the second version in relation to the intention implied in the title: whereas the first act of prosumption appeared to aim to dissolve the chair, the second act of postproduction does the exact opposite by casting the chair in aluminium it is preserved instead. While *Rest in Peace* and the other analysed examples reflect the various aspects of Stadler working as a prosumer, I also interpreted his work in the direction of articulating attempts to engage the users more actively, as potential prosumers. The attempts at potentially engaging the users were identified in relation to *Pools and Pouf*, *Tephra Formations* and *Possible Furniture*. Although one could argue that these furniture-like objects engages the user as any other furniture, my point was that due to their specific material configuration their use-function was less immediate identifiable. These works create subtle associations to ensembles of furniture or traditional sofa sets, whose use we would, in contrast, more easily understand, also due to our previous experiences. *Pools and Pouf*, for example, is

ambiguous both in regards to the use of some of the single elements and in regards to the placement of the puffs vis-à-vis the pools. The openness in relation to use and combination of elements was especially pointed to as characteristics of *Possible Furniture*: a work where the word possible in the title would appear to relate both to the unclassifiable status of these objects, as “maybe-furniture”, and to encompass an invitation to discover the possibilities of these elements as potential furniture. Whether these elements, or modules, are really for the user to combine and thereby complete the furniture, is not apparent just by looking at *Possible Furniture*. Nevertheless the title seems to indicate that the furniture affords the users to make combinations as does the visual representations of the work showing different formations of the elements (Stadler). To summarize prosumption in the sense of engaging users does, however, not happen in these works in the sense described by Nakajima: users or viewers are not actively engaged in the production of these hybrid furniture, but they do seem to signify an invitation to the users to become involved in a different, perhaps more active, way in their consumption. As a perspective on the various ways in which Stadler engages in prosumption and/or postproduction as working methods, it should be mentioned that he has also contributed with a design to the *Do Create* collection by Droog: a collection where the idea is to make the consumers create or complete the objects. Stadler is represented in this collection with *Do Cut* which is an abstract form which, with the aid of a saw, can be transformed into different objects such as e.g. a stool, lampshade or vase.

The themes of making users create and creation on the basis on existing products are also very present in the examples of Bey’s work. Bey’s practice was in the early years of his career closely related to Droog Design and the themes of re-use and co-creation would seem to have been introduced here for Bey to continue exploring them. Besides the cases examined here, Bey also contributed, as addressed by Taylor, to the *Do Create* collection with his *Do Add* chair which was constructed so one leg was shorter than the others demanding some additional elements in order to create balance and stability (Fig. 27). In

my analysis I analysed the *Extrusion Bench* which, parallel to the *Tree Trunk Bench*, requires some activities of its user and additional materials in order to be completed. Both works can be described as half-finished designs which demand some physical work of the consumer. The *Tree Trunk Bench* demands as the title indicates a tree trunk and in the case of *Extrusion Bench* the user needs to fill the extrusion container with garden waste in order to have a garden bench. Similarly the different objects in *Dust Furniture* also revolved around the idea of letting consumers finish the products: here by assembling dust into vacuum cleaner bags shaped as chairs and carpets. Although this works may, to some degree, be interpreted as engaging users to act as prosumers, and to co-create, it is not actually a case of users co-working with Bey in the creation process, but rather the case of Bey creating half-finished and somewhat “open” objects followed by a potential “post creation” or production by users. Furthermore, as the analysis demonstrated, it is questionable whether user-engagement with these objects would take place, for example because functionality is quite challenged in these works, and the attempts to make us into prosumers seems more of a conceptual statement, or materialized thought experiment, than an actual possibility. Bey’s works also activates the notion of prosumption in its other form, in the sense I have also described as postproduction, as he often creates artefacts on the basis of already-existing or found objects. This theme goes, for example, back to his *Kokon* furniture from 1999, where he combined different old chairs and tables and wrapped these assemblages in an elastic synthetic fibre. Whereas the wrapping in this case hides which found materials that are used: we cannot see exactly which chair or table is used but only their contours, the mix of objects and materials are transparent in the examples, *Crate series* and *Kratkasten*, analysed in this context. The interpretations of these works pointed to the transparency, in terms of manifesting the involved post productive strategy and the choice of materials, as being central to their potential meanings. The tactic of appropriation reflects in these cases formal experiments with the materials of crates, in



rather unexpected combinations with other objects, which at a conceptual level appeared related to considerations of value, re-use, by-products etc.

While Stadler and Bey are occasionally using the tactics of prosumption or postproduction in their work it is, on the contrary, very significant for the practice of Gamper. But rather than resuming how he works as a prosumer, in the sense of accumulation and re-use of objects to create new objects, which has been accounted for in detail in the analysis, I would to give a few examples of how other aspects, such as ideas about co-creation, performance and participation, also influences the practice of Gamper. In the analysis I pointed to, how Gamper combined his appropriative tactics with performative aspects as he had made performances out of his cut-ups and remixes of existing furniture. However, the performative aspect is also present in other ways in Gamper's practice as many of his projects revolve around creating participatory, or relational, situations or events. An example is his *Trattoria al Cappello* project which revolves around making food, furniture and other objects. In this project Gamper does, however, not engage with the audience in the making process, the collaboration concerning the creation of the environment and the meal is between Gamper and other designers (three graphic designers). With this group Gamper hosted food-nights for friends where everything for the dining experience: not only the meal, but also the kitchen, the chairs, tables, cutlery etc., was designed by Gamper and a variety of makers that he has collaborated with. These events took place at various locations in London and in 2008 the Aram Gallery commissioned Gamper to do the concept for the exhibition *Total Trattoria* (Fig. 75 p LXX). All elements in *Total Trattoria* have been custom made for this event where 'the main purpose (...) has been the bringing together of people to a dining experience supported by design' (AramGallery). Emily King described the *Trattoria al Cappello* project i.e. dinners for a network of Gamper's friends, as: 'rather than events that generate objects, these meals are motives for designing new things' (King, 2010). The dinners can be considered as performances – and a way of displaying design objects in use

– but the audience is not co-creators in the production of the environment and dinner, they are participants in the relational interaction which is the dinner. Just as the staging of dinners in a gallery made Tirvaniija's dinners into art, the dinners by Gamper becomes design when staged in a gallery for design. Gamper expresses: 'This is part of my life, not just a design project but a gathering of my friends – it's about not dividing your life and your practice' (IconEye). It would, however, seem that the bringing together of people actually means bringing like-minded people together for networking. Pointing to this, echoes the critique of many relational art works as for example the critique raised by Bishop of the cooking situations of Tiravaniija (Bishop, 2006 p 67). In terms of being open-ended, a characteristic of relational art, it could be discussed, as Bishop does in her critique of relational aesthetics, how open such dinners or situations are when everything is structured in advance by the artist or designer. Furthermore, as Bishop rightfully points to, such dinners or performances rely on the gallery setting to differentiate it from entertainment (Bishop, 2006 p 69). Finally, while the *Trattoria* project might have parallels to relational art in terms of making a meal into a performance or a work, however, the ideal of creating a zone free from commerce is not adopted as the dinners are about staging various products and furniture made by Gamper.

Another project by Gamper, *In a State of Repair*, combines some aspects of performance, postproduction and co-creation. The project occupied eight department store windows of La Rinascente in Milano during the *Salone Internazionale del Mobile* in 2014. During a week Gamper and others set up a workshop where a range of different household objects, shoes, books, chairs, clothing etc. would be repaired. The public was invited to bring things to fix and the viewers could witness the restoration and repair of the broken objects. In this project the users are engaged in the production by providing the raw materials, and on the basis of these broken objects a performance is created: the fixing process in front of an audience. A service is provided in this work or interaction which is similar to the service the consumer could have by handing in their broken things to a shoemaker, bicycle

repairer etc., the difference here is that the service is provided for free, the consumers can witness the repair process, the interaction is staged as a performance at a design fair and finally some of the restored objects, for example the repaired chairs, have the special one-off character as many of Gamper's works. The performance is also the staging of the proposal of an alternative to throwing away belongings too quickly just because they, as a result of everyday wear and tear, break in different ways. Thereby the project can be seen as comment, or critique, of a consumer culture where a vast amount of products are discarded, although they could be fixed, and continually replaced with new objects. In other similar initiatives, for example the event *The Department of Repair* at the University of Arts in London and the ongoing *Repair Café* project, focus is often on making workshops, where users can participate and learn how to fix things and thereby become empowered as consumers. Another example of the focus on repairing is the Dutch design platform, Platform21, which is aiming to influence the relationship between user and product. Platform21 has written the *Repair Manifesto* and organized workshops, an exhibition, lectures and repair evaluation clinics both with professional designers, students, amateurs, as well as the general public. What is interesting in Gamper's project, in comparison with the other repair-projects across contemporary art and design, is that the inherent encouragement to restore and keep objects longer is combined with a celebration of the craftsmen, technicians etc. who master the fixing of things. The *In a State of Repair* can be characterised as picking up on recurring tendencies to co-create and challenge the throwing away of things and the loss of repair-skills, but with here the emphasis is on engagement with professionals instead of amateurs. Focus is not least on Gamper's post productive practice as he creates different hybrid objects during this event.

Besides the examinations of cases studies from the practices of Stadler, Bey and Gamper, the chapter focusing on hybrids objects, related to the category of furniture, investigated various hybrids from different practitioners. The common theme in these cases were the appropriation of the plastic monobloc chair and the analysis showed how presumption, in

the sense of re-use, and postproduction were used as tactics or productive methods in a variety of ways. As these examples have been analysed and interpreted in details as appropriation, prosumption and postproduction, it would be repetitive/redundant to reconsider them in relation to these notions. Therefore only a few recapitulating comments will be made in regards to this grouping of cases. Some of the examples of the prosumption of the plastic monobloc, e.g. the appropriations by Gamper and Seymour, have a DIY character which may seem to suggest that we as users or viewer could be prosumers or post producers too. This is especially the case in the *White Billions chair* by Tina Roeder where the process of appropriation is quite transparent also in the mediation of the work. Roeder and the other practitioner's way of working openly with and re-using objects that are already in circulation almost invite viewers or users to continue or copy the creation themselves. However, the users are actually not, in any of the projects, invited to participate in the process of transformation and re-use instead the act of postproduction is for the designer or artist exclusively. The invitation to take action is, in my view, most clearly articulated in the work *Copyright* by Superflex which I included as an example of appropriation or prosumption of another mass produced, and widely circulated, chair. Here the process of modification or partial destruction of the chairs is very transparent in the work as the cut-offs pieces are left there as "pieces of evidence". My interpretation emphasized that the choice of chairs: both the produced cheap replicas of *Chair no. 7* and the post produced Ant *Chair* look-alike, were central to the generation of meanings in this work. The specific choice of modernist designs appear motivated in the ideology of democratic design inherent in modernistic design: ideals which Superflex considers unfulfilled due to the laws of copyright. However not only furniture design are under attack: investigation into copying and challenging of intellectual property such as copyright, licenses and patents runs through their practice in diverse ways. Later I shall return to Superflex, as they combine their challenging of copyright with a social engagement and a problem solving approach.

