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INTRODUCTION

One professor, realizing how absorbed I was with sculpture and being impressed with the results of my effort, once asked me: „Why are you actually studying design since this is such a highly commercial field. It is only a genuine art that can give an artist a feeling of a real fulfilment.” I still remember this moment even though it was 15 years ago. As a young man the only thing I knew for sure was that I wanted to design. I must admit that for that moment I could not respond to the professor's objection. This question has, however, stuck deeply in my mind and is still present with me at my professional performance. How to be a designer whose work is not only aimed to thoughtlessly stimulate customer's appetite even though this aim should still be highly valued according to the new product definition.

Satisfaction one gets from their profession, however trivial it may sound, most likely arises from both the natural inner need to improve the condition of things as well as from the love for a beauty. I understand the term beauty not only as a physical appearance of an object, but also as its logic in terms that it is functional and hence it provides the customer with positive emotions. From the very beginning of my professional activity I am trying to be honest with myself and to create the objects with good intentions since I want each of them to represent a certain value. It may be either discovering some tiny functional improvements for a customer or using natural materials which will make the product serve its purpose for a long time and hence it will not need to be replaced with a new one too soon. Obviously as a designer I am learning something new with each new project, so I am constantly developing throughout my professional career. Since I have come to terms with the fact that I will never finish my product education, below I would like to present you my complete achievements.

1.1 Who am I / Designer's identity

2006 – 2013

01.

The first experience, which made me believe that I will realize my professional plans and become a designer, was implementing a set of NOA ceramics in china factory Chodzież. It was an important experience for me since it took place on my 3rd year of studies. The project was completed under the guidance of prof. Tomasz Matuszewski and Marzena Wolińska Ph.D. I am mentioning about this, because for a few next years, even after graduating, I have been working in design field, yet at that period of time I did not manage to realize my desired project solutions. I call this period of my work an experimental one and even though it was a hard working time for me with lots of effort put into without a final realization, today I am positive about that past period.

I think that a designer should have lots of patience and perseverance in striving to reach their goals, they should also be humble and aware of the need for a constant studying. I had a lot of time to acquire these skills. After graduating in 2006, I became interested in ceramics technology. It is the elegance of this material and the satisfaction one gets when the new object is created, that has made me choose ceramics as a preferred means of communication in my design art. At that period of time I created many concepts which I then realized partially on my own and partially co-operating with model maker. The experimental character of my work was visible in my projects which would often almost exceed the current technology possibilities. My personal contact with the matter was also important then.

I participated in *Scientist in Business* programme supported by Poznań City Office (photos 01, 02). Thanks to this programme I could pursue a traineeship in china factory. I was discovering the technology by observing great specialists on each of the production as well as forming the models on my own. This experience has taught how to co-operate and communicate with specialists of each of the object production level. To put in it in other words, I simply learnt how to work in a team. At the same time several different products were created with my active input. Today I can be sure that my hard work have not gone waste, but it has enriched my project awareness and has given me a background for the challenges which were yet to come. All my design projects of that time have been created as a result of my inner need to practice the designer profession arising from the urge to process the matter and to experiment with the objects form and functions. At the same type as a young designer I was striving for new project orders, but I soon realized they were not easily available. It was probably due to my lack of experience and projects and consequently I did not possess a proper reputation. I would also blame the producers for their attitude towards designers. Anyway, I was working in a related field as an interior designer. I was working either alone or in teams to design the interiors of hotels, BP petrol stations, MAN truck service as well as private flats and houses. This experience has also influenced my understanding of the designer profession since it has taught me to work on a wider scale and to feel the space in a better way. I was also working on unique china collections, for instance for Atelier Amaro restaurant. I was experimenting with different ceramics materials in Kielce Design Center. My works were present on exhibitions in Berlin, Brussels and Milan.

At the same time I started working at the University. I had been working with ceramics since graduating till I got a doctor degree. My doctor degree project was focused on seeking functional and technological solutions. It also assumed combining traditional china with light and electronics. Thanks to china transparent properties the dish set could communicate with the user via the signs displaying on the dish surface. The messages were to help the user with the proper nutrients choice and the calory intake control. My doctor degree essay was a summary of the searches I had conducted so far and it also turned out to be my last experience with ceramics.

I have often been frustrated throughout the years I have spent on my individual projects which production costs I often had to cover myself. I was asking myself questions about the future and was tempted to change the profession for some related one. However these harsh years have also taught me perseverance and disinterestedness. As a teacher whilst working with students I have a possibility to mention my personal experience, not only about the design itself but also about the technology involved.

Below I would like to mention some important moments of my project career, which have strongly influenced my design style. I would also like to point what is important for me in terms of a teaching work. I am going to describe some project process experience which I have gained starting from my university graduation till now (2013-2019).

1.2 Rapid reality course / design, a team field

As I have already mentioned, I have started working for industry quite late in my life. After getting a doctor degree in 2013 I began a new chapter of my professional performance. I got a task to prepare the furniture collection for VOX Furniture company. This project turned out to be crucial in many different aspects. After the period of investigating china products, there came a time to challenge myself with totally new technologies, multidisciplinary team work, working under the time pressure and costs adjustment. Moreover after years of individual projects I started to work in duet with Bartłomiej Pawlak with whom I still am working under the studio brand *Pawlak&Stawarski*.

The project for a large furniture producer was a great opportunity for gaining new experience for a young designer who had previously been engaged only in micro-scale projects, which could be entirely controlled by the author without the need to count with the consumer markets.

