

Signe Carlsson 2023 - Degree Project - Bachelor of Fine Arts in Design



Childish Shelf

NEW PURPOSE, NO NEW PURCHASE



LUND
UNIVERSITY

Childish Shelf

New purpose, no new purchase

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Degree project for Bachelor of Fine Arts in Design

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Main Field of Study: Industrial Design

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ABSTRACT

This project is aiming towards designing to extend the lifespan of children's belongings to reduce excessive owning and over consumption amongst parents. Today, there is an issue of parents of small children needing to own many of the same products that they often need to replace and exchange as the child grows older. It affects both the environment and the personal economy of the parents.

The result is the **Childish Shelf**, a multi purpose piece of furniture that can function both as a crafts and play table for children, and a regular shelf that suits in an adult home. As the children grow up and the crafts table is of no use anymore, the Childish Shelf is rotated 90° into an upright position to be used as a standing shelf instead. When positioned as a table, it has a built in chair for the child and space underneath the table top for storage. When in its upright position, the shelf has an airy and open aesthetic that allows displaying decorative objects, books or smaller storage boxes.

New purpose, no new purchase!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Lund University School of Industrial Design and all the teachers I have had the pleasure of encountering throughout these three years of doing my bachelor's degree. To have had the opportunity to spend time in such a creative, social and motivating environment has been truly great and I hope to experience the same atmosphere in my future work life.

Thank you to Claus-Christian Eckhardt, Charlotte Sjödel and Jasjit Singh for valuable comments, feedback and support throughout this project and during other courses prior to this one, as well.

Thank you to the staff in the IKDC workshops who have taught me everything I know about handicraft.

A special thank you to Anna Persson who supervised me throughout this project. Our discussions kept me motivated and grounded throughout the process and you always came up with interesting and fun directions for me to explore.

Finally, a special thank you to my fellow classmates for interesting discussions, creating a friendly and fun classroom environment, and for supporting and encouraging instead of competing with each other. I highly value the community we created together.

Thank you!

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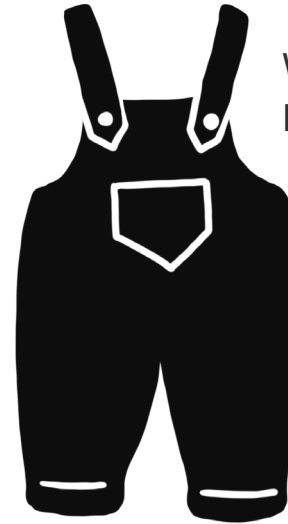
Childish Shelf

ISSUE

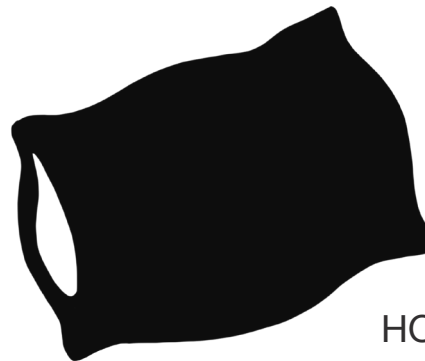
Small children go through a lot of products everyday that they only use for a short moment until the product needs to be replaced.

This short moment could be a couple of hours before bed sheets need to be exchanged for new, clean ones. This short moment could also be a couple of weeks before clothes need to be exchanged for a larger size. Or this short moment could be a couple of months before the child needs a larger stroller.

The commonality between the hourly, weekly and monthly switching out of products is that parents of young children need to own many of the same products and that they need to replace these products with newer ones much more often than adults do. This affects both the environment and the personal economy of the parents.



WEEKLY
EXCHANGE



HOURLY
EXCHANGE



MONTHLY
EXCHANGE



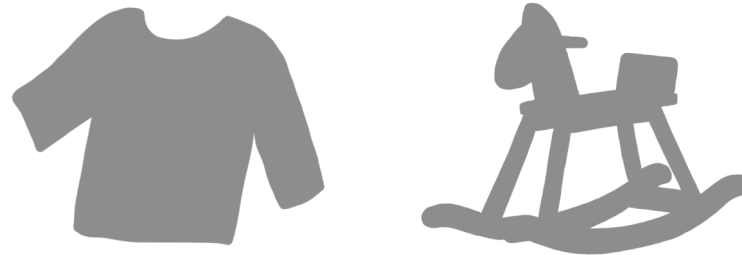
MOTIVATION

The motivation for choosing this project was a previous school project where I designed a modular doll house. I enjoyed working within the field where children were the target group and realised through my research for that project that children's homes are filled with products specifically for them

My motivation for the project was therefore the obvious need of a solution to the many products that need to be exchanged all the time together with my own interest in designing for children.

DIRECTION OF PROJECT

“Design a solution to downscale the amount of products parents of small children need to own and decrease the need to replace these products as often as is the case today.”



*Now this can walk down two different roads - **clothes** or **stuff...***

...which made it important for me to research both areas to realise which was worth shooting for.

Possible clothes outcome:

A range of clothing items that can be worn for a longer period of time, hence fit for a larger amount of sizes than babies clothes do today.

Possible stuff outcome:

A children's product or piece of furniture that can be a natural part of the children's home and later on be desirable for the parents to keep when the children are grown up.

MARKET RESEARCH

CLOTHES

The market research within the clothing area focused on finding articles that offered the possibility for the children to wear the same pieces of clothing for a longer time period. Longer than what is the case with regular children's clothes. There was not a lot of different options however a few pieces showed solutions that made it possible to extend or expand the piece of clothing.

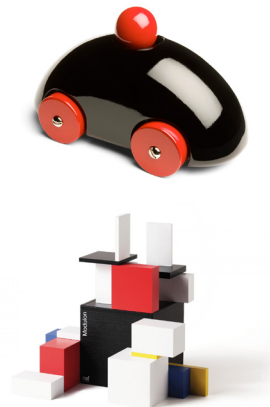
What seems to be more common though, are circular systems such as hand me downs, buying second hand or borrowing clothes.



STUFF

Through researching online and reading the book "Design for Children" by Kimberlie Birks (2018), a few children's designs were picked out and categorised for an overview. I thought that these objects had potential when it comes to prolonging their lives beyond only being useful during the toddler years.

Toys that become decoration



Alterable pieces for ageing



Mechanical alteration



Alteration through flipping



Larger pieces that later on work for adult homes



High chair becomes a bar stool

Shelves that could work for both children and adults

Doll house becomes a coffee table

RESEARCHING THE ISSUE

There have been others that are interested in the issue of parents of small children over consuming and owning too many things, that have written articles analysing this problem. More specifically, articles regarding how to design sustainably for children were the main sources for this research.

Siti Shukhaila Shaharuddin, and Marzie Hatef Jalil state in their article "Parent's Determinants Buying Intent on Environmentally Friendly Children's Clothing" (2021) that when it comes to clothes that are not thrown away due to laziness or them breaking, the parents usually sell or donate items of less personal significance and gift items of higher value. The article also states that 84,7% of parents would buy multifunctional clothes such as these if they found them on the market. However clothing items with too much detail and complicated parts can cause visual fatigue for both the parent and the children which makes them less likely to want to purchase the piece. With this in mind I realised that the circular systems of exchanging clothes between families might be the better way of trying to solve the issue of this project, when it comes to children's clothes.

On the topic of designing furniture and toys for children, Cristina Salvador, José Vicente, and João Paulo Martins describe in their article "Ergonomics in Children's Furniture - Emotional

Attachment", that in order to design something that has a longer life span the designer needs to think about creating a bond between the object and the child that can last for a long time (2014). Furthermore, Birks (2018) confirms this by explaining that furniture and objects for children need to be more than miniaturised versions of adult furniture for the piece to be meaningful to the child.

Salvador, Vicente, and Martins (2014) also state that children enjoy color, patterns and round shapes. On the other hand, Peng Wei and Zamira Madina explain in their article "Application of Environmentally Friendly Materials in the Design of Children's Furniture Based on Fuzzy Technology" that parents might have other preferences such as safety, functionality and the furniture piece blending in with the rest of the interior (2022). This is an interesting aspect to me since this leads to the designer having to find a balance that fits both target groups.

CONCLUSION

I felt confident from the beginning with the issue I am addressing but not necessarily with which way I wanted to go. After considering both directions of clothing and stuff, and researching both themes I found the field of designing a product or a piece of furniture to tackle the issue to be the most interesting. More specifically I would like to experiment with designing something that both be an entertaining product for the children and that can be a part of the home interior even after the children are grown up.

A child's hands are shown working with dough on a wooden table. The child is wearing a yellow long-sleeved shirt. They are using a cookie cutter to shape the dough. In the background, there is a wooden rolling pin, a container of pencils, and other kitchen items. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

FINAL BRIEF

"Design a children's product or piece of furniture that can be a natural part of the children's home and later on be desirable for the parents to keep when the children are grown up"

INTERVIEWS

Over the phone interviews were held to research what types of furniture, toys and products parents of younger children own, and how they view them in relation to their children and everyday life.

The participants were five parents living in different types of housing, with children of different ages, and who seemed to differ when it comes to how messy versus tidy their homes were. They were asked questions in relation to play spaces, products, aesthetic, and disposal and exchange of products.

What products do you think you will be able to use for many years even when the kids grow?

Can you tell me about your thought process when you design a play space?

What do you consider most important when it comes to children's products?

Do you consider your children's products to fit into the rest of the home aesthetic? Is it important?

ANALYZING THE INTERVIEWS

The common factor for all parents seemed to be that they found it important to be able to clean up quickly while still keeping the children's things easily accessible for the next play session. This was to enable both the children to initiate play themselves and to keep the play area nice and tidy for the parents as well. The following examples of what the parents answered to the questions, represent the general opinions of the participants.

“Larger pieces of furniture are more neutral to work for longer while fabrics and pillows are colorful and fun”

“Important that kids can reach for toys themselves and toys are visible”

“Be able to fold away childishness but allow messiness when unfolded”

“The play area needs to be close to where we are which is the kitchen”



The images show play spaces at the homes of two of the parents participating. These two parents described the same need of storage and being able to both clean up and start up play time even though their children clearly do not have the same amount of toys. In one household they have large storage systems displaying the children's things and the other household does not need more than a small bucket to fit all the toys. However both described that they are struggling to keep it tidy.

