

# Urban animal

Playfulness in public furniture

Degree project, Master of Industrial Design 2020.

Felix Rosenlund



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HÖGSKOLA

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Playfulness in public furniture

Felix Rosenlund

Degree Project for Master of Fine Arts in Design, Main Field of Study  
Industrial Design, from Lund  
University, School of Industrial Design  
Department of Design Sciences

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# Abstract

This project focus on the exploration of playfulness in public furniture. The aim has been to identify and refine playfull aspects of form and function of public furniture through iteration and form exploration.

In this project the main purpose has been to develop an inviting, playful yet practical public seating environment for outdoor use. This paper documents the design process and reflections of the author throughout the project and the end result, an outdoor furniture called Urban Animal.

# Urban Animal

Playfulness in public furniture

Felix Rosenlund. MID2. Lund University  
School of Industrial design. 2020.





An abstract painting featuring a dense composition of thick, expressive brushstrokes in vibrant blue, red, and yellow. These strokes are set against a dark, almost black background. Interspersed among the thick strokes are numerous thin, delicate yellow lines that crisscross the entire scene, creating a complex, web-like structure. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and chaotic beauty, characteristic of abstract expressionism.

**WHAT IS PLAYFULNESS?**



I asked myself this question many times during this project. While there are many definitions of playfulness this is my thoughts on the subject. These are my opinions and as with all opinions, there is room for discussion and disagreement.

Having that said, the following reasoning is what has been with me throughout this project and has served as guidelines for my creative process. As the design process is everything but linear there are aspects of my argument that has changed over and over as I've challenged them and gained new insights from discussions with people involved in my process.

There is a fundamental difference between play and playfulness. They tend to be used with the intent of being synonyms in a way. However, I don't believe that playfulness as an artistic expression is the same as it is when we are talking about personal traits of a person.

Play is in some way require rules, even if the rule can be constantly changing within the boundaries of play, play still requires limitations agreed upon by the persons involved. If one breaks the rules, it is no long playing but might result in fighting. This is something we can see simply by observing children going from best of friends to sworn enemies over a piece of LEGO.

Playfulness however is not necessarily governed by a set of rules agreed upon. Playfulness is in the eye of the beholder. It can be childish, chaotic and even perceived as offensive.

Playfulness is disruptive, it challenges our preconceptions of how things should look and function.

Playfulness is that glint of the eye, an invitation to break character, a way of letting one's guard down. Playfulness is the catalyst of play in many ways.

It's the essential part of play, it's the mindset and at the core of us as a species.

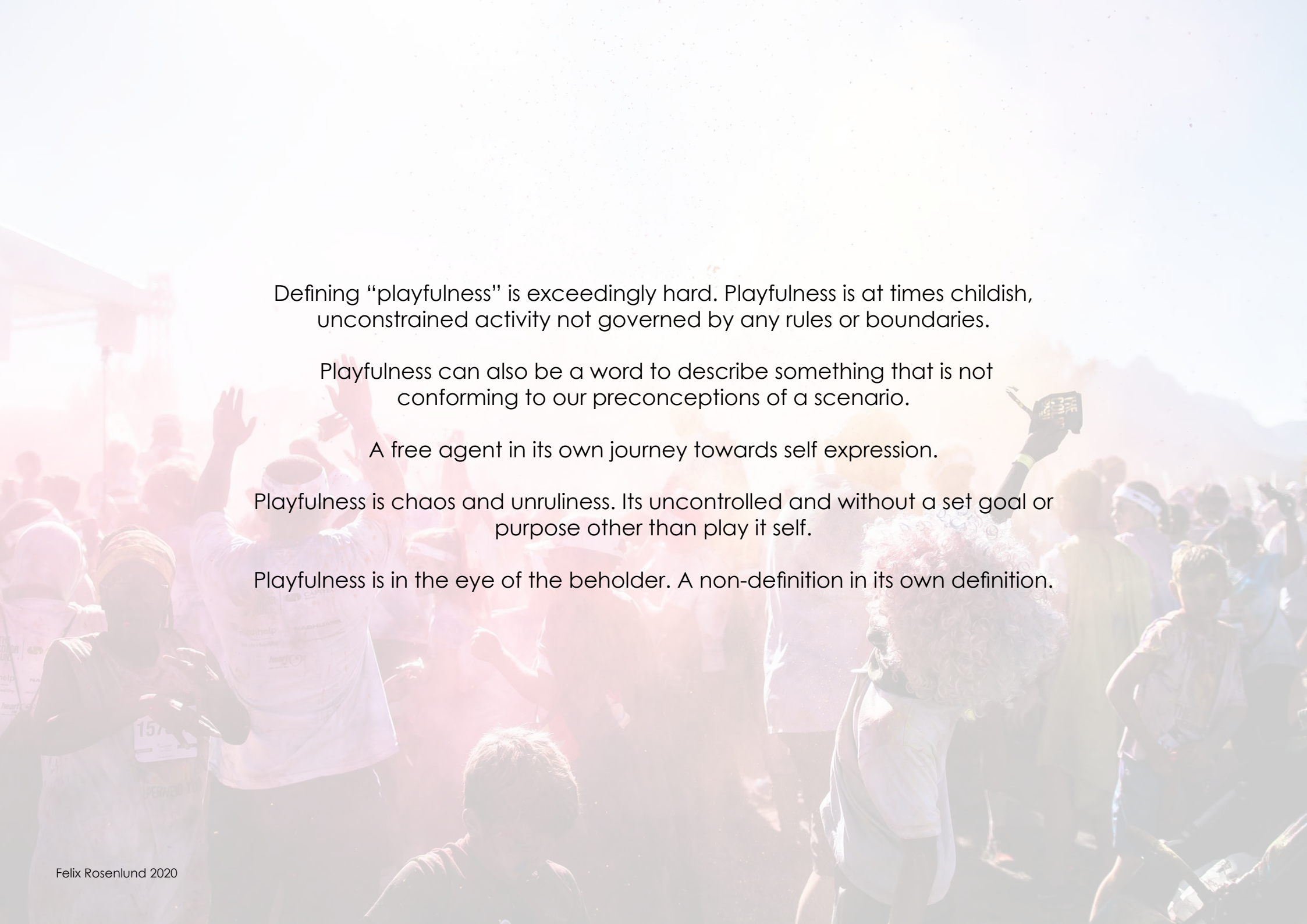
It's not always visible for us, especially not with adults.

Children tend to find ways of playing in even the worst conditions. Maybe the ability to identify playfulness is something we lose with age? This thought is one that has been with me a lot during this project. What is the reason we can't seem to agree on a fixed, clear, definition of what playfulness is stems from it being ungoverned by the rules we set up for so many aspects of everyday life?

If one search for the meaning of playfulness the first hit is on the meaning of the word. It is defined as a noun with the explanation "the quality of being light-hearted or full of fun."

In my opinion this can act as a description of a person. However I find it hard to describe a piece of furniture as "light-hearted" since it simply does not possess the ability to be light-hearted due to it being an inanimate object. Therefore my opinion is that there has to be underlying layers of meaning to this word when used outside the context of describing a person.

In trying to define this for myself my conclusion can be summarised as follows.

A large crowd of people is gathered outdoors, likely at a festival or race. The scene is brightly lit, with a strong sun flare effect. In the foreground, a person is wearing a large, voluminous, curly wig. To their left, another person is wearing a white t-shirt with their arms raised. The background shows a dense crowd of people, some wearing headbands and athletic gear. The overall atmosphere is festive and energetic.

Defining “playfulness” is exceedingly hard. Playfulness is at times childish, unconstrained activity not governed by any rules or boundaries.

Playfulness can also be a word to describe something that is not conforming to our preconceptions of a scenario.

A free agent in its own journey towards self expression.

Playfulness is chaos and unruliness. Its uncontrolled and without a set goal or purpose other than play it self.

Playfulness is in the eye of the beholder. A non-definition in its own definition.





The space



# Current state of affairs

Survey of public environments close to  
my home and courtyard at Lidingö

The following pages shows examples of the current state of public furniture in parks and public spaces in my hometown of Lund, Limhamn (Malmö) and Lidingö (Stockholm).

I have had help from member of the community to gather insights into what is missing, good, bad and has room for improvement as well as pictures of different parts of the cities. The main point of contact has been through Facebook groups and family members. They are also the ones who have take some of the pictures after on my request.

This has been a great way for me to gain insight into how public spaces are kept and what they provide in means of public seating areas. Due to the current situation, some of these pictures are not take today so they may present how some places looked some time ago. I feel that this is necessary to point out since they may have changed as of late.























# Furniture survey

Overview of different options available  
on the market today.



# Furniture/Art survey

Animal furniture and art.





# Social issues





# The user





My main goal with this project has been to create a playful seating area that invites the user to explore it in the sense that it is not familiar in its expression. In designing furniture for public spaces there is a lot to think about.

Accessibility, materials, production and function are just a few of the aspects one need to consider. I want my design to be as accommodating as possible to as many as possible.

Meaning that it has to function for kids, adults, elderly and people with disabilities even though they all need and want different things.

In this project I have had to weigh these groups not only against each other but also against aesthetical and functional aspects of the product. Looking into current state of affairs when it comes to public furniture and public spaces in my area, have shown that there is one thing that is lacking, surfaces to put away things on, i.e tables.

Park areas often have plenty of benches and other seating areas such as lower walls and hills. But there is a constant lack of tables unless they are “traditional picnic tables”.

These tables are really not working well for elderly people who have a hard time lifting their legs over the crossmembers and there is virtually no wheelchair accessibility.

Children are mostly accompanied by adults in public spaces, or at least watched over in some aspect, and do not really use public furniture to sit on but rather as another playground objects. No matter whether it's a bench, chair or table, children perceive them as just another object to play with.

I would argue that this is due to the context of which these furniture pieces are placed. A child would hopefully not climb on to your dinner table with their shoes on, but they might see it as a cave to hide under.

The way children interact with their environment differs from they way adults do. This is something that i believe to be important to keep in mind while designing for public spaces, especially parks. Parks are more inviting to play than a square and the furniture in these spaces need to reflect that.

This has been one of the reasons I've had to design something that, in my opinion, differs from what we normally see in public areas, especially parks.

Parkland is different from public spaces such as squares and pedestrian areas, stripmalls etc. Parks invites one to interact with nature in a way we do not do in more "urbanized" areas.

This is another aspect I wanted to improve on. The playfulness and exploring part of the interaction is in my opinion more important than sheer practical aspects such as production and maintenance procedures.

The value of aesthetically pleasing products have for a long time been considered to be of "less value than functional ones". Not that a product is not suppose to be perceived as beautiful, rather the opposite, but the fact that a beautiful object in some ways have to "explain" and justify its existence more than an object that is "purely functional".

An artifact that provides more than “just” a function many times end up being questioned more due to the fact that someone spent time on making it look “nicer than it has to” in order to perform the task it was designed to do.

In my process I've thought about how one can design objects that provides practical user scenarios as well as aesthetical improvements. The latter is harder to argue for since aesthetical values differ from person to person and sociocultural aspects such as where one has grown up, religious rituals, traditions etc.

Here I had to make a decision regarding my geographic placement, intended context, user and scenarios revolving these. In this process it was natural to me, especially due to the current situation around the world, to choose Sweden and our nordic countries as my main “market”.

We have similar socio cultural structures, traditions, religious beliefs (or lack thereof ). It is also where I see myself working for a foreseeable future.

This seems relevant to mention as well since that might have affected decisions I've made during the process whether it's consciously or not.

I want my design to be perceived as inviting, exciting, inclusive, functional and playful. I did not want to design something that is perceived as childish or ment only for children to use.

It's not suppose to discourage anyone from using it, rather the opposite. I want people from all walks of life to be able to see the playful aspect of my design as well as the practical use for it.

# The inspiration



I started off by looking into different shapes of animals, dinosaurs and fantasy creatures trying to identify common patterns in their body shapes.

What kept popping up in my head is the film clip of a polar bear playing with a sled dog, something that is out of the ordinary since polar bears are very territorial and aggressive in general.

This clip is often used to explain the function and importance of play, something all animals seem to do, including ourselves. Many mammals have similar ways of expressing the intention and invitation to play. This is often referred to as “play-bow” and can be seen with dogs in particular. It’s the way wolves and dogs signal that they are non-hostile and want to play.

While working with different concepts parallelly, I kept looking for abstract shapes that one might identify as a part or entire creature. Tables that resembles heads, lights that turn into tails and so forth. I found that our ability to see faces and things where they are not works well with this idea of abstraction. This allowed me to eliminate ideas that were too literal in their interpretation of a creature.

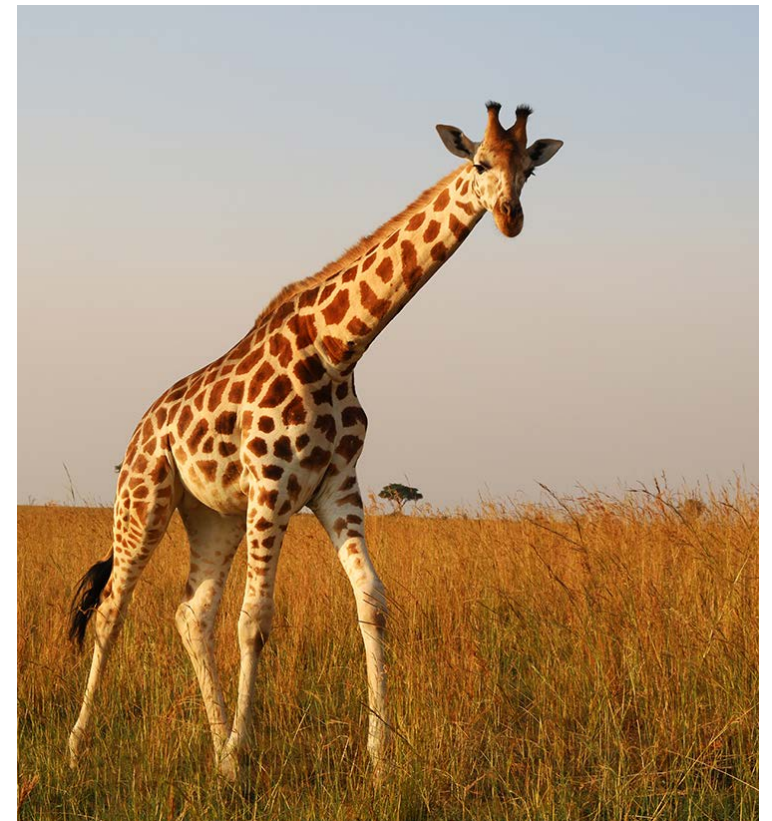
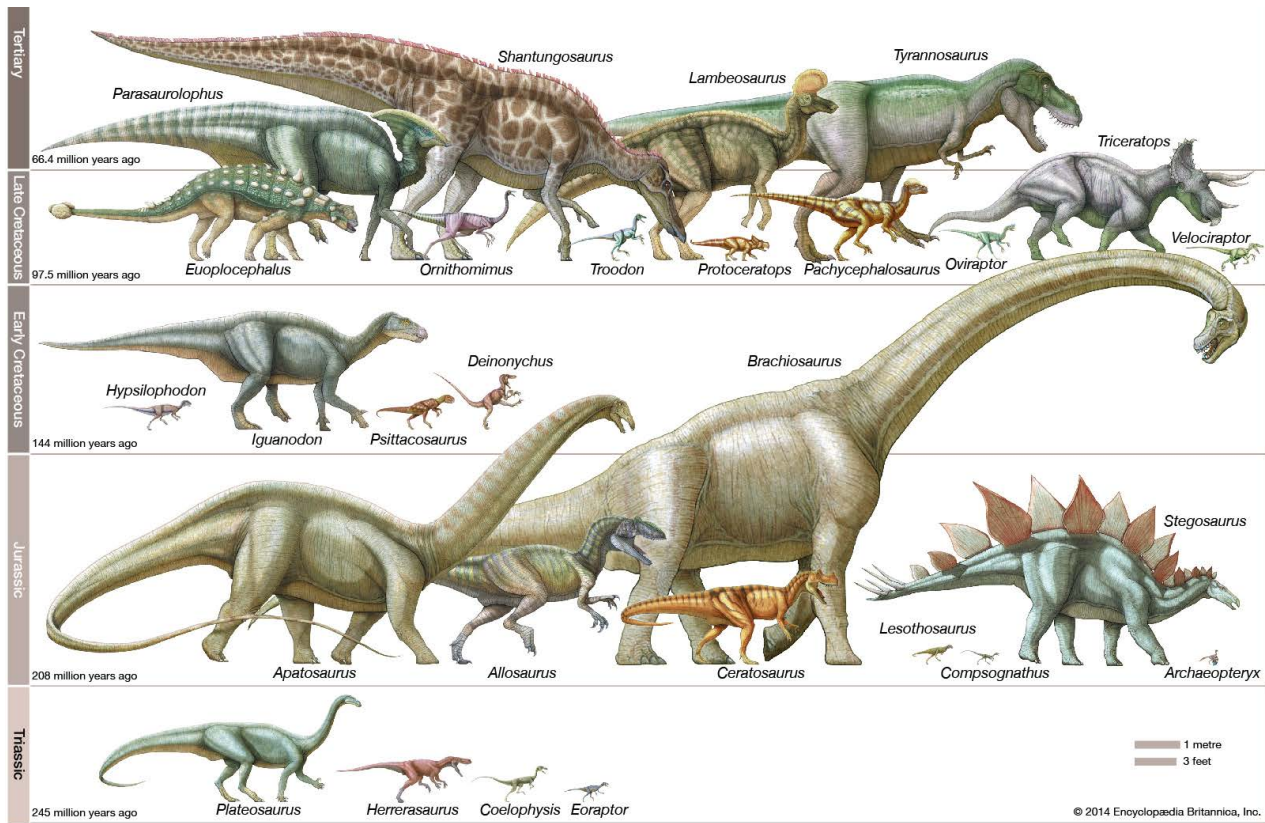
Another thing that came to my mind is that we tend to perceive different animals in different ways. Birds become brittle, insects disgusts us and animals with fur seems inviting and cuddly.

The fact that most bears would consider us food doesn't really affect our perception of bears as warm and cozy animals. Neither do we realize that the bone structure of a Flamingo is stronger than we think. This has made me think more about the perception we have of objects around us.

Why do we perceive some objects as dead, stationary and dull and in other we see life, movement and excitement? This thought has been with me as a guide in my process.

Asking myself; How can I obtain the illusion of speed and movement in a stationary artifact?





# Concept 1

Covered swirling bench

## About

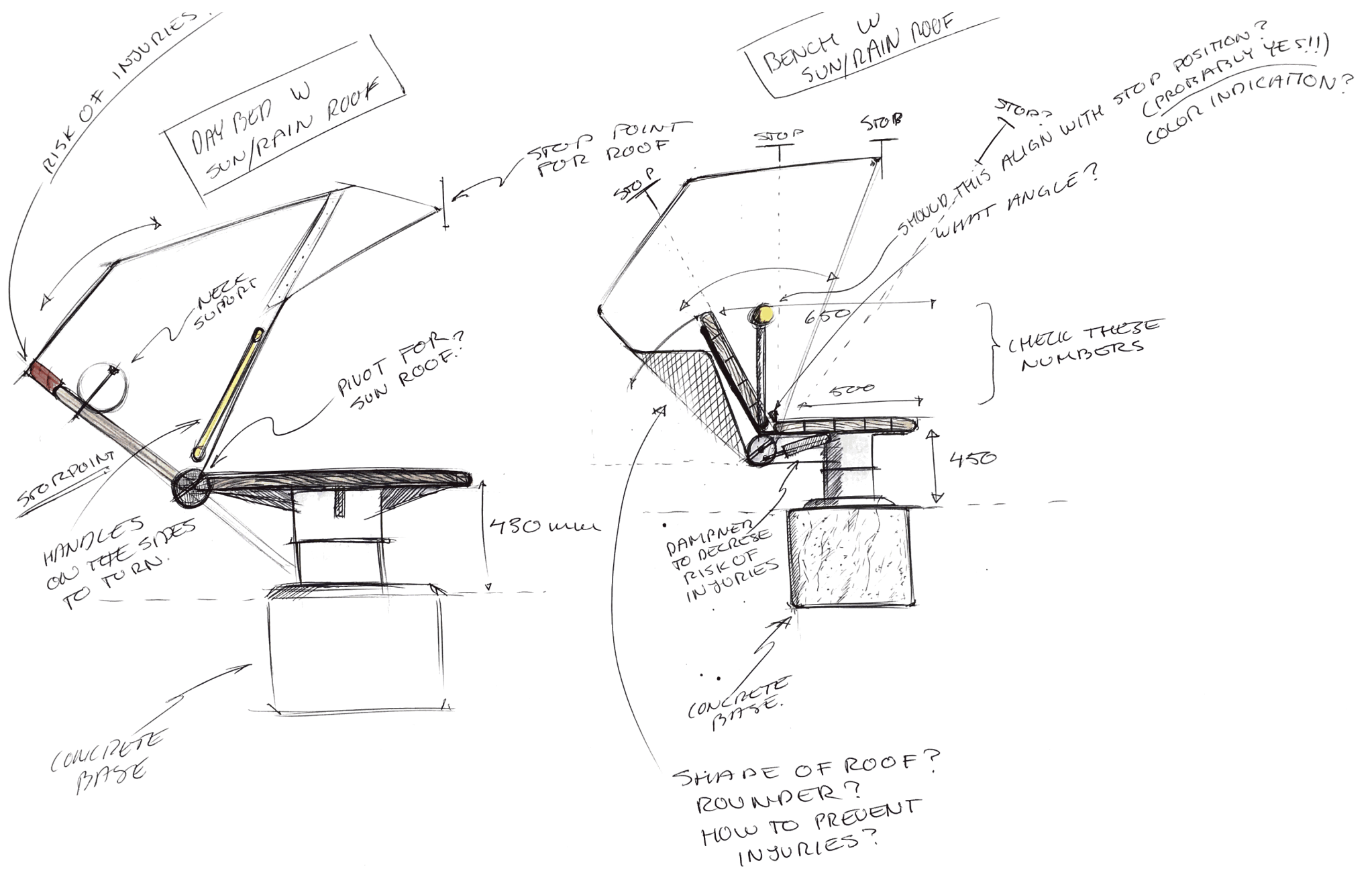
This concept focus on the need for shelter in public spaces. Whether it's shelter from wind, rain or sunshine this concept aimed to provide that.