The project phase was preceded by workshops with multidisciplinary team during which we have worked out the instructions for our common project. The producers expectations were then precisely explained in project brief. By this way we gained the tools to start the long creation process. This project, on which we were working during our every week team meetings, was somehow a test on my professional qualifications. For the first time I felt responsible for my project decisions since I was working for a client. Countless project versions were prepared which were later on discussed, subjected to criticism and judgement in terms of technology, ergonomics, marketing and sale. The project was challenging for me as for a person who did not have previous similar experience and that

is why I am grateful for a possibility to undergo this process. The collection of several dozen of elements was called **MUTO** and was processed for production. Today I can see that, even though we did not avoid some mistakes in project process, lots of applied solutions simply served their purpose. The co-operation with VOX company has also resulted with two large furniture systems **NEST** and **STIGE** designated for kids and teenagers.

The projects designated for the young users were collected with further requirements. The safety regulations had to be obeyed. Unfortunately, though, safety regulations do not always come with a desired visual appearance of the final product. That is why the projects had to undergo a specific verification and numerous geometrical reconstruction on each of the phases so that they could pass the safety tests without losing their visual value.

Co-operation with VOX Furniture was a highly instructive lesson since it has enabled to understand the mechanisms behind the industry of vast-scale production aiming at precisely specified customer group. It was very precious to me to be able to participate in all of product creation phases; starting from brief formulation, through countless evaluations, prototyping, focus investigations, fair presentation to final implementation. Moreover the experience like this teaches the precious skills to accept a constructive criticism and to resign from many ideas which appear to be good in author's opinion, but can not be valid due to economic or technological reasons (or for any other reason they would simply not succeed on a local market).

1.3 Surgical precision in diagnosing the needs/ utilitarian design.

The project which has given me lots of satisfaction and become a great profession lesson is designing a surgical wash for ALVO MEDICAL. Our studio was invited by Concordia Design team to co-operate at project of a new revolutionary wash for a company specializing in production of a high-quality medical equipment. The unique character of this project experience is determined by several different aspects. The most important value is the product destination itself since it indirectly serves to save a human life by guaranteeing high standard antibacterial protection during surgical treatments. The project process was extraordinary as well as it was supported by the knowledge of a large multidisciplinary team and preceded by sociological surveys.

Before the designers team began their work, there was a group of people working at certain hospitals that was collecting data from surgical Staff. The opinions of the staff (including professional surgeons as well as the rest of the hospital staff) were then investigated and interpreted by a sociologist. What is interesting, though, not only purely technical remarks were taken into account, but so were the emotional needs of the staff. It is because the mood of the operator and their team has an impact on the surgery quality and the satisfaction they get from their job.

Before starting the project work there were workshops with DESIGN THINKING method implied held with a huge group ALVO MEDICAL workers participating. Technologists, sellers, PR and marketing specialists all took part in the process. The aim of the workshops was to state it precisely what does the company expect from their new product. Thanks to the participation of different areas specialists, who would state their expectations in terms of their branch demands, long and complementary brief could be prepared.

The studies revealed a few most important problems to solve. I will mention few of them in order to show scope of the works. The existing models of surgical washes were made of stainless steel and because of the applied technology they had many edges inside the basin and such were difficult to access and consequently problematic to be kept clean. The dispatchers of soap, disinfecting fluids, brushes and towels were located outside the basin edge. If the surgeon wanted to use them, they would reach for the dispatchers with their wet hands, spilling the water and hence posing a risk of slipping. The front basin edges are usually linear so they do not allow for a full clinging during arms washing. The traditional washes also lack touchless tap systems and hence the operators have to regulate the water pressure using their elbows.

During a regular working day, such a surgical was his being used several times, before and after the surgery. The individuals responsible for cleaning the workplace described these activities as stressful ones. The high feeling of responsibility connected with saving human life would often cause frustration. Some remarks were especially interesting and surprising for me. For instance the staff was annoyed because of the stains formed on the stainless steel which could not be removed or some surgeons loved beautiful objects and would like to adapt some into the operating room. The quality, functionality and apperance of the medical equipment strongly influences the sense of profesionalism and hence the quality of the performed work; and such is particularly important for a group of people responsible for human life.

The most important part of the work was to redefine the functionality of the product. During the workshops we have made a decision to create a PREMIUM wash; a product which will perfectly match the needs of the staff. The key decision was to change the material which the wash was made of from stainless steel to a composite material with silver nanoparticles that have antiseptic properties. Thanks to this change we could maintain smooth lining in the wash. Inaccessible edges from the wash interior were removed which made it easier to clean it. The front line of the object got a hollow in form of a protective coat for the user. We designed shelves for brashes and a special container for wastes. The wash gained a character of a monolithic unit, brashes and towels dispatchers were blended into the solid above the basin in order to prevent water spilling. The surface which is available for the user includes soap and antiseptic liquid containers which provide the contect directly to the tap. The containers for the used equipment are located in the lower part of the wash and can be accessed by a knee touch.

Thanks to the precisely diagnosed needs of the target group we created a product which has become a model product of the company. Even though the price is higher the wash has become one of the bestsellers, because it provides a solution to the staff typical problems. The product in fact does increase the hygienic safety and facilitates work of the staff members.

I would venture to mention one funny anecdote which beside its humor is quite adequate to this project. One of our clients from the Far East two wash items: one to the hospital and one for a private use in his own house. He considered the product attractive enough to show it to his guests. I treat this fact as a compliment since usually the medical equipment is not particularly attractive itself yet here we have managed to raise the positive emotions in our client.

1.4 Universal language of design/ communication

Another experience, which has contributed to my professional qualifications rise, was our studio co-operation with a French-Portugese company ENVY LIGHTING. After acquainting with our portfolio during one of the design professional trade events, the company chairman offered us a co-operation over creating a new catalogue.