Before leaving the practitioners related to the examples of the appropriated plastic monobloc, I would like give some further perspectives on the practice of Jerszy Seymour, whose *New Order Chair* was included as a case study. The *New Order Chair* was an example of Seymour as a prosumer but in his many other projects focus is on user-participation, creation of situations and sharing. This is, for example, reflected in a series of works called *Amateur* which also indicates a subscription to openness as an ideology: both in terms of open-ended processes and sharing works or designs openly with users. Users are, in the practice of Seymour, at invited to actively make their own constructions at different public events and workshops and the design, or construction material, is provided as open source. The construction material, the so called *Amateur Wax*, used in the different workshops is a mouldable polycapralactone wax which in combination with various other materials is used to create different objects and installations. The *Workshop Chair* is an object coming out of the different participatory processes involving this wax (Fig. 72 p LXVII). The chair is a very simple chair made of a few pieces of wood joined together by the wax. The use of the *Amateur Wax* is available as an open source recipe on the website of Seymour. The *Workshop Chair* appears to be easy – as it reveals all of its parts- and affordable to make once the wax is acquired. Seymour has organized events where the concept of amateur would not only be discussed but also acted out by using the wax. The wax was considered both a material and ‘as a metaphor for joining things and people’ (MUDAM). The amateur is, for the exhibition *Coalition of Amateurs*, defined as ‘lover, appassionato, non-professional as a way of being’ in the context of the practice of Seymour and thereby he invites the opposite of his own position as a professional designer into the process of creating (MUDAM) (Fig. 73 p LXVIII). The different explorations of the concept of the amateur, such as the *First Supper*, *Salon des Amateurs* and *Coalition of Amateurs*, illustrates exactly that the process and interactivity between the designer and users is the work. In the *First Supper* at the MAK in Vienna people were invited to a dinner where initially wax was produced in a kitchen and used for making table and chairs, followed by

cooking food and having dinner (Fig. 74 p LXIX). A parallel can be seen to e.g. Tiravanija's cooking situations as Seymour's events or performances are also about the interrelationship between the creative practitioner and the audience. In comparison with the similar *Trattoria* project by Gamper, Seymour engages the users more actively as co-producers in his situations whether food or different objects are produced. The *Salon des Amateurs* appears to have been mainly about discussing the possibilities of the amateur and an amateur society which was presented in a wall diagram. The salon also included a big pool made with the wax material which functioned as a meeting point. Finally at the *Coalition of Amateurs*, which was both an exhibition and a workshop, visitors were invited to take part in the coalition and experience 'the fulfilment offered by doing, being and sharing' (MUDAM). In these cases the object is the catalyst for the interaction or situations taking place and thereby the object is still central although the wax or the chair produced might appear to become less important than the process. Revolving around the object Seymour facilitates experimental workshops with hands-on DIY experiences which express a belief in the creative potential of the amateur and perhaps a critique of the industrial production system.

### **Open ideology**

In comparison with these examples a different attempt to engage users as prosumers and to work with an 'open ideology' is seen in the project *Design for Download* by Droog. The project was presented at the *Salone Del Mobile* in Milan in 2011. The outcome of investigations into downloadable design was presented at this occasion while announcing the coming of an internet platform for *Design for Download*. This platform, MakeMe.com, is, however, presently only in beta version and does not provide actual possibilities to 'download, design, make and share digital design' (Droog). The platform remains to be realised and so does the aim of 'providing everybody access to design' (Ramakers). The Milan exhibition presented eight different to be downloadable product series of which Droog have included some of the furniture in their collection. The current Droog web

shop offers the possibility of purchasing one of the pieces from *Inside-out Furniture* by Minale-Maeda and different versions of the *Box-o-rama* shelving system by EventArchitectuur (Fig. 70 p LXV, Fig. 71 p LXVI). Certain modifications to the open ideology have, however, been made in the inclusion into the Droog collection.

Droog have posted the following positive press about the project, but the project have yet to fulfil this: 'When Droog launches its game-changing Design for Download (...) it will do for design in the 21st century what IKEA did in the 20th – democratize it – in this case bringing design directly to anyone with an Internet connection, with no international shipping or middlemen required. Just choose and configure your design, download the schematics and either take them to a nearby fabricator or give it a try yourself' (Droog). First of all the available design products are far from free: the *Box-o-rama* ranges in price from 1075 to 2795 €. It is possible to customize the shelving system in terms of colour and how the boxes should be placed, but the design is not available for download. This way the design cannot, as intended by Droog, be produced locally by a manufacturer or even by the end-user themselves. Instead the product is shipped in a flat pack to the customer to assemble. The linkage to the concept of design for download appears completely missing in the concrete product in the case of the cabinet from *Inside-Out Furniture*: the cabinet can be bought as any other product and user participation is reduced to its assembly.

If looking critically at the outcome of the *Design for Download* project, one could ask what is really 'open' about this and does it actually differ that much from furniture from IKEA besides from the price? Some of the intentions in this project remains unfulfilled for example the opening up of the design industry to the customer and compressing the process between design and production while minimizing costs so it would 'bring our products within reach for people who would not otherwise be able to afford them' (Ramakers). It can be discussed whether the co-creation allowed for user in terms of arranging boxes and picking from a standard set of colours is enough to justify a price

beyond 'accessible', neither does the multiplex beech material of the furniture add exceptional value. Ramakers has described *Design for Download* as a 'learning process' and 'an exploration of a concept' and it remains to be seen whether, or how, it will develop further in relation to being open access (Ramakers). The users can in the Droog products such as the *Box-o-rama* create their version of the shelving system: the compositional choices are, however, limited to choosing between certain rectangular boxes and colours. In this case, the aim might have been to create a platform for open design in the form of detailed designs of finished objects for end users to make themselves for free. In its current form the outcome is, nonetheless, a product which the user can customize, purchase. When receiving the flat pack the user can, according to Droog, 'click together and feel like a carpenter for a minute' (Droog). For now, the open ideology seems in the context of the Droog collection to have been transformed into any other exclusive Droog product while the design-production-consumption process has not been critically altered.

### **Social engagement**

The analyses of projects combining art and design in order to create solutions for homeless people reflected the form of prosumption where the producers (artists, designers) co-create with consumers (users, audiences). This was demonstrated to be the case in the *Homeless Vehicle* by Wodiczko and *PARAsite* by Rakowitz as both projects were based on the active engagement of user's in the creation or design process (Fig. 28 p XXVII, Fig. 29 p XXVIII). In the description of the *PARAsite* project on his website Rakowitz explains how the different versions of the tent have been adapted to the users. For example the user Artie who initially requested 'a domed sitting space for himself and his girlfriend (...) connected to a lower, intimate sleeping area for two' but then later wanted Rakowitz to make two domed sitting areas separated by the sleeping area, so Artie would be separated from the talkative girlfriend (Rakowitz). Furthermore both projects are, as well as the others projects of design for homeless and refugees examined in previous chapters, examples of engagement with users which relate to the social turn



across contemporary creative practices. This social turn is reflected in the works of Wodiczko and Rakowitz in the attempt to solve, or create awareness of, a social problem. At the same time social relations in these projects are potentially produced by and between the involved users. In comparison the garment-shelters by Orta can also be said to illustrate a social turn while making the social conditions of refugees a central issue in her work, but potential users do, however, not appear to be actually involved in these projects. None of the different shelter solutions described are available as open design or works in the sense of downloadable DIY solutions, but the *PARAsite* tent differs by being provided free of charge. A key feature about the *Backpack Bed* is also that it is given out to those in need in collaboration with welfare agency partners (SwagsforHomeless).

In relation to these projects which engage with solutions, of a more or less permanent character, to social problems, the projects of artist Kenneth A. Balfelt comes to mind. In different collaborative projects combining the fields of art, design, architecture and sociology, amongst others, Balfelt has worked, with a participatory approach, with marginalised groups in society. His projects include for example the design of an injection room, the relocation of beer drinkers in an urban park and the re-design of *Mændenes Hjem: The Home of the Men* located at Vesterbro in Copenhagen (Fig. 65 p LX). This project was made in collaboration with the artist FOS, designer Charlott Karlsson, architect Helle Gade Jensen and interior designers Loop. The project consisted in the restructuring and interior design of spaces such as the café, TV-room, canteen and the reception in *The Home of the Men* which is a shelter for homeless. The men in the shelter, near the central station of Copenhagen, are homeless and have mental and/or addiction problems. According to Balfelt and FOS, the refurbishment of the shelter is the result of a nine-month period of research conducted: 'for a better understanding of the institution, the staff, the users, the subject of homelessness and drug addiction' (Balfelt). Although the users were sceptical during the research period they did participate in workshops where they could have their say about the renovations and changes. FOS, Balfelt and the others aimed, through their

re-design, for creating a 'less hierarchical atmosphere' (Balfelt). This meant, among other things, implementing a new entrance, new rooms for sleeping and counselling, different furniture and a caravan meeting room.

The project aimed to 'downplay the "patient-doctor" relationship' by creating rooms or spaces for new forms of interaction or togetherness (reference). This is perhaps most clearly articulated in placing a caravan to function as a meeting room especially for meetings between users of the home and the employed social workers. The making of a caravan meeting room not only meant moving the meeting room into the middle of a large common room but also meant creating a room potentially creating other associations than an office of the authorities. The choice of a caravan was, according to Balfelt, motivated in the positive connotations most people have in relation to caravans and because 'most homeless people know the interaction in a caravan and therefore the caravan became our choice for a meeting room which gave the homeless better possibilities for navigation on equal footing with the social workers' (SMK). Last year the caravan, designed to function in this specific social setting, had to be replaced by a room for drug-taking and was then acquired by the National Gallery of Denmark. By entering into the collection of the museum the caravan is moved away from the everyday context of use for which it was created into to a context of contemplation: here it will provide a physical documentation of artistic practices operating in the social field. Thereby the caravan returns to art which for FOS and Balfelt is a position or platform from which concrete and practical solutions are developed while actively attempting to intervene in everyday, social and political structures. Similarly the projects by Rakowitz, Wodiczko and Orta have art as the outset for combining design, art and a social agenda which result, to various extents, in art becoming functional forms in everyday life. However, whereas the caravan from *The Home of The Men* was probably not conceived to end up in a museum, the projects *Homeless Vehicle*, *PARAsite* etc. are in contrast intended as temporary interventions in public space followed by circulation in an art context.

## Co-creating and sharing with users

In comparison with the above mentioned projects, the analysed cases by Zittel, AVL and N55 does not reflect a similar social turn in terms of engaging in social issues such as homelessness etc. Their practices can, nonetheless, also be reconsidered in relation to the notions of prosumption, postproduction, participation and open ideology. I will begin with the practices of Zittel and AVL and initially recapture that most of their works and projects have in common that they are fundamentally intended for use. The formal language of their different designs has references to modernist architecture in common and thereby their micro architecture are examples of postproduction in the sense of being based on already produced cultural forms, however these cultural forms are not only re-used but interpreted and contested. The characteristics of prosumption are also articulated in the practices of Zittel and AVL in different ways. The practice of Zittel can be characterised as experiments with living spaces which Zittel herself tests by living in them. The *A-Z West* desert compound, which seems currently to dominate her practice, could be described as a fusion of production and consumption. In this project Zittel continuously produces an environment, in the form of a habitation and different related functionalities, which she and a group of people actively consumes. In contrast with some of the previous examples where users were actively involved throughout the process of production it would appear as though the creation and production of the different works are done with Zittel as the sole creator. However, many of Zittel's works, as for example the different living units can be considered as rather open structures and the potential residents can adapt and modify them according to individual needs. The active consumption therefore takes place not during the production process but after in the customization by users which is welcomed by Zittel. One could argue that the adaptations and customizations generated through the residents' use complete the works of Zittel. Thereby these works are not examples of co-creation throughout the production phase, what Zittel provides are instead open, yet also to some degree fixed, frames or models for living for users to

potentially fill out –users which in this context appear to be predominantly from the art community.