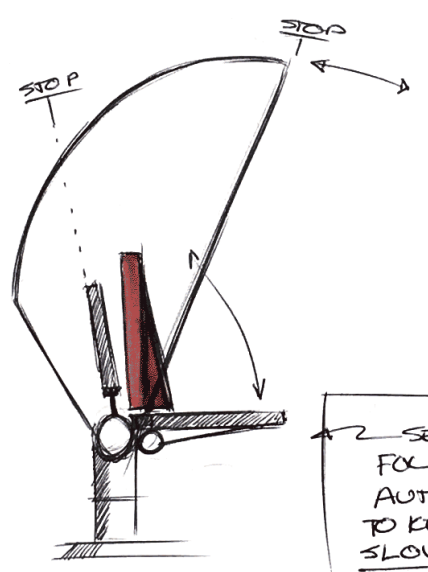
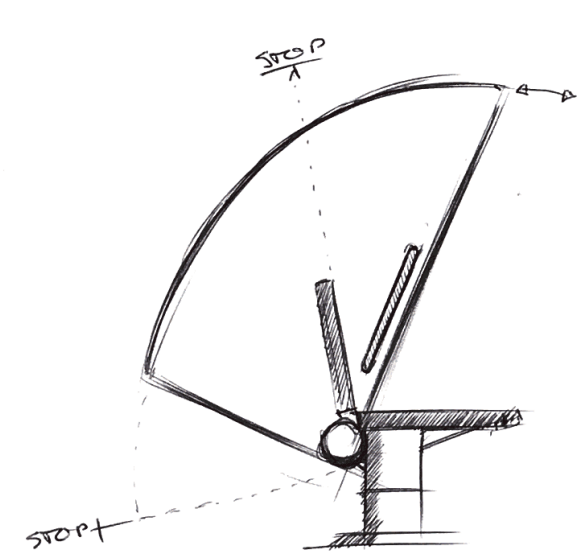
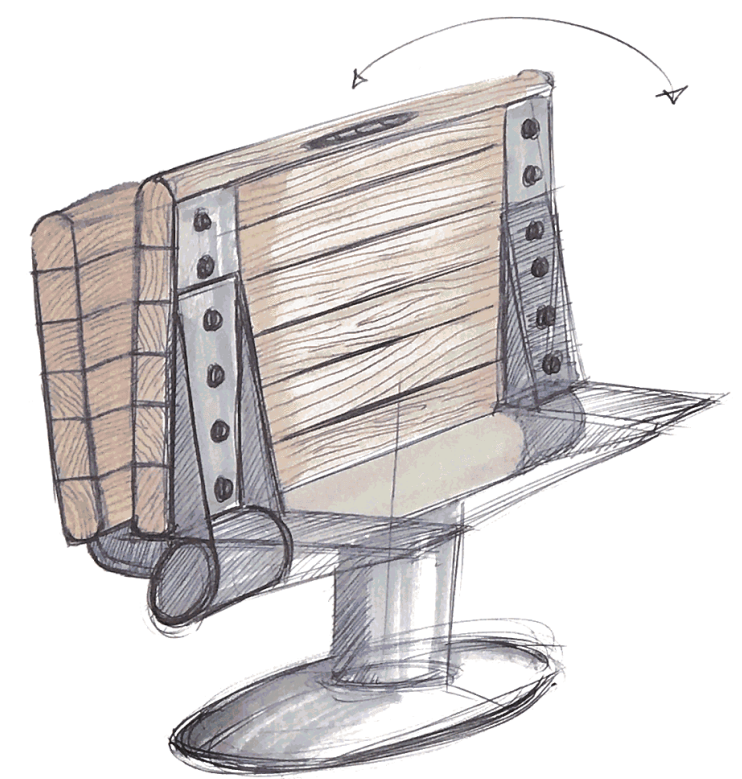
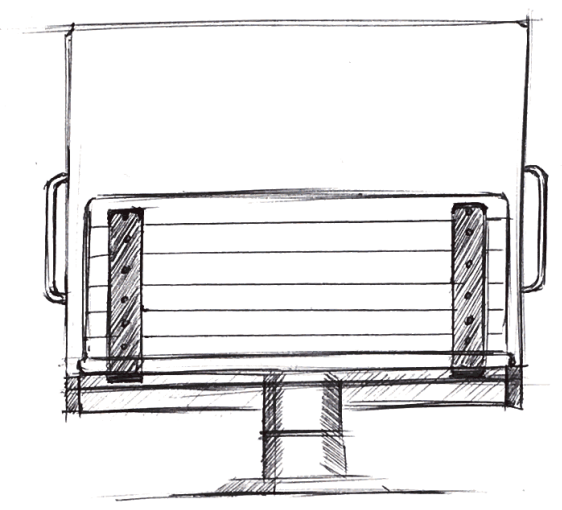
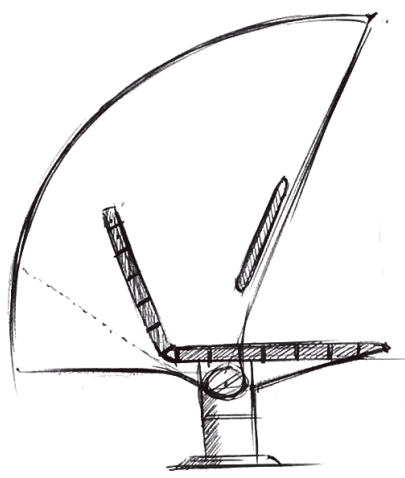
In addition to the shelter aspect I wanted it to have the ability to be turned in the direction the user wanted it to be in.

This would allow for the user to on one day use the shelter to keep the wind away from their face and the other to use the shelter to protect them from the strong sun.

I wanted to design something so people could spend those first spring afternoons outside rather than having to wait for another month. To extend the time we can and want to spend outdoors has been a recurring theme in my work and something that means a lot to me.

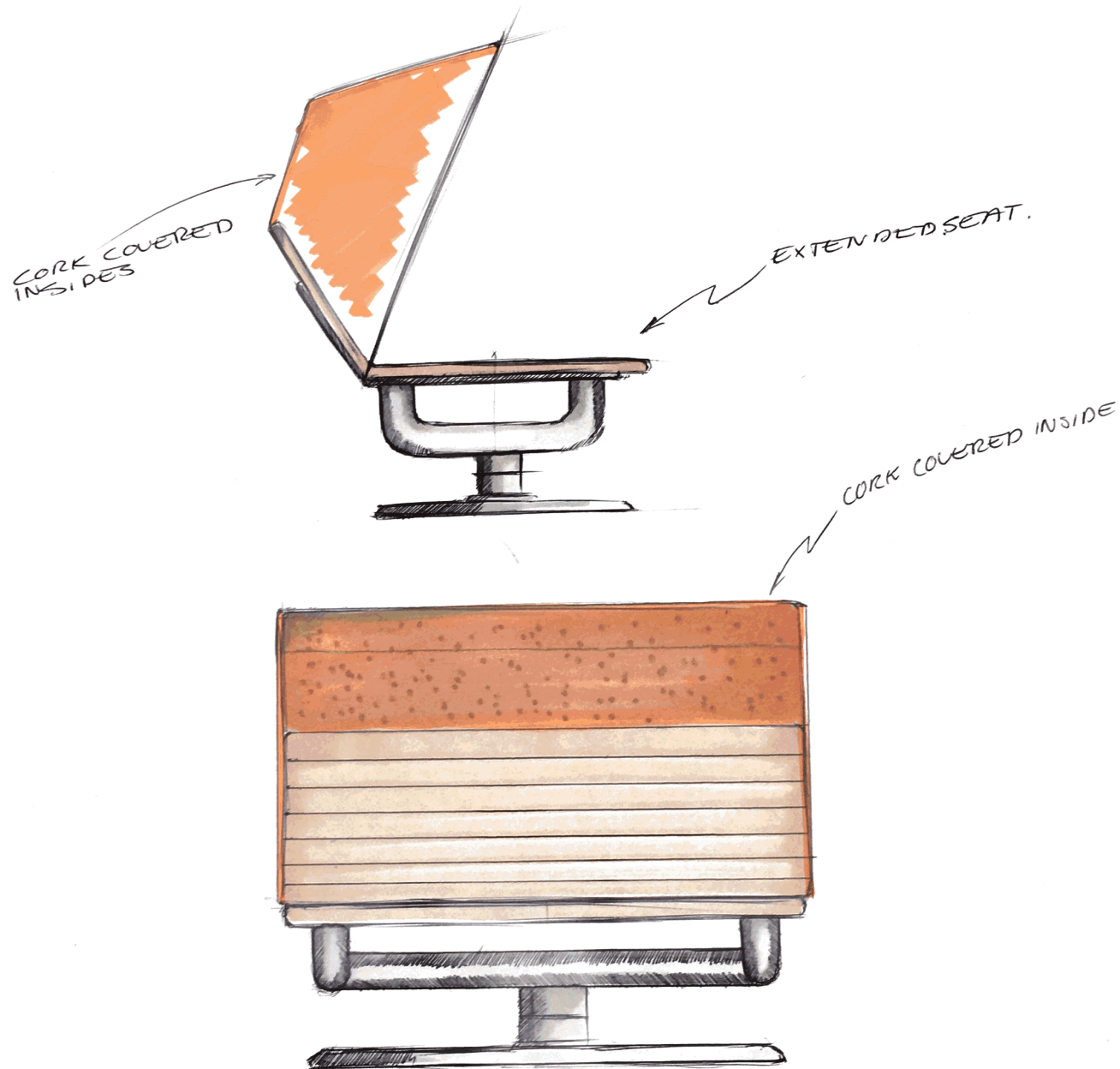






2 SEAT  
FOLDS UP  
AUTOMATICALLY  
TO KEEP IT CLEANER.  
SLOW CLOSING!

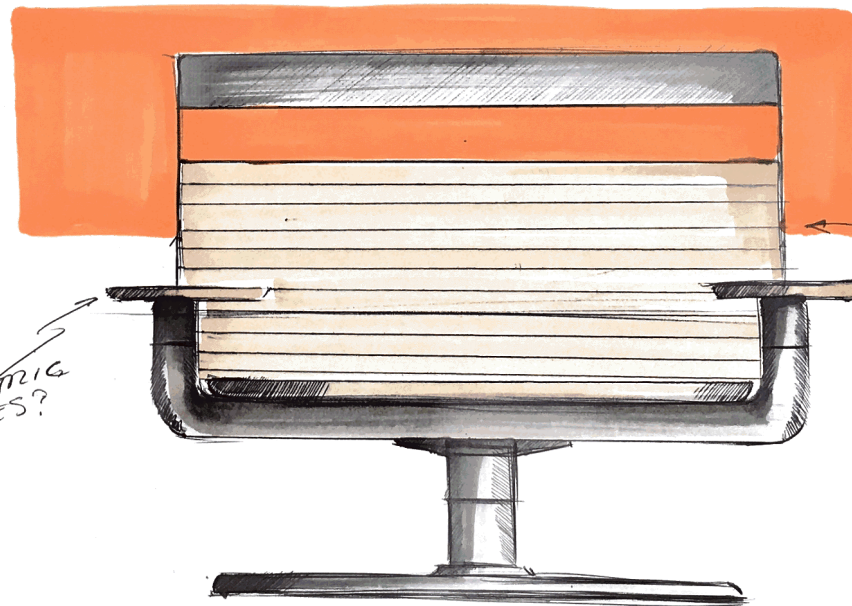
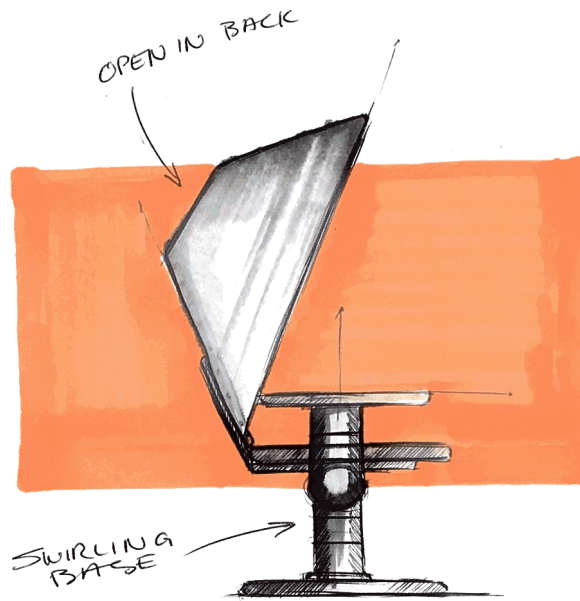
SWIRLING DAY BED





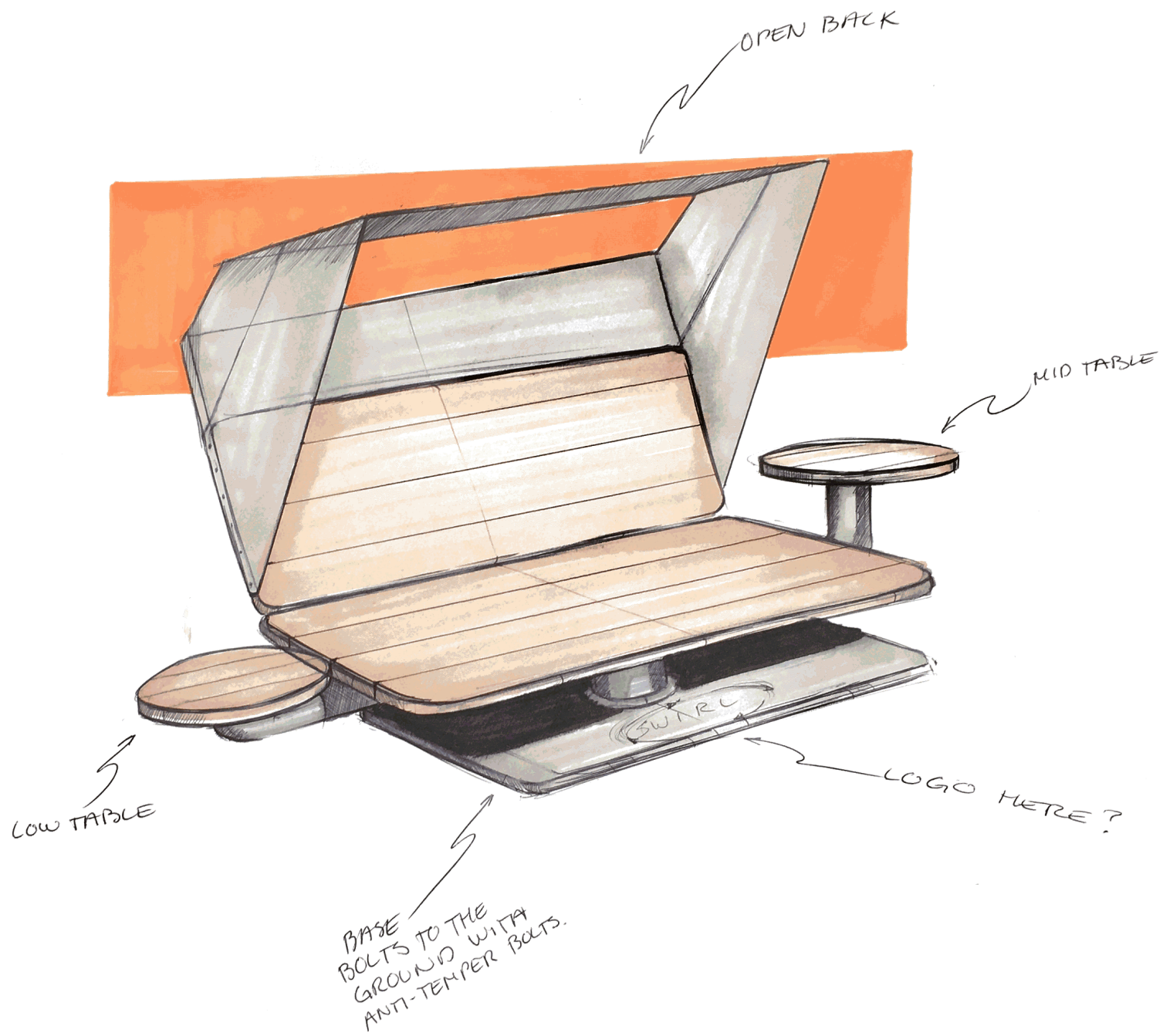
SWIRLING "SOFA" WITH WIND/SUN PROTECTION.

LINE THE  
INSIDE WITH  
CORK TO ABSORB  
SOUND!



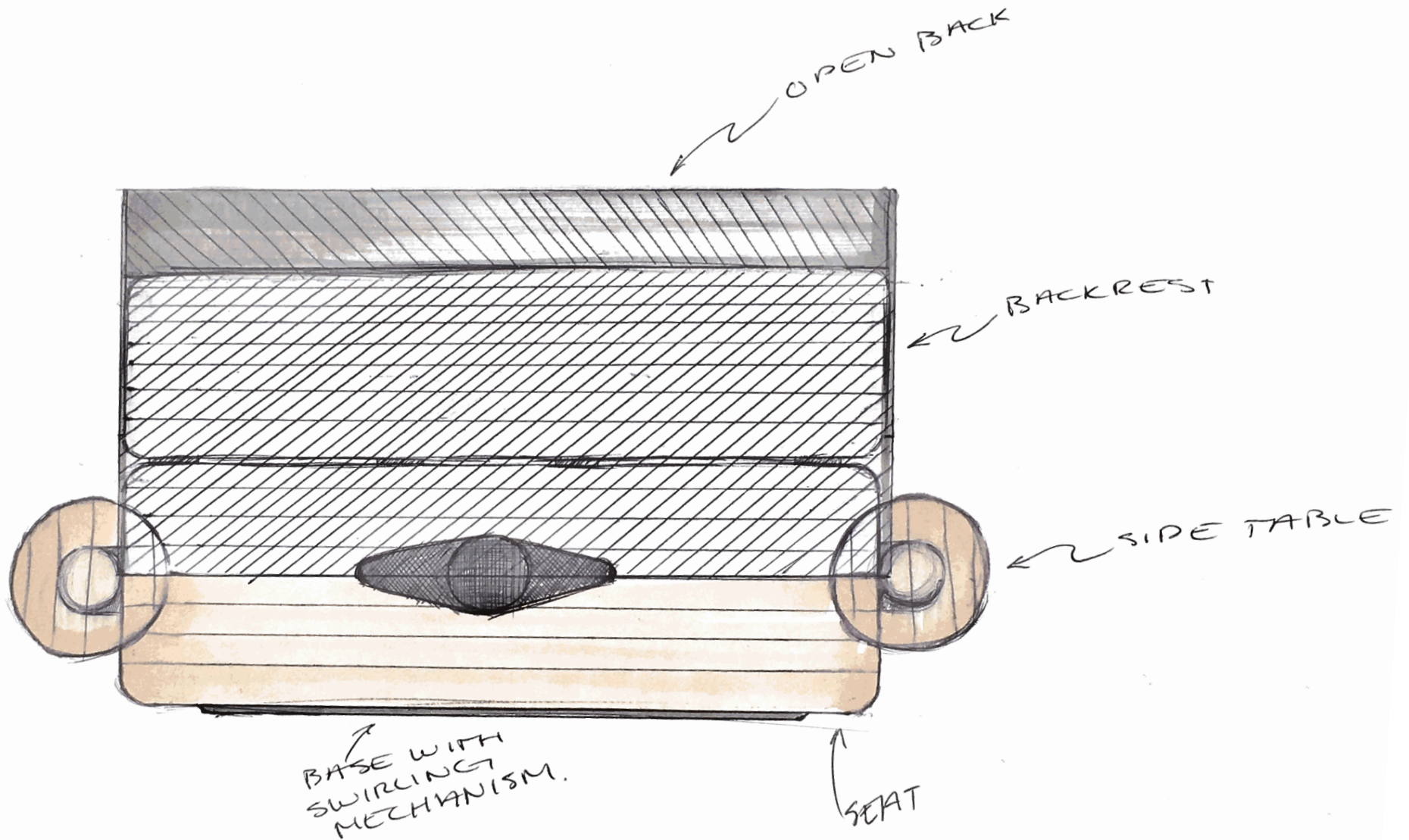
WOODEN  
SEAT AND  
BACKREST.

