Borrowing

Winter 2015 IARC 4/586 Interior Architecture Furniture Design
Time: 1:00-4:50 pm Monday/Wednesday/Friday

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Designers take inspiration from many sources when designing a piece of furniture - from nature, architecture, art, or by observing user behavior. One technique that is sometimes used by furniture designers, is the borrowing of a detail from another object, often unrelated to furniture.

The reason we do that is a part of user psychology - people are naturally drawn towards the familiar and they can relate to the concepts an object reminds them of. When interacting with a piece of furniture for the first time, if there is a detail that the user finds familiar, we are more likely to tap our intuition about how the object is to be used and we more easily find resonance with regards to its beauty.

Each student will select an object (that is not a piece of furniture) and extract a defining detail to be used in the design of a piece of furniture. The introduction of this detail should achieve at least one of the following:

- improving the furniture’s comfort or usability

- challenging the perception of a typology of furniture by changing the way it is normally used

- creating a new typology of furniture that solves a problem in the home or work space

Throughout the term, we will be: assessing the appropriateness of the borrowed detail/s and the intended function of the final design, working with a sensitivity to proportion, form, usability and comfort, while we work with craftsmanship and build quality.

Example: Compass is a clothes valet designed by Copenhagen-based Stine Gam and Enrico Fratesi for the Italian furniture company Casamania. The details of this product are borrowed from a compass and a ladder, two objects that many people are familiar with. The result is a Compass Clothes Rack, a piece of furniture that breaks the mold of a conventional coat hanger and one that is unique yet familiar at the same time.