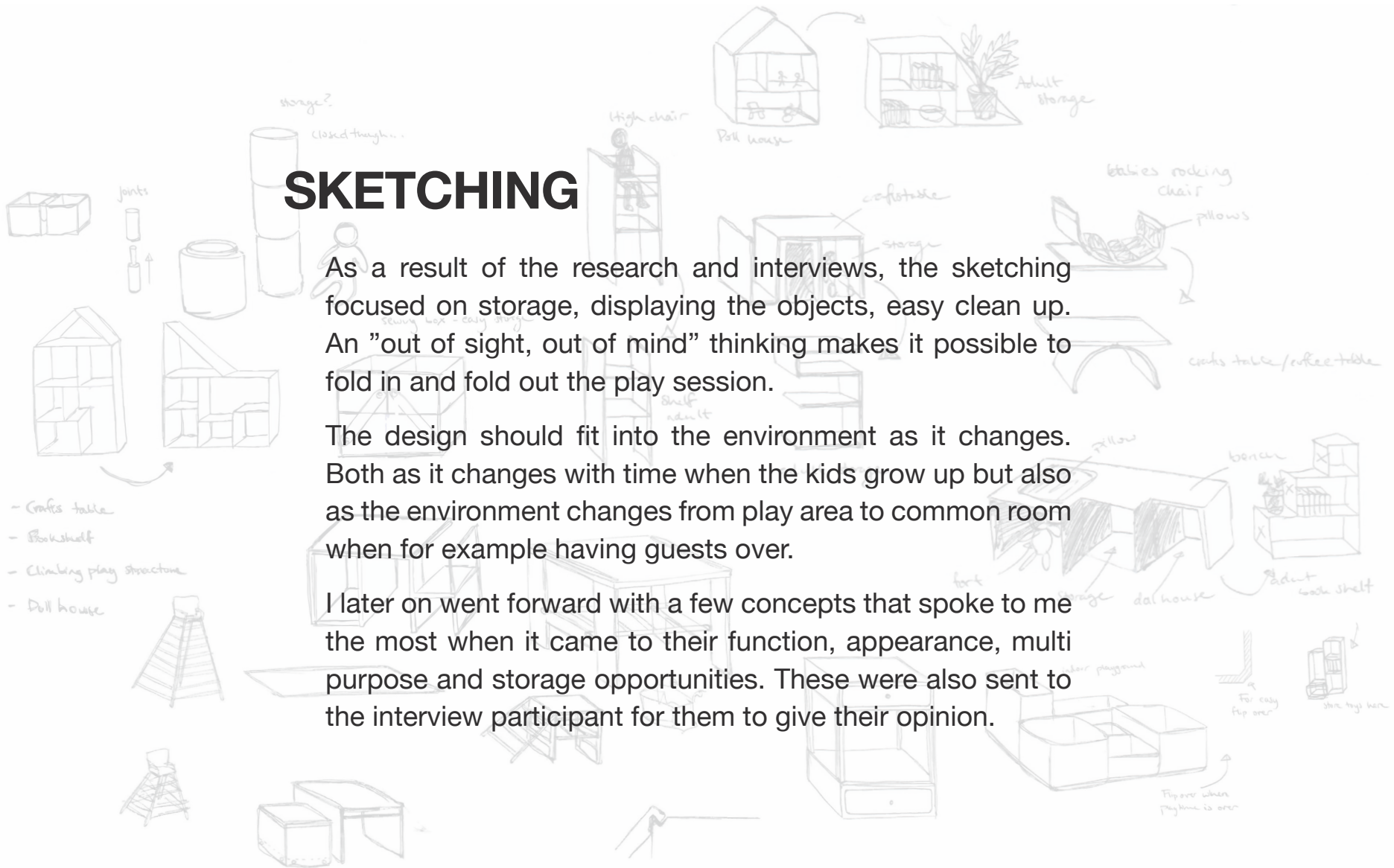
The conclusion of the interviews is that the most important aspects for the parents are storage, display of toys, a design that is not too childish, easy to clean up play time and easy to start up a play session.

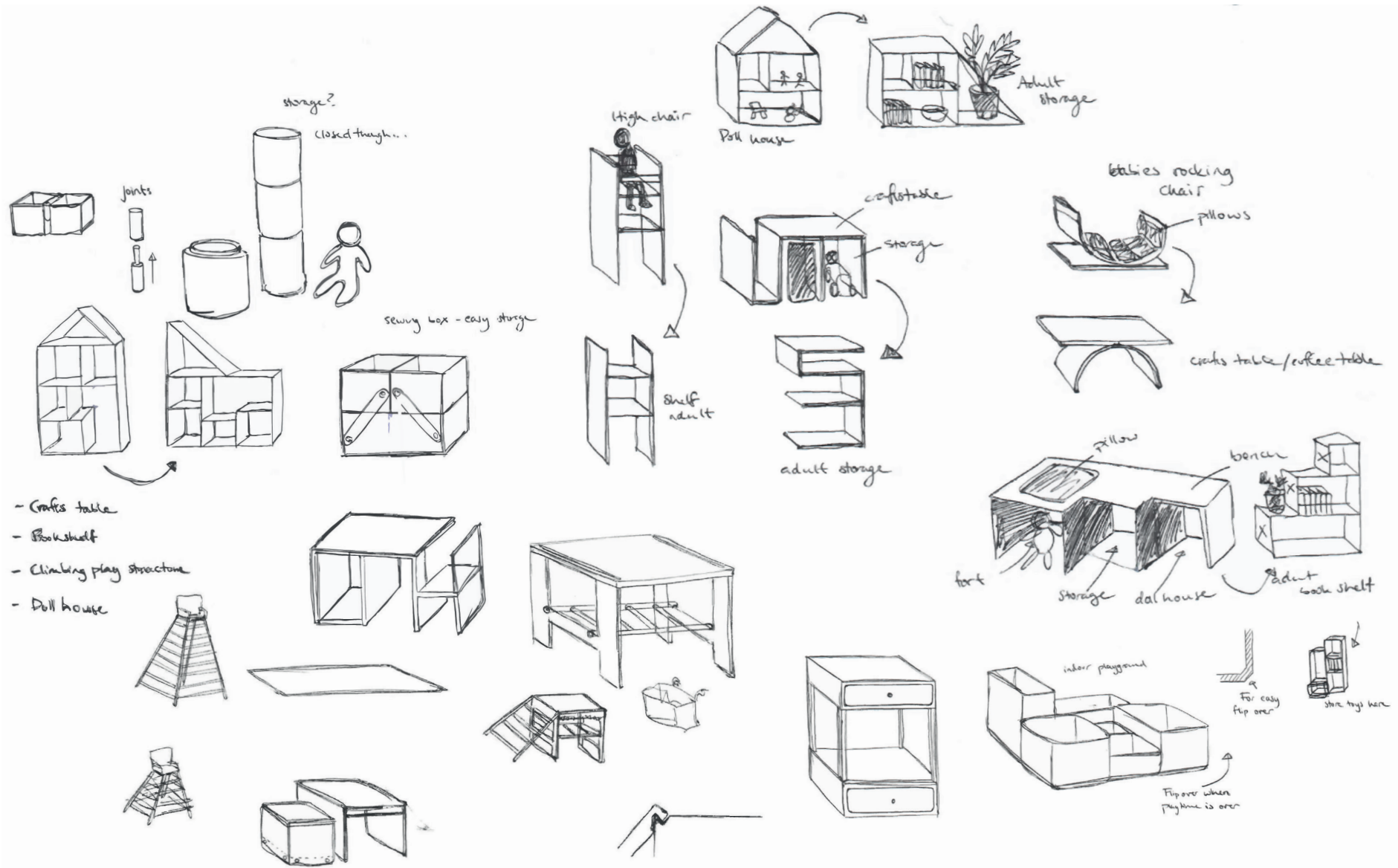
SKETCHING

As a result of the research and interviews, the sketching focused on storage, displaying the objects, easy clean up. An "out of sight, out of mind" thinking makes it possible to fold in and fold out the play session.

The design should fit into the environment as it changes. Both as it changes with time when the kids grow up but also as the environment changes from play area to common room when for example having guests over.

I later on went forward with a few concepts that spoke to me the most when it came to their function, appearance, multi purpose and storage opportunities. These were also sent to the interview participant for them to give their opinion.



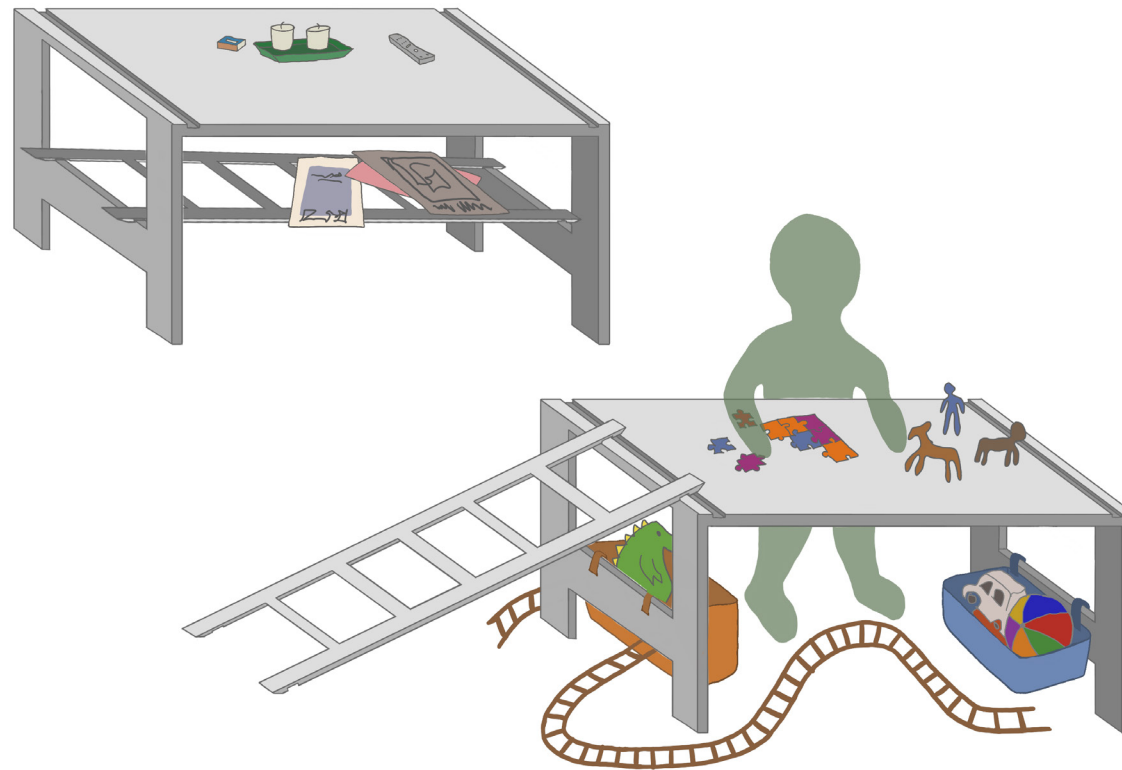




This piece allows for both the parents and the children to use it. It can be used as a bench or side table with storage underneath and the children can play both on top of and inside it. It is possible and encouraged to perform the classic cleaning method of swiping things

underneath the bed just to get the mess out of sight. This was the favourite for some of the parents but was in my opinion a little bit boring and would probably be a very large piece of furniture which might be an issue for young parents in often times, smaller homes.

1



2

A coffee table with the purpose of being used by both target groups separately through out the day. It is possible to quickly put the ladder underneath the table and remove the toys when the play session is over. This also means it can be used as a coffee table only, when the

children are older. The children can both climb the ladder and use the table top for calmer play. The parents thought this looked too dangerous for them to want to purchase and it does not have enough storage opportunities according to me.



The display cabinet is focusing on the importance of the children being able to see their things to encourage individual initiative to playing. Later on in life the children's things can be switched out to the parent's belongings. The appearance is child friendly with the rounded corners

but could still fit in an adult home. Many of the parents described that this is a piece that they already have in their homes and I agreed that it would not fulfil any purposes that other pieces already on the market, do not.

