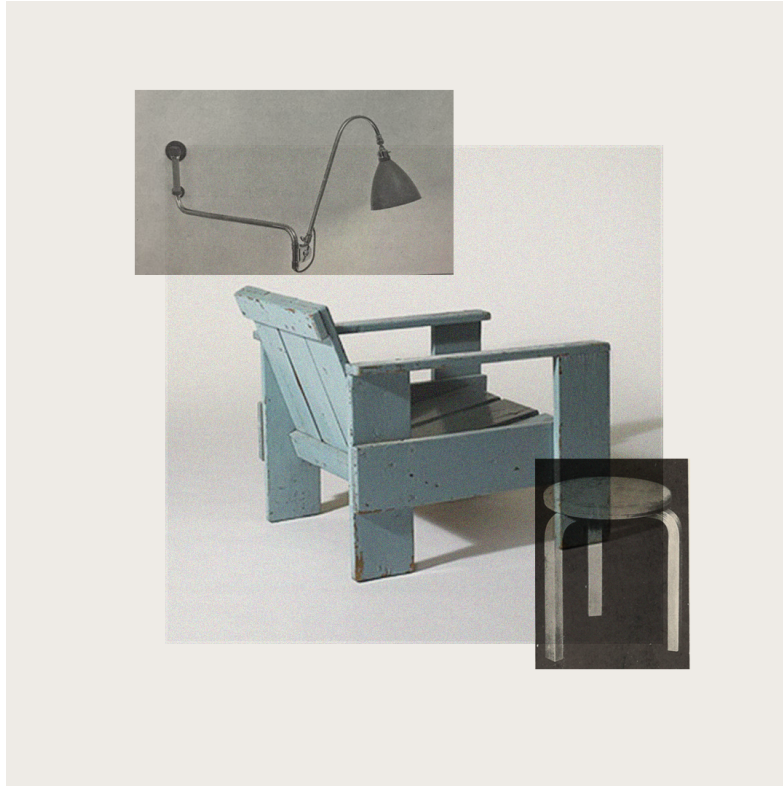


Jake Turkington, BA hon, Interior Design

Tender Objects: manual guide to 120 years of modernist D.I.Y. furniture



//Left. Gerrit Rietveld, 1934 Crate chair, C.1942 shown in situé with Alvar Aalto, Artek, Stool 60, C.1923. & Robert Dudley Best, Bestlite, BL10 Wall Lamp, C.1930.//

//Right. Constructed Gerrit Rietveld, 1934 Crate chair, March 2021.//

In order for a design to be well regarded by the wider public, I believe it must have both substance and environmental consideration.

In the practice of interior design – where explicit materiality is being lost – ideas have become harder to communicate within the digital environment. The manner in which modern design is currently taught contributes to this dissatisfaction – creating a situation where we underestimate the power of physical quality. Bold, digital representations and renders have replaced the tactility and quality of substance. In a virtual world the image has become more believable than the real.

Although we can name many environmentally concerned designers and artists, with practices that raise climate awareness or challenge systems of production, they still exist within a minority. Furthermore, the expense of their products make them unattainable for most.

In my second year at GSA I began to incorporate these realisations into my practice, as I became increasingly interested in materiality and methods of production. Dissolving my preconceived notions of design helped expand my understanding of our man-made and natural environment.

Over time, I've come to the conclusion that we simply need reform of practice. Solutions to our climate crisis exist – and are rather simple – yet simplicity becomes challenging when it suggests we dismantle our traditional understanding of design. Only in this process of deconstruction are we able to find new intrinsic values. Then, once this has been explored I believe the role of the designer is to translate these values and processes into the modern day.

Throughout my extended essay I examined the possibilities of farming the recently discovered Irish scots pine, detailing how it can be cultivated as a renewable and local timber source for Ireland. The essay highlights the importance of forestry as one of our few natural and sustainable industries, whilst recognising how counter-productive modern practices can be – specifically in the import of non-native Sika spruce.

As the most widely used soft wood timber in the UK and Ireland, spruce grows at a fast rate. Although this suits the ever-growing demand, it damages our native eco systems. I argue that Irish commercial forestry should switch to Scots pine, which grows at equal speed. Change would therefore not affect product supply, and could be introduced gradually before becoming the primary crop. The clear benefits are the preservation our natural heritage, which in turn supports our local flora and fauna.

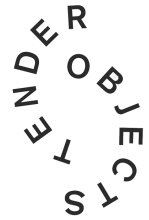
During my research I became increasingly interested in creating DIY furniture to display timber in its raw form. I wanted to bring attention to its use in interiors, so halfway through final year I decided to take a drastic change of course. Breaking away from a typical interior design portfolio, my aim is to create an approach that provides simple and easily digestible concepts with strong meaning.



//Left. Enzo Mari, Sedia 1 chair constructed, March 2021.//

//Right, notebook collage using archive images.//

*Tender Objects* is an accessible and elemental project with pure intention, providing simple directions to create functional and pleasing furniture. Reflecting on 120 years of DIY design history, I've created an edited manual distilling modernist design into key elements. I also explore the transition from commercial modernism to DIY techniques, documenting the products that satisfy our basic needs whilst appealing to our contemporary tastes and attitudes towards renewable design.

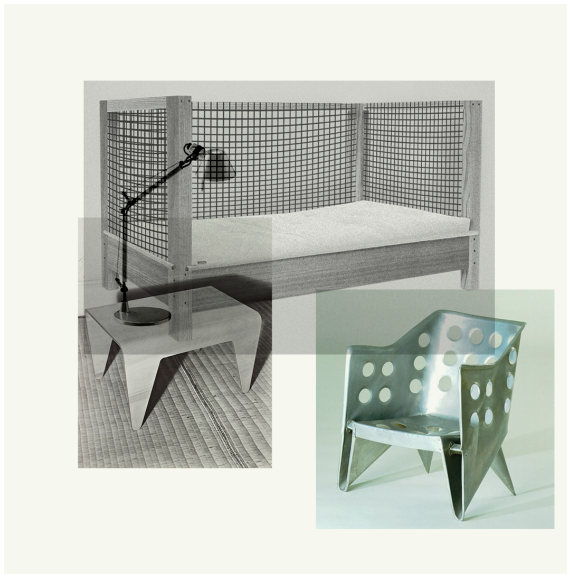


My personal role in the manual is to advocate for the democratisation of design, and in turn its transformative power. I have created open source instructions for building a range of furniture for interior and exterior environments, breaking down high-design items and making them accessible for the layperson. The aim is in the creation of practical objects that exhibit humble beauty at an extremely affordable price point. I want to emulate mass production, but at the hands of the masses rather than machine.

The role of the interior in this manual is more than just a gallery exhibiting the acme of DIY. It's about encouraging the proprietor to essentially focus on space from one's own point of view, from within. We are physical beings, and ultimately buildings are a frame for life, but interiors are not a theoretical activity. You experience interiors through your body. If you look at the way designers approach interiors and architecture, the majority do so from a conceptual perspective.

However, this manual promotes the experience of space. Interior design essentially joins the practices of architecture and the science of human experience. In this regard, the interior becomes the life of the building. Yet so often we see it as a shopping list. *Tender Objects* asks the reader to experience the interior in a physical way, expanding their understanding of how the materials we

choose to surround ourselves with have a profound impact on our lives.



// Left. Updated Oskar Strnad daybed c.1910 shown along side Ernö Goldfinger stool c.1937, Tolomeo Aluminium Lamp //

//Right. Rendered Model of Oskar Strnad, edited to fit Manual and contemporary taste.//