In both the practice of Zittel and the practice of AVL there appear to be an ambition or ideal to of a fusion of art and life through the engagement with design (and architecture). It is nonetheless debatable whether this fusion actually takes place – other than in the lives of the involved artists and co-workers. Very few of the different functional solutions created by AVL, related to dwelling, farming etc., seem to have been actually implemented and come to use by others in “real life”. Instead their active consumption is only present in different projects, e.g. the *AVL Ville*, where the members of the AVL Collective are living and working in them. Zittel and AVL have the investigation into and testing of different living systems in common, but their living units form a kind of micro societies, or artists’ colonies, which serve as models for living for users to observe but without an invitation to actually participate. I do not mean this as a critique, but rather as an observation about to which degree the selected examples of their works relate to current themes of or ideals of engagement of users. In the examples analysed in this context of, amongst other things, different mobile micro architecture neither Zittel nor AVL seem preoccupied with ideas about actively engaging users in the creation process. Instead their works have this character of proposals or model for viewers to contemplate - or complete- but without any indications of how to engage or potentially realize these models.

In contrast, the practice of N55 is based on the ambition of engaging users and on sharing the works or “things” made by N55 as they are provided as ‘manuals’ (N55). As already described, N55 can be describes as prosumers or post producers in the sense that many of their projects are based on the geodesic structures or architecture developed by Buckminster Fuller. In their practice this post productive or open source attitude extends to other users. N55 describe their own practice as revolving around working ‘with art as part of everyday life’ and they aim to implement N55 ‘things’ in various situations around the world (N55). As part of this implementation into everyday life, all works are

considered as ‘manuals’ and are available on their website as ‘open source provided under the rules of creative commons’ (N55). As users we are free to share their creations and adapt them as long as appropriate credit is given to N55 and the creations are only used for non-commercial purposes. A DIY manual for creating a *XYZ Spaceframe Vehicle* is for example downloadable at their website, but the manual is not user-friendly in the sense of being simple and the assembly would demand skills and capabilities (N55). Apart from the assembly manual of the *XYZ Spaceframe Vehicles* few of the works actually comes with a manual in terms of construction drawings and step by step guides. Instead the so called manuals are overall descriptions of the work including technical specifications, component lists and component diagrams which does not easily enable the user to create a similar thing or system – as many of the systems are, to various degrees, quite technically advanced e.g. the *Solar Power System* or the *Spaceplates Greenhouse* (Fig. 69 p LXIV).

On the one hand it is debatable whether these things or systems would actually be created by users as they would be rather complex and demanding to make. The concept of ‘manuals’ therefore appear more as ideology than pragmatism. On the other hand, one could perhaps argue that precisely because the things are not easy-to-build the user will be more ‘empowered’ by the acquisition or cultivation of skills in the process of making. The assembly would in this way differ from DIY experience which perhaps most people relate to: the home assembly of IKEA furniture. According to von Busch, the assembly process is in that case carefully curated by IKEA and results in the following: Yet, this controlled assembly also strips the builder from a learning experience. You can build the whole IKEA catalogue but still not come any closer to becoming a carpenter or cabinetmaker’ (von Busch, 2012 p 452). There is no doubt that following most of N55’s quite vague manuals would be a learning experience which perhaps only few people would actually undertake. But in this way N55 are not making their expertise redundant, as they offer N55 Services. They can assist in ‘improving living conditions wherever it is needed, in collaboration with local communities or persons around the world’ by implementing existing N55

systems, adapting them or developing new systems for the situation (N55). The openness in the projects by N55 also includes involving users actively in the process in some examples for example when commissioned for a project or as events in relation to an exhibition. But overall the idea of open appears mainly to relate to their works, that is finished 'things', being open and free for users to make as described in a N55 manual whereas the degree of user participation during the process of designing a thing or system seems limited. The users must instead realize the things by themselves, which requires skills at a certain level and furthermore the so called manuals demand an active effort from the user as they lack specific instructions, this lack does, however, leave a lot of room for creative adaptations. The outcome of the practice of N55 is freely published online, but the described lack of detailed instruction manuals may potentially limit the circulation of the N55 'things'.

The practice of Superflex also reflect an ideology of co-creating and sharing with users and their works or project are consequently termed 'tools' (Superflex). Furthermore their projects often are often combined with a social or political agenda as they base their projects on specific locations and the related challenges. Following this Superflex creates solutions which potentially contribute to solving the issue at hand for a group of people. The terming of their works as tools emphasizes their strong focus on problem solving and a tool is defined as: 'a model or proposal that can actively be used and further utilized and modified by the user' (Superflex). Superflex has focus on the active engagement of users in the process and the attempts to give users the continued ownership of the solution – something they have in common with FOS & Balfelt. According Superflex often collaborates with locally based NGO's and furthermore collaborates with actors with different expertise, depending on the project, such as for example engineers.

Superflex has created a large and diverse range of interesting 'tools' from which the *Supergas* project is an example (Fig. 66 p LXI). This project illustrates how Superflex creates functional proposals and over time develops them further into actual production.

*Supergas* is a 'tool' which consists of a small biogas unit, running on organic materials such as agricultural waste and human and animal faeces, which provide sufficient gas for the cooking and lightening needs for a family living in rural areas in for example Africa. The first biogas system was tested in 1997 and installed at a small farm in central Tanzania and later the system has been installed in Thailand and on Zanzibar. The project was part of *The Land* project in Thailand: Superflex was invited to use a piece of land to experiment with the biogas system and build a house. Tests were then made by a farmer and his family living there. The construction of the biogas system has been made in collaboration with a biogas engineer, Jan Mallan, and its implementation and further development in Tanzania and Zanzibar is the result of collaborations with NGO's such as Dantan (*Supergas*). The project has, besides being implemented at these locations, been widely exhibited in museums and galleries. The Louisiana Museum, where the project was shown in 1997, was 'a main sponsor of the first biogas installation in Tanzania' (Superflex). The project has resulted in *Supergas Ltd.* where the engineer Mallan and other partners and investors are working to develop the project into commercial use in different parts of the world. Following this the project was taken a step further in 2010-11 as prototypes were developed for a new design made for mass production in cooperation with two companies in Mexico (Fig. 67 p LXII). Information on the current state of the development of these prototypes or future locations for installation is not available at the present time, but a downloadable *Supergas* DIY manual, as well as descriptions of the system, is accessible at website of *Supergas* (*Supergas*). This example is just of many projects by Superflex that illustrate the social engagement. It also reflects that their works also provides people with 'tools' for further concrete use and a close cooperation with and engagement of users.

As already pointed to, the practice of Superflex reflects an open source attitude as a central strategy is to make their work - and the work and design of others - accessible to people. This is illustrated in their many *Copy* projects which also reflect that the open ideology inherent in their practice include provocative attempts to make the designs by

others available as open tools as well. Superflex is in many cases prosumers of the designs of others which they then use for further co-creation, sharing and through this empowering of users. For example, in relation to the *Supergas* project, they have incorporated an already-existing product, the *PH 5* lamp, challenged the copyright and post produced it as the *Biogas PH5 lamp* (Fig. 68 p LXIII). This lamp is a modified version of the very well-known lamp by designer Poul Henningsen and made into a biogas lamp in order to 'create a lamp for people living in areas with no access to electricity' (Superflex). The *PH 5* lamp was designed for mass production and, as Superflex rightly points to, Henningsen himself argued for democratic design and that design should also contribute to the lives of the weakest groups in society. Today the lamp, which has been canonized as one of the best Danish design, is only within reach for people of some economic resources and it has become a very popular lamp in middle class homes in Denmark. Superflex can arguably be said to attempt to re-democratize the lamp by their modification of the *PH 5* lamp – or as Superflex formulates it, they have made: 'a rethinking of the original concept adapted for a globalised world' (Superflex). This rethinking was, however, not welcomed by the lighting company Louis Poulsen Lighting A/S who holds the copyright for producing the lamps of Poul Henningsen. They wanted the lamp removed from an exhibition in Sweden, but it was, nevertheless, agreed after negotiations between Superflex and Louis Poulsen that the project could continue under certain conditions (Superflex).

### **The enablement of sharing**

A final perspective on these examples of sharing and engagement with users concerns the enablement of this openness. The open source manuals of N55, the *Design for Download* by Droog, the *Amateur Wax* by Seymour and Superflex's different tools all express, although in different ways, what von Busch has described as an ideological aim of 'distribution of production capacities' (von Busch, 2012 p 446). These projects furthermore have in common that it is to some extent digital technologies, including the Internet, which



enable the sharing and openness. According to both von Busch and Nakajima, the Internet is not only a technology that enables the sharing, but also a technology which generates new ways of thinking and has, for example, resulted in the 'open ideology' (von Busch, 2012 p 446). Nakajima also considers the rise of prosumption in art as closely related to the use of new digital technologies. He argues that even artists who do not use the technologies adopt the language and thinking prevalent in digital and social media 'such as DIY (do it yourself), culture of use, marketing and branding' (Nakajima, 2011 p 560). Similarly von Busch observes that is 'has over the last decade become commonplace to describe our social worlds on the basis of concepts derived from the world of computers and new media technologies' (von Busch, 2012 p 448). Terms and concepts such as networking, platform, and open source are for example often recurring in the cases of N55 and Seymour. Nakajima understands prosumption as 'the fusion of the processes of production and consumption' and considers art as a social and collective activity (Nakajima, 2011 p 550). Consequently, I would consider the concept of prosumption to be linked with the ideology of openly distributing works, designs, or 'things' and this open source attitude enables prosumption on the part of the consumer.

The open ideology is central to the practice of N55 both in their logic of thinking and in their appropriation of the Internet as mode for generating and sharing knowledge in the form of things. For N55, at least for now, the Internet provides a platform where their manuals can be downloaded. The possibilities of engaging users actively, by for example uploading images of the N55 things, are, however, unutilised at their internet platform. N55 do, however, 'encourage persons developing new XYZ SPACEFRAME VEHICLES to mail it to [N55] for publishing' (N55). In a similar way, Seymour also makes use of new technologies in the most basic sense by just making the *Amateur Wax* available for download. Although Superflex characterises their artworks as working tools for citizens to use, there is hardly any tools available to download at their website, except for the recipe for the recipe and branding elements of *Free Beer* which is published under a Creative

Commons. In comparison, Droog makes more use of the different new software technologies available, as they try to engage the users online by using a programme for customization of the *Design for Download*. The reason why the technological possibilities are used differently by Droog can of course also be found in the fact that Droog is a commercial company. Consequently they are operating with a different logic in relation to being open: the users may customize the designs but only to a limited degree to ensure that the final product still has the "Droog character". How users want to make and adapt N55 things is open and similarly Seymour does not explicit specific intended uses of his wax. One could argue that N55, Seymour and Superflex could potentially use the possibilities of the new technologies more to also create online relations between people: the users of the manuals, the wax and the tools. But perhaps it is exactly a point in these cases that the while the Internet may enable sharing, the actual aim is to have participatory collaborations taking place as physical meetings and interactions between users and the artists or designers.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusions on transgressions and mixtures**

The hybrids described and interpreted throughout this thesis are arguably very diverse as they reflect a variety in attempts to challenge, expand or fertilize the practice of design and art respectively through, what could by a botanical analogy be described as, cross pollination. The analyses have demonstrated several quite different ways and objectives of combining or mixing art and design. However, a commonality across the range of hybrids has been a focus on material, three-dimensional objects in a sequence moving from the scale of objects within a category of “work”, to the scale of product design and the larger scale of micro architecture. In relation to this selection of the material outcomes of the contemporary hybridity of design and art, a strong focus in the analysis has been on the relationship between the materiality of the hybrids and the tactics, potential meanings and purposes that they reflect. But before I recapitulate my examples by considering how the object-based analysis has enabled a greater understanding of their hybridity, also in terms of how this challenges the concepts of design and art, I would like to discuss the hybrids by including the perspective of disciplinarity.