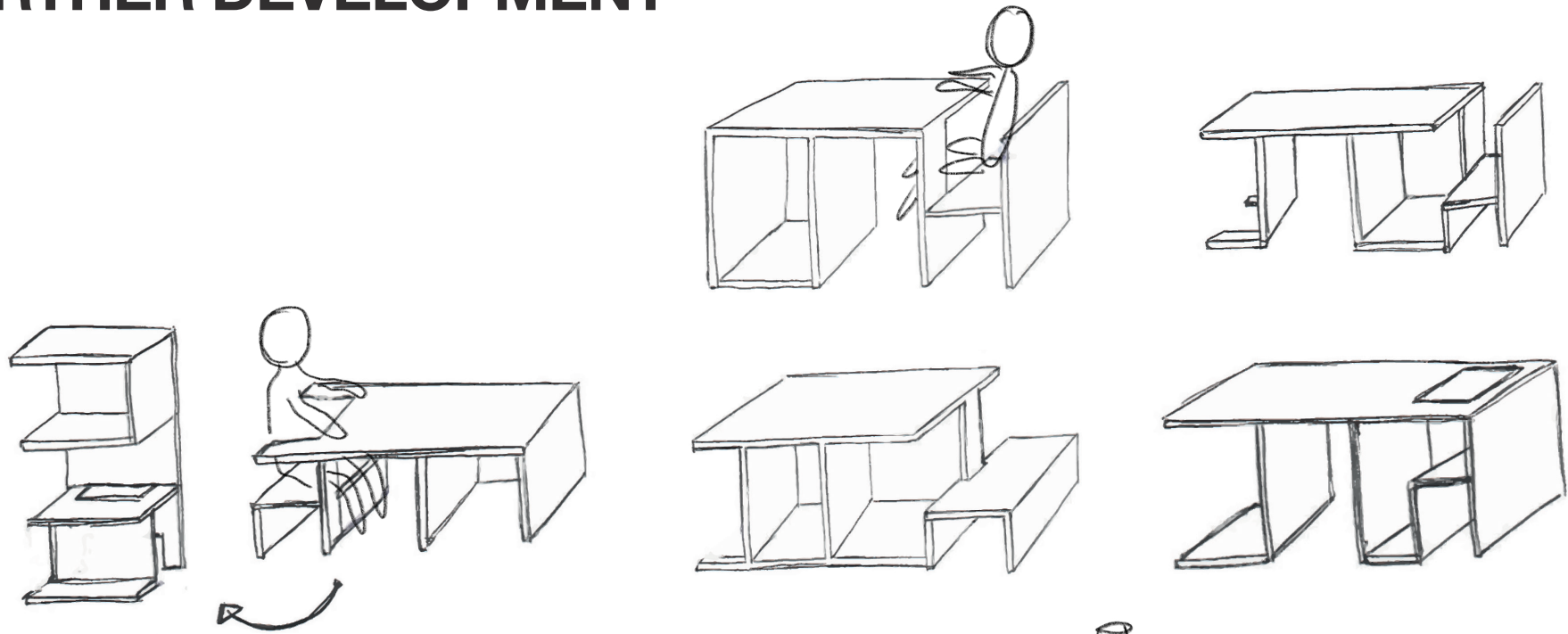
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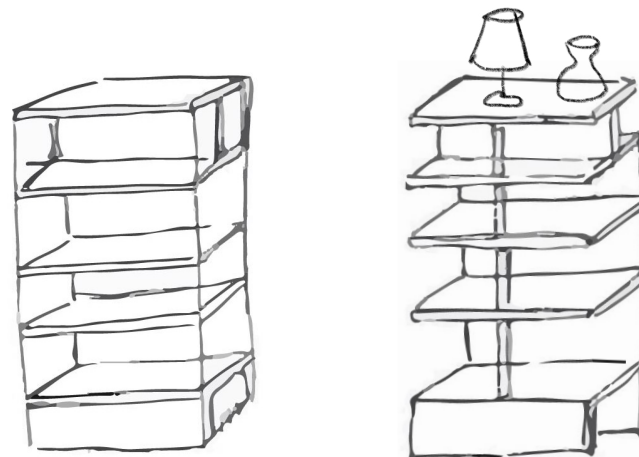
4 This crafts table has storage underneath and allows the children to both sit and stand by the table while using it. Later on when the children are too old to use it, it is simply flipped over to function as a shelf for the adults. This was also a favourite amongst the parents that gave their

opinion however they seemed hesitant when it came to them visualising this in their home. In this case, I interpreted that this was due to the fact that it looks less similar to what they already have at home and therefore they could not relate to it as much.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

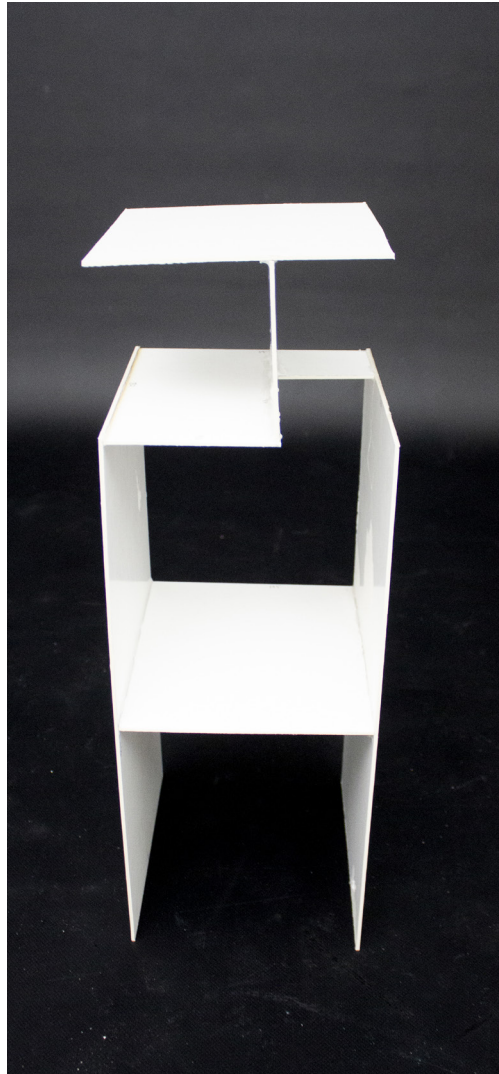


The alternative chosen to continue working with was the crafts table. This was because I thought it had the most potential when it came to designing something unique that is playful and has multi purpose while still having an aesthetic that suits adults.



seat
storage
table

shelf
decoration



In this case, the table top would become the side of the shelf, perhaps making the depth greater than the width...



...while here, the table top would become the back of the shelf which made more sense, dimensions wise!

Cardboard modelling allowed exploring the limitations and opportunities of the dimensions

The issues I encountered at this stage was mostly coming up with dimensions that would work for the piece both when standing up and lying down. The measurements need to enable the child to both stand and sit by the table but also make sense when it comes to width and depth when the piece stands up in its shelf mode.

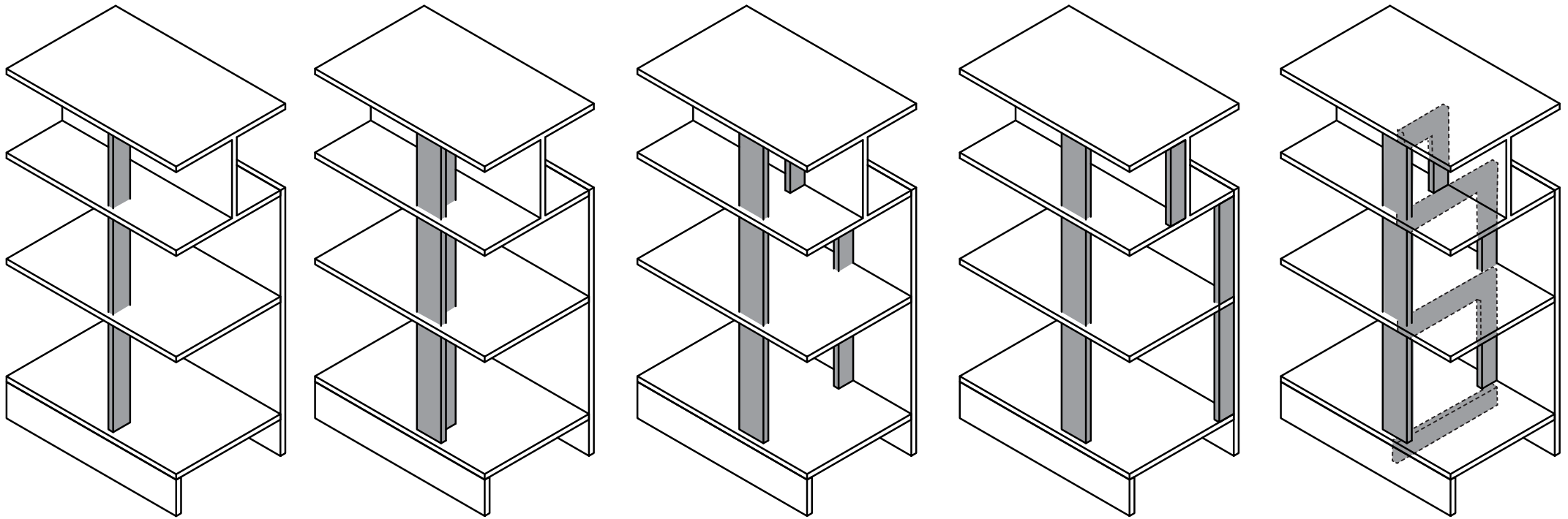
Another important issue to adress was the matter of the stability of the piece. It needs to be constructed in a way that allows weight to be placed on the piece from two directions; on the table top and chair, and on the shelves.





Finalizing main concept...





...thinking about stability in all directions...

MODEL MAKING *scale 1:1 model*





EDGE TREATMENT



When designing for children it is important to keep in mind the fact that they can be a little clumsy and easily fall and run into sharp corners and edges. At the same time, the parents in the home also have their preferences when it comes to the sharpness of the furniture corners. It was decided to mix sharper and rounder corners and edges depending on which corner or edge it was. The children would most likely run into the table top corners and bench backrest corners, hence these were rounded even more than the rest. However the difference is not too noticeable and when the Childish Shelf is standing up, these rounded corners are going against the wall and therefore not as visible.

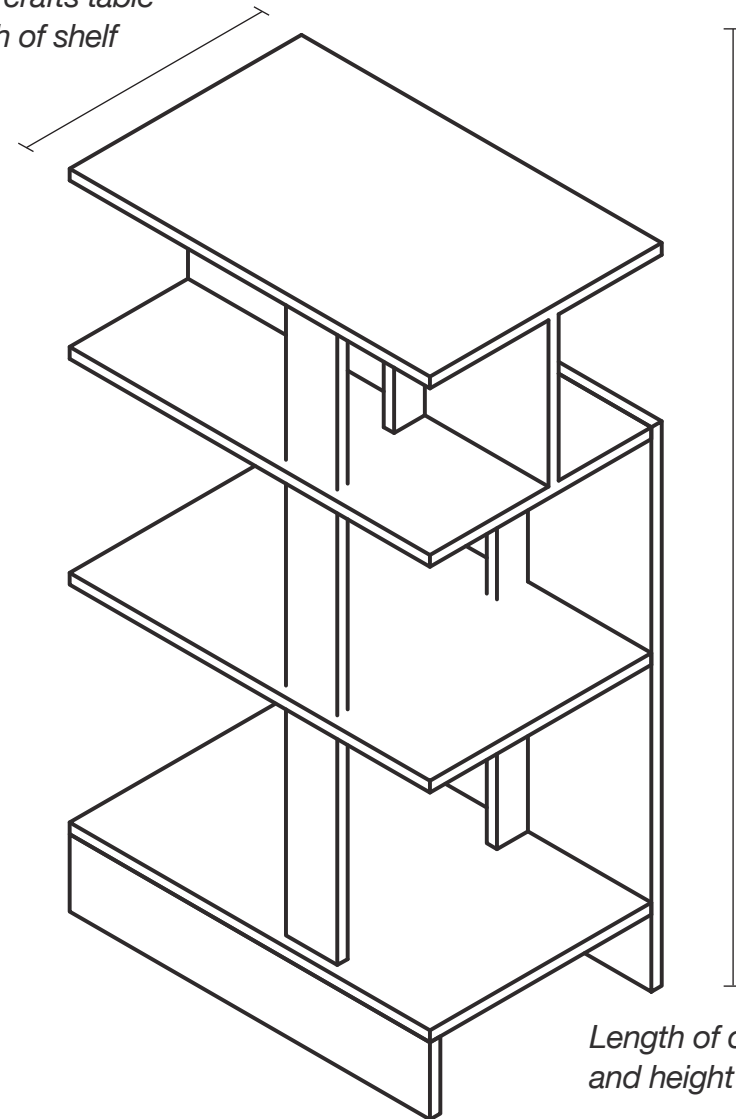
DIMENSIONS

The dimensions chosen for the table/shelf are based on dimensions from objects already on the market. More specifically crafts tables, children's chairs and different types of shelves. All measurements had to be altered slightly to fit together with each other both when performing as a crafts table and when performing as a shelf.

If the depth of the shelf was altered, naturally so was the height of the table leading to that there was a maximum and minimum measurement that the depth could have.

The thickness of the pieces was decided to 12mm since this was also the width of the plywood used for the prototype. In the first sketches, the thickness was greater than that but after some consideration and through prototyping in full scale, it was realized that 12mm would make it more lightweight and therefore easier to handle while still keeping a similar aesthetic to the thicker alternative.