The ENVY conception assumed a co-operation with the designers of different nationalities since they wanted to enrich their collection with some diversity and innovations. We presented some of our propositions out of which three different product collections were chosen – a set of tables and consoles and two lighting sets.

As we were working in an international team with French and Portugese, we had to have in mind the cultural differences and niuances in communication, yet in general the atmosphere during the co-operation was very friendly and creative. The geographical distance was tough quite challenging. We were communicating via e-mails and other digital platforms. Not only did we learn some professional words in other language, but we also somehow aquired a discipline in conveying our ideas. The conversations had to be prepared in advance with all the questions and materials well specified in order to avoid possibile misunderstandings which might have arised as a result of lack of a personal contact. Of course we received the material samples and we were working on common 3D models yet we did not manage to exact all the details we wanted to include. We design products using not only our imagination and mind, but also using our senses. That is why a contact with a prototype is necessary to be maintained on each of the project phase.

The co-operation with ENVY has resulted in **NOOBE** collection which consists of a console and two small tables. Two lamp collections: **BUSHI** and **RAMY** were prototyped and presented on design trades in Paris, but unfortunately they were not produced on a commercial scale due to internal changes within the company structure. Even though the co-operation with ENVY did not bring about the expected results, still it was a prescious experience. It required improving our interpersonal skills and made us more sensitive to cultural differences. Leaving one's comfort zone indeed promotes designer's personal progress as it raises one's confidence in communication and executing their project ideas; also in foreign language and on remote.

1.5 Beautiful technology/ simplicity and function

We started our co-operation with MARMITE with quite an experimental project, given the reputation of the producer. **ISLAND** basin contained a large functional space in its inner part and it served to put soap or other commonly used cosmetics on it. It was at the same time an easel of the basin draining system. In the effect a drain saddle was fully covered and water would disappear under the basin. The main reason for which this project was created was the need for a basin with a tap installed inside the basin. We managed to meet this demand. The achieved product was unconventional with its untypical appearance. It was exhibited on design trades and received lots of audience attention, but still it was considered rather a curiosity.

We heard from MARMITE after the trades, they shared with us both positive and negative opinions. Thanks to such support we designed another series of basins which had the features which we were considered positive by the trade clients. This time our project would match the character company's style more accurately since the forms were consistent with the production technology. Basins were designed basing on simple reconstruction of geometric solids. They looked really good with matt composite material since they would emphasize its assets. Designing becomes inspiring when one faces a challenge. Discovering a new technology can be considered such a challenge.

One needs to recognize the properties of the material and learn to make use of such. I am doubtless about the fact that the key to design a basin is to find a suitable form, manipulate with a convention and use the details properly. Its function is already defined, its ergonomics is predictable, but that is why one can focus on a form nuances. Thanks to this project I have learnt to withdraw from ideas expression so that I can better understand the clients' needs and add some innovations to the already existing product but the key is to do it in such a way that a new product would be still acceptable by a target customer. Apparently, so called soft design has won design experts' recognition. The **CADENCE** series has been awarded with many prizes what I am very happy about since it gives me a confirmation of my own project skills.

1.6 Brand power/ new perspectives

Every beginner designer dreams about working with producers who will be trendsetters in a given branch and who will at the same time respect their designers and their clients, providing high quality products. I had such an honor to be invited to co-operate with NOTI company. I had been observing this producers projects for many years and I would value them for their consistency in their displayed image. It was obvious for me that I had to emerge with a project that would be consistent with the brand's style but I also wanted it to be somehow unique.

The project was created based on a brief. The company knew exactly what they lacked in their assortment. **LOPP** collection was designed. It consisted of a desk, writing desk and a dressing table. The furniture base was the same for each of the collection element and the particular functions were defined by the additional accessories. The furnitures according to the producers instructions are designated to be folded by the customers themselves.

This feature and the conciseness of the construction supported by table legs without any additional crosspieces were achieved using a steel rack. This construction constitutes a cord of the furniture which the elements such as legs, drawers and table top are assembled to. Such structure allows for lowering the overall objects dimension as it is being prepared for a transport. The furniture looks quite extraordinary once placed in a space. The project idea was to create a modest product, but as always we would attempt to add some functional details into it.

The writing desk contains special compartments for office accessories; one of such even has a mediaport with a power plug and USB ports. The dressing table beside a drawer and a tiny compartment for jewellery also contains a mobile mirror. A customer can for instance hang a necklage on the regulatory grip. The furniture has smooth lining which makes it friendly for a user. As the furniture is made of oak and walnut wood it has a special elegant character. Thanks to the high quality of the material the furniture should make it to serve the user for a long period of time. The target destination of the furniture collection should be a home area, hotel apartments as well as the offices (which are currently getting a cosy, home-like character).

Relations with our clients can be in a way considered a test for a designer, in my opinion, since our job is to co-operate with them. A co-operation (understood as a mutual involvement in creating the best possible version of the desired product) between a client and a designer guarantees a good realization. The prize for a full involvement are subsequent co-operation proposals; that is what happened in NOTI case.

Working at University

02.

