

# Forever

- a design strategy.

The Forever strategy is to provide information about the material lifecycle, using product design and events as a means of communication.

The aim is to inform and involve citizens, in a positive and practical way, of their role and responsibility in recycling.

Furthermore, it serves as a methodology and inspiration for architects, designers and other professionals who want their products to have a positive effect on the environment and on people's behaviour.

The strategy is currently focused on cities, but it could also be applied to any size of community.

## Why

Manufacturing processes have undergone radical change during the past 50 years: Mass production techniques have dramatically increased volumes, speed and efficiency. This has lowered the piece price of products that previously represented a considerable investment, to a level at which we can buy, use and throw out, according to the fashion of the time. This "disposable" culture has thrived over the last several decades.

Globalization has made it possible to import materials from the other side of the planet, and it is now generally cheaper to produce an item in China even when it will subsequently be sold on "Strøget" in Copenhagen.

This is an unsustainable situation environmentally, and for many big cities, it is also a drain on the local economy.

According to the EU, each European generates annually an average of 3,5 tons of waste, which equates to 1,3 billion tons of rubbish for the European Union alone, - and this does not include waste from industry nor from agriculture.

80% of all Europeans live in a city (According to the UN, on world basis this number is 50 %) and a third of these live in cities with more than 1 million inhabitants.

Maybe it is easier to shed the feeling of responsibility for nature when living in a city: The waste disappears "forever" with the rubbish lorry, which possibly allows people to worry less about the stain that their lives leave behind.

In defence of the city dwellers, it has to be said that there is a dilemma:

Sustainable living is typically represented as people building their own straw houses out in the country-side; growing their own vegetables in the garden from which they then degrade their organic waste in their own compost heaps, and they get their energy from solar panels in the front garden.

This is an ideal world, but unrealistic considering the amount of people living in cities.

For this reason the Forever strategy focuses on the cities

Some citizens are environmentally conscious; they divide and recycle their waste, but few actually realize the potential of this waste if it were to be re-used as a raw material. The challenge lies in showing people this potential, to make them understand the future of recycled material, making them aware of their responsibility and role in the material cycle of the city.

## HOW

The Forever strategy uses product design and events to communicate the importance of people understanding their responsibility in the material lifecycle

The reason for using events and design as communication is partly because we believe that the effect of information folders is limited, - even with a text that is well explained, and also because practical examples are easier to understand than theory.

The events mainly focus on reusing material and objects that already exist: Showing how it is possible, with simple means, to change a piece of furniture, clothes or similar to suit a new style.

The products are everyday objects like doormats; glassware; diaries; laptop bags etc.. The difference lies in the way they are made and the material used to make them.

All products are made with material recycled from the waste or from the by-products of industry. The material source and the production should be as close to the point of sale as possible, both to reduce CO2 emissions from transportation, and also to support the local industry. For the producer, it is an opportunity to work with recycled material and acquire a knowledge that can be used to benefit other projects and contexts.

The products are always made so that they can either be recycled or biodegraded in the future.

For all this to make a real difference, the buyer needs to understand the process; therefore, when the product is sold, it comes with the complete information about the origin and composition of the material; how it was manipulated; the production process and how the product can be reused, changed and recycled/biodegraded at the end of its useful life.

In this way the buyer gets a practical example of the process of recycling.

Behind each different design, there are many hours dedicated to researching local waste and by-products, including the development and manipulation of the recycled material and the analysis of its lifecycle.

The goal is to demonstrate the value of 'waste' using functionally designed products to explain different materials' lifecycle.

Involving the citizens in the recycling process is giving them a good reason to help themselves.

By providing the research of the material of the product as open source information, a base is created for designers and architects to use the material in the future.

Re-using and recycling is a responsibility that we all carry.

Industry must change its' attitude to 'waste' and come to see it more as a useful by-product, at the same time, learning to include the by-products from other companies in their own manufacturing processes.

Simultaneously, it is important that the citizens become accustomed to buying and using products made from recycled material.

It is a question not only about information and habits, but also very much about design.

The Forever concept works towards sustainable cities; not just environmentally, but also socially and economically. The goal is to involve as many private individuals, organisations, institutions, private companies, universities etc. as possible, and thereby create a broad understanding of our shared responsibility for the material lifecycle of the city.

## WHO

The strategy operates at present under the trademarks 'Copenhagen Forever' and Barcelona Forever and hopefully during 2010 more will come.

'Barcelona Forever' started in 2008, and has already made several events and workshops, and is at present creating its' first prototypes.

'Barcelona Forever' collaborates with schools; public and private institutions as well as local companies.

Copenhagen Forever started in the spring of 2009, but is moving fast forward with good collaborations and interesting projects.

Both trademarks were registered by the Danish designer Mette Bak Andersen who has lived and worked in Barcelona over the last 8 years. She has developed different projects on sustainability and has directed several workshops on materials and recycling.

The main group of hardworking people that have contributed on the projects until now are:

Anke Pasold, architect, Isak Foged, architect; Pablo Cunningham, cabinetmaker; Nick Adam, shipwright; Carlos Prieto, design engineer; Ana Rodríguez de Lizana, interior designer; Txema Hernández, graphic designer; Alejandra Parraguez, industrial designer.

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