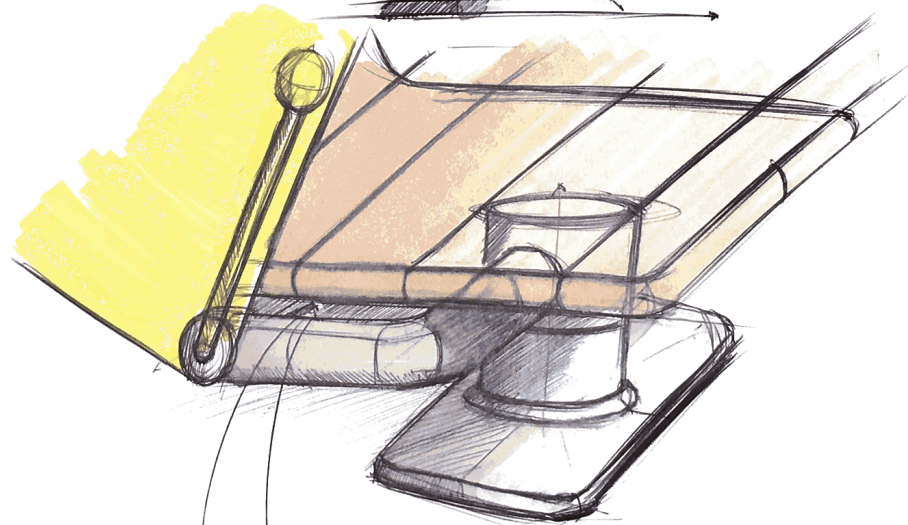
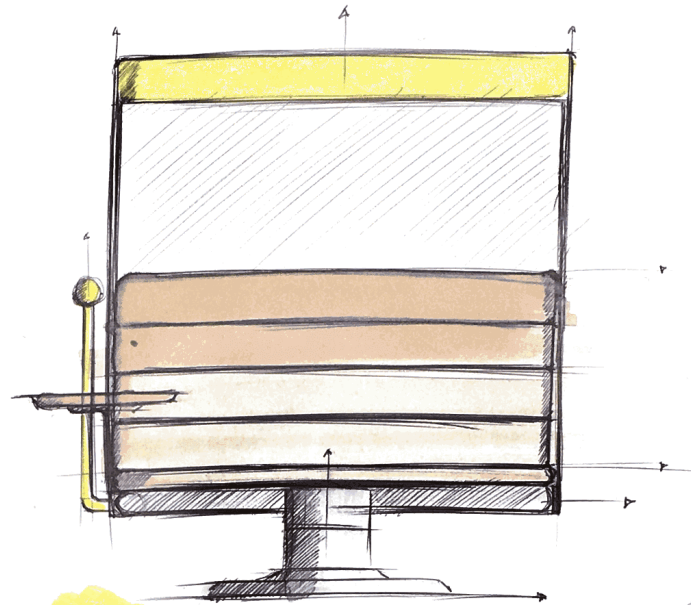
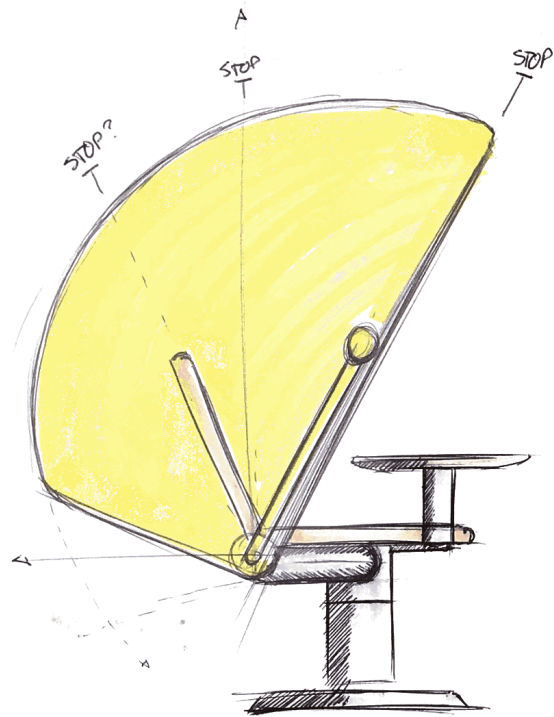
ASYMMETRIC  
TABLES?





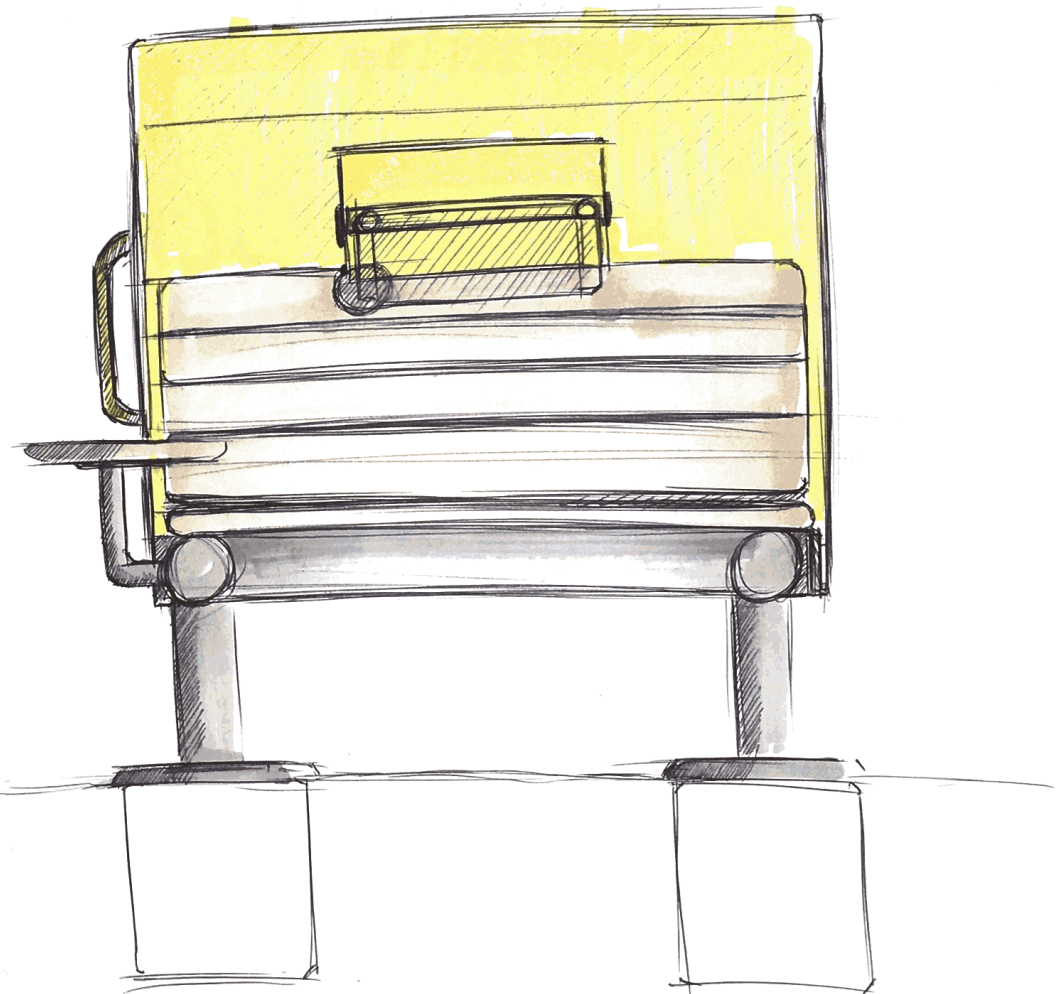
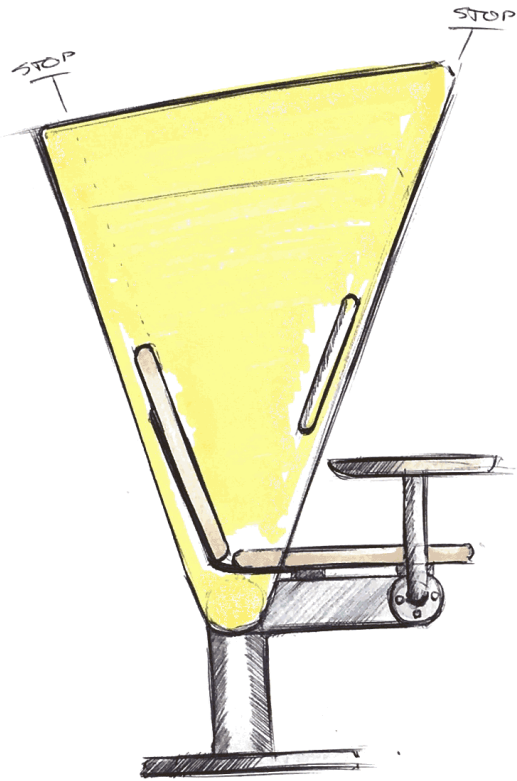
TOP VIEW OF  
SWIRLING SOFA.

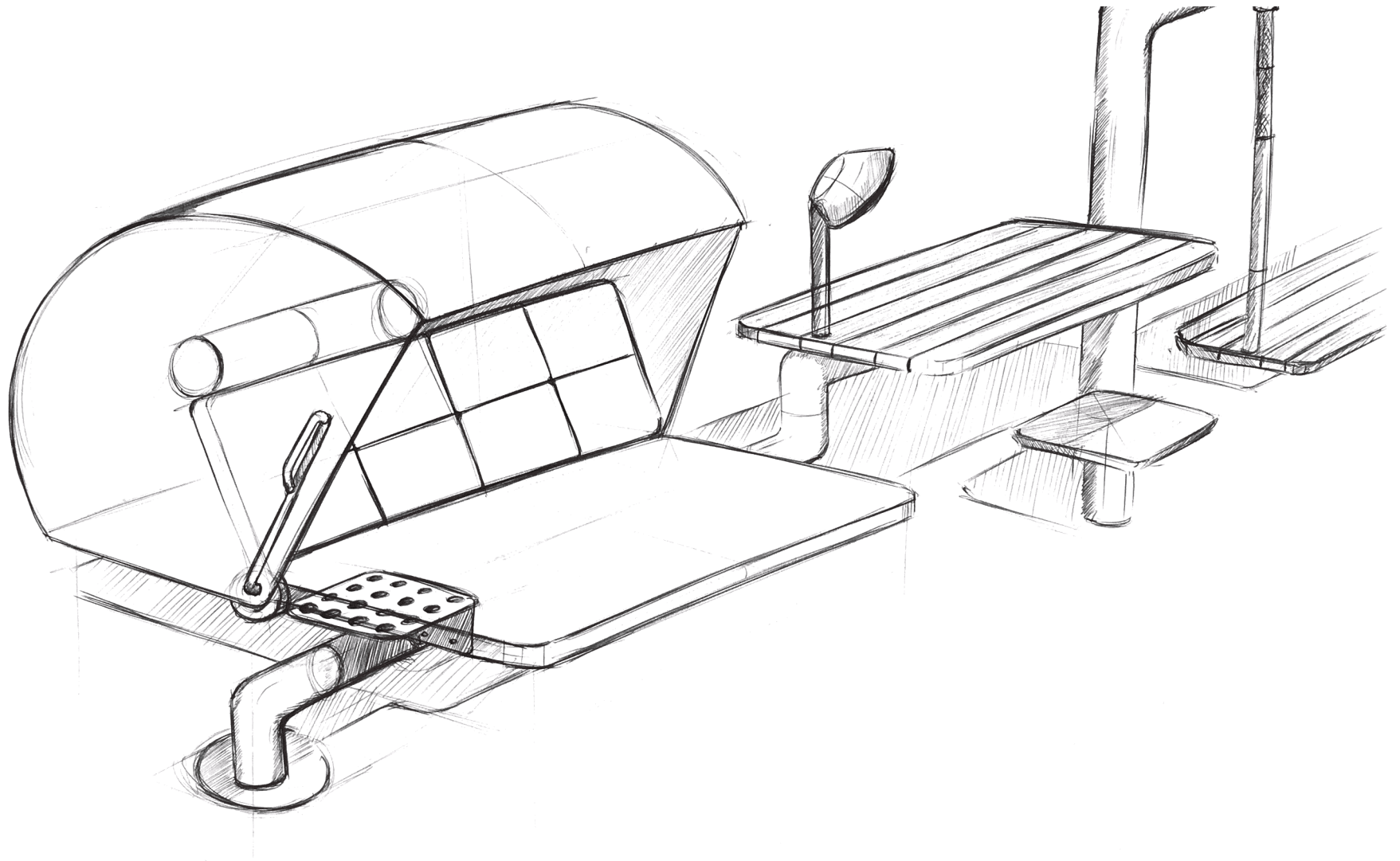




GAP BETWEEN  
SEAT AND  
ROOF?

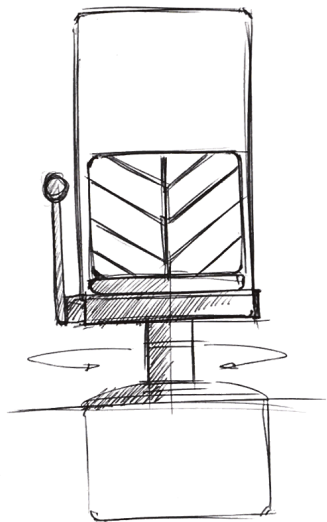
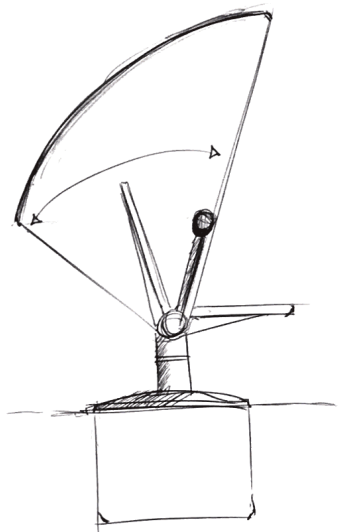




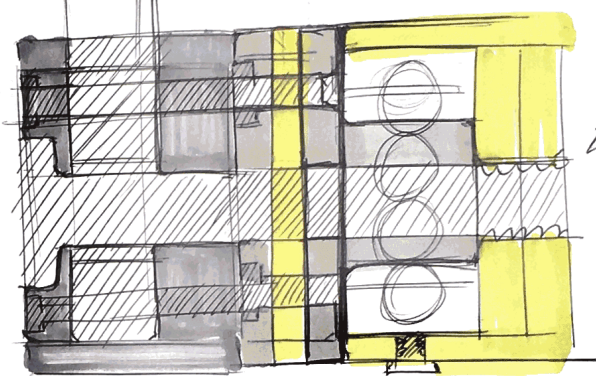




SINGLE SWIVEL  
WITH ADJUSTABLE  
ROOF.

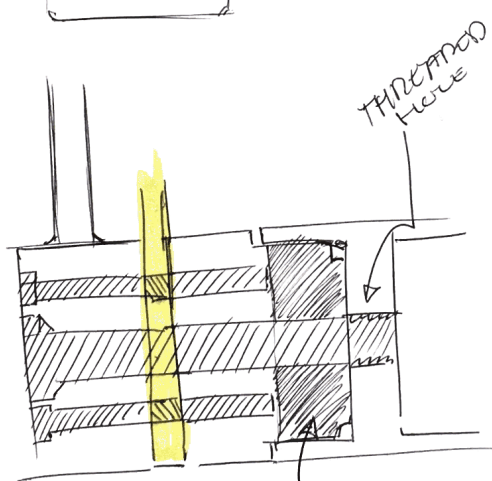


HANDLE  
LOCKS IN  
PLACE WITH  
SAME SCREW  
AS HOLDER  
FIXATES TO  
TURN PLATE.



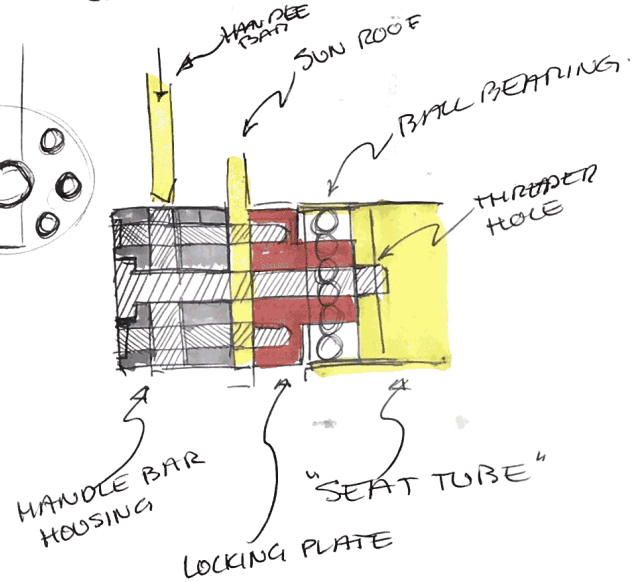
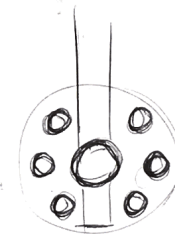
TRETTED  
PLATE.

LOCKING BOLT FOR BALL BEARING



THREADED  
HOLE

NYLON  
SLIDE RING



## **Pros**

This is a concept that i believe would be greatly appreciated among many due to its versatility. In being able to provide shelter from the elements at the same time as it allows the user to decide if its wanted or not is an aspect that I find interesting.

I would have loved to test this out in real life just to see how many people actually would use these functions or if they would just become novelty factors that only designers and architects would see the purpose with.

This concept would be easy to explain and motivate due to its functions being so precise and concrete and I might continue developing this concept further.



## Cons

The main issue with this concept is that it became more of an engineering task focused on finding solutions to mechanical issues rather than what i set out to do, create something playful and eye catching that invites the user to explore it further.

With the swirling shelter this aspect got lost in the feat to understand the mechanisms that would facilitate the functions of it. Rather than providing the user and the space with an eye catching artifact it became this large, rotating behemoth of a sheltered bench/sofa.

I did not find the joy and playfulness of the concept and decided to continue searching for other ways of visualizing my very loosely defined idea.

## Reflection

This concept came to be much due to me wanting to design something very “functional”. however, “functional” does not mean technical. This concept came to be just that, too technical. Rather than focusing on what I asked myself, “What is playfulness?”, I focused on solving mechanical issues.

This was not what I set out to do and after I came to this conclusion, I took a step back and redirecting my attention to designing a more playful concept. There are aspects of this concept that I personally find aesthetically attractive and interesting, but they are not playful. They are practical and useful in many ways, but they do not catch your eye or invite you to explore them.

This is two things I consider important and what drives my design in this project. Hence, I needed to change direction and find new ways of expressing playfulness and to evoke the lust for exploration.



# Concept 2

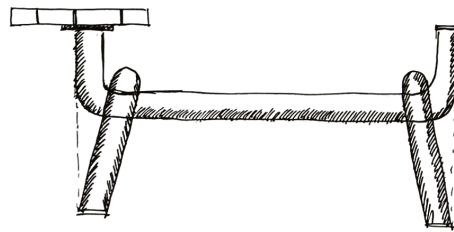
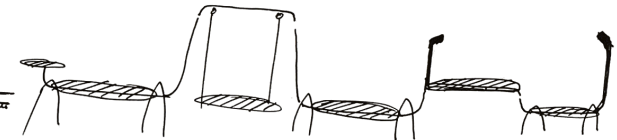
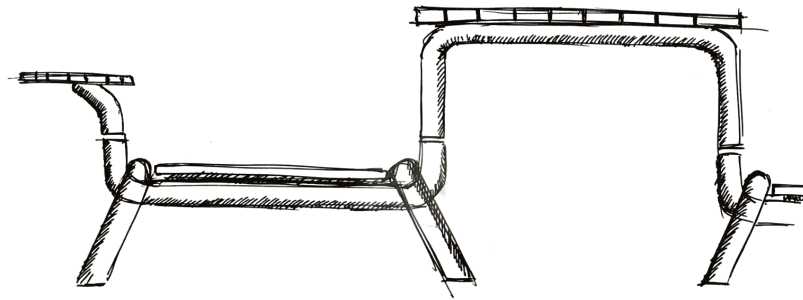
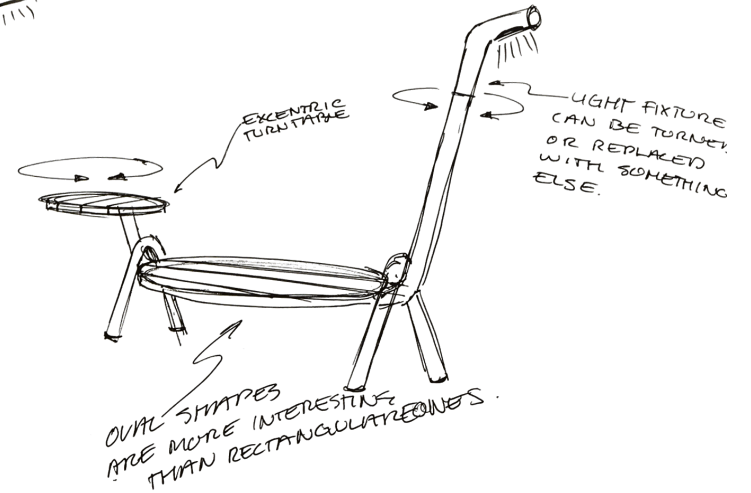
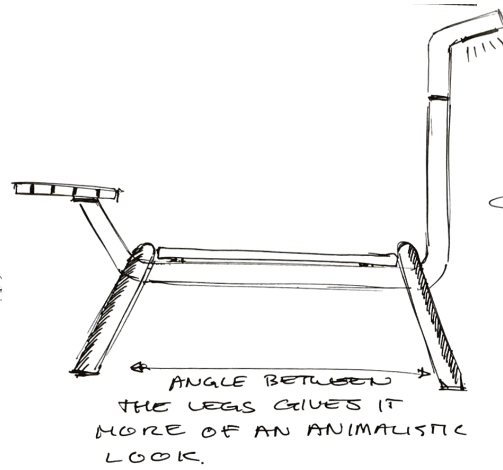
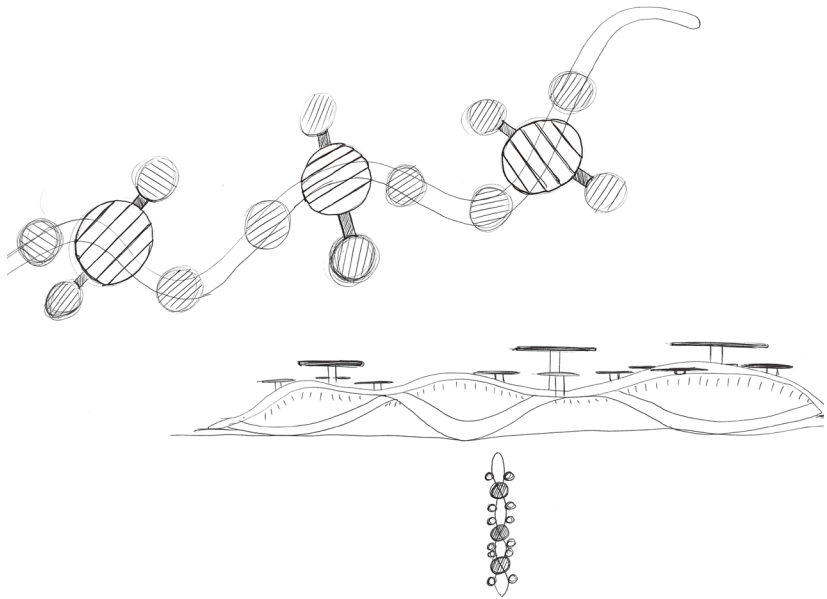
Modular system

## **About**

This concept focuses on the ability to incorporate lighting as a main function. Further it is modulare in the aspect that the parts are easily exchanged, replaced or repaired.