*Height of crafts table
and depth of shelf*



*Length of crafts table
and height of shelf*

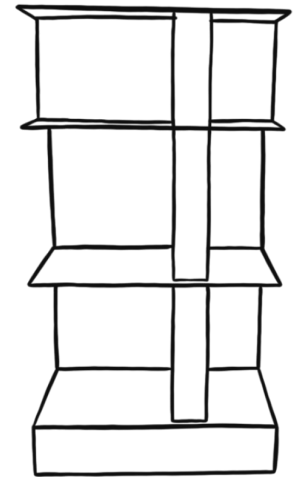
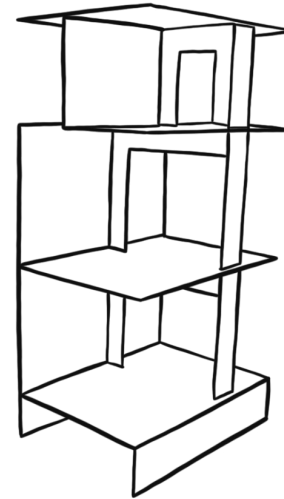
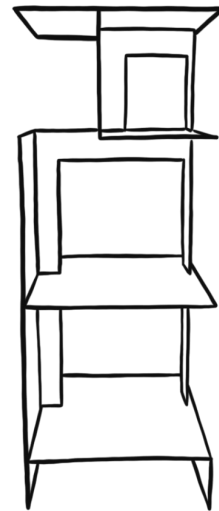
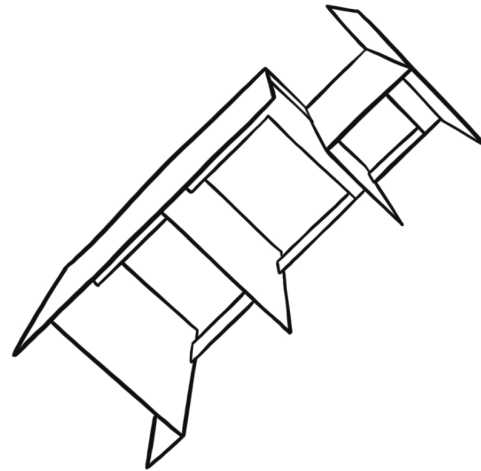
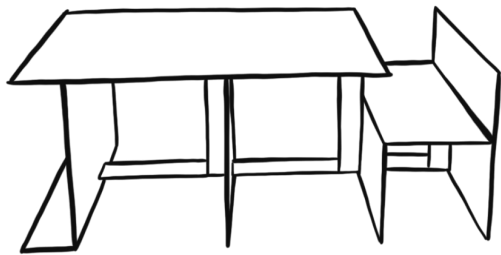
FINAL CONCEPT



The final concept is a three in one crafts table, storage unit and shelf. It is a multi purposed piece of furniture that can be used and enjoyed by both children and adults and that suits in both a childish and a grown up interior.

Typically, the Childish Shelf would be purchased for children to have in their room or in the common areas in the home. It is used as a crafts table with storage underneath that allows individual play, easy clean up and display of what is stored due to the open construction. A couple of years later when the child has grown out of the table or is not interested anymore the Childish Self is flipped 90° to instead be used as a shelf either for the child or for the parents.





CMF

The material chosen for the piece is solid pine wood. It is durable, fairly light and one can choose how to treat it to receive different appearances. It is also fairly easy to both sand down and retreat at home which allows for the parents to be able to freshen up the Childish Shelf after a couple years of the children wearing on the surface finish.

Depending on what surface finish is preferred, one can choose from three different treatments. Using a varnish gives a scratch resistant and slightly glossy finish. Oil and wax will both give a more natural appearance and are easy to repair by adding a new layer. Oil does not give as much of a protection as the wax but will keep the finish more natural. These two can also be combined for even better protection (Nilssons Möbler och Inredning).



There are three color alternatives that can all be combined with the different surface finish options. The three colors are called: Natural, White Stained, and Partially Colorful.

Natural - The pine wood is left natural and will go more yellow and towards a warmer tone over the years

White Stained - Staining the wood with a white color gives the piece a lighter tone and prevents it from going yellow later on while preserving the natural appearance

Partially Colorful - If one finds the natural wood color option a little too boring, this alternative offers a more playful and artistic aesthetic that suits both children and parents



Natural

White Stained

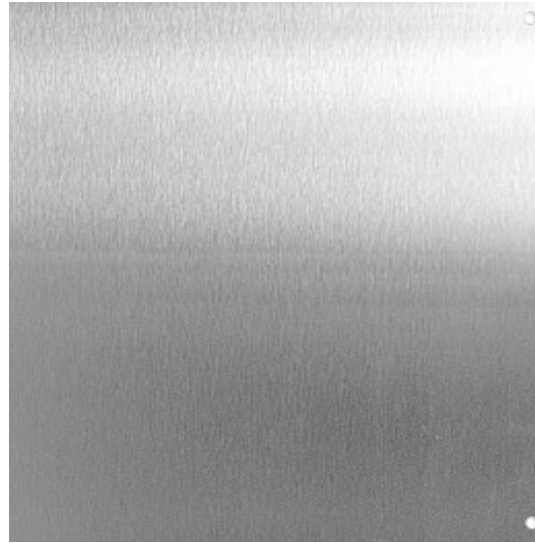
Partially Colorful

ADD-ONS

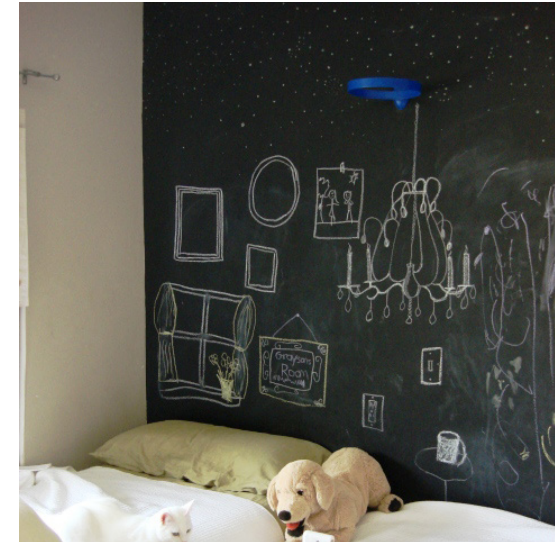
In addition to the Childish Shelf itself, the user can of course add things to make the experience of the piece even better. Here are some options with which, both the children and the parents could be even more content.



A plastic protection sheet could be added on the table top to prevent damage to the surface when used by the children.



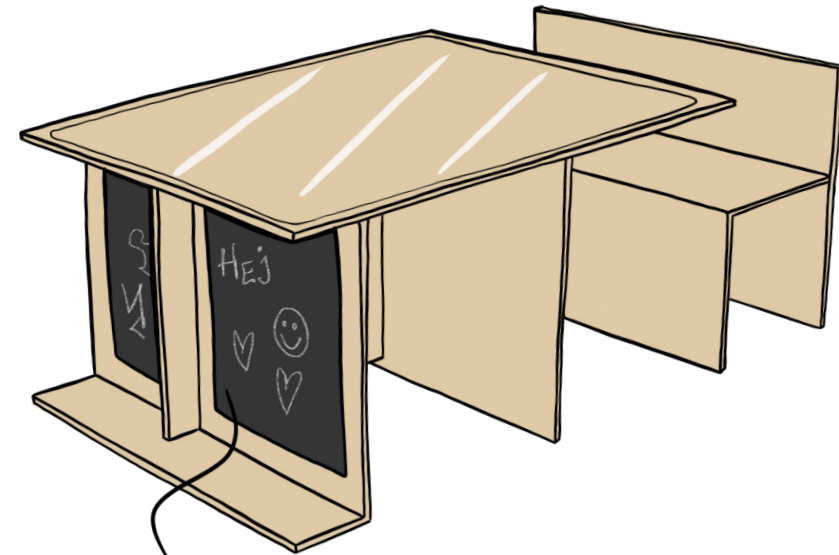
To be able to maximise the use of the crafts table the two shorter sides could be used. A magnetic board could be attached to one of the shorter sides and the other could be painted with chalk board paint. This painted side would be the bottom of the standing shelf later on, and therefore not be visible.



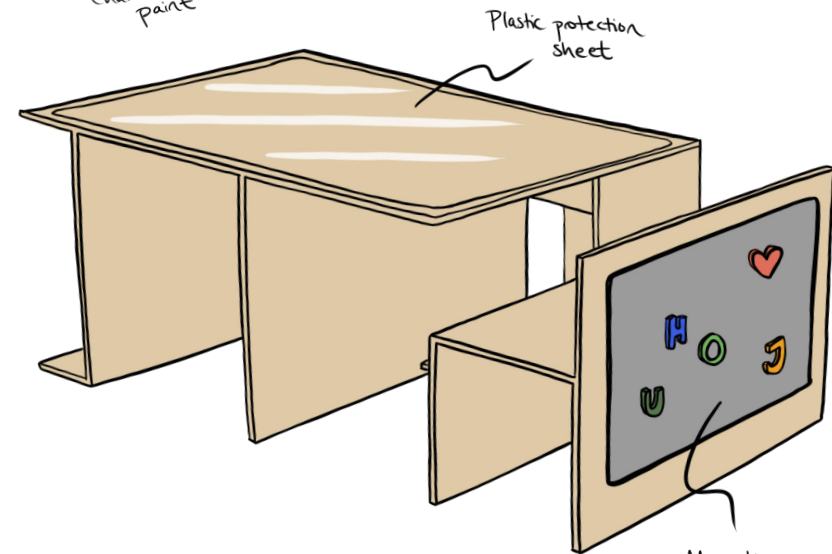
FINAL CONCEPT



To be able to attach for example the magnetic board or the plastic protection sheet, nano tape is a great option. It has great strength and will keep things in their places but it can also be removed and reused without leaving glue residue on the surfaces.