### **Disciplinarity and working models**

The discussion in the previous chapter of prosumption and postproduction combined a focus on analysing the production and the use side of hybrids, considered as production modes which fuse production, or creation, with consumption, or use. Another perspective on the production side of hybrids is to address the studio models of the creative practitioners in the cross field between design, art and related fields, which Coles has described as the transdisciplinary studio (Coles, 2012). This is motivated in the observance of another commonality between the practitioners working across design, art and other fields have in common: namely that the projects and works are the outcome of cooperatives or collectives of artists, designers, other creative practitioners and/or different types of specialists. Creating hybrids seems related to particular ways of working and collaborating especially when as the hybridity becomes as more complex. As introduced in

the first chapter, Coles argues for transdisciplinarity, in the sense of how contemporary practitioners work and collaborate in cooperatives or collectives, as an important factor in explaining the tendency to create hybrids. Consequently it will be discussed in the following how engaging with projects not confined by disciplinary boundaries may often be interrelated with forming multidisciplinary or even transdisciplinary teams. This discussion of the relevance of the term transdisciplinary to characterise the different types of practices between art and design reflected in this thesis will also include reflection on what motivate the moves between disciplines in my case studies.

As already accounted for in the review of Coles' publication on the interrelationship between design and art, Coles characterises contemporary practices between design, art and related disciplines as transdisciplinary. Coles' attempts at pinning down a definition of transdisciplinarity leave some precisions to be desired, but he points to Studio Olafur Eliasson as an example of a transdisciplinary studio. Following this a transdisciplinary studio is characterised by being a place where specialists from different fields collaborate and form transdisciplinary teams in relation to selected projects (Coles, 2012 p 9). According to Coles the transdisciplinary studio model can lead to: 'a form of practice where issues are explored and rigorously tested precisely because they are not confined by disciplinary boundaries, (but) it can also result in the overproduction of generic looking objects, installations, spaces and buildings' (Coles, 2012 p 10). For Coles, the studio model is central to interpreting the works of practitioners who move with fluidity across disciplines, although he states that he 'makes no claim to the studio as a primary site for the production of meaning of its output' (Coles, 2012 p 10). He emphasizes that the way a studio is mobilized is a crucial component in the analysis of design and art practices: 'The place and means by which a work is generated – which, on occasion has a hand in shaping its reception – must be accounted for' (Coles, 2012 p 11). I agree with him in the observation that the transdisciplinary structure is a fundamental aspect of many of the practices moving across disciplines operate, however, as will be elaborated, I am reluctant

to replace all other characterisations of these practices, e.g. relational art and designart with the term transdisciplinary, as it seems to be the ambition for Coles. For Coles the notion of the transdisciplinary is both an operative model for the practitioner and a model, or theoretical praxis, to drive the work's interpretation as transdisciplinary can account for the processes by which the artists and designer generate the work (Coles, 2012 p 13). The following will illustrate that the term transdisciplinary is not completely adequate to characterise the diverse types of practices between art and design reflected in this thesis. Nonetheless, the argument made by Coles about the emergence of new creative practices best described as transdisciplinary will serve as a point of departure for revising the different cases analysed of moving in-between and across disciplines. In addition to the focus on whether these practices can be characterised as inter-, multi- or transdisciplinary, it will be considered what motivates the moves between disciplines. The discussion of how hybrids appear to be linked to hybrid practices will lead to reconsiderations of how I have with a material object-based approach, in contrast to Coles, placed more emphasis at interpreting the outputs of the cross fields between design and art, as the underlying processes which may have generated the works have not been the core focus in my analyses but a part of the interpretations.

The practitioners used as the examples in the chapter on hybrid objects were Robert Stadler, Jurgen Bey, Martino Gamper and various others in the section on the appropriated plastic monobloc. Here the discussion of disciplinarity will be limited to focusing on the practices of Stadler, Bey and Gamper as they reflect different, yet similar approaches to crossing and combining disciplines. Stadler describes his own practice as interventions in diverse fields and, as his works illustrate, he is occupied with exploring the exhibition space 'in order to scramble the usual categories of art and design' (Stadler). The term interdisciplinary, in the sense of 'involving two or more academic, scientific, or artistic disciplines', appear to encompass the practice of Stadler better than transdisciplinary. Stadler creates hybrids, by combining furniture and sculpture, use and

contemplation, which seem motivated by breaking into a new category and perhaps reaching a broader or different audience. However, as already mentioned in the analyses of his works, his practice is also constituted of mono-disciplinary design work besides working in an interdisciplinary way. Creating works of design, nonetheless, appear to expand the spaces for action for Stadler in terms of opportunities for experimenting with and challenging both design and art. At the same time when creating objects which could be placed in both art and design contexts, new spaces open up in a more tangible way as exhibition spaces and new markets.

### **Hybrid works and hybrid, or transdisciplinary, practices?**

The earliest projects I mentioned by Jurgen Bey such as *Tree Trunk Bench* and *Extrusion Bench* were made in collaboration with the collective Droog. Since 2002 his practice is located within Studio Makkink & Bey which is formed together with architect Rianne Makkink. The studio also engages a design team and as a design practice they are working: 'in various domains of applied art and includes public space projects, product design, architecture, exhibition design and applied arts' (Makkink&Bey). The practice of Bey is, in comparison with Stadler, more collaborative as the cooperation with an architect and a design team is central to his practice. The team, which 'includes professionals from many different fields of knowledge; forming alliances with other designers, architects and experts', does not appear to include artists but this inter- or multidisciplinary practice often expands into the field of art as well. The expansion into art seems however to happen because of the critical or speculative approach to design that their practice reflects. Rather than a deliberate move into the art world, as articulated in the practice of Stadler, it would seem that the context of art is just another platform for Makkink & Bey in a range of potential spaces to investigate, exhibit and discuss design.

The practice of Gamper can also, similarly to the practice of Stadler, be said to be interdisciplinary, as he combines design and art. This is also what is emphasised in the

presentation of his practice: 'Working across design and art venues: Gamper's practice engages in a variety of projects from exhibition design, interior design, specialist of one-off commission and the design of mass-produced products for the cutting edge of the international furniture industry' (Gamper). Even though Gamper mentions mass-produced products, I argue that 'limited editions' or one-offs seem dominant as the outcome of his practice. The works of design of Gamper, with their inherent appropriation tactic, performative aspect and their often sculptural qualities, have opened up for a wide circulation across museums, galleries and fairs of both art and design. His tactic of reworking furniture, and places, has led to number of projects commissioned by museums to redesign for example their welcome desk, cafe and other areas. Gamper seems, with his interdisciplinary practice, to have gained a particular access to the different institutional contexts within both design and art.

Many of the examples analysed in the second chapter on hybrid objects could be described as motivated by breaking into the category of art or at least into a more "privileged" sphere of contemplation instead of everyday use. The opposite move, from the sphere of art into the sphere of the everyday life, can be detected as the motivation or intention in the cases that followed in the third chapter. I consider the practice of Andrea Zittel as multidisciplinary, as she combines art, design, architecture and clothing in her almost all-encompassing investigations into living. But while her practice crosses many disciplinary boundaries, the outcomes predominantly circulate in the art world. Her works appears not motivated by actually breaking into design, although she engages with design. Instead the works remain an investigation of, comment on or alternative to design and the related systems of production etc., located within an art context. In similar ways, the practice of Atelier van Lieshout can be characterised as multidisciplinary or maybe even transdisciplinary, as AVL works across and engages art, design and architecture. In the case of Atelier van Lieshout the works are always marked as the outcome of this artistic collective or studio, although founded by Joep van Lieshout. This is in contrast to

Zittel who, despite having a team working with her, signs the work as the creator. The atelier or workshop of AVL has different departments, fibreglass, sculpture, wood, and metal workshops, where the different types of work are produced and employ twenty people with different backgrounds. The practice of AVL could, following Coles, even be described as transdisciplinary as the atelier experiments across such a diverse range of disciplines and institutional contexts: AVL is an expanded practice which requires a multifaceted cooperative with many different experts. The practice of AVL is characterised by fluid movements across different disciplines but another key feature is how AVL is often positioned tactically in an in-between position and thereby avoiding, for example, rules and regulations concerning building.

The group N55 can, like AVL, be considered as multi- or even transdisciplinary in its current formation. The group consists of Ion Sørvin who is responsible for N55 and two so called core collaborators: the architect Anne Romme and designer/activist Till Wolfer. These three members of N55 represent three different disciplines which makes the practice multidisciplinary at least. N55 engages in additional collaborations, according to the character of their projects, with for example musicians, engineers and researchers and thereby I argue that their practice also reflects transdisciplinarity. This transdisciplinarity reflected in the practice of N55 relates to the somewhat all-encompassing character of their work. By this I mean that as a consequence of working with art as a part of everyday life, the practice of N55 engages with a great range of the aspects of life from transportation, to hygiene issues, to habitation and food production etc. Accordingly they collaborate with different people from a range of disciplines in order to address the life “problem” and provide a manual for its solution. For N55 art provides a platform for creating these different solutions which are ultimately intended for everyday life. I would argue that N55 engages with elements of design and architecture, amongst others, but in an expansion of art aimed at creating manuals or so called things rather than motivated by a transgression into the other disciplines per se. For N55 it appears as though art is a position which can



potentially include a range of elements from many other disciplines and this hybridity also opens up for moving across a variety of contexts e.g. art, architecture, music, technology and science to mention a few.

Finally the practice of Superflex does also in various ways reflect transdisciplinarity although it consists in an artist's group of three members. They engage in a great range of aspects of life from biogas systems, to soft drinks and finances etc. which, as the case of N55, results in much diverse collaboration including with engineers, writers and creative practitioners. Furthermore it is characteristic for Superflex to engage with users at the locations where they implement their tools and this is often achieved with the help of local NGOs. Consequently Superflex is a good example of how practices characterised by great complexity and hybridity are related with working in a transdisciplinary way. The concept of transdisciplinary has proven to be useful to characterise some of the selected practitioners and a potential conclusion is that transdisciplinary ways of working are found more frequently as hybridity becomes more complex in some practices. I do, to some extent, agree with Coles in stating that the transdisciplinary studio model has emerged as a new way of working and that it is related to new conditions and possibilities across the creative fields. But at the same time I would again emphasize, as my analyses have showed, that the transdisciplinary studio model relates to some of the points of overlap between design and art (and other disciplines) while the working methods of practitioners positioned in other crossings are more adequately described as inter-, cross- or multidisciplinary. Finally, even though I find examinations of the studio model to be a relevant perspective in relation to understanding interpreting a phenomenon such as hybrids, I have worked from a position where the hybrids have instead been in focus. What has been gained from the close examinations of the objects will be considered now in the final conclusion.

## **The findings of closely studying hybrids**

This dissertation has aimed at clarifying and understanding the convergence and intermingling of design and art in recent decades by closely examining the material manifestations of primarily two different crossings or points of overlap between art and design. The analyses have demonstrated several quite different ways and objectives of combining or mixing art and design. I have examined hybrids within two selected points of overlap: 1) an engagement initiated mainly from design with art with furniture-like objects as the primary cases 2) an engagement initiated from art with projects ranging from product design to mobile micro architecture. As an additional dimension to these two groupings, I included examinations of the tendency running transversally through these practices in-between design and art in terms of the engagement in works or projects which are of open-ended, participatory and process character. A commonality across the range of examples within my two main categories of hybrids has been a focus on material, three-dimensional objects in a sequence moving from the scale of objects within a category of “work”, to the scale of product design and the larger scale of micro architecture. In the perspectival cases, in what could be considered a third grouping of hybrids, some emphasis was on process and co-creation, but the analyses also demonstrated how objects, or tools or manuals, were still present both as catalysts for and the goal of interactions between the creative producer and the users.