With this concept my aim has been to create a furniture family that consists of a base module that can be changed and extended to suit the users need. Whether the user intends to place it as a single unit or expand it into a continuous, larger, unit, this concept allows for it.

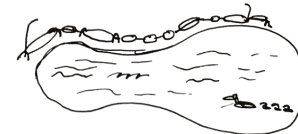
The second key aspect of this concept is to allow for customization and special units to be produced as a complement to the base unit.



CONNECTABILITY/MODULARITY IS ACHIEVED BY CHANGING THE TABLE/LIGHT FIXTURE.

IN ORDER FOR THIS TO WORK EASILY THE ENDS NEED TO BE STRAIGHT!

CYLINDRICAL CONNECTIONS ALLOW FOR 360° ROTATION. MODULES CAN BE TWISTED TO FOLLOW THE SHAPES OF THE AREA.



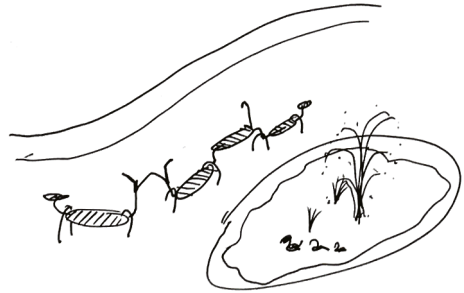
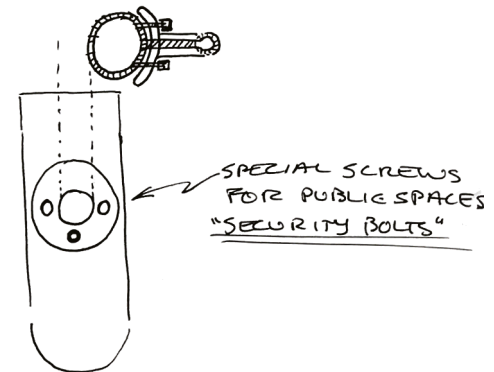
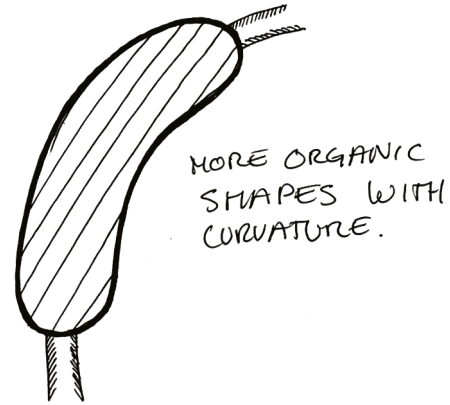
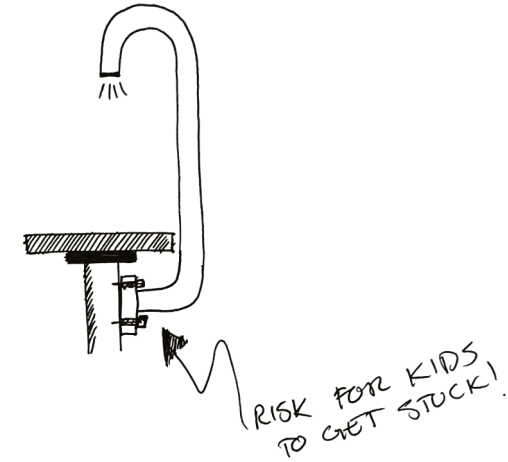
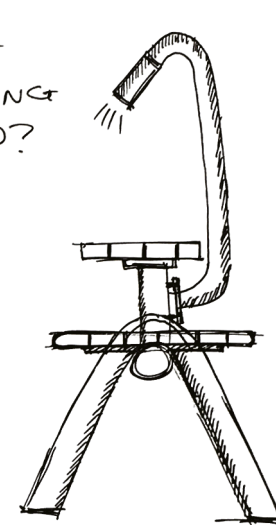
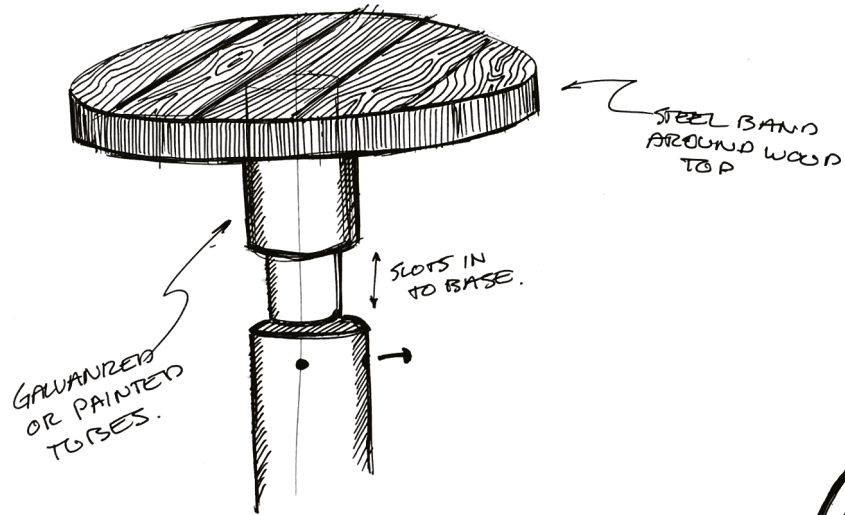


CHOOSE A SPECIFIC AREA TO DESIGN FOR?

TALK TO A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT ABOUT REGULATIONS, ISSUES ETC. (ESA, SARAS NEIGHBOUR, (ZA?))

WHAT RULES APPLY IF ONE INTEGRATES A SWING ETC? SOFT PLATES, SAND?

CERTEK PA LTD.  
CAMLWA/HAKAN



SWINGS WITH LIGHTS  
ALLOWS KIDS TO FEEL  
SAFER DURING DARKER  
DAYS. EASIER TO KEEP  
TRACK OF KIDS.

CHARGE  
LIGHTS BY  
THE MOVEMENT  
MADE?

TOP VIEW

SIDE VIEW

WOODEN  
EDGES OR  
METAL BONDING?

METAL LEG.

ACRYLITE  
SHEET  
OR LED-STRIP

BOLTS TO THE GROUND/  
BASE PLATE.

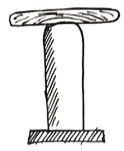
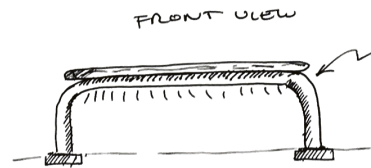
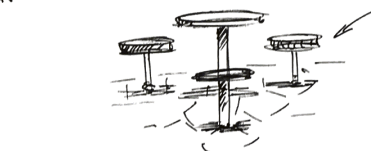
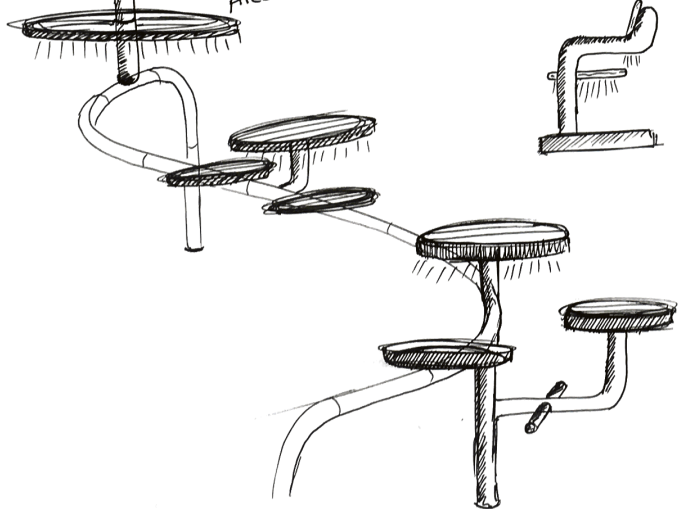
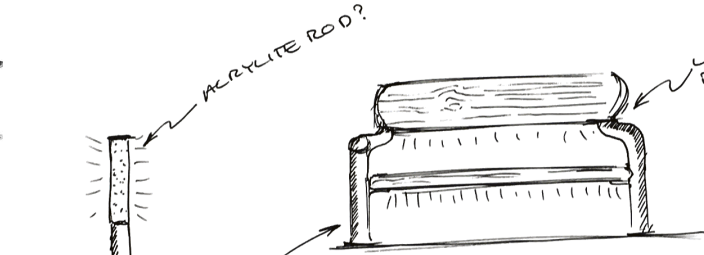
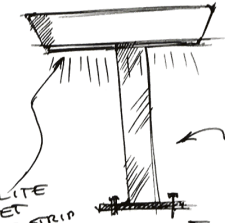
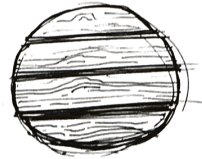
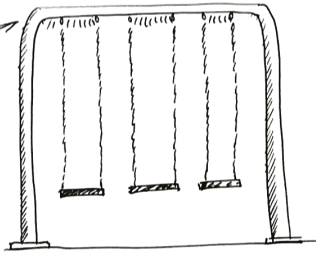
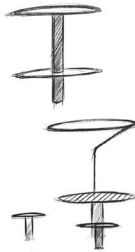
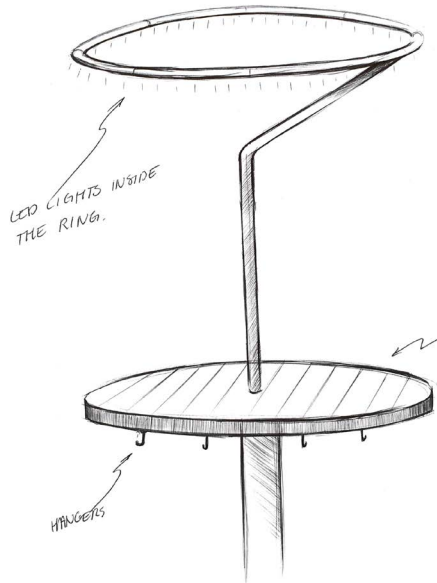
LIGHT FROM  
BACK REST  
AND SEAT.

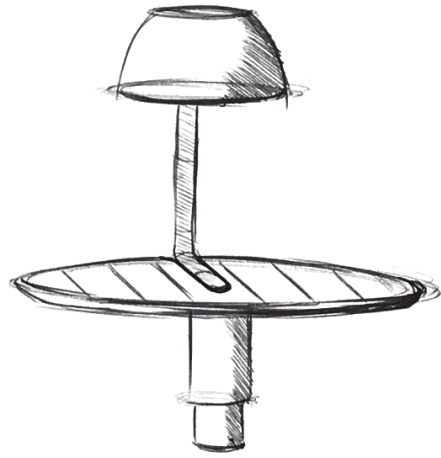
DIFFERENT  
HEIGHTS.  
FOOT RESTS!

FRONT VIEW

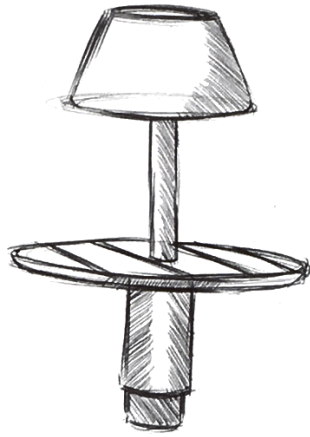
LIGHT FROM  
THE PIPE

SIDE VIEW

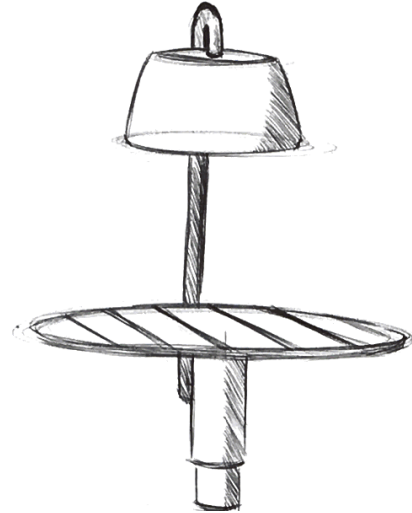




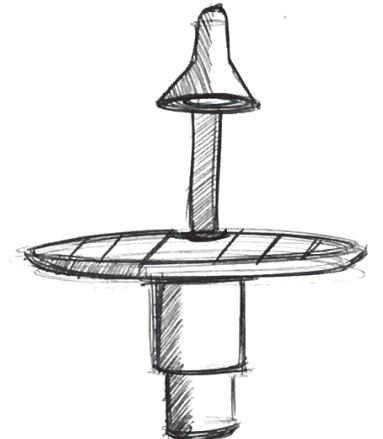
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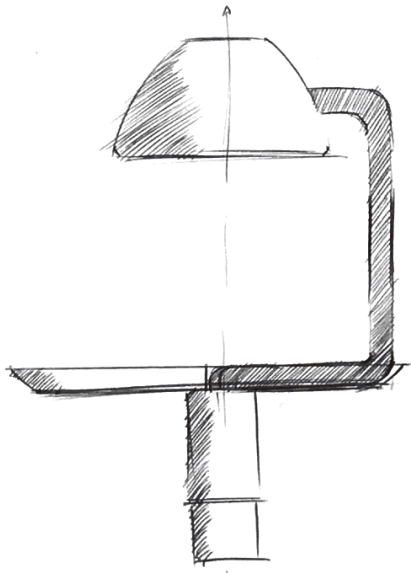
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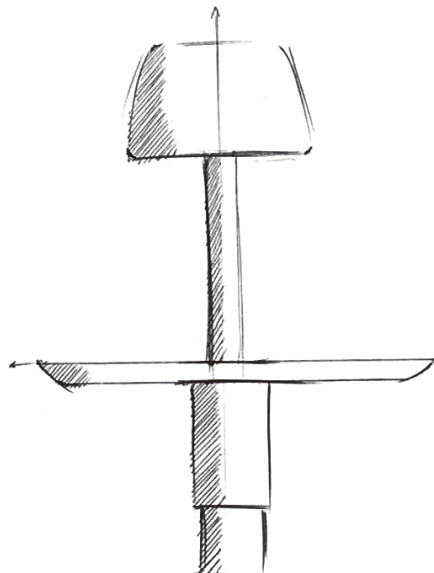
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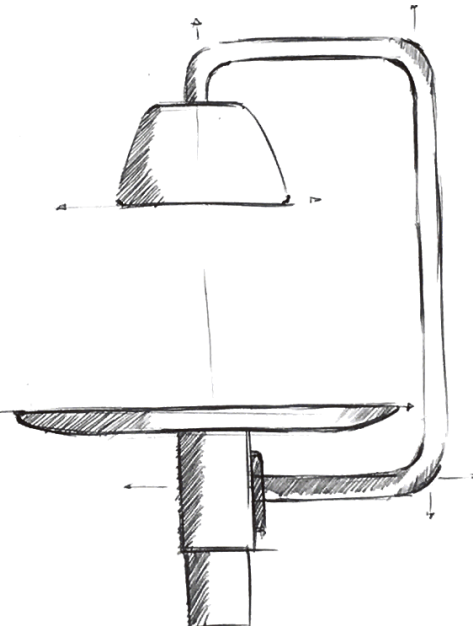
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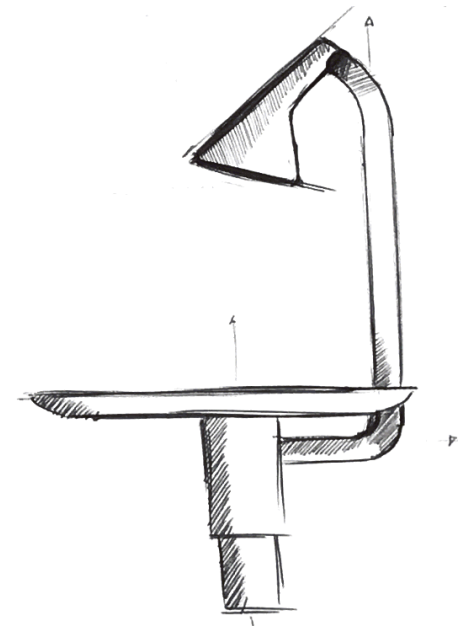
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2.

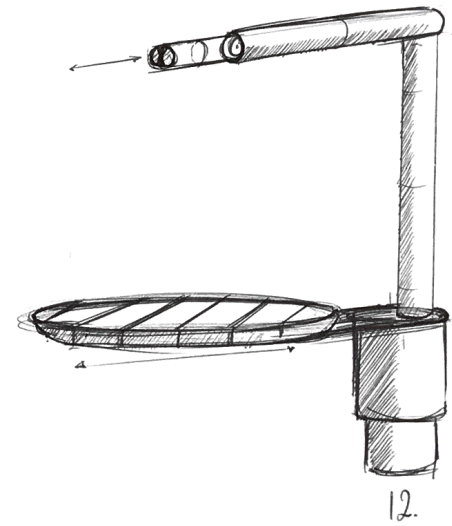
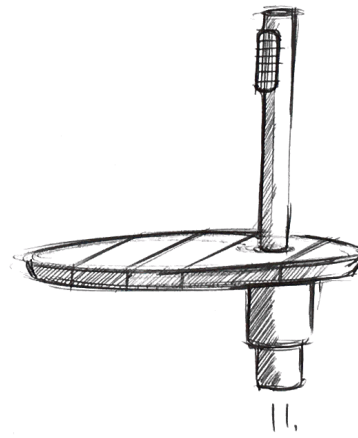
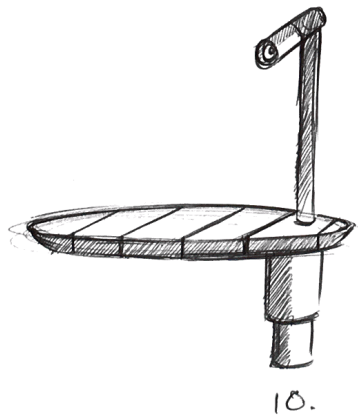
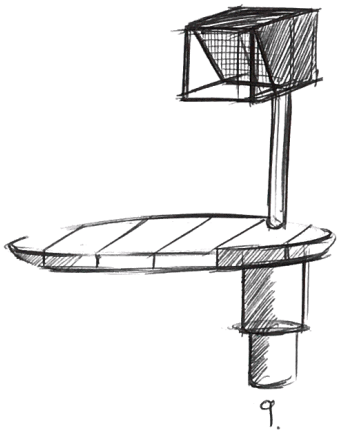
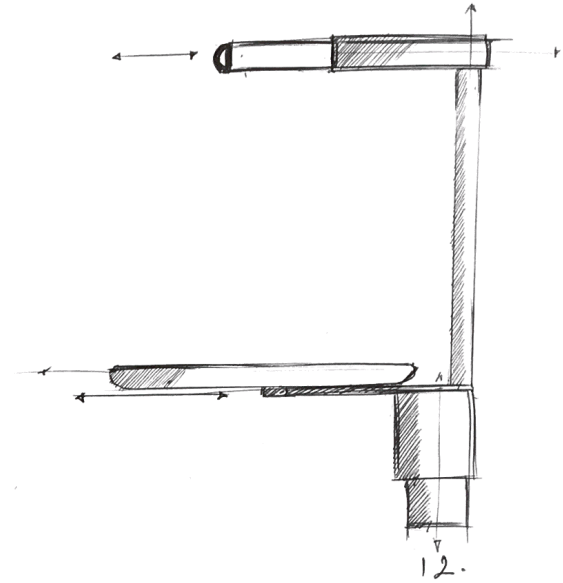
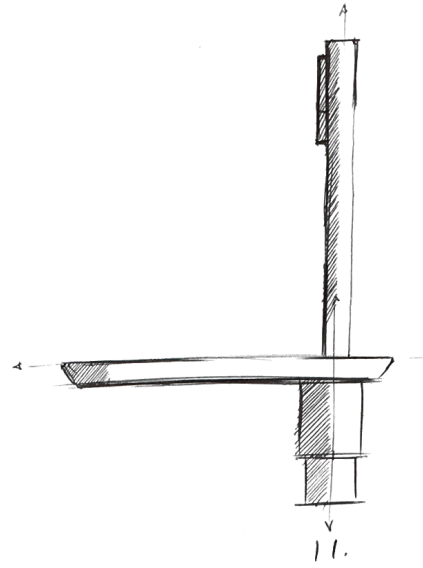
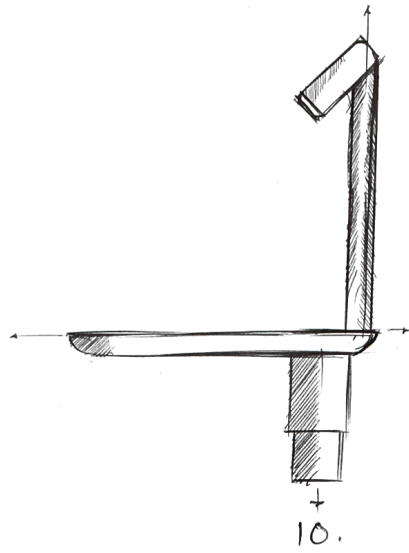
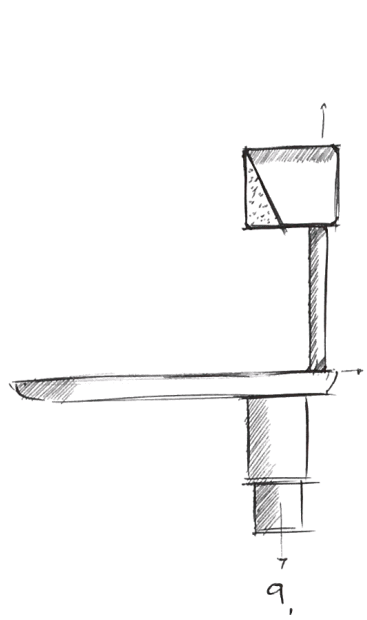