2.1 My career at Design Department 2005-2019

I have been working with students of Design Department at Poznań University of Arts since 2005. When I was on my 5th year I was offered a job as an assistant in Product Design Studio run by prof. Tomasz Matuszewski. While I was working on my master's thesis, I was only listening to the advices given by the profesor to the students but I was not actively participating in such consultations. Not to mention the obvious lack of experience, I was simply too shy to lecture my peers. Still though, I have learnt a lot by watching the process of product creation and getting to know the professor's and the students way of thinking. Moreover I was participating in all artistic activities of the studio. I was preparing presentations and exhibitions for the end of academic year. After completing my diploma under prof. Matuszewski guidance, I took part in a competition for an assistant job which I won and started working at the University. The curriculum was at that time divided into so called minor and major programmes and it depended on whether the given studio was of the students main or additional one. At some point prof. Matuszewski commisioned me to manager the minor programme. It was an opportunity for me to gain an experience in running my own project lessons with a little help of the supervisor. It lasted from 2006 till 2013 when I got a doctor degree and become a senior lecturer. I passed a competition and become a head

of The Product and Utility Structure Studio. I still hold this office, conducting both semester and diploma subjects with the students of all years.

Additionally, I was running formatting and modeling technique classes with the 1st year Design students. The aim of these classes was to make the students accustomed to the necessity of materializing their project ideas in order to evaluate on such. I was also running classes with the students from Poznań University of Technology that would aim to present the specificity of a designer profession and hence to encourage the future engineers to co-operate with the future designers.

I was also holding an office of Academic Enterprise Promotor in years 2010-2015 in Greater Poland Innovative Platform at Economy Department in Poznań City Office. This venture would join the attempts of Poznań universities (Adam Mickiewicz University, University of Medical Sciences, University of Arts, University of Life Sciences, University of Economics, University of Physical Education) to promote academic accomplishments of students among the entrepreneurs circles. I was preparing offers for entrepreneurs that would offer them a broadly understood co-operation with research workers and students of our university. I was awarded with UAP Chancellor prize for my involvement in this project.

As an assistant, and later on as an lecturer, I was actively participating in Design Department activities. I was participating in annual open air project events, I was coordinating diploma exhibitions, carrying Departments presentation on Poznań International Fair, conducting interdepartments confederations and collaborating publications devoted to young workers of the Department. From the very beginning of my assistant's career I have been engaged in reviewing the final thesis of our department students; I have written dozens of such. I was a member of the Department Head Team in years 2013-2017. I was participating in admissions process as a council member. I have been acting as a secretary of the University Council of Admission and my role is to conduct the entrance exams for all department of the University.

2.2 Product and Industrial Design Studio

Taking over the management of one of the Design Department studios, has opened an entirely new chapter of my didactic work. I got a benefit of the doubt from my mentors and collaborators and hence I could feel fully responsible for my students. I also feel obliged to look after the reputation of the studio which was funded years ago by prof. Rajmund Teofil Hałas. He was the funder of our department, a person who established new standards of academic teaching and also a great designer whose artistic oeuvre I am a great fan of. If I was to pick one key word for my concept of teaching, I would choose the word *respect*. I think that every good aspect of designing is connected with some values. I will try to evaluate this simple statement. I am building relationships with my students basing on a respect;

a respect for their personality, esthetic preferences, project inspirations regardless of the fact if such correspond with mine. I want my guidance to be a dialogue rather than instructive lecture which in my opinion may be harmful for students. I am observing the dynamic changes regarding young students mentality and I am trying not to judge them. At the same time I am trying to share with them this what seems timelessly valuable for me. I instill them a respect for the product recipient.

Every project process in our studio starts with determining the recipient target group of the project. By respect towards the user, I mean taking care of their good relation with a product. That is why I pay a great attention to a proper defining and elaborating the products functionality. I encourage my students to imagine that they were the future users of the products they would design. I want them to predict the way in which the product would be used and what possible emotions it would bring about. I also try to teach them a respect to the materials as such are medium in designers job. Basing on my personal experience, I teach my students a conscious exploitation of the materials. And I will do so regardless of the fact whether they will use a given material in accordance to its specific properties or they will rather use it in an experimental way. For me a respect for the natural environment, being a popular subject of the projects which I supervise, should be closely related with attempts to raise and nurture the awareness of the future designers. I prefer to educate students over the matter of the profession-specific caution rather than to indoctrinate them. I am personally very sensitive to the issue of contaminating the natural environment and as the designers we have a major impact on such process and hence we should be aware of our responsibility for it. However there are many misleading information over the issue of what should and what should not be considered ecological. That is why I am trying to pass to my students the attitude of respect and the sense of responsibility for their project decisions as I believe that in future they will act consciously and will obey the profession-related ethics rules.

As an active designer I also want to teach my students a respect for their future clients. Since design is a branch embedded in services and team work, I wish my students to understand that they should closely co-operate with their clients and should always act in accordance to the clients best interest.

The identity of a brand, technological capabilities, financial aims, market strategy, target group and finally people who make up the brand – all of these are the elements which a designer should take into account and count with. That is why under our studio conditions we also talk a lot a about the clients role.

2.3 Work methodology.

Our studio operates in a mode of guiding students individual work and discussing the ideas among the students attending the classes. There is an open character of discussion, I encourage my students to conduct dialogues with their colleagues, to support each other in intellectual development, but also to give each other a constructive critic.

Each year I prepare a new range of topics. Usually such includes about five topics which are formulated in such a way that they give an opportunity for creative interpretation, but at the same time they should be a point of reference for students. I will also always offer one free choice of topic for students, mainly for higher years students. I am open to students topics suggestions, yet I will always mind that the range and difficulty level of such should be adjusted to a didactic effect which I aim to achieve. Such topics are often derived from personal passions, recognized project issue or inner imperative which in effect often results in great, meticulously evaluated project realizations. Moreover in the studio we conduct competitive topics. The students participate both in closed competitions carried out by the department in co-operation with the external partner and in open competitions. Students challenge themselves with the task of varied difficulty level and deal with a variety of issues. Thanks to that they have an opportunity to develop logic thinking and technological analysis skills. Moreover they can raise their sensitivity, master their observation skills and acquire a general alertness which should be very important for a designer.