Chalk board paint



Plastic protection sheet

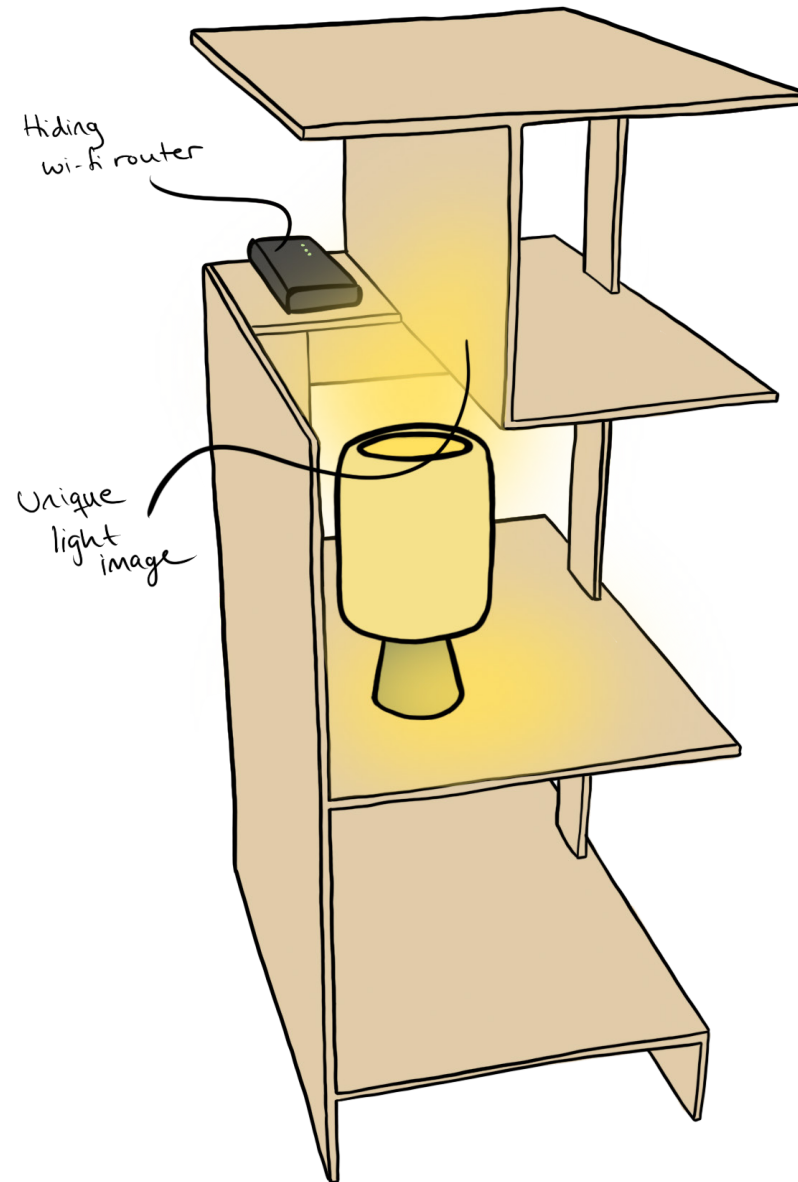
Magnetic board

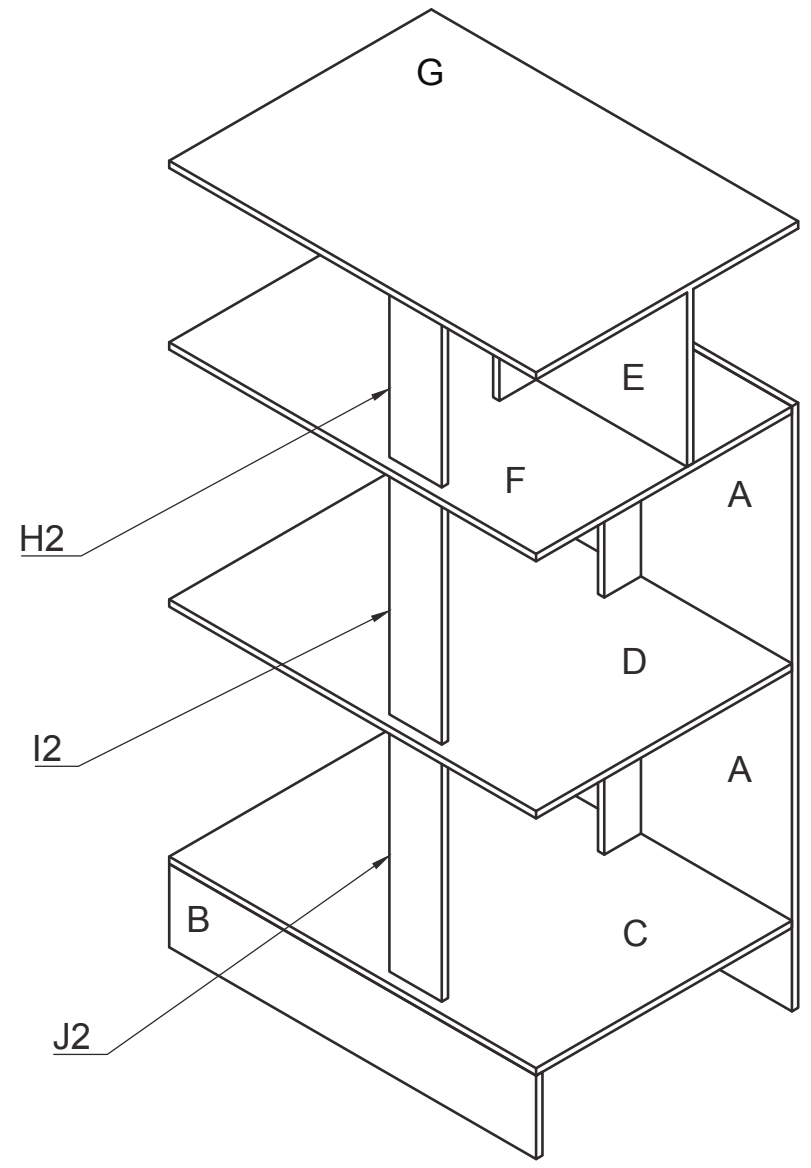
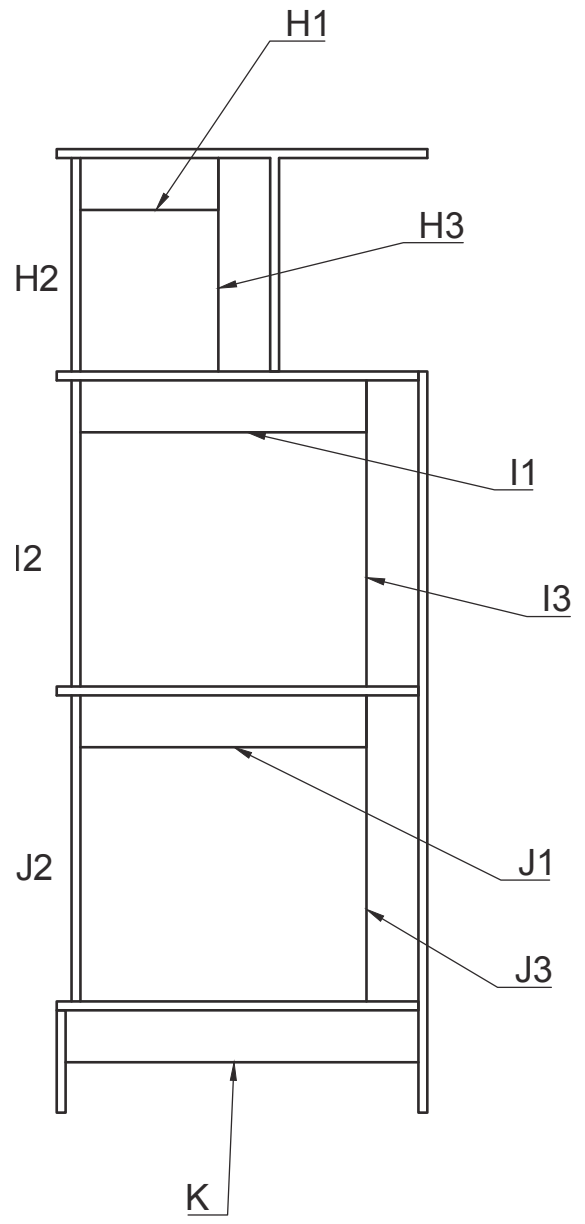


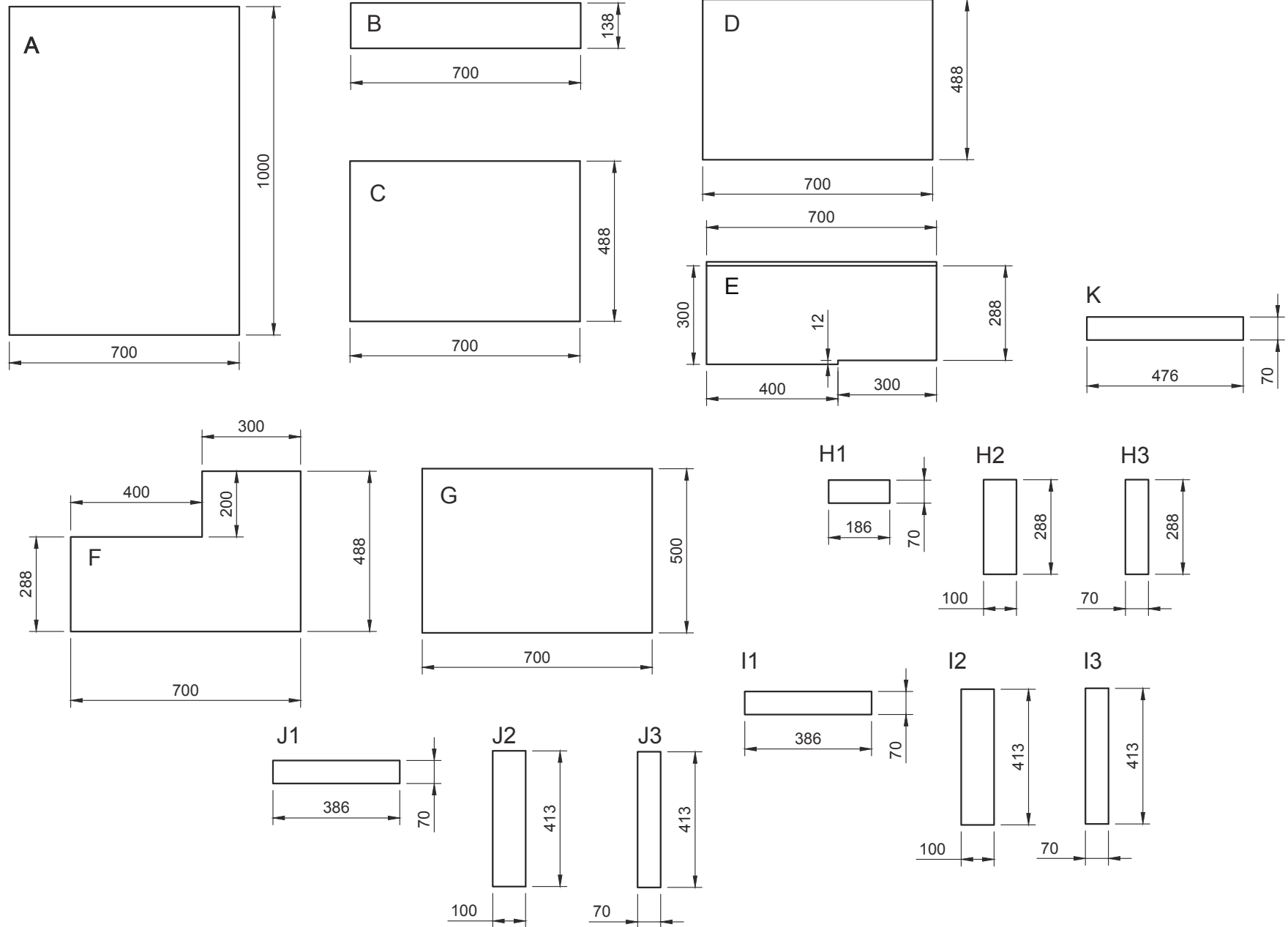
Felt furniture pad strip is easy to attach and easy to remove. Since this piece of furniture will have different parts standing on the floor depending on the orientation of the piece, this type of protection would be used to not damage neither the floor nor the shelf.

When the Childish Shelf is turned upright into its shelf orientation there is an area in the top level that is slightly hidden if the shelf is placed against a wall. This area could be kept empty or it could be utilized for storing the "ugly but necessary" such as the wi-fi router.

Another area that is special to this piece is the second shelf's left side towards the back that has a taller ceiling than the rest of that level. Here, one could for example place a lamp that would create an interesting light picture reflecting upwards and on the wall behind it. One could also place a taller plant here that could climb upwards and around the back of the shelf in a perhaps, interesting way.