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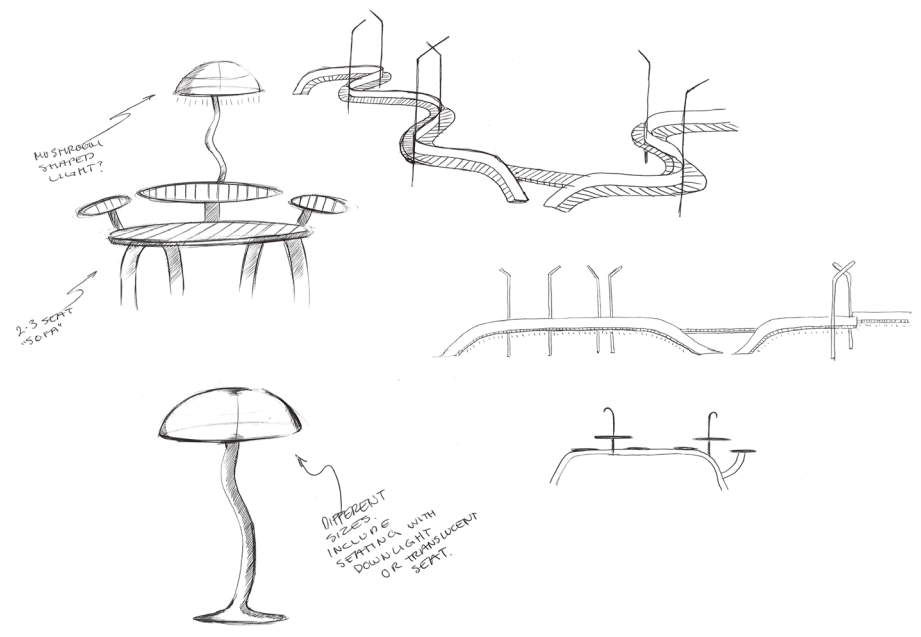
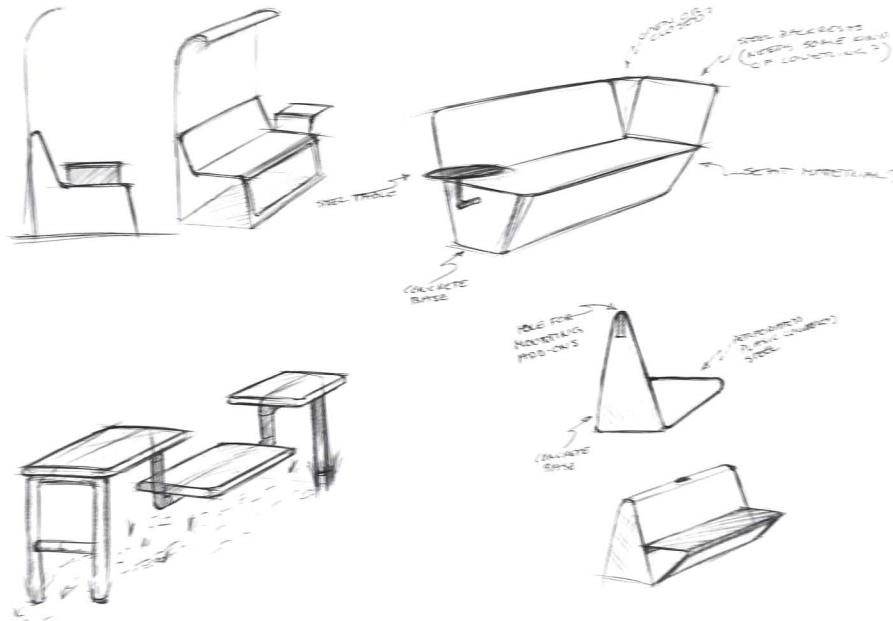
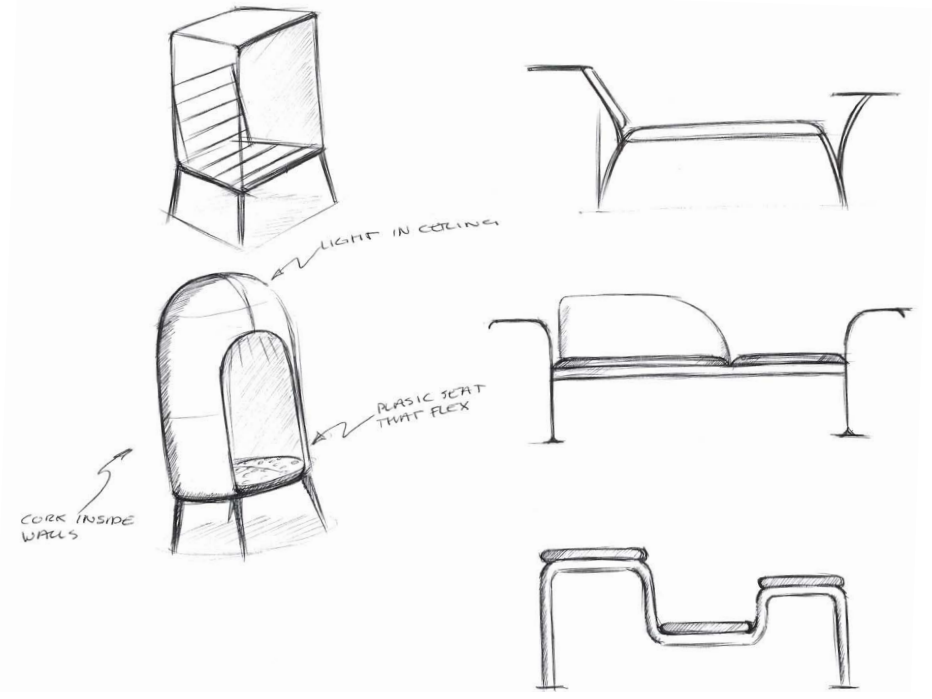
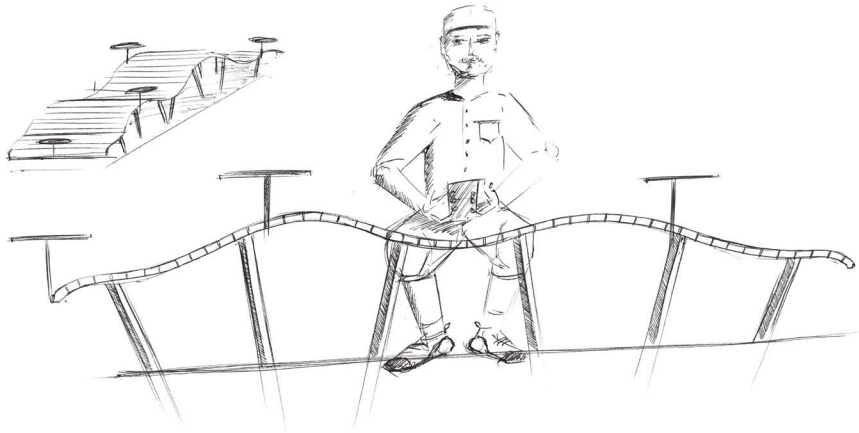


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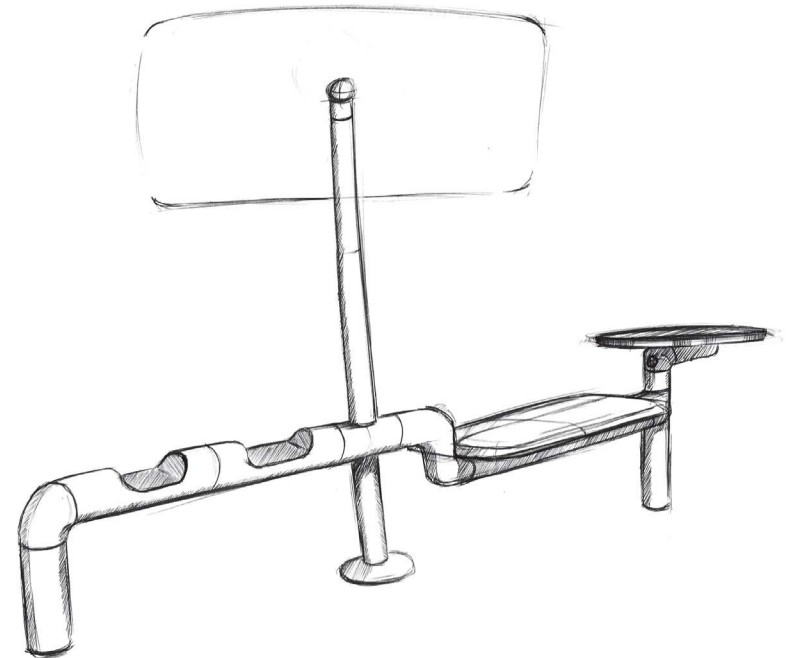
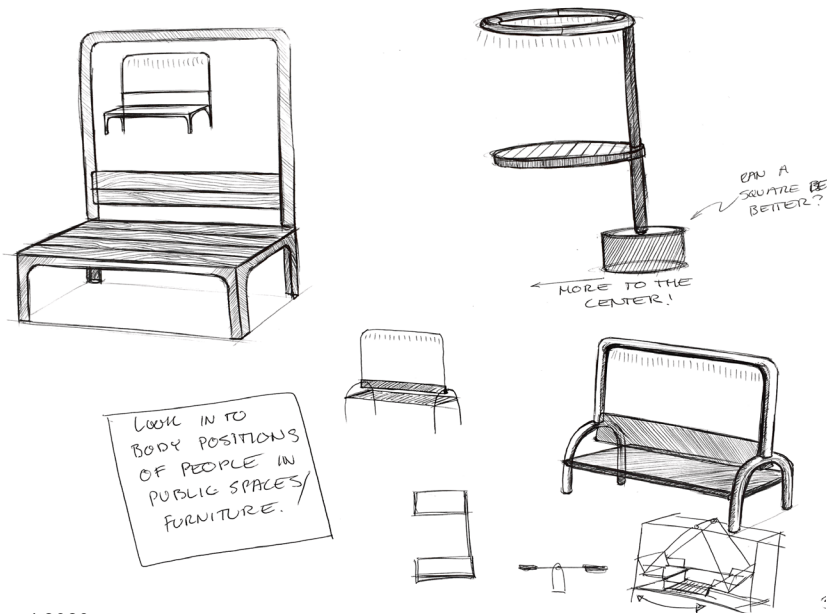
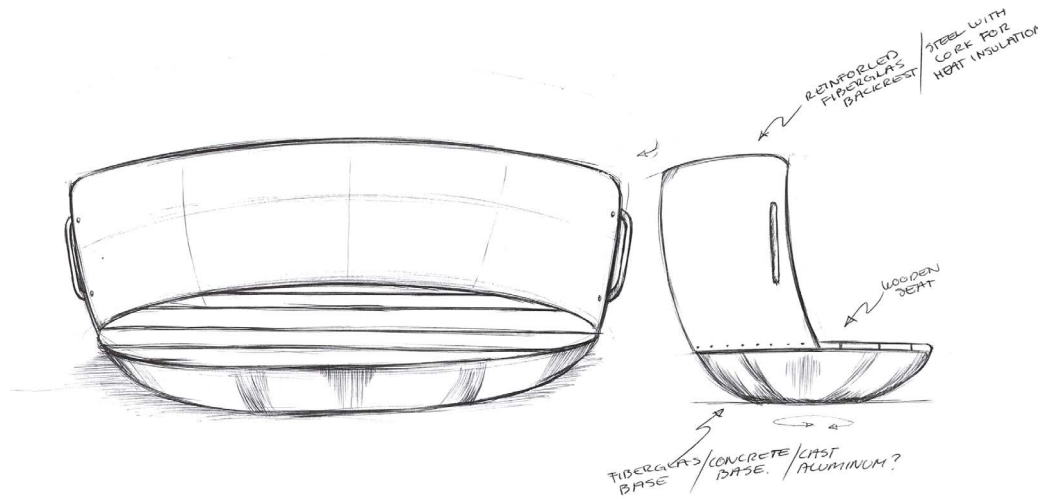
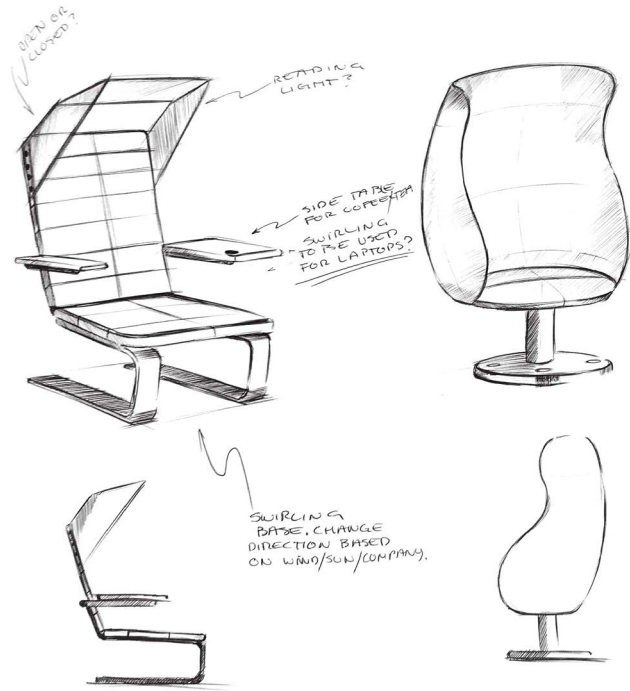












## **Pros**

In my opinion this concept has two key pros. The first being the modularity and customization aspect that allows for it to be tailored to a specific environment. The pivoting function allowed by the cylindrical mounting points gives you the possibility to adapt it to the space it occupies.

By allowing the pieces to interlock and pivot around each others end points this concept can be made to fit into spaces otherwise hard to adapt to. The ability to follow the shapes of the space, like a coastline, boardwalk or irregularly shaped lawn opens up for new ways of furnishing public spaces. Even though there is a multitude of modular furniture systems out there, they tend to be less flexible in their base features.

## **Cons**

By focusing so much on the functionality of the concept and how it needs to be produced made me lose much of the playfulness I was striving for. The idea itself is in my opinion not a bad one.

however, the focus end up being more of an engineering project rather than a design project. As i wanted to bring out more of my artistic side in this project, I had to make a decision whether or not I should continue with this concept even though I felt that I was missing out on the playfulness aspect of the project.



## **Reflection**

Looking at this concept and weighing the pros and cons against each other I came to the conclusion that I needed to move forward with a different approach.

In order to find those playful elements I needed to focus less on the modularity and construction side of the design and more on the expression of it. Having had this idea of abstracting animal and creature shapes in the back of my head for some time made me want to be more extreme in my design and expression.

I felt that this concept had a lot of good features and aspects but it lacked in playfulness. Therefore I choose to develop another concept focusing more on the aesthetical aspects rather than the construction ones.

# Concept 3

Urban Animal

## About

This concept draws knowledge from the previous concepts in a lot of ways. It utilizes some of the modularity of Concept 2 by having exchangeable modules and a variety of mounting points.

Further it is by many means a modular concept in that aspect that it can be customized to follow lines, obstacles and objects like buildings in the space it occupies. My intention with Urban Animal has been to design a product that is inviting, playful and draws the attention of the beholder.

A product that disrupts the space at the same time as it adapts to it. Urban animal is intended to become a platform for further development and experimentation with more modules in order to create new abstractions of creatures and animals.

This is in some way merely the base that will allow landscape architects and developers to customize the outdoor spaces they work with. Having that said, Urban animals is in no way an unfinished product but rather a product that is in constant change depending on the fantasy and creativity of others.

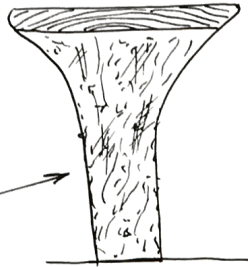




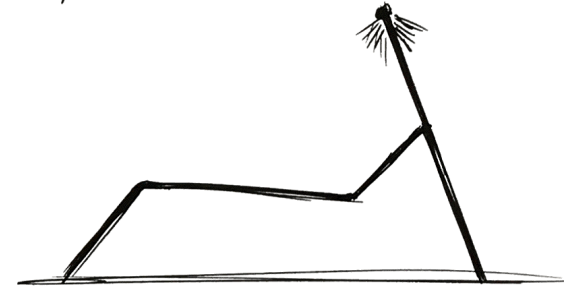
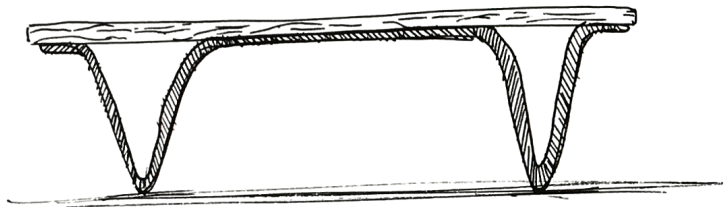
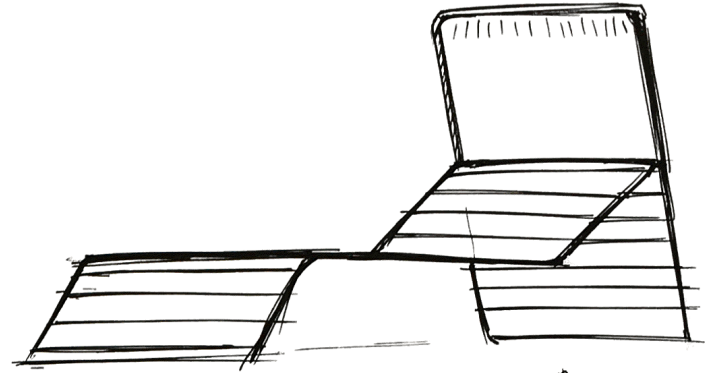
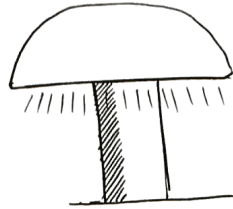
This sketch caught the eyes of everyone I showed it to. It was perceived as graceful, light, animalistic and playful. As a starting point this came to be what I have circled back to throughout this face of the project.

It has acted as a guiding light in some ways. It has that “springy-bouncy” feeling to it. Movement, speed and playfulness. It is not super practical nor is it too artzy. It is very much an undefined and loose idea that sparks interest. This is what I was aiming for and therefore this sketch has meant a lot to my process and the end result.

CONCRETE  
BASE WITH  
WOOD TOP

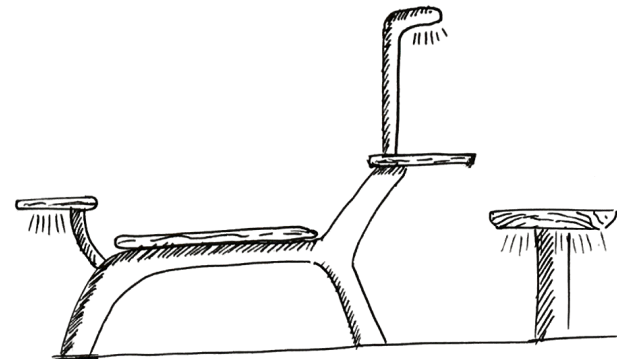
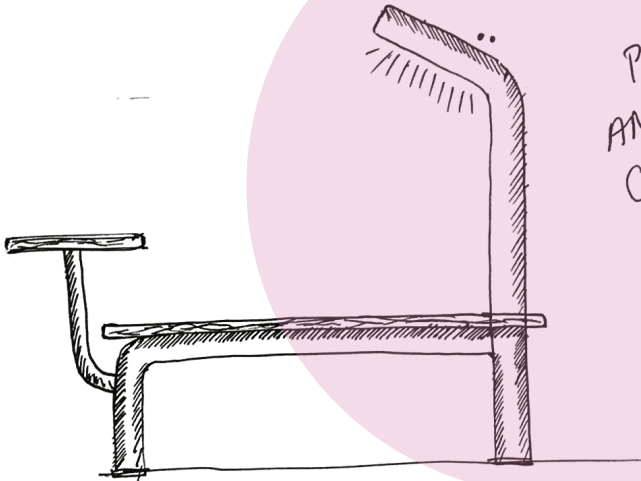


GIANT MUSHROOMS

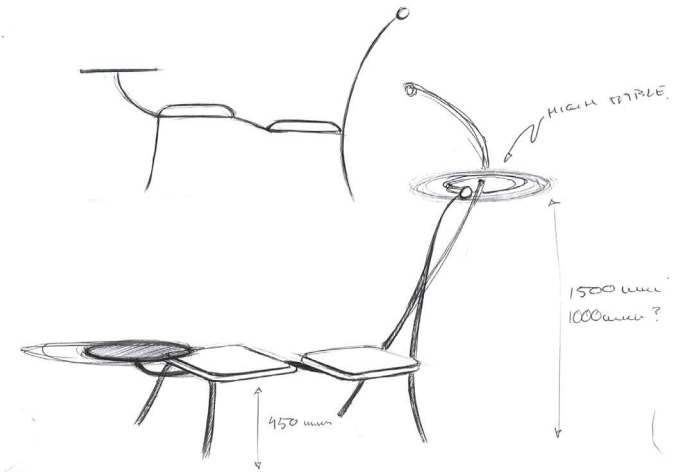
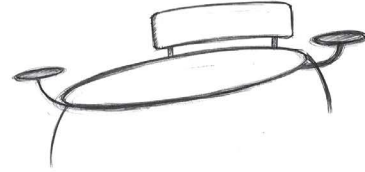
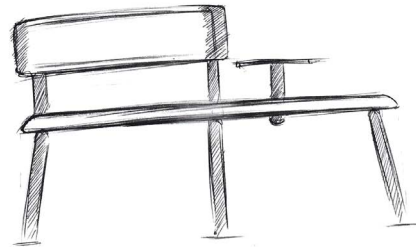
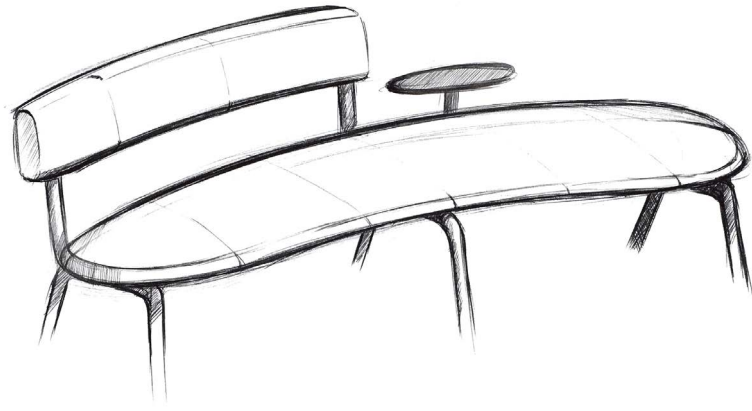


NGRAAH!

