

DESIGN INNOVATIONS FOR PROFESSIONALS

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MILAN'09 PREVIEW

# crisis of ideas



three questions for designers:

01 do you think there exists a crisis of ideas on the contemporary design market ? what might be the consequences of its clash with the economic crisis?

02 within your personal working process, which are the issues that currently interest you most ?

03 how do they apply to the designs you are showing this year in milan ?



sam hecht



1\_ I think the design crisis you speak of has been present with us long before the economic crisis. I believe that the image driven society that has taken over the central idea of what design is, which is being useful and full of use. If design dialogue continually goes no further than a goal of beautification, then, if something is very useful but rather odd, or indeed ugly, then it is not seen as something to understand or consider as design. This is a mistake.

2\_ I am very much interested in the in-between. Products that are neither here nor there. Grey, rather than black or white. Products captured by people with a second glance rather than a confrontation with radicalism.

3\_ The «Table, Chair, Bench» program for Established & Sons, is a piece of furniture that doesn't know what it is. Is it a table or a chair? Or a bench? It's a piece that is open to interpretation rather than about specifics. And by doing this, it will have more chance at sticking around, because of its versatility. I have no idea of its success or failure because it is within the realms of experiment. Some will like it, but equally many will frown at it. Just like people, I guess. It's a very human piece.

**ESTABLISHED & SONS > TABLE, CHAIR, BENCH:**

Sitting on the Tokyo metro, Hecht noticed that the seats appeared as long red benches with no armrests. The bench had one pink coloured zone — the size of a chair — so that the first person to enter the train would gravitate towards the pink part and sit down. The first passenger had effectively subdivided the rest of the bench for everyone else, so that no space was lost, as the train got fuller. «So I got to thinking... What if there was a bench that used a chair to create a sitting zone. Then the bench would look more like a table and chair yet still be able to act as a bench. TBC is a highly flexible matrix of different functions, where its flexibility is informed by its oddity.» To be used for the hallway of a home, waiting areas, lobbies etc.



**MUJI > BATH RADIO (PART OF THE ONGOING COLLABORATION WITH MUJI):**

According to Industrial Facility, this type of product — useful for a short period of time, to listen to music or news during a shower or bath — had not found its place. Available ones look «out-of-context» in the bathroom, which is generally wet and with few surfaces. The connection between a radio and the Muji refillable shampoo bottle introduced in 2003 «might at first seem absurd, but if both are viewed as things we consume during bath time, it is perhaps quite relevant,» comments Hecht. The speaker relates to the size of the shampoo sticker. The on/off and volume control is at the top. Channel selection is underneath as one rarely changes channels in the bathroom. Sound quality is enough for the purpose of a shower. Water resistant sealing protects the radio from moisture.