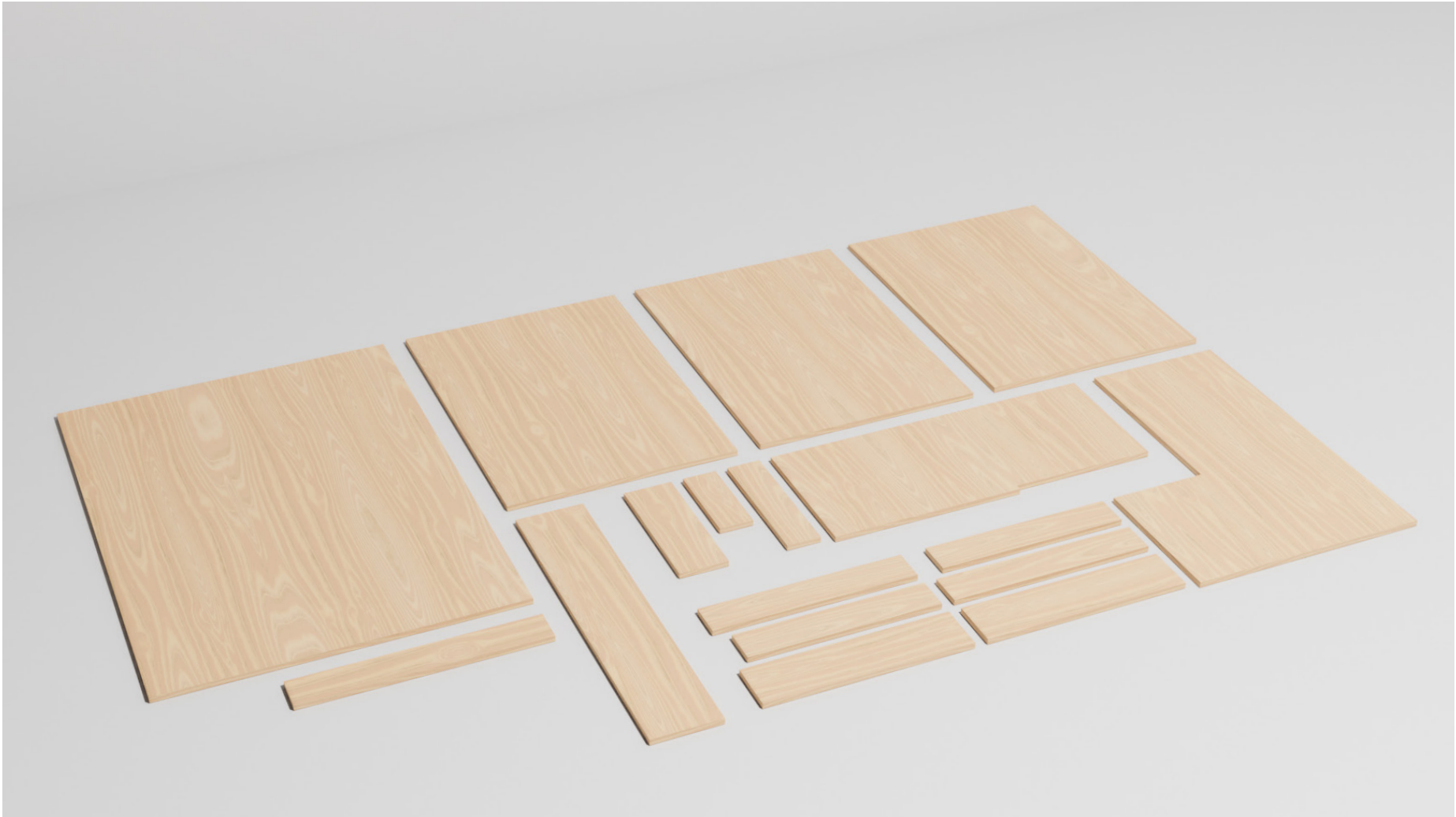




FLAT PACK

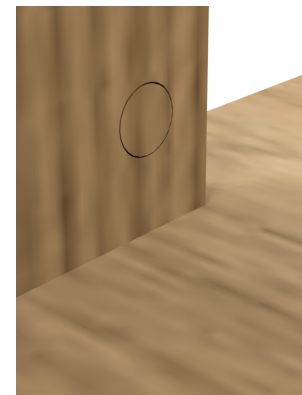
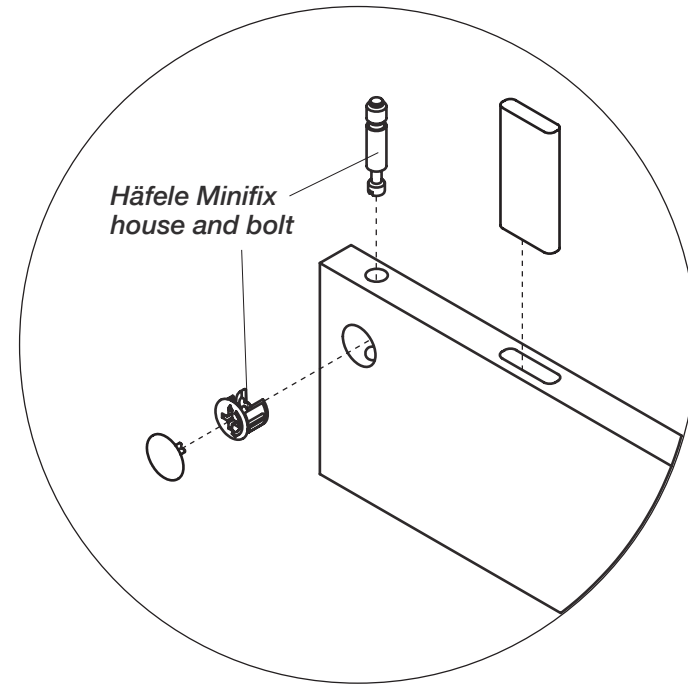
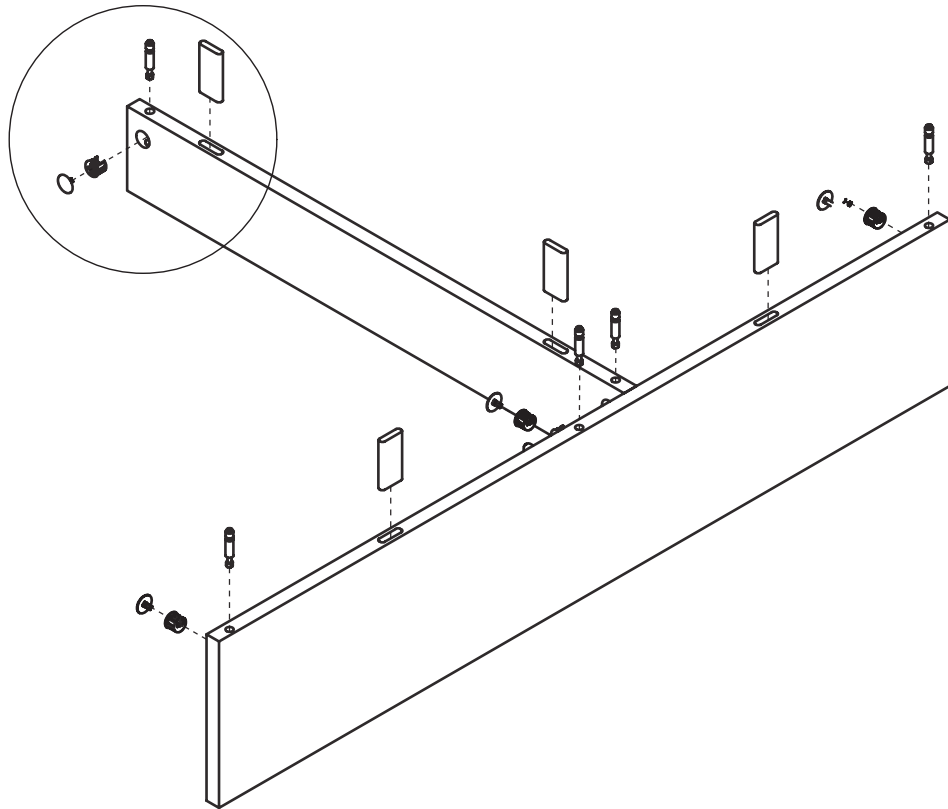
FINAL CONCEPT

All the pieces are separate from each other and can be flat packed. This allows for smaller packages and therefore cheaper and easier shipping.



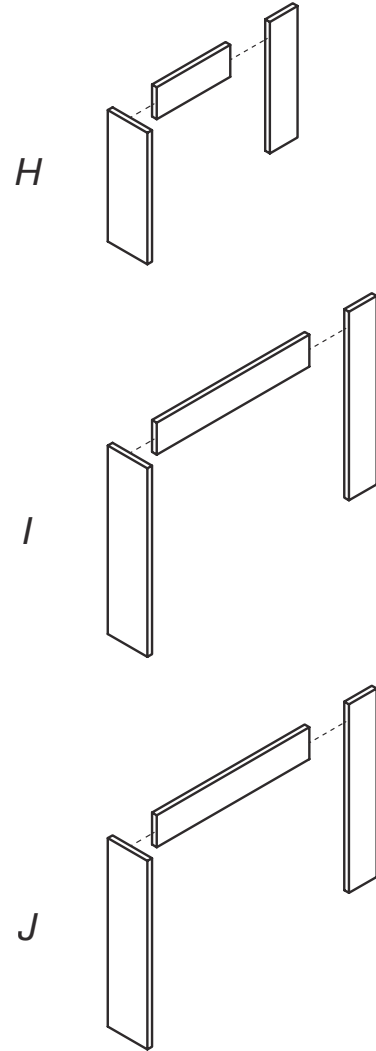
ASSEMBLY PLAN

The table is assembled by the users themselves. The pieces would be connected with wide rectangular wooden plugs and Häfele Minifix house and connecting bolt. The fittings occur in other types of furniture and are therefore recognisable and common ground which simplifies the assembly.

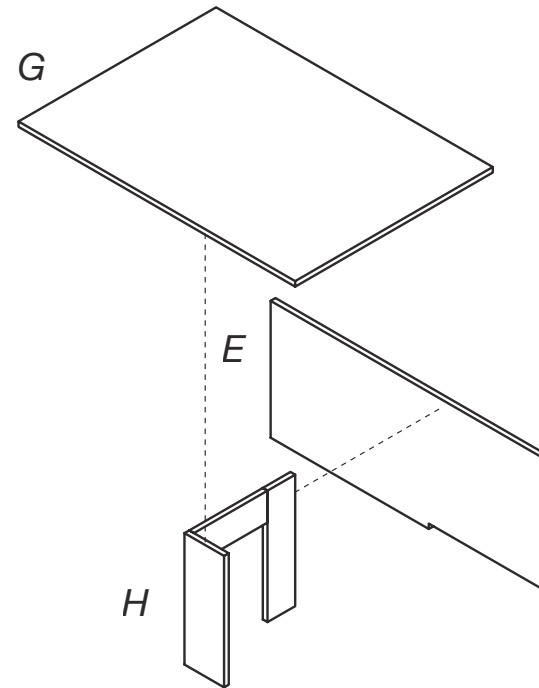


A circular wooden plug of the same material as the rest of the furniture would fill the remaining hole. This is important since the piece is to be turned in different directions which makes it impossible to hide all the drilling holes.