In relation to the overall focus on the material outcomes of the contemporary hybridity of design and art, a strong emphasis in the analysis has been on the relationship between the materiality of the hybrids and the tactics, potential meanings and objectives that they reflect. The analysis and interpretations of the hybrids have been inspired by phenomenological hermeneutics combined with a material semiotic approach where close examinations of the objects resulting from practitioners creating in-between and across design and art have been at the foreground. In the following I will recapitulate the nature of the findings in this research enabled by the object-based analysis. This reconsideration

of the deeper understanding gained of the hybrids will return to the concepts of design and art and discuss how the specific character of their hybridity consists in mixes and combinations of the parameters or characteristics which usually define the differences between art and design. Furthermore the conclusion will consider, as have to some degree been pointed to throughout the analysis, that the hybridity in many of the cases not only concerns a blend of elements or characteristics within the work, object or project, but the hybrid character is interrelated with mixing the mechanisms, discourses and systems of design and art respectively. These reflections on the different combinations of blending the characteristics of design and art, for example function and aboutness, with mixing their structural frameworks concerning production, circulation and consumption will lead to considering the differences between these hybrids with regards to their origin in different institutional contexts. Finally, while this thesis have primarily, through object-based analysis, identified the tactics, and their potential meanings, adopted in contemporary hybrids, this conclusive part will reflect on how, and which, other approaches and perspectives could potentially further enrich the investigations conducted here.

This conclusive part will begin with clarifications of the nature of the interpretative findings and a discussion of the results of the analytical approach of dealing with the selected examples as hybrids. The first grouping of examined examples was hybrids which relate to the category of objects, and more specifically furniture. While I may initially have considered these hybrids as the result of movements from design towards art, or of design attempting to be art, this perception have become more nuanced through the analyses. Although these ambiguous furniture objects adopt different characteristics from art, they do also sustain central parameters from, and relations to, design. The hybrid character of the objects examined here means that they can potentially be categorized and framed as art, design and/or in-between. It has from the beginning been an explicit intention to maintain an open attitude towards these hybrids in order to embrace their complex, unresolved and ambiguous character. However, as a result of the progression in

the analyses and interpretations, the grouping of hybrids objects have primarily been considered as hybrids with an origin in design which engage with art as a way to fertilize, enrich and question design. Although I maintain their hybridity and character of being in-between, I have mainly interpreted these crossbreeds, or crossings of design with art, as relating to, and commenting on, design and as a consequence I applied the concept of a work of design as a way to characterise the specificity of these hybrids. The concept of a work of design was applied in order to identify the particularities of these hybrids in terms of their inherent intermingling of design and art which made them distinguishable as design.

To strengthen or nuance how these hybrids can be considered distinguishable from artworks further comparisons could have been made between my case studies and examples of the tradition, described by Lise Skytte Jakobsen, within art of: ‘the creation of “useless” and therefore artistic chairs’ (Skytte Jakobsen, 2011 p 218). Such comparisons would possibly have pointed to similarities in tactics, form and style, making it difficult to distinguish whether the objects are design or art, however, it could also have contributed to elaborations on how the engagement with functionality as a parameter differs according to the disciplinary outset and intended context of the work. I consider my adaptation of the concept of a work of design to have enabled, in combination with closely observing the objects, interpretations of how the potential meanings of selected examples are generated specifically as a mixing of characteristics, considered as opposites, of design and art. The concept of a work of design allowed me to pose questions about whether, or how, these cases displayed the characteristics of a “designwork” in terms of the challenging of functionality, the aboutness and self-referentiality while at the same time identifying the hybridity of these examples with regards to the specific character of their mix, blend or cross pollination.

From the analysis of the different works of design I concluded that the practitioners engaged in material and formal experiments by adopting the format of installation and

painting as a media and mixing it with furniture. Thereby these works seem to support the observation, made by Meltzer (accounted for in chapter one), of the parallel use in design of installation as an exhibition format resulting in the rapprochement between art and design. The point is, as the analyses have shown, that when installation is used as a presentation format in these hybrids it is part of the attempts to gain status of an autonomous work. Furthermore, the examples of works by Stadler, Bey and Gamper overall illustrated that the parameter of functionality, related to design, is not completely abandoned in these hybrids. In fact, a very central aspect of these cases is exactly the function although in the form of experimentation, challenge or re-interpretation of the use-functions of the objects created. The engagement with functionality reflected in these hybrids is closely interrelated with the content or aboutness activated through the objects that is by creating furniture with new forms of utility different meanings are evoked. By carrying meanings and requiring interpretation, these hybrids include a central characteristic of art in the form of aboutness: aboutness, or content, which, as demonstrated in the analyses, were primarily themes or issues related to the history, discipline and consumption of design. Overall I therefore consider these examples to reflect mixings of design and art created in order to push how design is made, considered and used. These hybrids were interpreted as engaging with aspects of art in the sense of having content or meaning and while this often implied the working method of appropriation as a way to experiment and engage with aspects of function. The following analyses focused on the re-use, adaptation and transformation of the plastic monobloc chair. Although the concept of a work of design was not applied to these cases, some of the examples showed similarities in terms of their hybridity being constructed as combinations of use-function, by either enhancing or limiting its usage, and meaning, in the form of various commentaries on the plastic chair and the culture of mass consumption of which it is part. In relation to the monobloc chair I considered how different methods and material tactics were used in to transform the status of the plastic

chair from industrial, mass produced everyday object to an adoption from art of the status of singular, or limited, object. In the analyses the appropriated plastic monobloc I included the perspective, from Kopytoff, of a cultural life of objects to discuss how these examples, despite their diversity, all resulted in opening up new biographical possibilities for this everyday chair in the sense of now also gaining access to e.g. galleries of art and design which at the same time would exclude some of these modified versions of the chair from an everyday usage.

By entering into the context and rarefied atmosphere of the gallery, the hybrids objects becomes ascribed with, what Düttmann formulated as, exhibitability and untouchability and the presentation in e.g. a gallery, in contrast to a shop or showroom, certainly stimulate contemplation and speculations about the meaning of the work. As a further perspective on my analysis I could have focused more on taking into considerations how the gallery or art setting, and the related codes or protocols of reading or interaction, influences the reception of the hybrids. Certainly the context has an effect on the perception of the hybrids, as it emphasizes their partial functioning as art. However, due to the interpretations of how the hybridity of these objects still includes some aspect of functionality, although ambiguous, challenged or expanded, the analysed hybrids can be considered as also related to, what Taylor has termed, 'the discourse of the creation of use-objects' (Taylor, 2011 p 253). An interesting perspective, which would be relevant to research and unfold further is how the mediation and discourses influences these objects in-between and how these framings of, what I have termed, hybrids continually changes. These hybrids have within the design world for a period been accounted for as designart, and to some degree they still are described as such, but the rhetoric concerning this cross field and the related practices would now appear to have less focus on the art-element. Instead such manifestations more and more frequently become characterised as categories within design, and not as combinations with art, as they are for example termed "experimental" design and "independent" design.

One of the conclusions reached, on the basis of the examined cases, is that overall the hybridity of these objects is closely interrelated with mixing the mechanisms and structures related to design and art respectively. Based on my analyses, the conclusion about the specificity of these hybrids which can be made is that the manifested hybridity relates both to creating some kind of autonomous work and to creating more autonomy, or freedom, for the practitioners. Overall the hybrids analysed in the second chapter reflect, what is normally considered as characteristic for artistic creation, self-initiated and free experimentation and the outcomes are primarily circulated through galleries, museums and design and art fairs. It is important to emphasize that the reflected strive for more autonomy does not lead to these designers crossing the border completely into art but creating hybrids enables them to move in-between and across design and art. Thereby I reach a similar conclusion in relation to the designers analysed here, as Taylor, in the form of arguing that autonomy and assuming the role of an artist are central parts of creating hybrids (Taylor, 2011 p 258). Similarly to Taylor, I consider the creation of hybrids as opportunities taken by designers to be self-tasking and exploring own concerns which may be said to form a counter-culture not based on the demands of companies or clients. Being a counter-culture does, however, not in these cases reflect a wish for being at a distance from, or outside of, culture, instead it reflects, according to Taylor: 'an effort to find a place within a culture of designing and making that is not controlled by the dictates of industry' (Taylor, 2011 p 258).

This pointing to these design practices, in-between design, art and related fields, as a kind of counter-culture within design opens up for potential perspectives in further research in the form of analysing this network or generation of designers, who would appear to work with new parameters, motivations and resources and in new contexts, as a specific case of design culture. Taking on a design culture approach, as advanced by Julier, would mean focusing on the interactions and relationships of the activities of designers, other actors such as gallerists and producers, consumers, objects, images, spaces etc.

(Julier, 2014 p 230). The thinking inherent in this approach is, as Julier notes himself, parallel to the thinking, termed ANT, around assemblages constituted of networks of human and non-human actors (Julier, 2014 p 230; Latour, 2005; Law, 2009). Especially, if my research had only focused on what could be termed the designart network, it would have been interesting to elaborate more, through the use of the actor-network tool and without losing the sensibility to materiality, on how the meanings of the analysed artefacts are formed through the negotiations carried out and how the hybrids could be considered as actors in this network. However, instead of thinking specifically in terms of networks and relationships, my starting point has been the objects and the interpretations of their potential meanings, but, nonetheless, the analyses in this context to have generated understandings of the practices and their positions and transgressions within the networks of contemporary art, design and culture.

The other central focus in this thesis has been on a grouping of hybrids which are the outcomes of artists engaging with design to create different functional solutions for living and dwelling. The various examples ranging from being related to the category of product design to the category of micro or small-scale architecture. These analyses demonstrated that the solutions originating from positions within art were hybrids in the sense of adopting the functional elements from design and combining it with artistic intentions about raising awareness about a social problem. I consider these different solutions to potentially be regarded as functional solutions and thereby these hybrids include the parameter of social relevance, or of having potential impact on people's lives, which is often considered distinctive for design. I conclude, nonetheless, that these hybrids differentiate from the design projects in terms of how the emphasis, despite usability of their shelters, is still stronger on being a statement or protest. Within the case studies of the third chapter, I distinguished in between hybrids for homeless and hybrid dwellings for the pleasure-loving nomad both in terms of the manifested functionality but also with regards to how the material features generate potential meanings on the theme of minimal



existence. Across both types of micro mobile architecture I applied the opposition between pragmatism and idealism as a way to address the hybridity of this grouping of cases. Throughout my analysis of the different projects I considered them in the light of the opposition between being functional and applicable solutions or idealistic or utopian proposals. The interpretations showed that in many of these examples, it was not an either/or, but rather a combination of both pragmatism/functionality and idealism/aboutness/critique. Different examples from the practices of Andrea Zittel, N55 and Atelier van Lieshout illustrated how they addressed mobility, modularity and compressing the facilities of existing in small-scale habitation units. Focus in these analyses was on the specific character of their hybridity in terms of the combination of the functionality, or the physical layouts of the different living-units or capsules, and their meaning or content regarding how these solutions can be considered to reflect ideals about a self-sufficient possession-less existence.

The issues of self-sufficiency and freedom, or autonomy, in relation to societal and economic structures also lead to including the analogy of a parasite vs. an organism as a way to discuss the projects throughout the chapter. In contrast to the cases of the second chapter where the creation of hybrids were related to a degree of adopting the autonomous position of art, the cases of micro architecture does overall not reflect a move in the opposite direction towards, what has been described as, the heteronomy of design. Although, by being hybrids concerned with solutions for dwelling, these hybrids do not engage with the commercial or economic structures related to design and architecture. Instead it can be concluded that a characteristic across these examples is how they employ mobility tactically, e.g. to avoid building regulations. Some of the projects have the character of independent or autonomous organisms but at the same time there are various degrees of parasiting on existing structures taking place. It would overall in these hybrid projects, whether they relate to mobility by choice or necessity, appear that even though there is an engagement with the characteristic of design of problem solving, the steps are

not taken completely into account when making an impact on people's lives. Rather these hybrid projects reflect to a great extent instead problem raising activities, or aboutness in the form of critique of and reflections on human and social conditions, by proposing alternative ways of living. The hybrid dwellings analysed in this context can, as part of what constitutes their hybridity, overall be considered as maintaining an indirect relation to society and using art as a platform or laboratory for alternative imaginings about living. Thereby the hybrid dwellings analysed becomes, as I have pointed to, related to the notion of utopia, which has not only been associated with mobile architecture throughout the history of architecture, design and art, but regained currency in contemporary discourses in art in the form of micro utopias.