Students will often choose the topics which at first may appear less attractive since they cover the issues such as social exclusion or disability. The realizations of such projects are conducted with the help of other specialists – guardians, therapists and research workers. Independently of the topics specificity, there is a common pattern according to which the project is being realized and such can be divided into stages:

- Defining the project issue.
- Making project assumptions – defining a target group and a potential producer.
- Analyzing possible solutions, market research.
- Creating a thought map/moodboard – looking for cultural contexts, visual and technological inspirations.
- If necessary, consulting with specialists.
- Evaluating on project assumptions.
- Materials and technology choice.
- Searching for function and form – sketching, modeling.
- Deciding on conception and elaborating on such.
- Project presentation.

2.4 Behind the students work.

I require many different skills from my students. The very base of their everyday work is the ability to visualize their concepts. Imagine serves as a language for a designer, so students draw thought maps, moodboards, they sketch, they create prototypes, models and 3D visualizations. Acknowledging one's individual predispositions, I will leave my students with a free choice of a technique they will use, but still I demand a precision and clarity of the message. The University offers its students an opportunity to master presentation sketching and modeling technique as well as CAD modeling platform use. The students job in the studio is therefore to use these skills in practice of designing process and to present the results of such. I do my best to encourage young people not to use their aquired skills thoughtlessly but to creatively choose forms of expression that will match their projects specificity. Designers resource is also their gained knowledge about industrial technologies. Every project which is being created through a didactive process is being prepared according to the specific production process. If a given technology is available, then the students conduct trials with the material. If the project requires a technology which is unavailable though, then students will try to gain knowledge which will enable them to make theoretical assumptions about the possible materials and production.

In our studio students also share their passions, interests and previous experience what helps them to get used to public speeches. I support a conception of creating such working conditions within the academic studio that will remind real design studio atmosphere. I am trying to perform the projects coordinator role, to support young artists through asking them stimulating questions, to provoke a reflection and to build a solid background for future projects. I do care about a chronology and I want to keep a discipline in a way as well so that the students can work out their own method of work. I am aware of the fact that I am not able to prepare my students for every possible circumstances that they might encounter in their professional career, but at least I can give them tools they can use to undertake possible challenges. My own professional experience is very useful in this case. Since I have been working with many producers with each of them having different technological and financial capabilities I can understand the job market mechanisms more thoroughly.

Coordinating master thesis gives me lots of satisfaction. It is mainly due to final years students high determination to achieve the best possible results of their work. Those diplomas which have been created in our studio, were later on presented on international and local exhibitions. They were also appreciated by the critics and awarded in competitions.

From 2013 there have been about 150 students in the studio, they were of various age, degrees and nationalities. Under my guidance there have been (or are being in progress) 24 bachelor and master degree diplomas created. I sincerely hope that our graduates have received here a proper preparation to their future careers.

3.1 Project used as a basis for post-Ph.D thesis.

03.

NODE, HIPS, ARCH, HEY collections. A hollistic vision of project implementation.

It happens sometimes that a designer meets a producer who becomes a partner in their personal development. I consider FAMEG company such a partner. This producer has inherited from Michael Thonet his artistic and intellectual accomplishments. The factory was founded by Michael's sons: August and Karol in 1881 in Radomsko and was originally called „Thonet Brothers”. Since '50s, after reconstruction and fusion with Ksawery Wunsche and S-ka factories, the producent exists under the name Fabryka Mebli Giętkich. FAMEG is today one of the biggest wood furniture manufacturers in Europe and one of the branch leaders in the world.

We have started to co-operate with FAMEG in 2016. I will dare to say that from the very beginning we fund a common ground with each other and hence we would easily find an agreement. FAMEG is a family business run by highly determined and passionate people. The owners understand the necessity for development. They want to create a new brand image; they want to be recognized as a company that has a long history and traditions, but which at the same time is building its modern identity. Such plan assumes a multithreaded process. They are investing in restructuring their resources, building new technological lines, but also in creating the brand through a design. The special agreement which I have already mentioned have so far resulted in implementation of five furniture collection which posses a new value for the company. Each of the collections have been created basing on the analysis of FAMEG assortment; each of them is unique and designated for different target group.

I am particularly glad that each collection is innovative and goes beyond the typical production patterns. This is often about the details which a customer may not even be aware of yet such will influence their perception of the product. Introducing even minor changes is a step forward for a the producer since it is a beginning of a new pathway which may turn out to be a revolutionary one. A product which is constructed in a different way that the former ones changes people's way of thinking, shows them a need for change and proves that such change is indeed possible.

I would like to refer to four furniture collections designed for FAMEG: **NOD** (photo 03), **HIPS** (photo 04), **ARCH** (photo 05) and **HEY** (photo 06) which I consider my personal artistic achievements. I have decided to choose the above collections because they all share a common feature which is a traditional technique of wood bending, but at the same time each of the collection has certain functional, technological and esthetic solutions which are absolutely innovative for FAMEG company.

3.2 Product addressing. *Brand's vision of new furniture, who is a target group.*

„Good design admits to the deeper insight that beyond performing a purpose in a good way, the purpose itself has to be good.“

Konstantin Grcic

As I have already mentioned, recognizing producer's needs and defining a target group to whom the product will be addressed to, is an important element of initial stage of projects processing. Each company has its own politics regarding implementation issue. I have encountered both a method of preparing detailed briefs as well as discussing the projects ideas in team through workshops using Design Thinking method. FAMEG is a company with old traditions, but it has had a new management since 2013. That year was crucial and one can conclude that the company was given a new life in a way. In the result they have a very personal attitude towards creating new products.