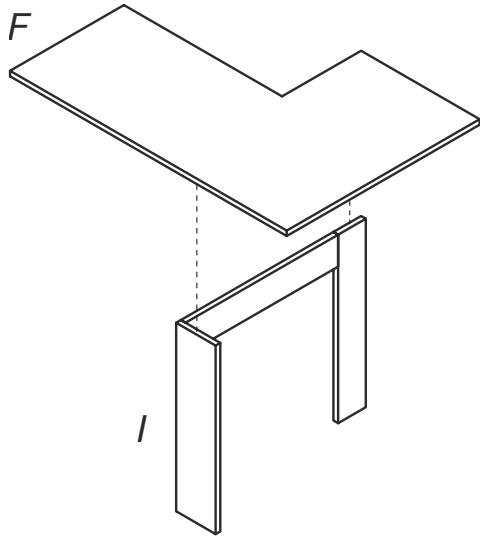
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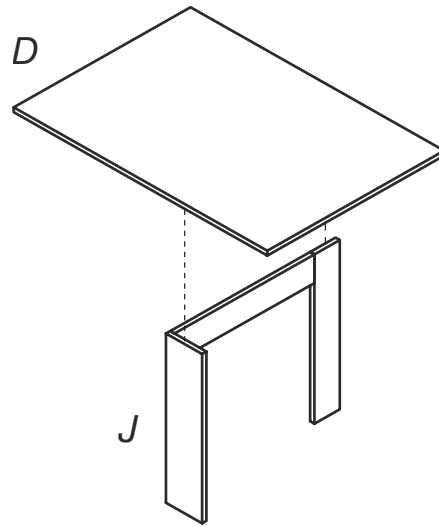
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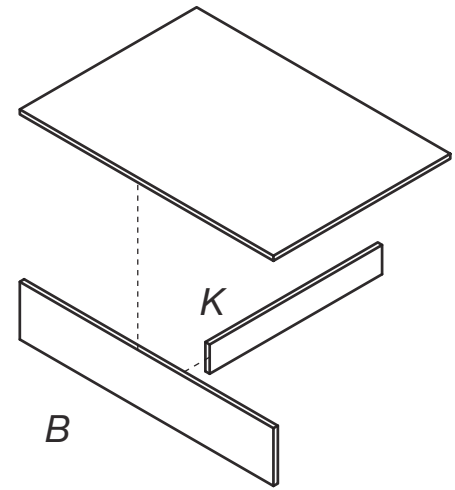
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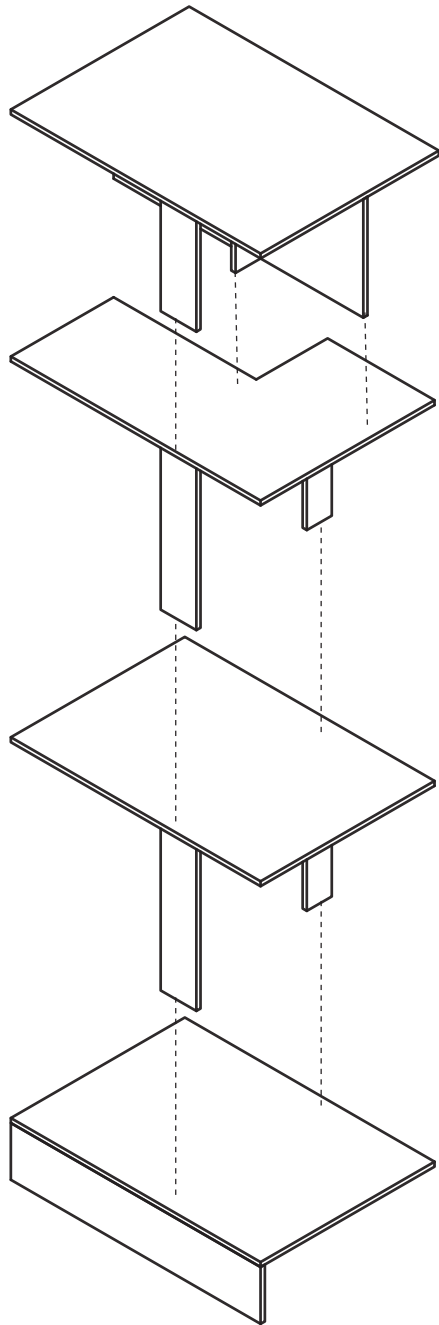
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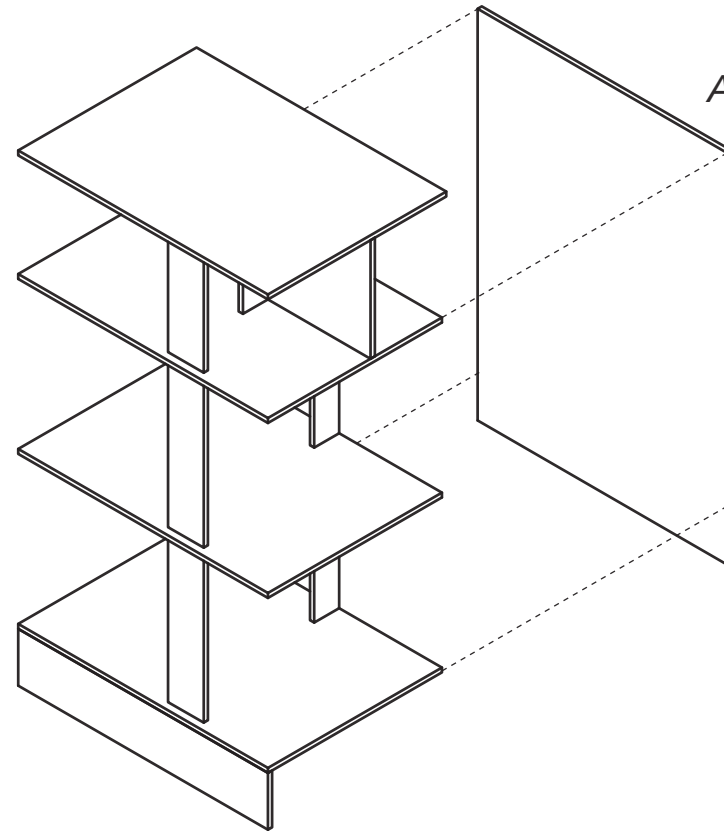
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6



7



SCENARIO RENDERS

Renders made in Blender with royalty free Blenderkit materials and 3D models show what the Childish Shelf looks like placed in different settings. One might choose to place it in the living room to have the children nearby when they are using it. Then suddenly one day, they do not use it anymore which is when you turn it around and use it as a regular shelf.

One might also choose to put it in the children's room instead. They would use the crafts table for a couple of years and later on turn it around to use it as a shelf still in the same children's room. want the children to play in the common area in the home such as the living room.

When making the switch from crafts table to shelf, the Childish Shelf gains a new purpose without requiring a new purchase!

New purpose but no new purchase!







PROTOTYPING



The prototype was built in the wood workshop at Lund University. The material is 12 mm thick pine plywood and the building process followed the step by step assembly plan with the exception that the piece was glued together with wood plugs as connectors instead of the intended fittings.

The most crucial part of building the prototype was accuracy and precision when it came to the measurements. To ensure all pieces would fit together and therefore be able to get an idea of how the stability would work, a lot of time was spent on being extra careful when sawing, drilling and gluing.







Childish Shelf









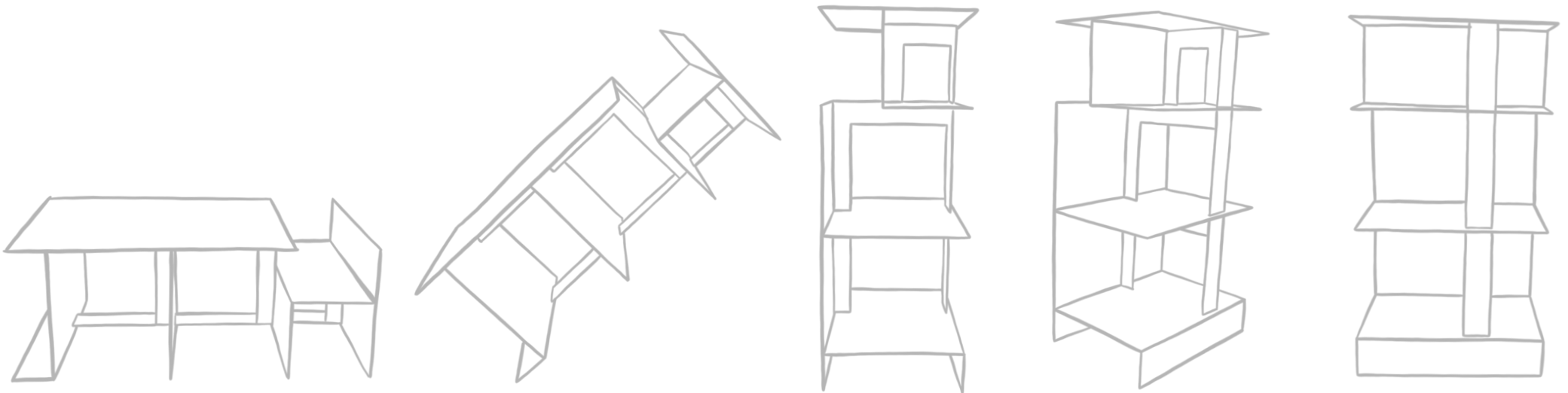




CONCLUSION

The purpose of the project was to design to downscale the amount of products parents of small children need to own. Through the Childish Shelf, parents do not need to throw out the old crafts table to replace it with for example a new shelf. They also do not need to own both one crafts table, one chair, and one storage

unit for the kids, as the Childish Shelf covers all three. As a result, that is one large piece of furniture that does not need replacement while also functioning as three different pieces of furniture. Downscaling four pieces - crafts table, storage unit, chair, and shelf - into one for each home that owns the Childish Shelf.



REFLECTION

Reflecting back on the project and my process from a personal point of view, I overall feel very content with both the process and the result. I felt confident with the choice of target group and the issue to address which is what sparked my motivation throughout the process. It was of course a lot of hard work and I was lacking inspiration at times but that feeling did never take over. I learned a lot during the project but especially when it comes to trusting my own capability and trusting the process. For example, in the beginning I was certain that I would be designing children's clothes but I am happy I let the process lead me in this direction instead. It has been developing and fun to work individually on

a project of this size and to take responsibility for the whole process while also receiving inspiration and feedback from classmates working in parallel with their own projects.

When it comes to what could be done differently I think there are probably a few things but mostly I think that the stability and assembly is what perhaps could need improvement. The stability and the assembly of the prototype was working well however I think it would be beneficial to consult with someone with more expertise on the subject to make alterations that could increase the stability when built with the correct materials and fittings. Furthermore it would be interesting to in a design process of a children's product, include children as test users. In this project, there were parents participating throughout but as the children are also the target group, it would make sense to also take their expressed opinions into consideration.

In parallel to the bachelor's project, I took an ethics course that resulted in a (Swedish) text reflecting further on designing for children. This text can be found in the appendices.





Childish Shelf

Signe Carlsson



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APPENDIX

*Att Designa för Barn och Föräldrar ("Designing for Children and Parents")
- a Swedish essay written in parallel to the bachelor's project that reflects
on the subject of designing for children*

ATT DESIGNA FÖR BARN OCH FÖRÄLDRAR

VAD BEHÖVER DE Egentligen och vem är det som väljer?

SIGNE CARLSSON

Introduktion

Jag tror att många småbarnsföräldrar eller föräldrar vars barn en gång varit små kan känna igen sig i att man har hur mycket saker som helst hemma. Under åren från det att barnen föds till det att de blir tonåringar går de igenom en stor mängd saker, saker som ibland bara är användbara för en kort stund. Denna korta stund kan vara några timmar innan sängkläder behöver bytas ut mot nya. Denna korta stund kan vara några veckor innan nya kläder i större storleken behöver köpas in. Och denna korta stund kan vara några månader innan liggvagnen behöver bytas ut mot en sittvagn. Föräldrar behöver dubbla och trippla uppsättningar av det mesta och större möbler har ett bäst före datum för när barnet har blivit för stort. Detta leder till ansträngningar både på den personliga ekonomin och på miljön. Mitt projekt har därför fokuserat på att designa något som ska kunna minska

antalet saker en förälder behöver äga. Detta har jag gjort genom att designa en barnmöbel som har flera syften i en och samma möbel och när barnet har blivit för gammalt för att använda den, kan föräldrarna ha egen glädje av den i hemmet. Det har resulterat i ett pysselbord med förvaring undertill som senare vänds och ställs på högkant för att bli till en bokhylla som passar in i interiören i det nu, vuxna hemmet.

Denna text diskuterar olika aspekter som har varit viktiga att ha med i tankarna under designprocessen för att designa något så bra och välfungerande som möjligt. Dessa aspekter har använts genom att börja i änden av vad grundproblemet är; över-ägandet, för att sedan fundera kring hur man skapar en ny innovation utan att slita för mycket på traditionen i möbelen, utforska form och funktion till att sist men inte minst analysera och balansera målgruppernas önskemål och preferenser.

Ägande och antal ägodelar

Eftersom grundsyftet i mitt kandidatarbete handlar om ägande och hur mycket eller lite en småbarnsförälder behöver äga tyckte jag det var intressant att läsa om synen på detta i boken *The Green Imperative - Ecology and Ethics in Design and Architecture* skriven av Victor Papanek år 1995. Hur ägandet påverkar oss och vad som leder oss att välja att köpa eller inte köpa något blev aktuellt för mig att fundera kring i förhållande till mitt arbete. Det finns tendenser hos designers att trilla ner i fällorna av att designa "för många" eller "för mycket" (Papanek, 1995, s. 164-165) vilket också leder till att kunderna väljer att köpa för många eller för mycket, m.a.o. att överkonsumera och att överäga.



Fyra olika rakapparater från Philips där alla har varsina unika syften vilket får användaren att möjligtvis investera i alla fyra istället för att köpa endast en.