Finally I included the perspectives of prosumption and postproduction to discuss the underlying threads running across the cases of the two groupings. From these discussions it can be concluded that the hybridity reflected in many of the cases become further complicated or composite by the aspirations to engage users as participants and prosumers. The aspects of co-creation and participation, which influences several of the practices in-between design and art, further challenges the opposition between the contemplative function of art, requiring interpretation, and the functionality of design, requiring use. In such hybrid works or processes, as have been described in chapter four, the activities for the users becomes a mixture of creating and using which in turn generates both the function and the meaning of projects. For example when Seymour engages in his *Amateur project* he combines design with the element of a more free experimentation, but when users also becomes engaged the mixture goes beyond adopting the self-initiated creative approach from art. Furthermore the analysis showed how many of the practitioners blending design and art, e.g. N55, Seymour and Superflex, are preoccupied with openly sharing their works or products with users. This reflects both on the autonomy related to art and the heteronomy associated with design: by making the artefacts, tools or manuals, available for users the autonomous status of their artworks is

challenged as the works potentially obtain a direct and concrete impact in people's lives. But simultaneously these open source works also challenges design's usual close relation to economical and commercial forces, as they constitute, or propose, an alternative to market-driven consumption. Thereby some of the hybrids can be framed as part of broader tendencies within contemporary culture of engaging with our material culture in new ways which has been conceptualised as open source generation and a culture of use.

### **Hybrid and hybridity as analytical tool and conceptual framework**

In order to characterise and conceptualise the range of different mixtures of design and art I have throughout this thesis applied the notion of hybrid and hybridity. This has been motivated in the characteristics of the cases as blends of differentiated and heterogeneous entities or substances. I have applied hybridity as a 'transgression concept', that is to describe something which traverses or crosses borders or categories, which is parallel to the use of hybridity within sociology and cultural studies according to Birgitta Frello (Frello, 2006). My application of hybrid has similarities to how Frello describes hybridity being used as a transgression concept: 'Transgression concepts, however, are also employed to grasp positions, which fall *beside* the notion of a world of bounded cultures. That is, positions, which are "on the margin" – neither completely inside, nor completely outside' (Frello, 2006 p 2). The notion of hybrid has proven useful both in regards to maintaining openness towards these borderline, or in-between, cases of design and art, and in relation to acknowledging their character of falling beside or being on the margin. One might argue that hybrid is a somewhat vague term which designates a mixture but does not point to a specific blend and, as this thesis has demonstrated, it is obviously necessary to specify the components or elements constituting the hybrids in question. Nonetheless, the strength of this notion has within this context been that hybrid have encompassed all the examples as they have all been characterised by mixtures and some degree of transgression or displacement.

According to Frello, the application of hybridity as a concept has a critical dimension within social and cultural theory:

‘the concept of hybridity [...] has been used to indicate on the one hand an emancipating position and on the other something which is supposed to have a critical edge to it per se – that is simply by virtue of *being* hybrid or by virtue of possessing an ambivalent position somehow’ (Frello, 2006 p 3).

My application of hybridity has certainly reflected the ambivalence in the positions of the analysed artefacts and practices. My usage of the concept has, however, not included assuming an implicit criticality: some of the hybrids have, as the analyses demonstrated, reflected a critical edge. My framing of the hybrids have instead been in terms of supposing that they have aboutness or content: content which may or may not been considered as critical. But what the hybrids analysed in this thesis all reflect, through the blending of substances from design and art, is a questioning of categories. The different analyses have also reflected that contemporary hybrids may disturb and displace categories, but that hybridity does not automatically led to a blurring or dissolving of boundaries. Frello makes a similar observation:

‘Since boundaries are not manifestations of objective cultural differences, they do not automatically break down when cultural elements blend. Boundaries are socially constructed and they can pop up when they are least expected’ (Frello, 2006 p 4).

In relation to the present research, it can be concluded that contemporary hybrids simultaneously refer to the points of contact or overlap between design and art and to their distinct and opposite features. Thereby hybrids may be considered as a result of art and design both expanding, but they also implicitly reflect that distinctions between hybrid and “pure” still exists, and is challenged, across the creative disciplines.

## Summary

This dissertation relates to a moment in history of an apparently intensified interchange or confluence between art and design. A great diversity of manifestations of the interactions, convergences and merging of design, art and other creative disciplines can be found throughout the history of these disciplines as overlaps between them are a recurring phenomenon. The focus here is on a new generation of artists and designers who presently, and in the recent decades, have been working in different interfaces or points of overlap between the two disciplines. The scope is furthermore limited to primarily two passages within the plethora of movements and crossings between design and art in recent decades. The one crossing, and the resulting artefacts, which will be analysed consists in designers borrowing or adopting from art in order to challenge functionality and engage with “aboutness”. The other main crossing addressed consists in artists who are including design in order to give their works a strong element of utility and social relevance. The outcomes of these two passages or crossings between design and art are within the context of this dissertation characterised as hybrids in the sense of the combination or mix of elements from different sources.

This dissertation has aimed at clarifying and understanding the convergence and intermingling of design and art in recent decades by closely examining the material manifestations of the crossings or points of overlap between art and design. It has been argued and demonstrated how there are distinctions to be made within the apparent blurriness of design and art expanding or crossing into each other. The different examples have been grouped as primarily outcomes of two different crossings of art and design in order to account for both the diversity and similar traits across hybrids. I have examined within two selected points of overlap: 1) an engagement initiated mainly from design with art with furniture-like objects as the primary cases 2) an engagement initiated from art with design with project ranging from product design to mobile micro architecture. The approach to analyse and interpret the hybrids, or combinations and mixes, has been a

close examination of the objects resulting from practitioners creating in-between and across design and art (including also other related disciplines). With this approach the hybrids have been at the foreground while their context, for example their institutional and market-related conditions, and historicity have been less in focus but provided a background instead.

This dissertation consists of five chapters. The first chapter mapped out the terrain of the topic through a review of the literature concerning the contemporary design and art relationship. Hybrids relate to different concepts of design and art therefore I extracted different conceptualisations of art and design. In this chapter I also accounted for the terminology in relation to objects oscillating between art and design and I argued for why the term hybrid was chosen to describe this phenomenon. The chapter sketched the historicity of the interrelationship of design and art, as I focused on the more recent history as the background where historic parallels to contemporary hybrids can be found. Finally, I considered approaches study hybrids as I argued for analysing and understand the phenomenon through close object-based analyses supplemented with investigations of their contextual background.

In chapter two, the focus was on the crossing where hybrids are created which can be placed within the category of objects and furniture in particular. Different examples were analysed and interpreted in order to understand the outcomes of intermingling features from art with functional design objects. The first part of the chapter focused on case studies from the practices of three different designers: Robert Stadler, Jurgen Bey and Martino Gamper, and investigated how they engage with design through adopting tactics associated with art. This section also asked how to analyse and interpret these artefacts elsewhere categorised as designart and establishes an approach for doing so in terms of a paraphrase of a concept of an autonomous work of design. The second part of the chapter consisted of several examples of hybrids by different practitioners, designers as well as artists, where the recurring theme is the appropriation of the plastic monobloc chair.

Appropriation was considered as a key tactic or productive method used in objects oscillating between design and art, yet the cases are discussed and compared in relation to how the manifestations of this tactic vary according to both the point of origins of the practitioners and the intended context. The analysis showed that the material transformation of an everyday, mass produced object into an “extraordinary” object was characteristic for the selected appropriations of the plastic monobloc. This generated new meanings in relation to the plastic chair and as I argued also provides new biographical possibilities for the chair within a culture. Finally the last section provided a recapitulation and discussion of the questions concerning analysing and interpreting these hybrids as both bearers of meaning and function.

Focus then moved in the third chapter to the grouping of cases of artists engaging with design to create different functional solutions for living and dwelling. The various examples ranging from being related to the category of design to the category of micro or small-scale architecture were divided in relation to whether they appeared to be intended for a willingly or unwillingly nomadic life. I analysed different projects by e.g. Michael Rakowitz, Krzysztof Wodiczko and Lucy Orta engaging with the issue of homelessness by artists and compared these to some projects by designers. These analyses demonstrated that the solutions originating from positions within art were hybrids in the sense of combining the functional elements from design with artistic intentions about raising awareness about a social problem. As a contrast to these examples I included an example of a pragmatic and realised design for homeless. I concluded that what differentiated the artistic projects was the fact that the emphasis, despite usability of their shelters, was still stronger on being a statement or protest. Running through this chapter I addressed to various degrees the level of pragmatism and idealism in the different project. Considering the projects in the light of this opposition continued in the examples of solutions for dwelling for the nomadic existence by choice. The second part consisted in examples of micro mobile and temporary architecture generated from within the practices of Andrea

Zittel, N55 and Atelier van Lieshout. Different examples of their works illustrated how they addressed mobility, modularity and compressing the facilities of existing in small-scale habitation units. Focus in these analysis has, however, not only been on the physical layouts of the different living-units or capsules but also on how these solutions can be considered to reflect ideals about a self-sufficient possession-less existence. Finally a few parallels are drawn to historic examples as perspectives on the contemporary examples since mobile architecture has throughout the history of architecture, design and art been associated with more or less utopian ideas.

The fourth chapter addressed the question of which similarities or underlying threads which can be found across the diversity of my examples, apart from their shared engagement with both art and design, through the concepts of prosumption and postproduction. It was considered how the notion of prosumption could describe on the one hand the process of creating on basis of something existing and on the other hand the active engagement of users in creation processes. To elaborate on this discussion I included the concept of postproduction and demonstrated how this supplemented the understanding of some of the selected hybrids. I conclude that many of the selected practitioners creating hybrid objects engages in processes of prosumption and/or postproduction in the sense of making on the basis of already existing materials but focus is less on engaging users in this creation process. The projects related dwelling do, in contrast, display different degrees of actively engaging users, especially in the project for homeless people whereas the other group of projects for living reflects the visions of the artists more than involvement of actual users. This opened up some further perspectives of considering if the recurring tendencies of social engagement, focus on the participatory and an open ideology is also reflected in the practices placed somewhere between art, design and other related disciplines. The aspect of social engagement and openly sharing with users was, consequently, considered in some of the cases of hybrids analysed throughout the dissertation. But in order to elaborate more on these tendencies I also



described some examples which have not been accounted for in the thesis. These provided some additional perspectives on for example the practices of N55, Superflex, Seymour and Gamper who are all, in different ways, influenced by working in participatory and open-ended ways.

In the conclusive chapter I discussed the interrelationship between working in inter-, cross- or transdisciplinary ways and the creation of hybrids as I proposed that transdisciplinarity explains some practices in the points of overlap between art and design but far from all. Finally I recapitulated the findings of this research which based been based on the premise that the question of how and why hybridity is manifested in different objects and projects can be addressed by closely examining the material objects. I have demonstrated the differences in engagement or mixing of art and design in two different points of overlap, although they share an interest in creating bearers of both meaning and functionality. Other points of overlap between design and art could have been chosen, as there is a much larger range than has been possible to account for in this thesis, but I have argued that the two selected groupings of hybrids point to two central crossings in the complex border landscape of art and design. I hope to have contributed to elaborations and clarifications of a part of the ongoing interrelationship of design and art which consists of convergences and divergences. I have deliberately tried not to rigidly place these hybrids in either art or design but allow them to remain somewhere in-between. Nevertheless, the examples analysed in this dissertation have also repointed to where some of the borders between design and art still exist – although contemporary practitioners and the hybrids they create move with fluidity across them.