The products are being created within a small circle of decision-makers and in the next step they are being passed to technologists and constructors. Since there are no people responsible for brief preparation, a designer becomes fully responsible for projects assumptions. We got a task to examine the market and similar companies and to check on current trends and innovations. Our work began with analyzing FAMEG's portfolio and looking for such elements which would match our idea.

NOD (photo 07) collection was the first project designer for FAMEG. Analyzing FAMEG's portfolio, we recognized a need to create a modern and characteristic furniture collection. The company has lots of traditional, history-inspired furniture models with some more modern models in its offer. New models appeared somehow noble and raw due to their simple lining. The challenge of completing the collection was therefore to create something which would be different than already existing models. We purposely proposed quite controversial solutions. The leading theme was using two moulded pieces serving as a chair support and a seat placed slightly above the chair's base. Moreover forms of those moulded pieces were cut with a smooth line – they had no straight sections. The construction of a seat rail and legs was made of solid wood of a round section what gives the furniture a soft appearance, creating a contrast to simple straight lining of the rest of the modern collections furniture items. We assumed that **NOD** collection should be an outstanding product which would possess a new value to the company. It was designated for contract sale, gastronomic services, hotels and other public objects. In consequence we enriched our collection with solids designed to perform various functions. Investors and interior designers would often prefer such collections that they can use to furnish the entire object of their investment in a consistent way. That is why **NOD** collection consists of a chair, barstools of two different heights, an armchair and two tables – a coffee and a bar one. The armchair which is particularly meant for hotel lobby and cafeterias has won a great popularity. This armchair has a very wide seat. Not only is it comfortable for a user, but it also enables the user to support themselves against

against the chair's back whilst standing up. Its surface area also allows for putting up some personal items such as for instance lady's bag.

Facing the requirement of the project to be individualized in its character, we have designer **NOD** in such a way that further configuration extensions of the collection might be possible. Therefore, beside a vast choice of colors, wood type and upholstery – both the rack and the seat part can be colored separately. It is possible thanks to the special construction which allows for painting even before the whole furniture is folded. The interior designers are therefore constantly receiving a product which they can easily personalize.

The collection emerged as an innovative and outstanding one and was awarded with **Must Have** and **German Design Award Special** prizes. It was also selected by Dorota Koziara to be presented on **Top 10** exhibition which was held in Interior Gallery Domar in Wrocław during 10th edition of Night with Design.

HIPS (photo 08) collection has different designation. Our aim here was to create a soft and cheap furniture that would function well in food courts, cafeterias and bars. Such furniture should have a rather informal style, it should not be too elegant. That is why we decided to enrich the collection with a product of smooth lining. The collection consists of a chair and an armchair. The informal style was achieved using a single, deeply ironed blank form which joins the seat with the back part. Both furniture base and its seating part have soft smooth lines. Casual style was emphasized in low and wide armchair which also comes in a version without an upholstering. In the effect we have achieved a furniture which will create a casual atmosphere of the area in which it will be placed. **HIPS** form outlook is easy to manipulate. Large wooden surfaces in colorless version will add some nobility to its appearance. Vivid colors will highlight the dynamics of the furniture. The upholstering version will give a calming effect. The above features constitute the universal character of the furniture as it is designated for everyday use.

ARCH (photo 09) collection is though a complete opposition of the projects assumptions described above. The aim in this case was to create an elegant furniture of a high standard and advanced technology was involved in production. **ARCH** is a shortcut standing for architecture; it also refers to the English word arch as it is inspired by traditional architecture elements. The chair and armchair geometry has rather a traditional form, but the details make up its general modern character. Slender legs and cuttings in a seat rail make the form look subtle and proportional. The back made of bended plywood exposes a large surface of natural wood, particularly in the oak version. The graining form and its structure highlight the noble character of the product. This collection is designated for elegant interiors with superior standard. **ARCH** collection belongs to premium products collection due to its advanced technology of production. The furniture belong to the highest prize category in the company offer, but such was the project assumption. The project has been added to the company's portfolio and it has reinforced the brand image due to the media and clients interest it has gained.

HEY is a collection of tables and small tables which has been designed as an alternative for tables with wooden tops placed on a steel leg. Domination of such table model in cafeterias and restaurants is overwhelming. Of course such can be justified with the practical reasons – steel construction ensures stability and long-period resistance. Such solution is perfect for popular restaurants which will daily have an intense human traffic. Although FAMEG is a producer known for wooden furniture production, it also uses steel bases for table tops. So we took a challenge to design an alternative base for table tops that would be made of plywood. In the effect the furniture is consistent in term of the used materials and the producer can fully rely on their technology in production. Even the construction is wooden due to special joining of the legs in form of a stiff „kolumn” we have managed to achieve a very stable furniture. The collection is adressed for those restaurants that are rather moderately attended since wood as a material is still uncomparably less stable than steel. **HEY** will undoubtedly add some fresh atmosphere to the interiors and it is so due to its specific legs shape what I am going to evaluate on later on.

3.3 Technology. *Inspiration, beauty source, market advantage.*

One of my favorite designers Ronan Bouroullec has compared a good project to a perfectly prepared dish in which all ingredients are selected in perfect proportions. „No ingredient can be missing and no ingredient can dominate in order not to spoil the taste”. French cucine is considered one of the best in the world, so I agree with this funny comparison. One of the key component of a succesfull project is a proper technology use.