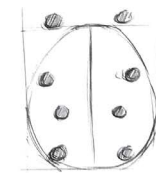
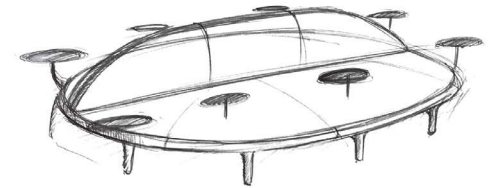
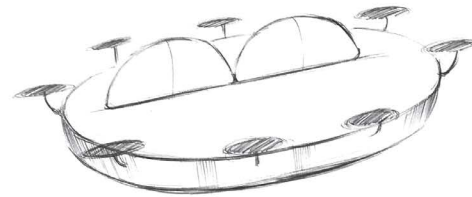
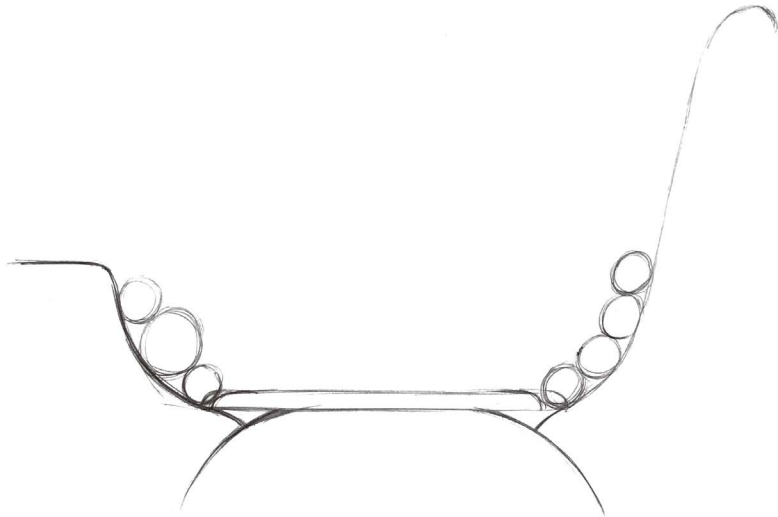
PLAYFUL SHAPES.  
ANIMALS, DINOSAURS ETC.  
CAN BE VARIATED BY  
CHANGING COLORS  
AND MATERIALS ON  
SEATS, TABLES AND  
FRAMES.

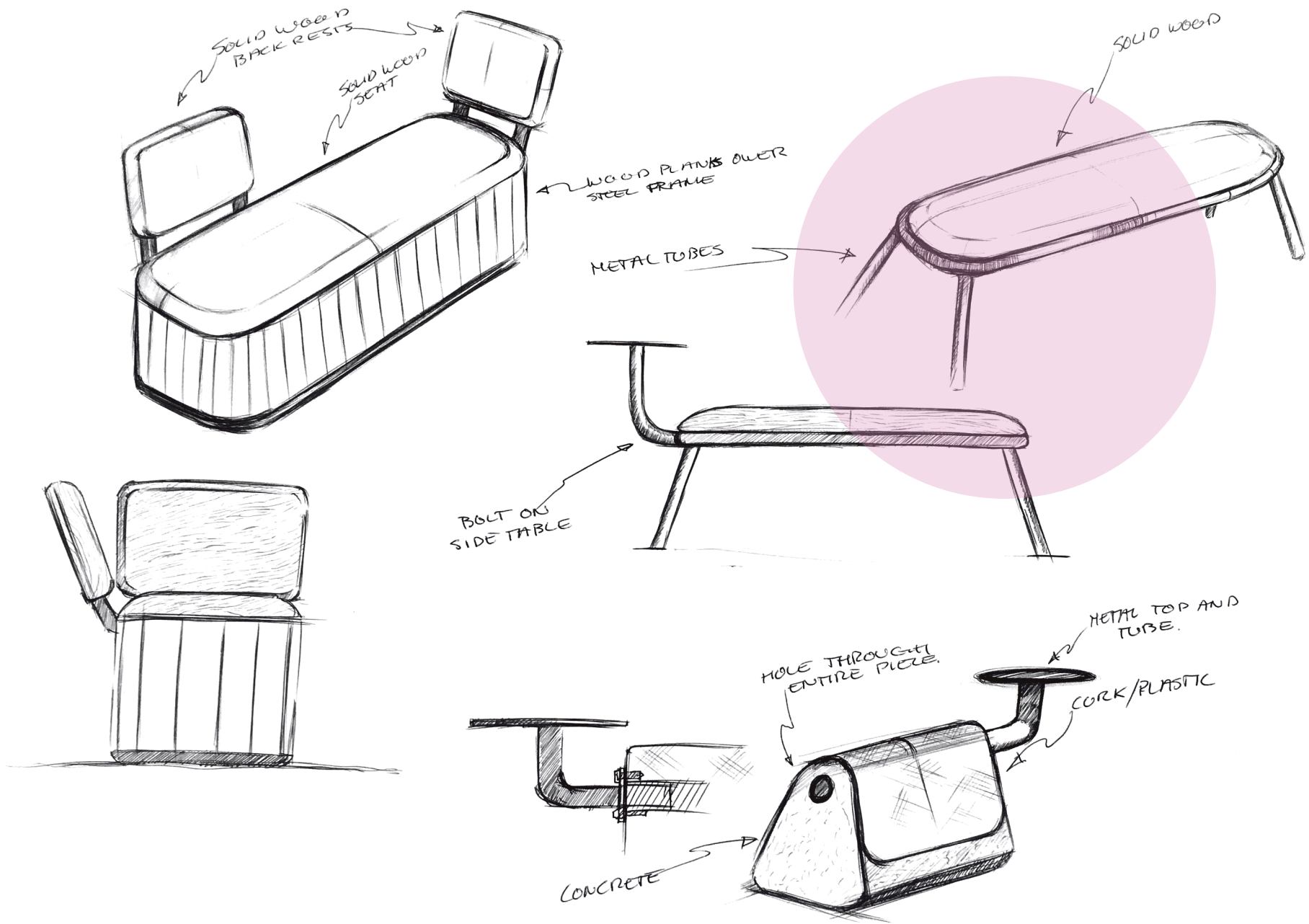


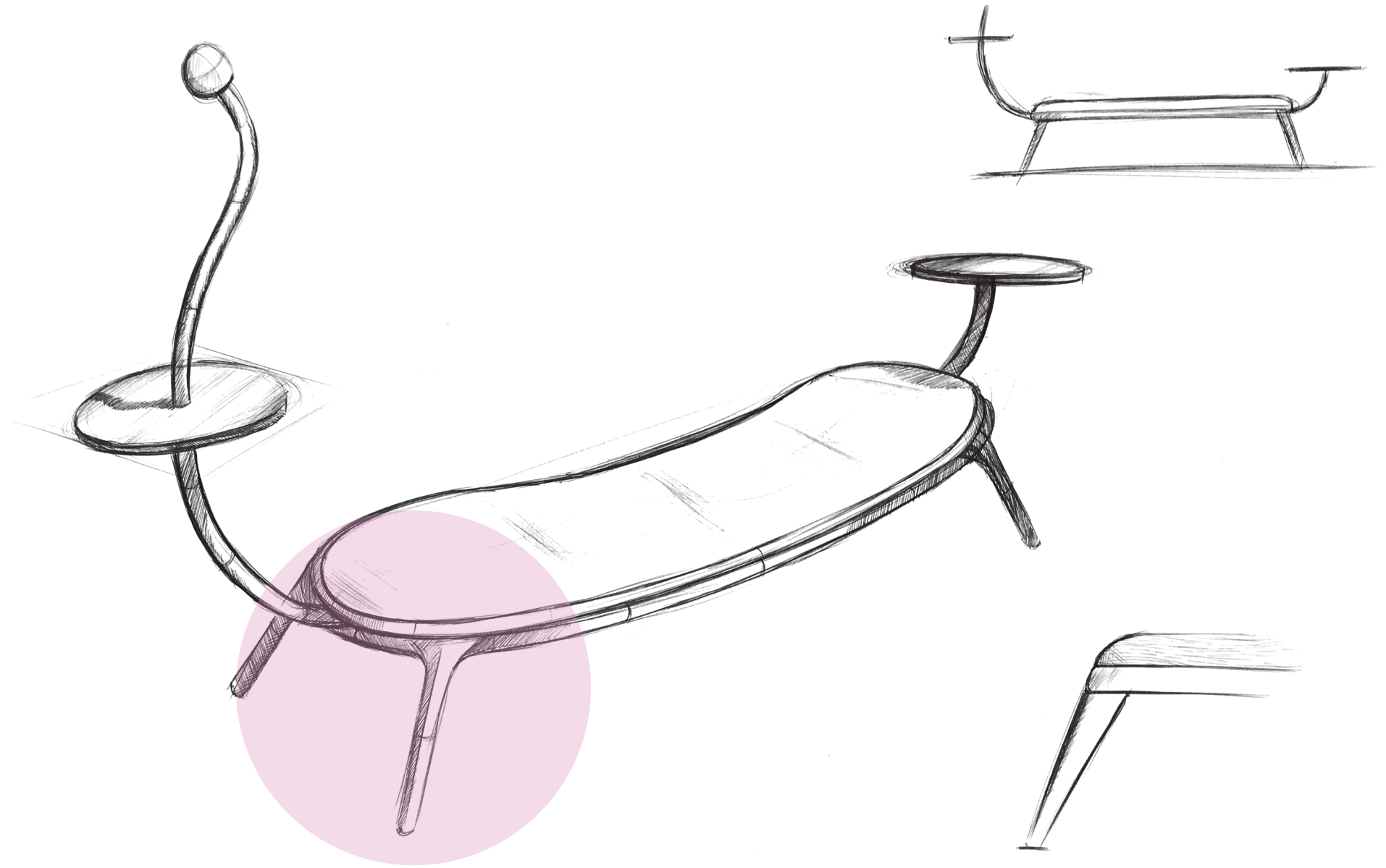




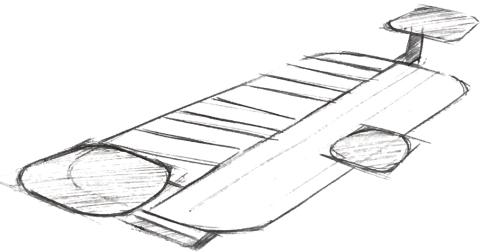
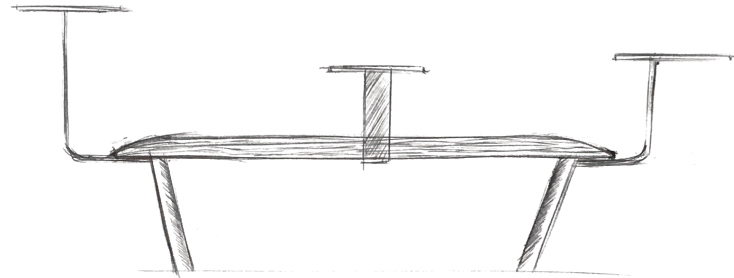
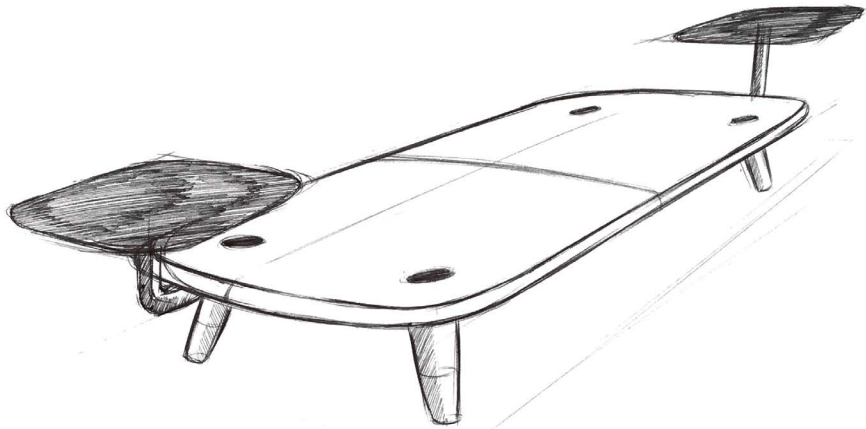
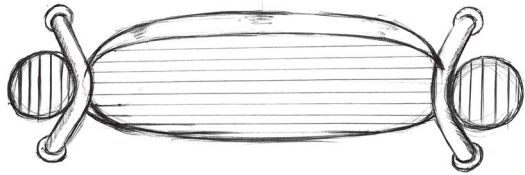
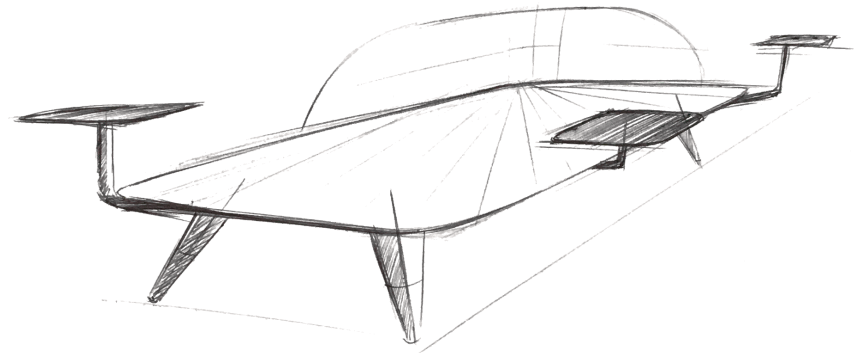
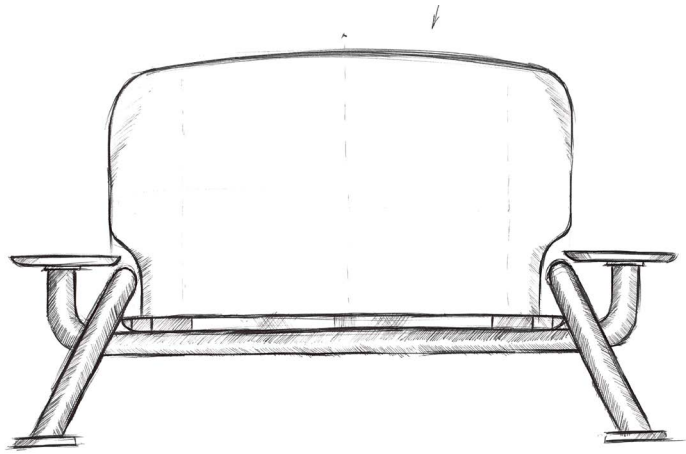
LADY BUG

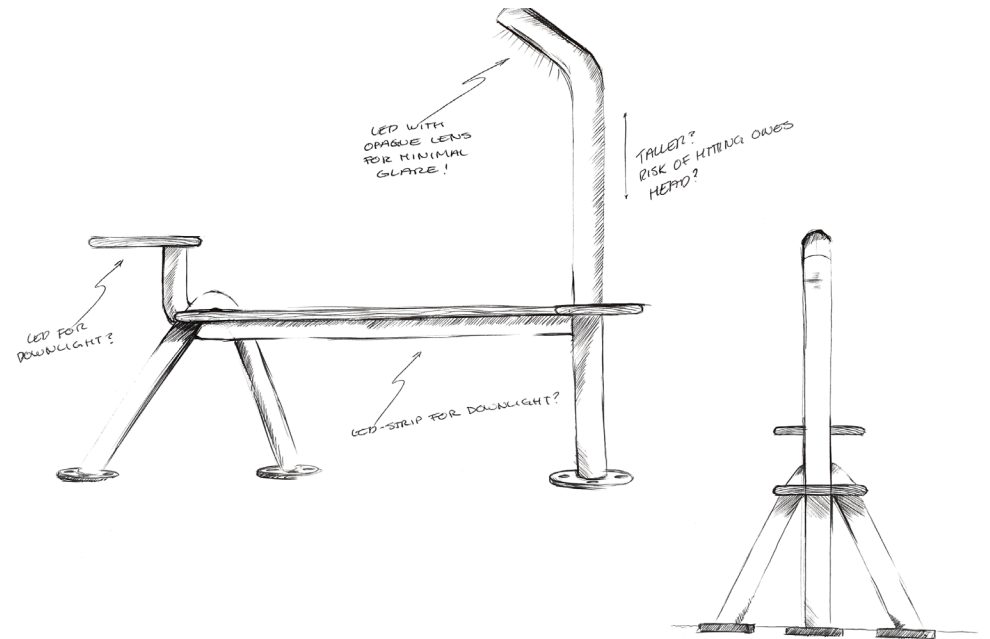
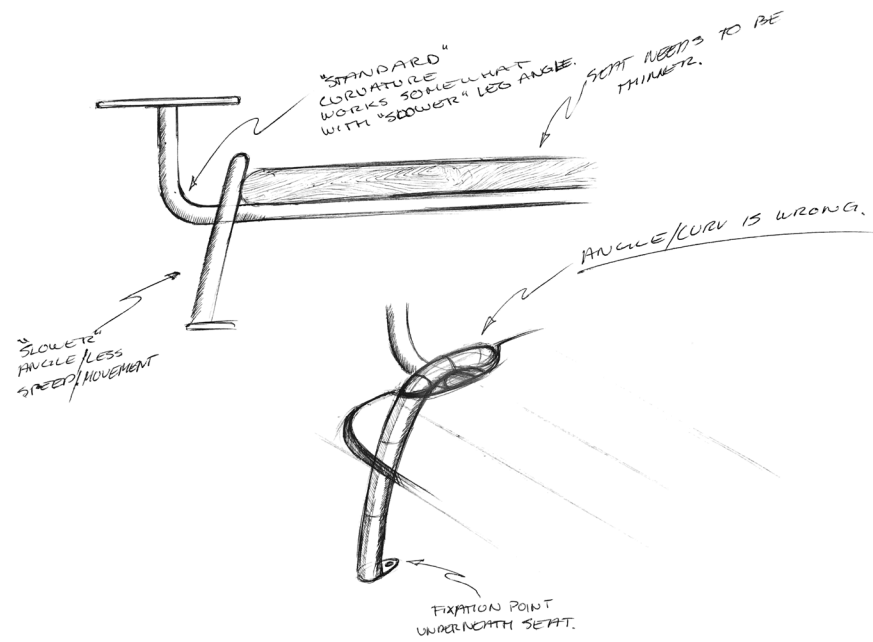
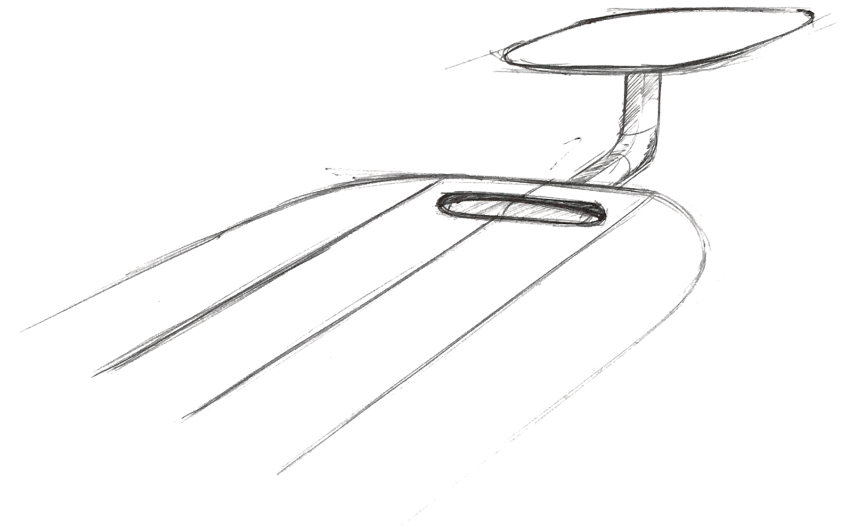
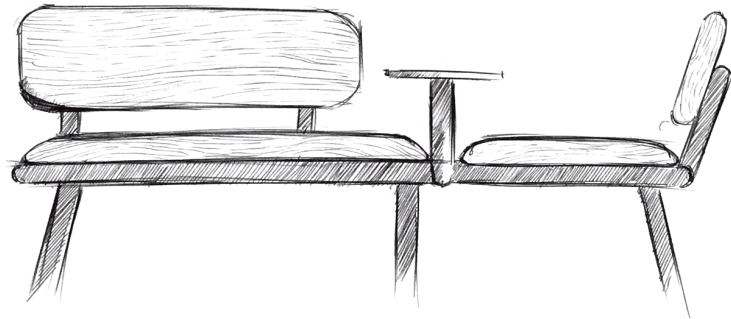