För att förtydliga dessa fällor ger Papanek exemplet rakapparater när han beskriver fällan benämnd som "för många". Om man designar en rakapparat som har en elkontakt, en som är batteridrivna, en som är av mindre storlek och en som är batteridrivna och uppladdningsbar, bidrar man till överkonsumtion eftersom kunden kommer att övertygas om att den behöver alla varianterna. Fällan "för mycket" innebär att människor

generellt äger för många saker som vi egentligen inte behöver. Vi hittar på behov vi har och köper snabbt en ny produkt för att fylla detta behov, istället för att lösa problemet på annat sätt så som att låna av någon annan eller använda ett annat föremål som vi redan har.

Dessa aspekter är viktigt för mig att tänka in i mitt kandidatarbete då syftet med arbetet är att minska överkonsumtionen som finns hos småbarnsföräldrar. Min möbel kommer att kunna användas både av barnen när de är små och senare av föräldrarna när barnen vuxit ifrån möbelen vilket förebygger att föräldrarna köper en ny bokhylla för att fylla utrymmet där pysselbordet hade stått tidigare. Dessutom leder min möbel till att konsumenten undviker fällan benämnd som "för många" eftersom möbelen i sig fyller flera funktioner; pysselbord, lekyta, förvaring, stol, hylla. Detta gör att kunden eventuellt inte köper både ett pysselbord, en bokhylla, en stol och flertalet förvaringslådor. Däremot skriver Paul T. Anastas och Julie B. Zimmerman i sin artikel *Design Through the 12 Principles of Engineering i tidningen Environmental Science & Technology* (2003) att en av de 12 principerna som finns för att designa på ett hållbart sätt är princip nummer 8 som översatt till svenska lyder: "Designlösningar för onödig kapacitet (t.ex. "one-size fits all") bör betraktas som dålig design.". Anastas och Zimmerman förklarar att detta innebär att det finns en risk för en designer att "över-designa" och därmed skapa funktioner i ett objekt som är helt nödvändiga (2003). Det är något som blir viktigt för mig att se upp för. Att tänka att min möbel ska vara multifunktionell men att varje funktion ska ha en relevans. Det är här det blir viktigt att tänka att innovationen ska fylla ett syfte som möbler som redan finns på marknaden inte gör, men utan att överdriva det för att hamna i något som ingen kommer vilja ha. Detta handlar om innovation och tradition.

Innovation och tradition

Om min möbel ska fylla ett syfte som inte andra redan befintliga möbler gör, utan att ta det för långt gäller det att ha finkänslighet gällande vad konsumenterna är redo för och inte. Innovation kan ändra på det traditionsenliga sätt som en målgrupp använder eller betar sig kring en produkt. Detta kan vara positivt om det traditionella sättet en produkt

används på ses som förlegat eller ineffektivt när världen runt omkring utvecklas. I fallet av detta arbete ligger problematiken inte i hur man traditionsenligt använder ett pysselbord eller en bokhylla utan i att traditionen och trenden är att man byter ut de saker i hemmet som inte längre tjänar en. Förr fanns en tradition av att laga och återanvända sina saker men i takt med att massproduktionen satte igång under 1900-talet blev det plötsligt lättare att köpa nytt istället för att laga.



Tripp Trapp-stol av Peter Opsvik, 1972

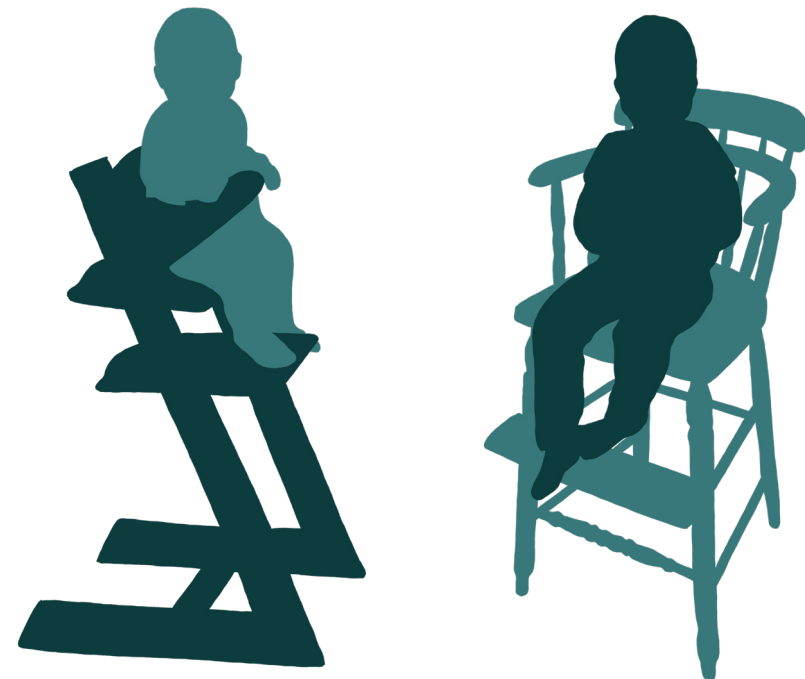
Windsor Barnstol från ca. 1800

Därför är traditionen idag mer slösaktig vilket är den problematik som min innovation ska lösa. Detta bör däremot göras med väl avvägda val när det kommer till min produkt för att faktiskt få med konsumenterna på tåget och inte förvirra dem med det nya icke traditionsenliga. Enligt mig är det effektivt att designa på ett sätt som får användaren att känna igen produkten. På så sätt kan denne enkelt anpassa sig till de nya faktorerna. Om en innovation ligger för långt ifrån det som finns på marknaden sedan innan blir det svårare för användaren att anpassa sig.

Ett exempel på när innovation har gått ifrån tradition men på ett sätt som inte tog det för långt är *Tripp Trapp-stolen* av Peter Opsvik från 1972 för Stokke. I sin artikel *Application of Environmentally Friendly Materials in the*

Design of Children's Furniture Based on Fuzzy Technology skriver Peng Wei och Zamira Madina (2022) att man förr designade barnmöbler genom att göra miniatyrer av vuxenmöbler istället för att se till barnens behov och ergonomi (Wei & Medina, 2022).

Mer specifikt om barnstolar skriver Graham Scott (2022) i sin artikel *When Were High Chairs Invented* att det redan i början av 1800-talet fanns stolar för barn som vi även idag känner igen som höga barnstolar (Scott, 2022). När Tripp Trapp (tillsammans med andra stolar med samma koncept) kom, liknade de en sådan traditionell barnstol som människor känner igen men det fanns innovation i designen genom att den var ombytlig och föränderlig. I detta fall kunde de innovativa delarna enkelt anammas av användaren eftersom stolen fortfarande liknade en traditionell barnstol.



Föräldern kan känna igen produkten trots att stolen från 1972 har moderna funktioner som ändrar på det traditionsenliga användandet.

Användandet av barnstolarna från 1800 respektive 1972 är snarlikt.

I mitt projekt hade det på detta tema kunnat bli problematiskt om jag designat min möbel för att fungerade både som pysselbord, matstol, säng, förvaring och klätterställning hade slutprodukten förmodligen fått ett utseende som inte påminde om någon av de traditionella originalen. Detta hade lett till förvirring och att föräldrarna förmodligen inte hade investerat i produkten då den hade varit för oförståelig för att orka ta till sig. Ett igenkännbart exempel på detta som finns redan idag är tvättmaskiner som på senare år fått så många olika inställningar och knappar att man blir överväldigad. Som ett resultat använder man endast de tre mest grundläggande programmen. Till mitt projekt är tanken att ha både innovation och tradition i tankarna när jag designar. Å ena sidan kommer tradition utmanas eftersom syftet med projektet är att ändra sättet på vilket föräldrar idag, inreder sitt hem för sina barn. Å andra sidan blir det viktigt att behålla element som målgruppen känner igen för att säkerställa att de vill investera i produkten. Jag har därför behövt hitta ett mellanting där min möbel kan vara multifunktionell upp till en viss gräns så att barnen och föräldrarna fortfarande kan relatera till den.

Form vs funktion

Vidare finns en annan viktig aspekt för mig att tänka in i mitt kandidat- arbete, den om huruvida formen eller funktionen ska vara huvudfokus. Ett klassiskt ställningstagande en designer tar är att antingen designa genom "form follows function" eller vice versa. Syftet med produkten är att lösa en problematik genom sin funktion och därav kan man tolka att funktionen skulle vara viktigast. Men även formen spelar roll eftersom den ska tillfredsställa både barnen och föräldrarna. Cristina Salvador, José Vicente och João Paulo Martins skriver i sin artikel *Ergonomics in Children's Furniture - Emotional Attachment* (2014) att barn tenderar att dras till färger, mönster och runda former när det kommer till kläder, saker och möbler. Till mitt arbete gjorde jag intervjuer med småbarnsföräldrar som bland annat fick svara på frågor om formspråk och där visade det sig att de flesta föredrar att både barnens och deras egna saker har ett mer neutralt form- och- färgspråk, i alla fall när det gäller större möbler. De påvisade också vikten av produkter med god funktion och lättillgänglighet.

Papanek (1995) menar att det har tidigare skiftat i designkulturen mellan att främst tänka på att något ska se bra ut och att främst tänka på att något ska fungera bra (s. 54). Han skriver också att vi inte ställer oss frågan tillräckligt ofta om huruvida vi kan designa något som både ser bra ut och fungerar väl. Men jag anser att det är precis det jag måste göra i mitt projekt; tänka på både form och funktion eftersom produkten fallerar om inte båda delarna är inkluderade i designen. Dessutom blir det viktigt att hitta en balans just när det gäller form- och- färgspråket som passar både barn och vuxna eftersom jag har båda som målgrupp och måste därför tänka in bådas preferenser.

Genus inom design för barn

En annan aspekt som faller in under form- och- färgtemat som ofta syns inom design är design ur ett genusperspektiv. Vare sig vi vill det eller inte finns det tydliga skillnader i hur den generella designen för och av kvinnor ser ut och i hur den generella designen för och av män ser ut. Frågan som blir relevant för detta projekt då är huruvida detta även blir tydligt i design för barn. Den klassiska designskillnaden blått för killar och rosa för tjejer kan enligt mig uteslutas då jag anser den trenden som förlegad. I sin studie *Gender Bending Through Design - An Account of a Student Project on Gender* (2009) skriver Lena Hansson och Marcus Jahnke att design för kvinnor ofta är enklare, med färre funktioner och med ett mer simpelt formspråk än design för män som ofta är med teknisk med ett hårdare formspråk. Detta kan säkert stämma in på design för barn också men om man ser till exemplet nämnt tidigare där det beskrevs att barn tycker om färger, mönster och runda former syftar det på barn generellt och inte på kön (Salvador, Vicente och Paulo Martins, 2014). Alltså kan man enligt mig utesluta att tänka på huruvida barnen som ska använda min möbel är tjejer eller killar. Barn är barn och det tycker jag är viktigt att de får vara även i förhållande till min barnmöbel. På ett sätt kanske genusfrågan i förhållande till design är irrelevant eftersom jag väljer att inte sätta ett kön på mitt kandidatarbete men jag tycker ändå att det är viktigt att ta upp. Vi vet att sättet på vilket vi uppfostrar barnen kommer att forma hur de blir som vuxna, att allt börjar med barnen som man brukar säga. Vilken design vi väljer att omge våra barn med är en liten men än dock viktig del i hur de kommer att se på sig

själva som vuxna och därför anser jag det inte så icke betydelsefullt som vissa kanske anser, att vi gör könsneutrala designval för barnen eftersom kön inte borde få bestämma hur vi blir som personer.

Slutsats

Det är lätt att man under en designprocess fokuserar på det kreativa, estetiska och funktionella och glömmer bort sociala och mänskliga aspekter som bör finnas i bakgrunden i de beslut man tar i processen. Ibland kan man till och med glömma bort grundtanken bakom projektet. Vid första anblick av någon av de teman denna text tagit upp, kan man som designer kanske tänka att de inte är relevanta om man är insnöad på det praktiska i processen men varje tema har något viktigt att bidra till den slutgiltiga produkten. Det är därför viktigt att under processens gång gå tillbaka och ta i beaktning teman som syfte, mottagare, funktion och målbild. Först då blir designprocessen komplett.

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