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## **Another Dimension of Design: Seeking Balance between Ecology, Consumption and Social Structure**

**Analysis of the product design process in an ecologically close cycle – project of a set of socially engaged objects**

### **Abstract**

My doctoral thesis, *Another Dimension of Design: Seeking Balance between Ecology, Consumption, and Social Structure*, springs from reflections on the surrounding environment, and recent drastic societal changes including those caused by the climate crisis, the tightening of the requirements of economic systems, overproduction and waste, and the global Covid-19 pandemic.

As a designer of utility products, I try to convey the idea of self-sufficiency and minimalism by drawing attention to the global problem of overproduction. I promote the innovative use of both recycled materials and ceramics to satisfy the design dimension of excessive consumer requirements.

Alongside the creation of my own projects and workshops, I have focused on the social aspect of work, initiating a design process and way of manufacturing for individuals from different backgrounds and of differing abilities. Ceramics and recycled materials provide

a simple and cost-effective basis for working with people with certain physical and mental limitations.

From my experiences and research in working with recovered materials, I have created the Seven Days of Creation. This concept combines many aspects of modern life into one overlapping system of design. I believe its values are necessary for comfortable functioning in modern society.

The Seven Days of Creation focuses on three distinct products that have been designed to be reproduced in a small series. To make them the materials required include glass from non-returnable bottles and jars, porcelain, enamel ware and tin cans. These materials are utilised to create a series of lamps, plates with warmers, and food storage containers. As we live in a world of globalization, I try to emphasize the importance of local production. By departing from mass production, we can do much to maintain harmony with nature and the environment.

This product concept series is proposed as an exemplar for today's product designers. The engagement of social groups and locally available materials has the potential to activate the *spinning wheel* of self-sufficiency on a small scale and thus become a component of a broader system.

It is my hope that by focusing designers on the local, their role could expand to encompass many different groups of people. It is a minimalist idea which could evolve as a model for over-consuming communities.

The selection of objects that surround us will thus become a tasteful and unique occupation, thus driving small production lines and supporting centres associating people with special needs and fighting against exclusion.

In addition, extending the life of objects increases their value. Design also plays a key role here. The cucumber jar no longer needs to stay in the cellar, and beautiful wine bottles can retain their beauty in a different form. Working with waste material itself gives rise to ideas about its usability. Whenever I have the opportunity to work with students, I try to make

them familiar with the concept of design that starts from the end: to begin with a finished product that ended its life too quickly.