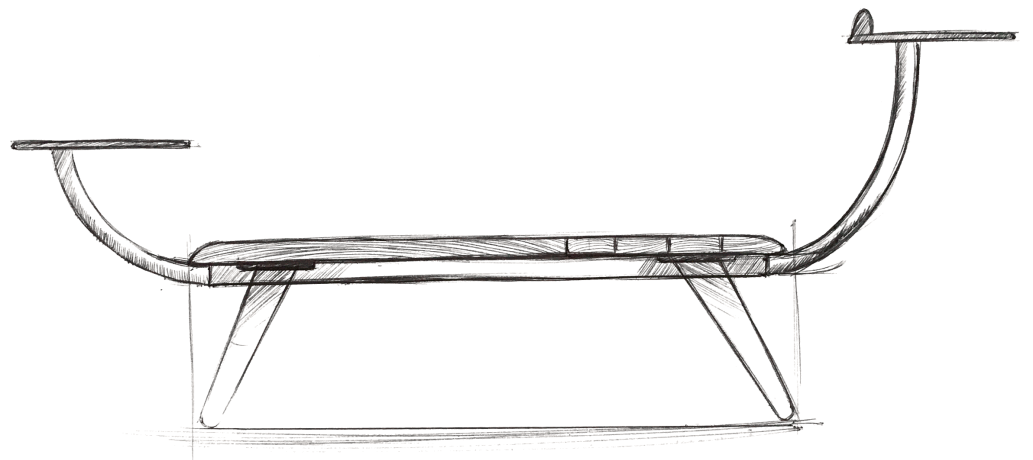
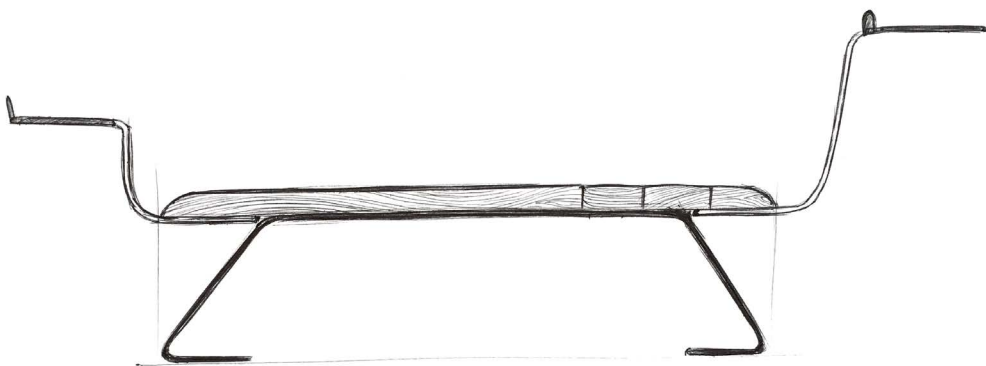
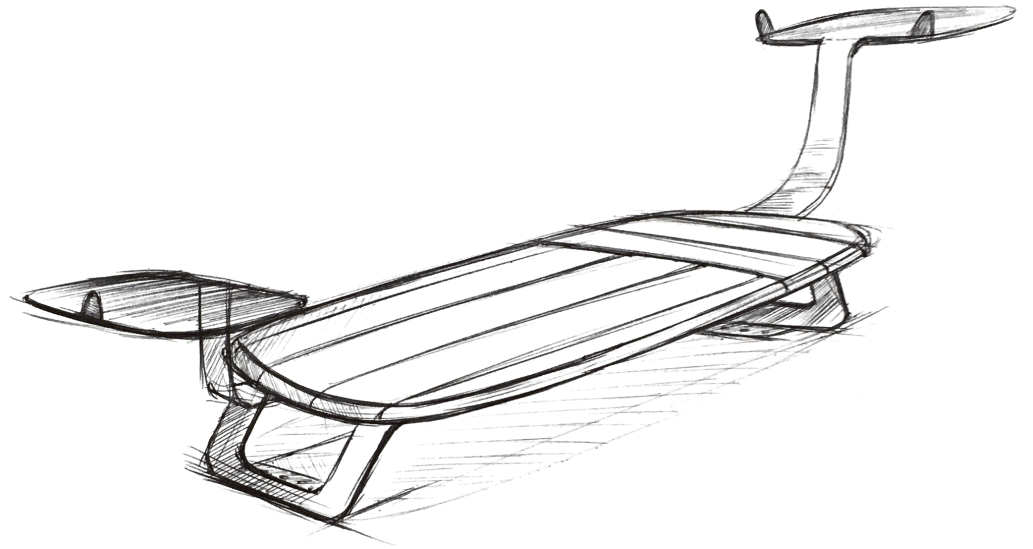
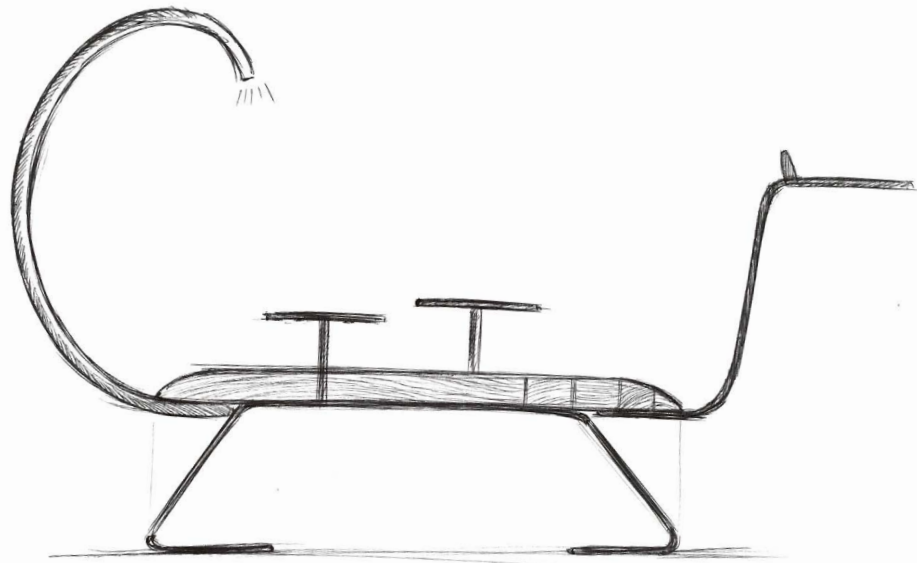






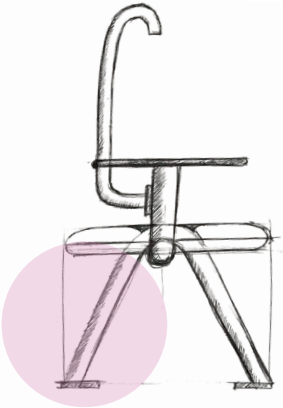
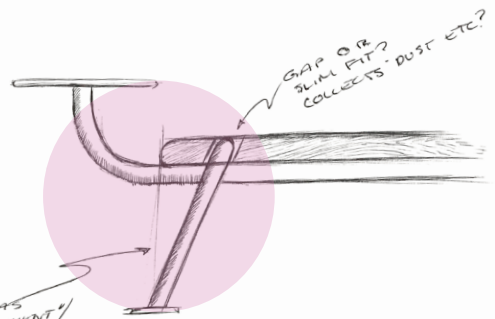






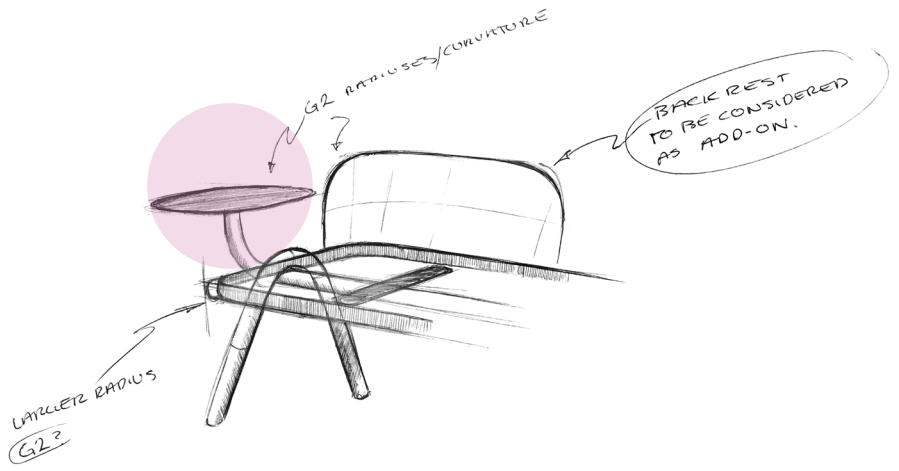
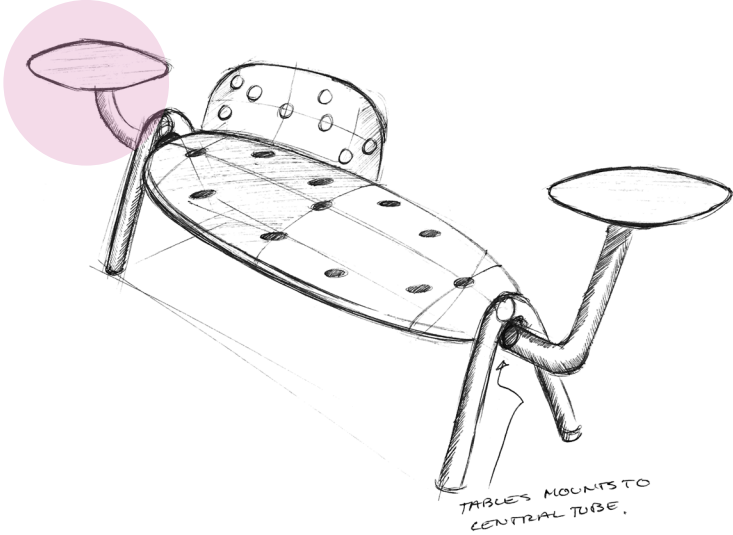
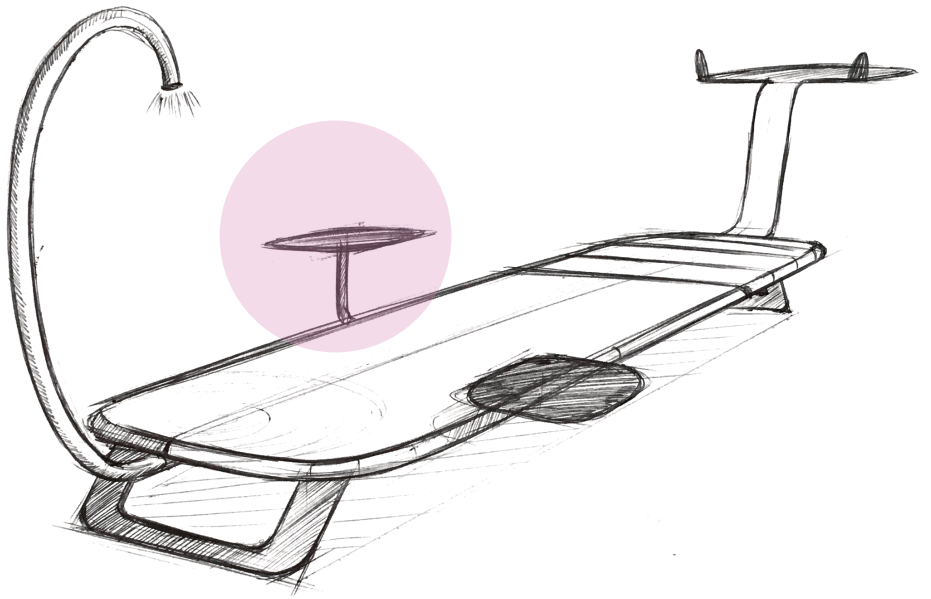


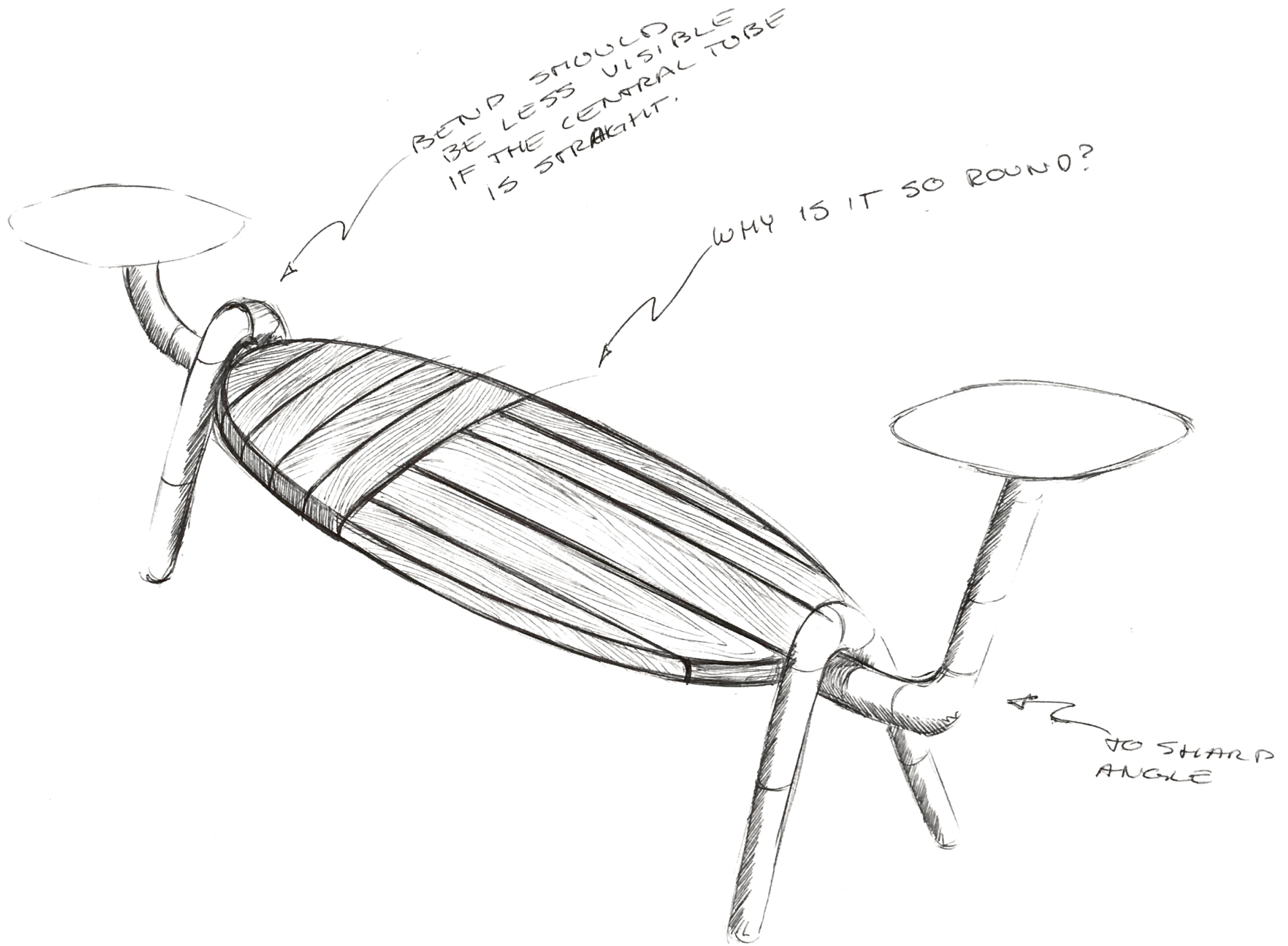
THIS ANGLE HAS MORE "MOVEMENT" SPEED TO IT.

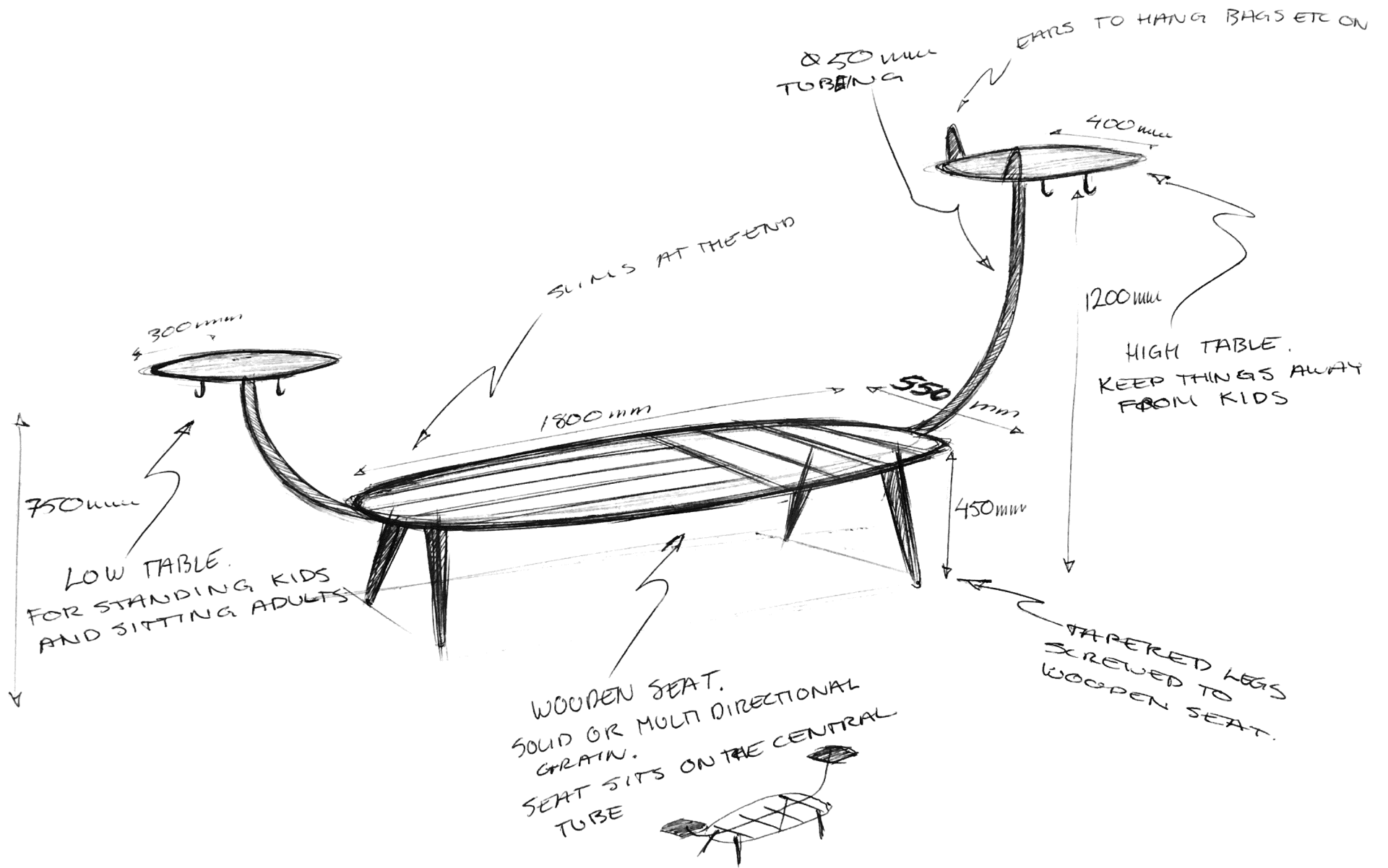


PROBABLY A BAD IDEA? TO MUCH CREVISES THAT COLLECTS DUST, TRASH, GRAVEL ETC.

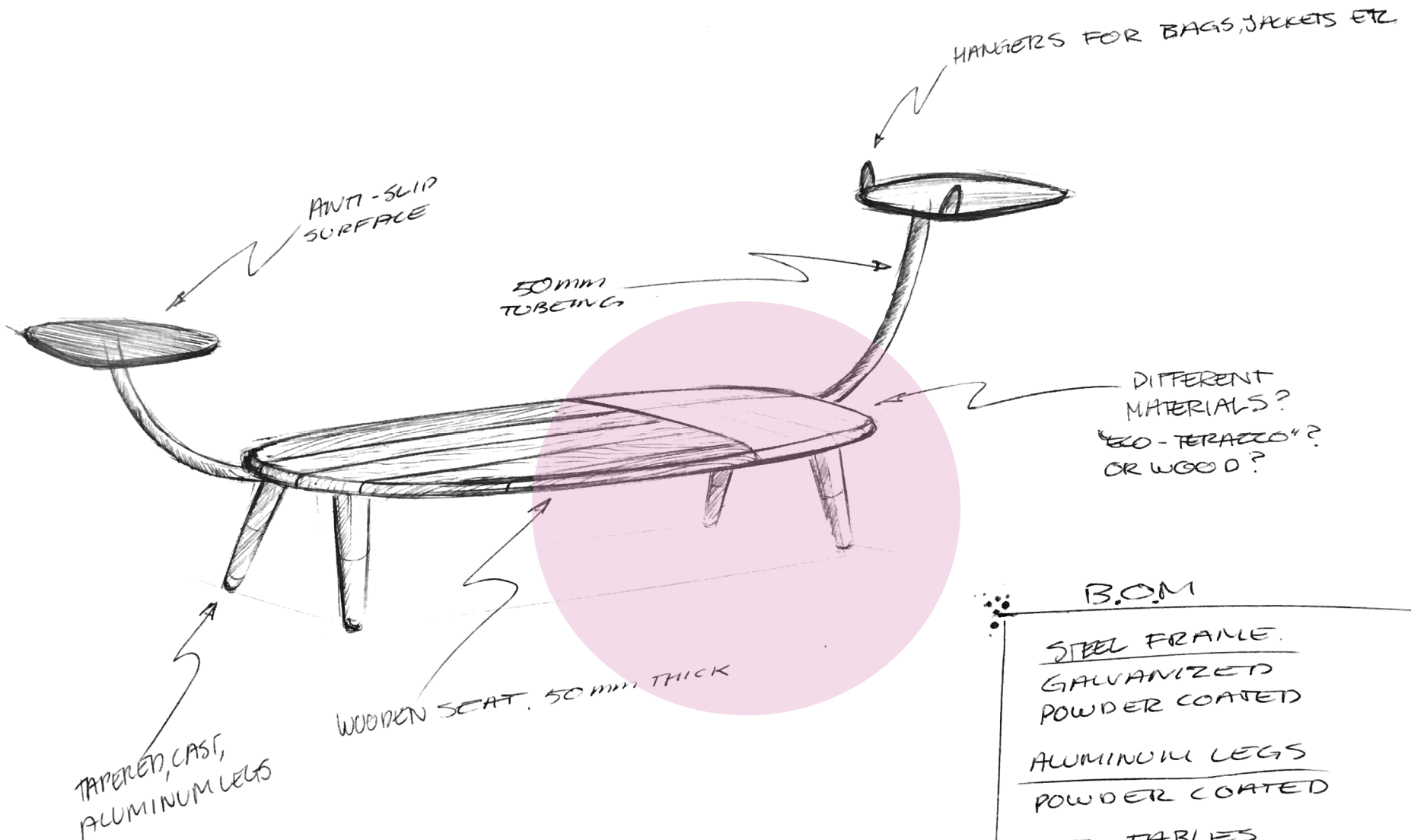
"ROUNDS WITH ROUNDS"  
"LIKE A SIF"











DIFFERENT MATERIALS?  
 "ECO-TERAZZO"?  
 OR WOOD?