## Sammenfatning

Denne afhandling omhandler en periode i nutiden, som tilsyneladende er karakteriseret ved øget udveksling eller sammenflydning af kunst og design. Gennem historie kan der findes en stor diversitet af manifestationer, der er opstået ud af genkommende fusioner og sammensmeltninger mellem design, kunst og andre kreative discipliner. Fokus i denne sammenhæng har været på de nyere generationer af kunstnere og designere, der arbejder i forskellige grænseflader mellem de to felter. Fokus har yderligere været afgrænset til primært to grænseflade el. overlappende punkter mellem kunst og design: 1) grænsefladen, og de resulterende hybrider heraf, bestående primært af designere, der skaber kombination, hvor kunst indgår for at udfordre funktionalitet og udtrykke et indhold el. en kommentar, 2) grænsefladen hvor primært kunstnere inkluderer design for at skabe værk med elementer af brugbarhed og social relevans. Resultaterne; værkerne, objekterne, løsningerne, bliver i denne sammenhæng karakteriseret som hybrider, da de er kendetegnet ved at kombinere eller blande forskellige el. heterogene elementer.

Afhandlingen har haft til formål at afdække og analysere sammenflydningen af kunst og design gennem på nært hold at undersøge de materielle manifestationer af denne konvergens. Argumentationen har været, at indenfor den tilsyneladende uklarhed og udviskning kan der udpeges distinkte forskelle både i bevægelserne på tværs af disciplinerne og forskelle i udfaldet i form af hybriderne. I de to primære punkter af overlap har jeg undersøgt: 1) et engagement initieret primært med et udgangspunkt i design med møbellignende objekter, som de primære cases 2) et engagement initieret fra kunst positionen, her har casene været fra et spektrum mellem produkt design og mikro, mobil arkitektur. Tilgangen til at analysere hybrider har været næranalyser af de objekter, som er skabt af udøvere der bevæger sig imellem og på tværs af kunst og design. Med denne tilgang har objekterne været i forgrunden, mens deres kontekst, såsom de institutionelle og markedsmæssige betingelser og deres historicitet, har været mindre i fokus og i stedet udgjort deres baggrund.

Afhandlingen er faldet i fem dele, hvor det første kapitel udgjorde en udvidet introduktion til undersøgelsesfeltet og de relaterede problemstillinger. I dette kapitel har jeg gennemgået dele af den eksisterende litteratur om emnet, der er karakteriseret ved endnu ikke at være taget op i særlig høj grad indenfor akademisk litteratur. Hybrider relaterer i deres karakter af kombination af kunst og design naturligvis til forskellige begreber om design og kunst, og derfor består den følgende del af betragtninger over hvilke begrebsdannelser, der knytter sig til afhandlingens udvalg af hybrider. I dette kapitel har jeg endvidere reflekteret over og redgjort for valget af at betegne disse objekter, der bevæger sig mellem design og kunst, som hybrider. Dette blev efterfulgt af en kort skitsering af historikken i forholdet mellem design og kunst, idet der primært fokuseres på nyere historie som den kontekst hvor hybriderne skal forstås. Dette leder til beskrivelser af min tilgang til at analysere hybrider, der baserer sig på objekt-nære analyser, som suppleres med et udblik til deres kontekstuelle baggrund.

I afhandlingens andet kapitel er fokus på hybrider, der på en eller anden måde relaterer til møbler og forskellige eksempler analyseres og fortolkes for at forstå denne sammenblanding af karakteristika fra kunst med funktionelle designobjekter. Analyserne omfatter bl.a. eksempler af Robert Stadler, Jurgen Bey og Martino Gamper, der alle arbejder med design gennem at adoptere kunstneriske greb. I forbindelse med disse analyser indgår overvejelser af, hvordan disse artefakter, som andetsteds er blevet omtalt som designkunst, kan analyseres og forstås. I forlængelse af dette etableres en tilgang til analyse i form af en udvidelse af et begreb om et autonomt designværk. Dette efterfølges af en sektion med yderligere analyser af hybrider, der har det til fælles, at de er eksempler på appropriationer af plastikstolen (også kendt som plastik-havestolen). Disse eksempler er valgt idet appropriation som taktik eller arbejdsmetode forekommer at være hyppig blandt udøvere i krydsfeltet mellem design og kunst. Undersøgelserne viser, at denne arbejdsmetode dels resulterer i vidt forskellige transformererede plastikstolen, og at disse forskelle relaterer til om udgangspunktet er en design- eller kunst praksis. Fælles for disse

eksempler er dog, at der sker en materiel transformation af dette hverdagsobjekt, der bliver til et mere "ekstraordinært" objekt. Dette betyder ikke blot ændringer i betydningerne knyttet til plastikstolen, men også at stolen får nye "biografiske muligheder" indenfor kulturen. Endelige afsluttes kapitlet med en yderligere diskussion af spørgsmålene omkring hvordan hybrider, i deres egenskab af bærere af både funktion og betydning, skal forstås og analyseres.

Derefter var fokus i tredje kapitel på grupperinger af cases som primært er eksempler på et engagement med design fra et kunstnerisk udgangspunkt. De forskellige eksempler, fra design til mikro arkitektur blev opdelt i hvorvidt de syntes at være projekter tiltænkt et frivilligt eller ufrivilligt nomadisk liv. Forskellige projekter af bl.a. Michael Rakowitz, Krzysztof Wodiczko og Lucy Orta, der omhandler problematikken omkring hjemløshed blev analyseret og sammenlignet med lignende projekter skabt fra en design position. Analyserne viste, at projekterne fra et kunstnerisk udgangspunkt var hybrider i form af at kombinere de funktionelle elementer fra design med intentioner om at skabe opmærksomhed omkring et socialt problem. Ud fra sammenligningen med de pragmatiske og realiserede designprojekterne konkluderede jeg, at på trods af funktionalitet og anvendelighed i kunstprojekterne så var fokus primært på, at løsningen udgjorde en social protest. Gennemgående i kapitlet har jeg adresseret modstillingen mellem pragmatik og idealisme i disse projekter og dette perspektiv fortsatte i eksemplerne på bo-løsninger tiltænkt en frit valgt nomadisk tilværelse. Anden del af kapitlet fokuserede på eksempler på mobil mikro arkitektur skabt af Andrea Zittel, N55 og Atelier Van Lieshout. De forskellige cases viste, hvordan de behandlede mobilitet, modularitet og det midlertidige i kombination med at komprimere de basale faciliteter knyttet til vores eksistens i beboelses-enheder i lille skala. Fokus i disse analyser var ikke blot på den fysiske udformning og funktionalitet af disse forskellige løsninger men også på, hvordan mikro-enhederne kan siges at reflektere idealer om en uafhængig, selvforsynende eksistens uden mange ejendele. Disse nutidige eksempler artikulerer

genkommende ideer af mere eller mindre utopisk karakter og blev derfor afslutningsvist genovervejet ved at drage paralleller til bevægelser inden for arkitektur- og designhistorien.

Det fjerde kapitel udgøres af perspektiverende betragtninger bl.a. omkring hvilke fællestræk der evt. kan findes på tværs af de meget forskellige eksempler på et kombineret engagement af design og kunst. Argumentationen vedrørte, hvordan begreber omkring prosumption og postproduktion kunne bidrage til betragtningerne omkring hybrider. Prosumption forstået dels som at producere på basis af noget eksisterende og brugeres engagement i produktionsprocessen blev relateret til udvalgte eksempler. Dette suppleres med postproduktion som perspektiv, der viste sig at kunne udfolde forståelsen af de hybride praksisser. I relation til eksemplerne på udøvere, der skabte møbellignende hybrider konkluderede jeg derefter, at der oftest var tale om prosumption forstået som at skabe ud fra noget allerede eksisterende mere end prosumption forstået som et engagement af brugeren el. betragteren. Eksemplerne fra det tredje kapitel, i form af forskellige telt- og shelterløsninger til hjemløse mennesker, var derimod eksempler på at involvere brugere i udformningen, og relaterede derfor til den anden del af prosumption-begrebet. Prosumption viste sig i mindre grad relevant til at beskrive eksemplerne på beboelses-løsninger til et mobilt liv efter eget valg: her var brugere ikke involverede i samme grad, i stedet kan disse projekter betragtes som kunsternes visioner, om end pragmatiske, for måder at leve. Dette ledte videre til overvejelserne omkring hvorvidt eller hvordan nutidige strømninger i form, af fokus på socialt engagement, inddragelse af brugere og open source som ideal, kan siges at reflekteres i krydsfeltet mellem kunst og design som denne afhandling har beskæftiget sig med. Derfor blev supplerende eksempler af N55, Jerszy Seymour, Martino Gamper og Superflex inddraget, idet de alle befinder sig i grænsfeltet mellem design og kunst og samtidig er influerede af tendensen til at arbejde med brugerdeltagelse og processer af åben karakter.

Det afsluttende kapitel indledes med en diskussion, hvori det overvejes det i hvilken grad den tilsyneladende større hybriditet mellem discipliner, som resulterer i hybrider har en sammenhæng med inter-, multi- eller transdisciplinære arbejdsmodeller. Dette leder til den endelige konklusion og udpegning af, hvilke indsigter afhandlingen har frembragt idet præmissen har været, at spørgsmålet omkring hvordan og hvorfor hybriditet manifesterer sig i forskellige objekter kan adresseres ved at studere objekterne nøje. Jeg har demonstreret forskellene i engagementet med, eller sammenblandingen af, både design og kunst i to forskellige punkter af overlap og samtidig vist, at på trods af forskelle kunne en delt interesse udpeges i at kombinere at skabe bærer af både betydning og funktion. Andre overgange el. krydsfelter mellem kunst og design kunne have været valgt, idet grænsefladerne mellem design og kunst rummer et langt bredere udvalg end det har været muligt at afspejle i denne kontekst. Men jeg har argumenteret for, at de udvalgte grupperinger af hybrider har peget på to centrale punkter af overlap i det komplekse nutidige grænselandskab mellem kunst og design. Forhåbentligt bidrager denne afhandling til udfoldelser, nuanceringer og præciseringer til det fortsatte forhold mellem design og kunst, som skiftevis og simultant består af ansatser til adskillelse og fusionering. Gennemgående har jeg bevidst forsøgt ikke at placere hybriderne i enten kunst eller design, men stræbt efter at fastholde deres specifikke mellem-position og hybride karakter. Ikke desto mindre har disse hybrider gennem analyserne også peget på, hvad der udgør eller hvor grænserne muligvis stadig går mellem design og kunst – også selvom de nutidige udøvere, og de objekter de skaber, bevæger sig flydende på tværs af og over de to områder.