Technology is a huge advantage of FAMEG. Even though wood bending involves rather simple rules, there is something amazing in the process and one can observe it during the shows held by the company. The spectators are fascinated watching the process. The malleability of evaporating wood is surprising. The forms which are being created through this process have a predictable industrial pattern known for dozens of years, but at the same time the forms appear natural. However bending natural wood is only one of many technologies which FAMEG uses. The company owns a plywood production line and can form it using press machine. The industrial development has resulted in formation of a technologically advanced machines park with CNC 5-axis milling machines. It is designer's job to creatively use the technology, to join traditional elements with the innovations in order to achieve the best possible visual and efficient effect.

It is important to find a value in company's technology, because then one can create a product which will not only contribute to strenghtening the company's market advantage, but will also satisfy the recipient. Each of the products described below brings a new technological value and each of them was a challenge for the entire team. However if nearly exhausting technological capabilities succeeds, then the unique technological character of the obtained product is guaranteed. Thanks to such attitude, the company is strengthened and its capabalities become more unique. Products which were difficult to produce, can serve ng forces being working on material in many directions simultaneously.

as somehow a certificate confirming the staff skills. Using advanced technology also protects the company against copying their products by competitors. Plywood formation is rather an easy process provided that the plywood is bended in one surface. However the forms obtained in such process are not too dimensional, they often lack sophistication and smoothness in lining. Bending in several dimensions often results in plywood stratification, drawpiece bursting due to strong forces being working on material in many directions simultaneously.

NOD collection was the first production challenge. Even though the ironing is not particularly deep, the back part muld is unlinear in dimensions. We did not want to give up on this process as it was a specific formal decision and it would improve the comfort of the furniture use. That is why we would repeatedly correct the back and the seat geometry and we would discuss the bending process with the constructors. Finally we managed to obtain less obvious bending form, which would make the furniture look more attractive. Moreover we were also working on the constructive junction of the furniture's base. We wanted it to be open-work and look distinct, but it also had to meet the requirements of strong bonding. The most reliable construction of chair seat rail is the one which is fully built-into a seat rail. The base we have designed was the opposite of the above. However, thanks to the junction binding a seat rail with legs we have obtained a very stable product.

As a designer I highly appreciate an opportunity to actively participate in the process of product creation. Our co-operation with FAMEG is about active working with prototypes and materials. We are spending many hours in the factory introducing corrections, searching for solutions, discussing with the management, producers and technologists. Each prototype stage is completed with our corrections introduced which may come in form of either descriptions or 1:1 scale models which are later on processed by the producers. Obtaining a hoof for a moulded piece takes a lot of time and money, so we will always be particularly cautious before we order this stage for further processing.

HIPS collection is a great achievement in terms of plywood formation. There is no single element in this product which is made of solid wood. Therefore it may be concluded that from a technological point of view the collection is achievement representing company's high capabilities. Another specific feature of the project is using a plywood of a changable thickness. Layers forming a pile are being arranged in fan-like shape hence varied thickness can be obtained. **HIPS** has back and seat system and legs produced using the same technique. Thanks to this method the visual and physical softness is obtained. The plywood edge changes within the furniture envelope. It brings about certain constructional advantages. In these areas where a moulded piece needs to be highly stiff and resistant and in the point of base junction, the thickness of the plywood is typically around 15mm. The upper back part and the seat edge though are around 9mm what makes the furniture look more subtle. Legs are getting thinner going downwards and so the construction gets more splendor look.

ARCH (photo 11) construction is a combination of an old plywood bending technology with CNC milling technology. The back is made of one moulded piece and the material modulating technique was also applied in this case. In the back and seat junction point the back is thicker. the entire furniture base has been produced using a numerical milling machine. This machine allows for very precised processing, very accurate depicting of designer's vision and full repetitiveness. I am mentioning this because it can not be taken for granted. Especially in bended furniture there is often a certain inequality in production, every furniture is slightly different in sizes. Of course it is a typical feature of bended classics and can be treated as their unique asset. However **ARCH** belong to such furniture collection which is required to have its elements and details very precisely measured. Only very advanced tools allow for such such forms to be obtained through mass production. I am glad that we had a chance to design a collection which joins the old with the new. I think that the company will be constantly developing in a direction of obtaining new technologies, still maintaining their traditions though. This furniture is particularly precocious for the company as there is a minimum risk of comitting a mistake in the production process. It therefore lowers the customers complaint percentage and the customers are guaranteed a high quality of the product. Moreover, since it is impossible to obtain a similar product without a proper technological background, the unique form of the collection is ensured.

HEY (photo 12) tables collection is also inspired by FAMEG technology. We wanted to design a table made of bended plywood that would come in various versions. We also wanted to keep the production expense as low as possible.

In the project a singl moulded piece was used. It is being produced in large format. Next it is being cut cut into stripes forming the table legs. Legs are then milled in two different ways: they will either form a 3-leg or 4-leg kolumn construction. In first variety we obtain a base with 3 legs designated for round table tops and in the secondo variety we obtain a base with 4 legs designated for square tops. Before the legs are joined in a column they can also be processed in two different ways. They come in a rounded version as well as in a version with a leg being cut straight at the end. Here again one single operation determines the furniture character: it can be either smooth, friendly or it can be more classic, slender and „serious” in the appearance. Planning on HEY production cycle allows for obtaining a few visual versions of the furniture using several simple operations.

