“...the usefulness of a method...is to provide an adequate way of ‘listening’ to the users, and to the world, in such a way that the new design becomes well fitted to people and to circumstances.” – J. Christopher Jones

DESIGNING RELEVANT OBJECTS

Users become attached to an object that has a clear identity because they develop a relationship with the piece. This extends the life of the product. Students will look at furniture through history to study rituals and archetypes that have informed design over time. The class will take a field trip to Portland to tour an upcoming NW furniture design exhibit and also Design Within Reach. Students will look at the most current design publications/sites and discuss relevant issues that affect design today.

Research will inform the design of two pieces – first, a one-of-a-kind object and second, a table intended to be produced in multiples.

Course Goals:
Students will gain knowledge of materials through hands-on crafting and experimentation. They will also develop a personal design strategy through debates about:

- the importance of form versus the expression of a story
- whether evidence of the human hand increases a user’s connection to a piece
- how today’s accessible computer-aided manufacturing environment allows the possibility for a designer to think past mass production to mass customization
- how these issues affect the relationship of the postindustrial designer to the user

Evaluation:
Students will be evaluated with respect to their ability to take clear positions though design and to the care, thoroughness, and craft of their finished pieces.