B.O.M

- STEEL FRAME.
- GALVANIZED
- POWDER COATED
- ALUMINUM LEGS
- POWDER COATED
- STEEL TABLES
- GALVANIZED
- POWDER COATED
- ANTI-SLIP TOP
- WOODEN SEAT

TREATED FOR OUTDOOR  
 28/4-20

## Pros

Urban animal is both a stand alone piece and a herd. It's a statement piece and a practical bench that provides a place for the user to rest their legs, have a cup of coffee, read a book or keep track of kids playing. It brings a joyful and playful element to a space without being an object aimed towards children.

Urban animal allows both young and old to take part of it. The asymmetrical, low, side table allows for wheelchair accessibility as well as a place for children to put down drinks, food or toys.

The high table allows for parents to keep objects away from children at the same time as it can function as a standing workspace in another scenario.

The ability to exchange, move and add modules to the base allows for new functions and features to be added at any point whether it is a light, backrest or another coffee table.

## Cons

Urban animal can be perceived as too disruptive or too childish due to its non-traditional appearance. At the start of this project I was of the opinion that public outdoor furniture was a less restricted part of the furniture industry where designers, developers and architects were less constricted in their way of expressing themselves.

This has proven not to be the case in my opinion. After analyzing the product portfolios of several major manufacturers of public outdoor furniture I came to the conclusion that they to a large extent mimic each others products and ways of presenting them.

This might pose a problem for Urban animal since it's not a conventional product, neither was it suppose to be, and therefore there is a risk that it would be perceived as immature or too extreme in its expression. Not conforming to the standard of modern products can be either a gift or a curse and is something that I can not foresee.

## **Reflection**

This concept, named Urban Animal, has come to be the one I've decided to continue developing further.

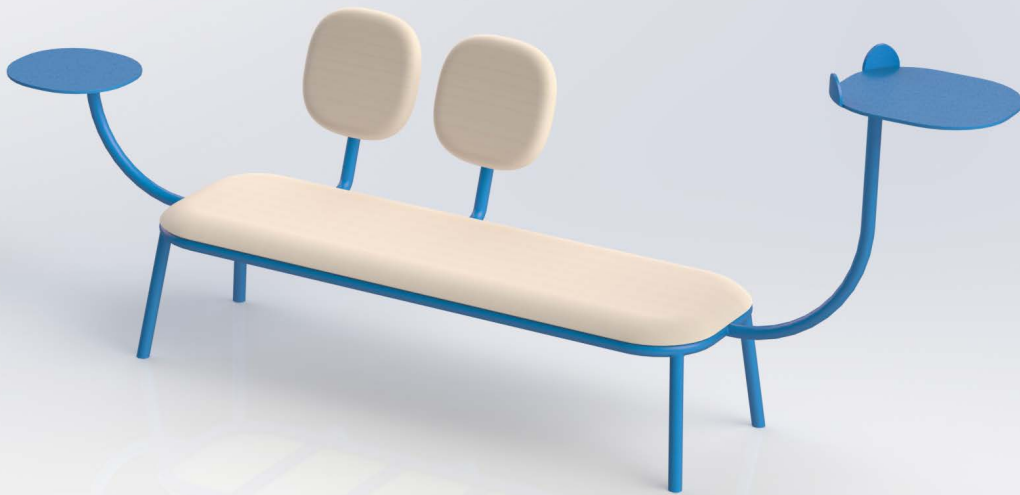
I find that the work so far has proven to work better than the previous concepts I've designed. Even though I have some doubts about how it will be received I feel that it has achieved what I set out to in regards of playfulness.

This being the point of my project, I feel comfortable moving forward with this concept. I believe that there are many ways I can continue to develop this product further and later on even turn into a furniture family.

Urban Animal presents the opportunity to change a space into a more welcoming and playful one, an aspect I personally find very useful in our otherwise sometimes strict public environment.



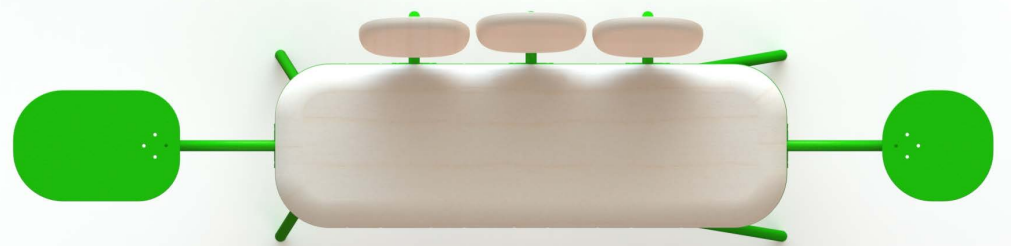
# Rendered concepts





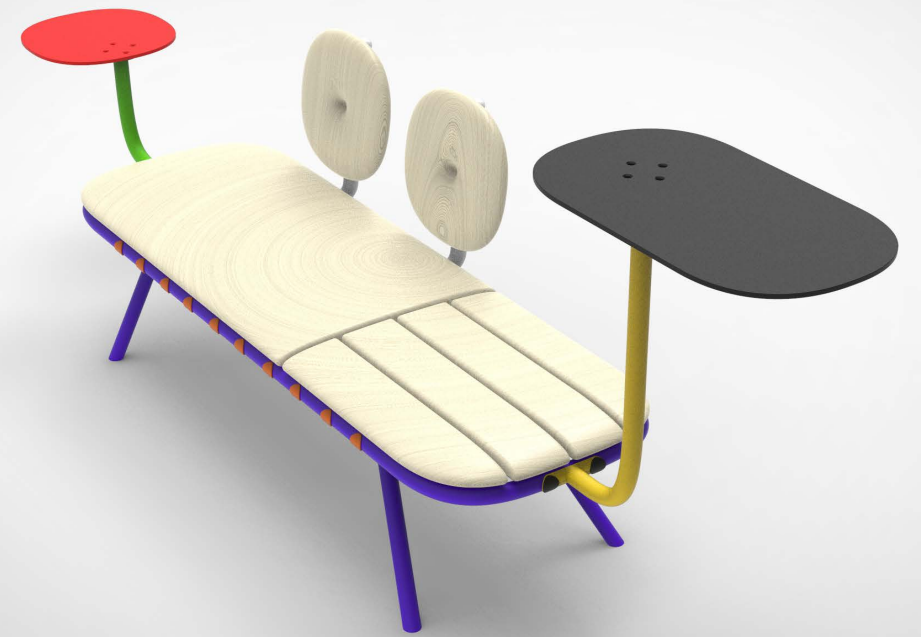
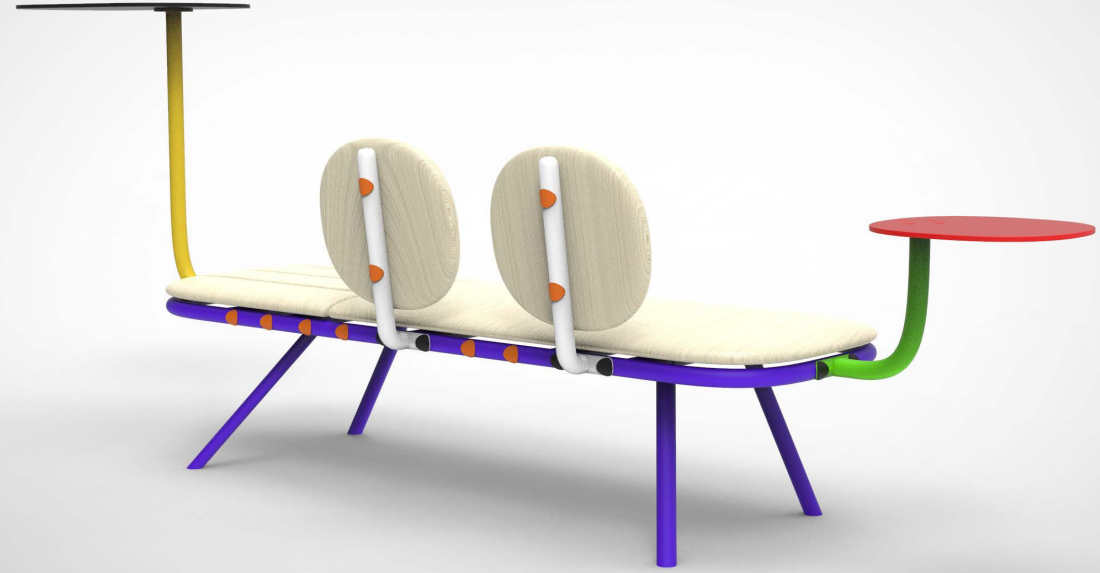
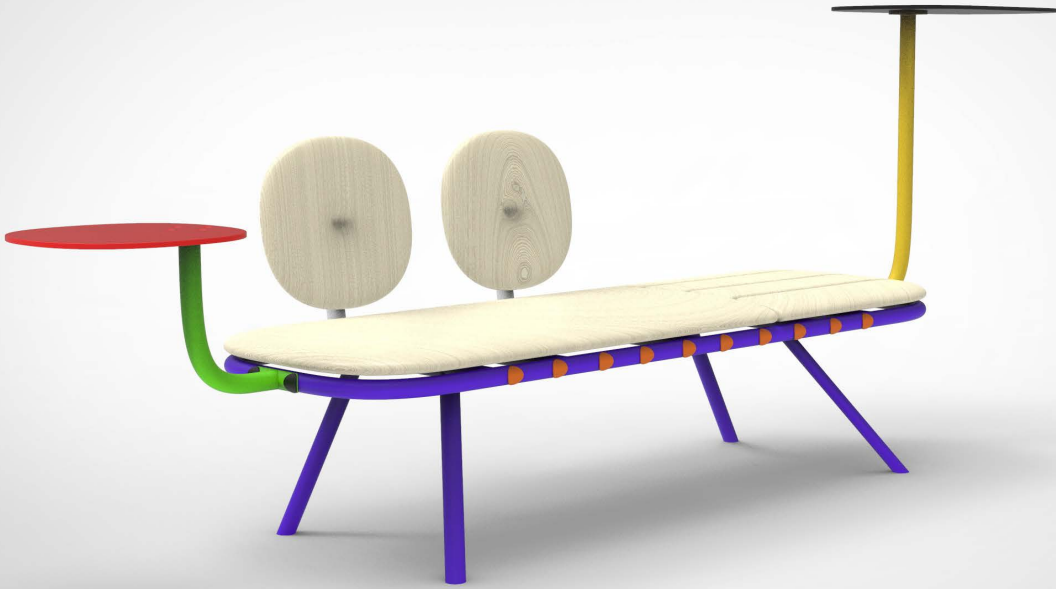














# Making the decision

Deciding on what path to go in this project has been challenging for me in many ways. There has been many twists and turns, ups and downs and forward and backwards during this project. In many ways this is what my process tend to look like, chaotic and irregular.

Spending weeks on a concept to later realize that it's not working out aesthetically or functionally is less than ideal, but it is a vital part of the process to explore different options, concepts and ideas. No matter how painfully frustrating it is to have to abandon something you put a lot of time into.

Weighing the different concepts against each other through this project has been harder than I expected. All of them have different expressions, functions and intentions. All of them have their pros and cons. All of them have come to be by my hand and mind. They all have their unique ways of addressing issues and challenges that might be presented in a public space.

After discussing them with my supervisor, examiner, classmates, friends and family I came to the conclusion that there is some things that was more important than others. One thing that often is said in relation to design is that form follows function. It's something that follows us all as a kind of mantra whether or not we like it.

I am of the firm opinion that form does not have to follow function, nor does it only have meaning when it does. Form itself is something that has an intrinsic value. The way we perceive an object is determined by our previous experiences and knowledge we've acquired before. In playing with this in my design I aim to create a feeling of familiarity and at the same time the lust for exploring an unfamiliar object.

The lust for exploration is one of the first emotions we have. That's how we have evolved as a species, we walked past that hill, through that forest, in order to see what lays beyond. It is a fundamental part of being human.

This is what I want to trigger with my design, the lust for exploration and discovery. To seek out those elements of form that will draw one's attention to it.

Out of my concepts I believe that Urban Animal is the one that does this. It acts like a disruptive yet familiar object within its intended context. The playfulness of it comes from the abstraction of animals, fantasy creatures and objects. Where I see a dog another may see a cat or a giraffe.

A child may perceive the tables as roofs or the seat as saddle. The expression of Urban animal is suppose to be undefined. It is not a giraffe, a dog or a spaceship, it's all and none of them.

How does all of this amount to a piece of furniture being perceived as playful?

In my opinion the way the different parts have been arranged in relation to each other gives Urban animal an inviting, exciting and expressive aura. One that invites the user to explore and experience it in a different way than one normally would with more traditional outdoor furniture pieces.

Furthermore I would argue that Urban animal places itself in between the one-off custom pieces and off-the-shelf standard furniture pieces we are so used to see in public spaces.

The customization aspect of Urban animal allows it to be used even in a more constrained environment due to the fact that it can be painted in any color, the seat can be made in a multitude of materials ranging from hardwood to recycled plastic composites and upholstered variants. This also allows for it to take its place in indoor environments without being perceived as out of place.



# Materials and sustainability

Scandinavian pine is stronger than that from warmer areas which makes it better for outdoor use.





Scandinavian steel production has 30% less environmental impact than the global average.

Sustainability is always something we as designers have to consider during our process, not after it's already done.

In this case I looked to the way Vester works with locally sourced materials, certified wood and production processes that ensures their products have a long lifespan.

They are not alone in the way they look at sustainability, but I would say that they use it very well in their marketing.

Whether or not it's a marketing thing or not, the transparency of modern companies are important, at least to me.

I've been told multiple times that I should not focus too much on production methods and so forth. In my opinion production methods to a large extent defines the process and what you as a designer do.

In being aware of how things are made one can make informed decisions and exclude processes which one does not want to be a part of using.



Whether it is deciding not to use animal products, imported hardwood or labour that is morally questionable such as child labour and harmful working environments.

It also allow you to be in tune with what is possible to do and at the same time seek out new ways of doing things, new ways that might make your design and final product better.

I choose to conform to much of what the major producers of public furniture us in terms of material and production methods. This is mainly due to the fact that they have been doing this for far longer than I have and people with far more experience than I have has been involved in making these decisions. With that said, I have not surrendered my creative process in favour for the standards of others.

I think that the use of locally sourced materials and to minimize the transport cost, both monetary and environmentally, is key in having a sustainable product. In focusing on the Nordic countries and our ability to produce high quality materials and products I believe that my demands on sustainable materials and production can be met.

Aligning yourself with industry standards is in my opinion something that one can do in order to have a framework. In this case, I wanted to design a piece that could be produced today without too many issues. That is why I've chosen to go with a more traditional approach in regards to the materials used in this product.

Urban Animal is, due to its modularity, a more sustainable option than a lot of what we see on the market today. It can easily be repaired or altered in order to provide new ways of usage.

Urban Animal is, due to its modularity, a more sustainable option than a lot of what we see on the market today. It can easily be repaired or altered in order to provide new ways of using it for alternative contexts.

If the seat gets damaged, one can repair or replace it without having to discard the rest of the pieces. If one day, one decides to refurbish the area, Urban Animal can be dismantled, repainted and also have features added or taken away to better suit the space.

The ability to repair and maintain objects is the really important part of sustainability to me. A porcelain plate may not be recyclable but it sure does work better to reuse than a paper equivalent.

Same thing goes for furniture. There is, in my opinion, little to no reason to design objects to be “sustainable” when they do not stand the test of time.

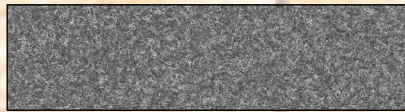
No matter how good ones intentions are, one must always see things with the aspect of time in mind.

I believe that the use of natural and recycled materials also provides a meaning and in some aspect redeems us from some of the issues we as designers create through increased consumption.

If we can design objects that last and take responsibility for them in means of material and production choices, we can get a step closer to making things better for all.

CMF





Felt



Leather



Fabric



HDPE - LDPE



Linen



Scanian Red



RAL 6038



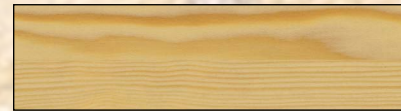
Galvanized Steel



White stained Oak



Red Oak



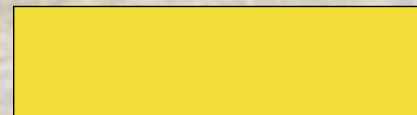
Pine



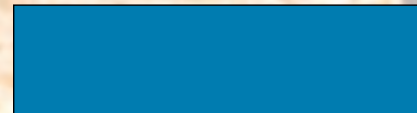
White Ash



Dark stained Ash



Scanian Yellow



RAL 5015

# Product specification

## **Construction specification**

Urban animal consists of a welded 40 mm tubular steel frame with 50 mm thick, solid wood, seats and backrests. The tables are made of 10 mm thick steel slates and bolts on to the table arms.

The tables, arms and back rests are mounted to the frame with tamper proof M12 bolts and nuts in pre-drilled holes.

The holes that are not in used can be plugged with a color matching, or other colored, blank to prevent dust and trash from gathering.

### **Urban animal base pack:**

Galvanized and powder coated steel frame, 490 mm height including seat.

Galvanized and powder coated low table, 720 mm height.

Galvanized and powder coated high table, 1200 mm height.

Galvanized and powder coated backrest frame with solid wood backrest.

Solid wood seat, treatment for outdoor use varies depending on type of wood.

### **Extra parts that can be provided on demand:**

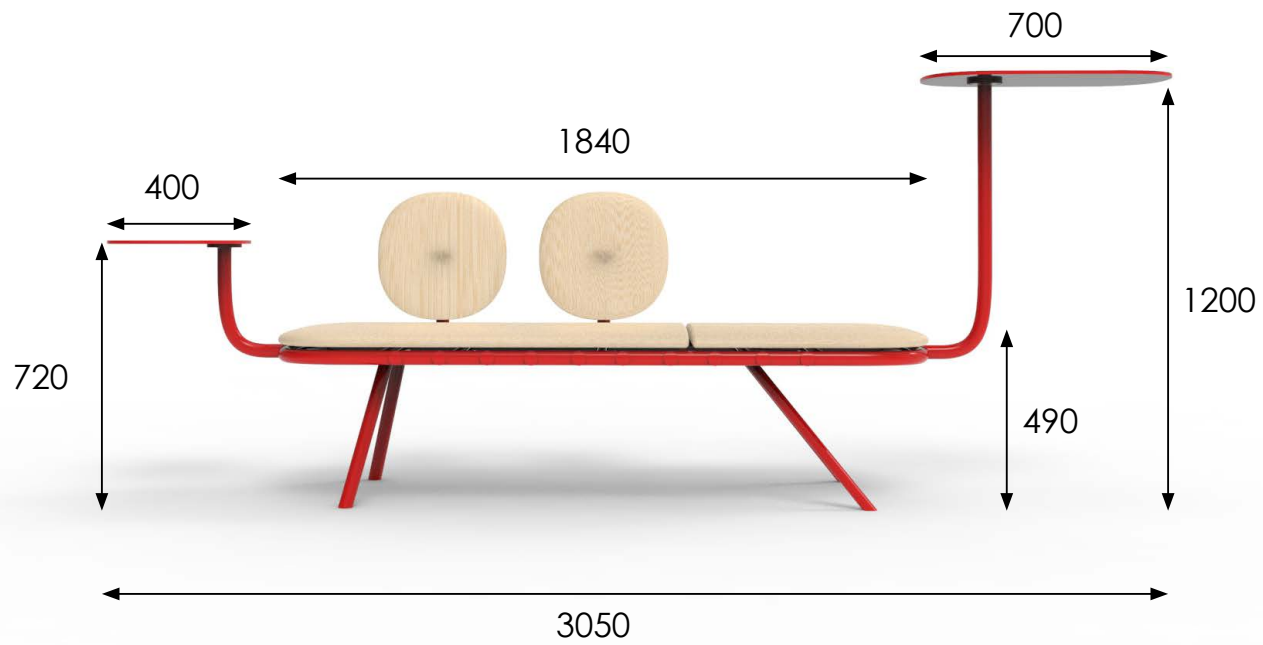
Galvanized and powder coated backrest frame with solid wood backrest.

Under seat LED lighting.

Galvanized and powder coated LED table light.

Galvanized and powdercoated LED high "tail light".

Upholstered seats.





Final concept