3.4 User's feelings. Form follows Emotion?

Form follows function – we all know this slogan by a famous architekt Louis Sullivan. The logic of designing included in these three words is still valid today. To an extent I might agree with this idea, however in my opinion this should not be a dogma for a designer. Another sentence Form follows emotion seems to stand in the opposition to the original version. However it is worth to remember that design is a varied branch; hence form should indeed follow function, yet it should not ignore the feelings of the recipients. A precisely designed

function can result in a beautiful product, same as a mathematical equation can be considered beautiful as well. Although, in my opinion designers should be somehow humanists, taking their inspirations not only from logic, but also from culture. They should be able to manipulate with a convention, they should be skillful in quoting and they should make their projects emotions-awakeing. I sincerely wish my projects to be enjoyed by the recipients. Or at least that they will not stay indifferent about my work.

I would like to focus for a moment on the issue of the emotions that we wish to evoke in our recipients through our products. And I have to say that I do not mean to manipulate with clients feelings, but rather to establish a non-verbal dialoguje with them using the design forms. I believe that the users would unconsciously collect all the positive emotions which the author has included in their product. And by this I mean the designer's involvement in every single detail of their work. A product which has been designed without a decent dilligence and emotional involvement will never win the recipients trust and sympathy. An object may be like a one-sentence haiku poem, like a refined poetry or like an add in a newspaper. All of the above are needed, they have their place and recipients yet they differ in the form language which a good designer should be in command of.

The choice of the expression forms should therefore depend on the emotions which we would like to convey. During fair events and premiere presentations organized by FAMEG I had a chance to watch people encountering our products for the first time. Their behaviors would often be similar in contact with certain products. **ARCH** collection, as I have already mentioned, has its seat rail and legs construction cut in a sculpture-like way (photo 14). Many people would automatically pull their hands along the trimmed section. I noticed this because I would do the same during my first interaction with a prototype.

The shapes and the structure of the natural materials may encourage more senses-based discovering of the object. Same as it can be a pleasure to hold in your hand a perfectly smooth rock thrown by a sea, it can be the same pleasure to touch a smoothly shaped product lining. Having in mind that **ARCH** collection is designated for restaurants mainly, we took it into account the perspective from which furniture is presented in such kind of interiors. Chairs are pushed to tables so they can be mainly seen from their back part. That is why we have designed esthetic junctions between the seat rail and the back and we have exposed the large surfaces of non-upholstered wood parts. The presentations participants would often lift **HIPS** (photo 13) collection furniture, probably to check a weight of the chair which appears to be light at first sight. People would eagerly sit on **NOD** armchair and try different configurations of the attached pillow. People were also intrigued by the untypical construction, they wanted to see the seat „hanging” over the seat rail (photo 15). I do not mean that all the emotions connected with our products are the positive ones. I do, however, think that the described products will not leave the recipients indifferent about. Moreover the message conveyed in form of the furniture classify the particular collections into different designations we have assumed.

3.5 Hollistic understanding of implementation. *Complex care over the product.*

I have decided to choose the projects implemented with FAMEG as one of the themes in my post-doctoral thesis due to our complex action involved in these projects. I have already described the process of making the projects assumptions, working on the technology choice and making attempts to reach a target group via a given form. However this is not all a designer should be responsible for. We had an opportunity to carry a full range of our products presentations. We are involved in all the photo session (photo 16). We plan in what context the products should be photographed and we also actively participate in sessions. FAMEG is a producer mainly focused on seating furniture and tables. The company's offer is mainly addressed to contrahents, private interiors are of secondary importance. That is why our photo sessions are rather abstract, they do not have a complex arrangement behind. Hence simple props serve us as a scenography and they are meant to represent the spacial context. Abstract frames remind a window woodwork, abstract solids substitute a contuar with bar stools. The furniture with its coloring, uphostlery structure and wood type is a main subject of a photograph.

The FAMEG owners have entrusted us the task of designing all fair exhibitions for branch events (photo 17). Since we aimed to change the image of the brand, we wanted the exhibitions to appear more modern. So we would apply a similar tactic as in case of the photo session. We created visually free spaces which would expose the products. In order to maintain a consistent impression, we used the particular themes known from the photo sessions. Furniture models were presented in a space in a way which will ensure the guests comfort during discovering the company's offer. The new company presentation has won a positive audience reception. FAMEG stall has won the Warsaw Home fair **Grand Prix** award and the first award in a category of **Selected Design 2018**.

The collections of **NOD**, **HIPS**, **ARCH** and **HEY** are consistent with FAMEG's tradition yet at the same time they are bringing some freshness and modernisty behind. I hope that the above implementations have been also important for the company as they indeed have been for our studio and for me as a designer. What one can be certain about is that our co-operation have resulted in noticable changes of the brand's image. Our projects which are supported by the management and produced by the specialists, are completing the brand's portfolio and drawing the media and the clients attention. Building a mutual trust and respect between a producer and a designer is in my opinion a key issue enabling for a satisfying co-operation and good products creation.

Summary

The integrity of my professional and didactic attitude is of a primary importance for me. I always try to complete the tasks entrusted to me with an utmost care and involvement. It does not matter whether it is about a subsequent implementary project or a project over which I am working with my students, I will always obey the same quality standards. My intention is to encourage students to creatively search for new project ideas. I want to challenge them and I am inviting them to fully engage themselves into a studying process. Prof. Rajmund Hałas, whom I have already mentioned, used to say: „Our profession is the most beautiful in the world, but it is very difficult.” I do agree with this statement. A conscious and responsible designing may bring lots of satisfaction and a designer may have a significant positive influence over many life aspectss. However at the same time we are obliged for constant education, updating our knowledge, gaining new skills and turning our the ideas into actual products. I think that a designer should be both a brave creator and a humble artisan. I am trying to instill both of these features in my students.

Łukasz Stawarski

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More pictures of the collections designed for FAMEG can be found in Artistic Achievements Portfolio.



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