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<b>Exhibition Title, Place, Year</b>	<i>What if? Art on the Verge of Architecture and Design</i> , Moderna Museet, Stockholm 2000
<b>Focus</b>	The exhibition is an attempt to take the temperature of contemporary art by highlighting and discussing certain aspects of current artistic practice; the involvement with architecture - and therefore also place and space - and design - and thus style.
<b>Curator</b>	Maria Lind
<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://www.modernamuseet.se/en/Stockholm/Exhibitions/2000/What-if/">http://www.modernamuseet.se/en/Stockholm/Exhibitions/2000/What-if/</a>
<b>Contributing designers and artists</b>	Lotta Antonsson, Miriam Bäckström, Martin Boyce, Nathan Coley, Jason Dodge, Michael Elmgreen & Ingmar Dragset, Maria Finn, Sylvie Fleury, Liam Gillick, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Gunilla Klingberg, Jim Iserman, Jim Lambie, Sarah Morris, Rita McBride, N55, Hajnal Nemeth, Olaf Nicolai, Jorge Pardo, Philippe Parreno, Elizabeth Peyton, Tobias Rehberger, Gerwald Rockenschaub, Pia Rönicke, Simon Starling, Superflex, Apolonija Sustersic, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Andrea Zittel, Pae White
<b>Exhibition Title, Place, Year</b>	<i>Against Design</i> , Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), University of Pennsylvania, 2000
<b>Focus</b>	Thematic exhibition that brought together an international group of ten younger artists whose work consciously blurs the boundaries between art, architecture and design, environmental installation and interior décor.
<b>Curator</b>	
<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://icaphila.org/exhibitions/1814/against-design">http://icaphila.org/exhibitions/1814/against-design</a>
<b>Contributing designers and artists</b>	Kevin Appel, Angela Bulloch, Clay Ketter, Joep van Lieshout, Roy McMakin, Jorge Pardo, Tobias Rehberger, Joe Scanlan, Pae White, Andrea Zittel

<b>Exhibition Title, Place, Year</b>	<i>Strangely Familiar: Design and Everyday Life</i> , Walker Art Center, 2003
<b>Focus</b>	The exhibition brings together more than 40 such innovative projects, drawn internationally from the fields of architectural, product, furniture, fashion, and graphic design that range from the sublime to the uncanny. Through works that question the habitual, transform the commonplace, alter our expectations of dwelling, and blur the boundaries of form and function, the exhibition challenges our assumptions about the design of objects and spaces around us.
<b>Curator</b>	Andrew Blauvelt
<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://www.walkerart.org/archive/D/AD73B5FEB80AC7536166.htm">http://www.walkerart.org/archive/D/AD73B5FEB80AC7536166.htm</a>
<b>Contributing designers and artists</b>	Michael Anastassiades, Atelier Bow-Wow, Shigery Ban, Jop van Benkom, Thomas Bernstrand, Jurgen Bey, Constantin Boym, Blu Dot, Julian Lion Boxenbaum, Dunne & Raby, elephant design, Moreno Ferrai, Doug Graofalo, Markku Hedman, LOT-EK, MVRDV, Koers & Zeinstra & van Gelderen, , Nucleo, Marijn van der Poll, R&Sie, Martin Ruiz da Azua, Jennifer Siegal, Alejandro Stöberl, su11architecture + design, Frank Tjepkema, Shigeru Uchida, Paolo Ulian, Marek Walczak, Marcel Wanders, Allan Wexler, Rachel Whiteread, <a href="http://www.fortunecookies.dk">www.fortunecookies.dk</a> ,
<b>Exhibition Title, Place, Year</b>	<i>Design ≠ Art: Functional Objects from Donald Judd to Rachel Whiteread</i> , Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2004
<b>Focus</b>	An exhibition of virtually unknown design works by some of the most significant Minimalist and post-Minimalist artists of the last fifty years
<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://www.cooperhewitt.org/publications/design-is-not-art-sc-functional-objects-from-donald-judd-to-rachel-whiteread/">http://www.cooperhewitt.org/publications/design-is-not-art-sc-functional-objects-from-donald-judd-to-rachel-whiteread/</a>
<b>Contributing designers and artists</b>	Donald Judd, Scott Burton, Richard Tuttle, Dan Flavin, Sol Lewitt, Rachel Whiteread

<b>Exhibition Title, Place, Year</b>	<i>Wouldn't It Be Nice... Wishful Thinking in Art and Design</i> , Centre d' Art Contemporain, Geneve, 2007
<b>Focus</b>	An exhibition which addresses the application of wishful thinking in art and design today. It explores the thinking processes and working methods, that fall into the gap between various attitudes, forms of behaviour and creative practices
<b>Curator</b>	Emilie King Katya García-Antón, Christian Brändle
<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://www.centre.ch/en/wouldn-t-it-be-nice-en">http://www.centre.ch/en/wouldn-t-it-be-nice-en</a>
<b>Contributing designers and artists</b>	Dexter Sinister, Jurgen Bey, Bless Dunne & Raby , Michael Anastassiades, Alicia Framis, Martino Gamper, Ryan Gander , Martí Guixé Tobias Rehberger , Superflex
<b>Exhibition Title, Place, Year</b>	<i>Telling Tales</i> , V&A, London, 2009
<b>Focus</b>	The exhibition explores the recent trend among European designers for unique or limited edition pieces that push the boundaries between art and design. It showcases furniture, lighting and ceramics, designed by a new generation of international designers, who are all inspired by the spirit of story-telling.
<b>Curator</b>	Gareth Williams
<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://www.vam.ac.uk/microsites/telling-tales/">http://www.vam.ac.uk/microsites/telling-tales/</a>
<b>Contributing designers and artists</b>	

<b>Exhibition Title, Place, Year</b>	<p><i>Destroy Design</i>,  Mudac, Lausanne, 2010  Aarhus Kunstbygning, 2010  Design Museum Gent, 2012  Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2012</p>
<b>Focus</b>	<p>Through a selection of works from the FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais collection, the exhibition 'DESTRØY DESIGN' plunges us into the world of design and contemporary art. The common element of all these works of art is the object: redeployed, re-seen, sometimes mishandled, the object, often a part of everyday life, becomes installation, manifesto, photograph or sculpture.</p>
<b>Link</b>	<p><a href="http://www.fracnpdc.fr/?p=2504&amp;lang=en">http://www.fracnpdc.fr/?p=2504&amp;lang=en</a></p>
<b>Contributing designers and artists</b>	<p>John Armleder , Atelier Van Lieshout, Ralph Ball , Bless, Maurizio Cattelan, Ronan &amp; Erwan Bouroullec, Sam Durant, Didier Fiuza Faustino, Sylvie Fleury Front Design, Piero Gatti, General Idea Cesare Paolini &amp; Franco Teodoro, Andrea Zittel, Piero Gilardi, Liam Gillick, Marti Guixe, Dominique Gonzales-Foerster, Zaha Hadid, Swetlana Heger &amp; Plamen Dejanov, Francois Hers, Jim Iserman, Donald Judd, Charles Kaisin, Scott King, Antonia Low, Maxime Naylor, Gaetano Pesce, Tejo Remy, Radi Designers ,Philippe Ramette, Denis Santachiara , Markus Sixay, Florian Slotawa, Superflex, Barbara Visser, Maarten Van Severen, Christopher Wool</p>

<b>Exhibition Title, Place, Year</b>	<i>Design by Performance</i> , Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Hasselt, 2009
<b>Focus</b>	The exhibition 'Design by Performance' is a showcase for performative trends in contemporary design, which focuses not on the production of a finished product, but on the production process itself: objects whose realisation is a continuous project, affected or formed by either the environment, the specific situation in which they find themselves, or onlookers.
<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://www.z33.be/en/projects/design-performance">http://www.z33.be/en/projects/design-performance</a>
<b>Contributing designers and artists</b>	Atelier NL, Maarten Baas, Pieke Bergmans, David Bowen, Oscar Diaz, Edhv, Front, Martino Gamper, Simon Heijdens, Eric Klarenbeek, Sofie Lachaert & Luc d'Hanis, Laurent Liefoghe, Lawrence Malstaf, Bruno Munari, Markus Schinwald, Studio Glithero, Studio Libertiny, Tjep, Unfold & Tim Knapen
<b>Exhibition Title, Place, Year</b>	<i>The New Décor</i> , Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre, London, 2010
<b>Focus</b>	The New Décor is an international survey of contemporary artists whose work takes the common vocabulary of interior design as a point of departure. Refashioning forms and artefacts associated with interior space and presenting them in the public setting of a gallery, the artists in the exhibition respond to ways in which our private realms are increasingly interconnected with the outside world
<b>Curator</b>	Ralph Rugoff
<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/find/hayward-gallery-and-visual-arts/hayward-gallery-exhibitions/publishing/the-new-d%C3%A9cor">http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/find/hayward-gallery-and-visual-arts/hayward-gallery-exhibitions/publishing/the-new-d%C3%A9cor</a>
<b>Contributing designers and artists</b>	Monica Bonvicini, Martin Boyce, Tom Burr, Marc Camille Chaimowicz, Los Carpinteros, Jimmie Durham, Elmgreen & Dragset, Urs Fischer, Gelitin, Fabrice Gygi, Mona Hatoum, Diango Hernandez, Yuichi Higashionna, Jim Lambie, Lee Bul, Jin Shi, Sarah Lucas, Ernesto Neto, Manfred Pernice, Ugo Rondinone, Doris Salcedo, Roman Signer, Pascale Marthine, Tayou Rosemarie Trockel, Tatiana Trouvé, Haegue Yang



<b>Exhibition Title, Place, Year</b>	<i>Totem and Taboo: complexity and relationships between art and design, freiraum quartier21, Vienna 2011</i>
<b>Focus</b>	The exhibition is about conventions in art and design. The exhibition concentrates on contemporary art and contemporary design. Rather than explaining its subject, it explores a gap in the discourse on design and art and questions the boundaries of disciplines
<b>Curator</b>	Elena Agudio, Bessaam El-Asmar, Tido von Oppeln, Alexandra Waldburg-Wolfegg
<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://www.mqw.at/">http://www.mqw.at/</a>
<b>Contributing designers and artists</b>	Øystein Aasan, Stephane Barbier Bouvet, Paolo Chiasera, Jan De Cock, Kai Linke, Martino Gamper, Jeppe Hein, Lisa Lapinski, Rodney LaTourelle & Louise Witthoef, Kueng Caputo, Studio Makkink & Bey, Michaela Meise, Mirko Mielke Manfred Pernice, Gianni Pettena, Bertjan Pot, Stefan Sagmeister, Andrea Sala, Joe Scanlan, Clemence Seilles, Judith Seng & Alex Valder, Jerszy Seymour, Florian Slotawa, Albert Weis, Johannes Wohnseifer, Heimo Zobernig
<b>Exhibition Title, Place, Year</b>	<i>Overlap, Den Frie, København, 2011</i>
<b>Focus</b>	
<b>Curator</b>	Jørgen Carlo Larsen, Ditte Hammerstrøm
<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://denfrie.dk/portfolio-item/overlap2011/">http://denfrie.dk/portfolio-item/overlap2011/</a>
<b>Contributing designers and artists</b>	Maarten Baas, Bestué-Vives, Louise Campbell, FOS, Martino Gamper, Niek van der Heijden Michael Johansson, Krüger & Pardeller, Axel Lieber, Studio Makkink & Bey, Rita McBride, Tobias Rehberger, Karen Ryan David Svensson, Usin-e: Amaury Poudray, Rémi Bouhaniche, Sebastien Wierinck

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<b>Exhibition Title, Place, Year</b>	<i>Camouflage</i> , KIASMA, Helsinki, 2012
<b>Focus</b>	Visual art and design have often crossed paths in recent years in exhibitions, trade fairs and auctions. They have also come into contact on the pages of glossy magazines on design, art, architecture and urban living, as well as in blogs and online publications. In the <i>Camouflage</i> exhibition, contemporary art and design come even closer, engaging in dialogue and even masquerading as each other
<b>Curator</b>	Leevi Haapala
<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://www.kiasma.fi/">http://www.kiasma.fi/</a>
<b>Contributing designers and artists</b>	Handkerchief Productions Riitta Ikonen Kaisu Koivisto Sebastian Errazuriz Maaria Wirkkala Afke Golsteijn & Floris Bakker Silvia B

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