



## FACULTY

# INSITU

Using history as inspiration

### Author/Unit

**Marie-Louise Velthuis**

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Essay/Thesis:	15 hp
Program and/or course:	MFA Applied arts and Design
Level:	Second Cycle
Semester/year:	Spring 2017
Supervisor:	Petra Lilja
Examiner:	Torsten Hild
Report no:	xx (not to be filled in by the student/students)

## Abstract

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Keyword: Forgotten furniture, redesign, history, deconstruction, dressingtable, dressboy

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During years of change in taste, material exploration and context shifts we have forgotten some archetypes of furniture that were once part of our homes. This project is an investigation in how to use history as inspiration for designing new pieces of furniture. It examines what we have forgotten and why. By learning from the predecessors of the forgotten archetypes I hope to have created a piece that will last and gets the change to age gracefully from generation to generation without disappearing.

# INSITU



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## 1. BACKGROUND



# I . THE HOUSE

## 1. MY HOUSE

My summers as a kid were spent in our holiday house in France. The house, commissioned by Leopold II was a gift to his secretary for outstanding service. The house, in the style of the 1800 elite, was situated in the middle of a forest. My mother had decorated the house with furniture from that era and items that fit the overall ambiance of the place. Walls were painted with Fleur de Lis and every room had their own appointed color. Coming back to that house years later, I realized that the rooms were smaller, the attic was not haunted but inhabited by owls, and the tree had outgrown the tree house. Some things, however, had not changed.

The furniture was still there. I rediscovered bedroom sets with marble tops, carved edges and matching nightstands. The writing desk had endured time with grace, hand made by a carpenter two generations ago, from the toughest oak accompanied by a male and female chair with straw seating. When wandering through the house I found lost treasures that through the eyes of a child had seemed like everyday objects, but now made me wonder why some of these objects had become rare and special. What had happened that made them into a relic of times past?

## 2. THE HOME

There is something special about entering a home. You are visiting a museum of their life. The items they have chosen to surround themselves with give insight into their experiences and memories. This attributed role we commonly assign to the house has its origin in the late 19th century. Adrian Forty, former professor of Architectural History at The Bartlett, the Faculty of the Built Environment at University College London, has focused his research mainly on architecture's role in societies and cultural contexts. In *Object of Desire* he argues that as early as in late 1800, early 1900 the house became increasingly a display of the occupants' characters. A fact that was enthusiastically embraced by furniture manufacturers at the time.

The home as a display of the life lived has not always given visitors a honest insight into the lifes of the inhabitants.

Catalogs of domestic furnishing were used to find a persona, that was suited to show to visitors. Joseph Aronson, a renown art historian (1965) writes that:

“ Here is at the present time an ambition on the part of many well-to-do persons to imitate the effect produced in houses of old families where, for generations, valuable and memorable articles of decorative furniture have been accumulated, just as pictures, plate and china have been preserved; and failing the inheritance of such

household gods, it is the practice to acquire, or as the modern term goes, “to collect,” old furniture of different styles and periods, until the room becomes incongruous and overcrowded, an evidence of the wealth, rather than of the taste, of the owner. “ (p.291)

In *The poetics of space* (1994) Gaston Bachelard, who was a French philosopher that made contributions in the field of poetics and the philosophy of science, describes how the house as display went through a transformation in the 1960's. The outcome was a home less focused on the persona and more decorated, in order to make it feel like a place of comfort, for the inhabitant.



## 1. MEMORIES OF FURNITURE

Memories can enhance the affection for an object. It was my memory of the furniture I found, that gave the objects an extra layer of character. The fact that the pieces had a life before me, made their history even richer. Donald Norman (2011), director of the Design Lab at University of California, San Diego, who is widely regarded for his expertise in the field of design, usability engineering and cognitive science, states that the memory of an event can be more important than the actual event itself since it is the construction of the memory in combination with details from other memories that make it to be what it is. If I want to use memory to give objects more character, the question remains: is the object part of the memory or the memory part of the object?

We remember certain memories because they were once linked to information we already had or somehow considered valuable enough to store in the longterm memory. We use memory and the information we extracted from the memories to function in life and new situations.

Dick Swaab, professor of neurobiology and director of the Netherlands Institute for Brain Research explains in *We are our brain* how we recollect by combining different sensory input and that it is thus difficult to truly see what specifically makes something stick in our brain. (Dick Swaab, 2010) However, it can be concluded that memories tend to go to the longterm memory when associated with pre existing memories. The more history and association a memory has, the better the chances of survival are.

I propose that this theory is also applicable to a piece of furniture.

Transferring a memory to a piece of furniture has been brought up by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (noted for his work in the study of happiness and creativity,) and Eugene Rochberg-Halton (professor of Sociology. ) In 1981 they concluded from interviews with people in their homes that the special objects were those that helped a special feeling revive in the owners of the objects.

It is not within my possibilities to orchestrate a pre given feeling

originated from a memory between the owners and the piece of furniture. I can however give them a sense of history within the object.

Contemporary pieces of furniture do not get the same chance as their predecessors, to mature and become a vessel of memories. It is a time in which we replace items before we get attached to them. By giving the items a sense of history and a past life, I believe pieces can be created that have an advantage in surviving. This project will be an investigation in to what archetypes of furniture we have lost in history and in what way we can reuse their past.

I propose that a piece of furniture can be given the advantage of history by using the history of similar pieces of furniture in the design process. Although this history could be considered a "fake" history because the new object has in fact not existed for that long, the use and inspiration of "ancestors" could give an object an advantage to start with. It is then up to the new owner to expand the time line by giving the object new memories.

## 2. DISPOSAL OF DESIGN

After the industrial revolution, access to a bigger variety of furniture has given us an opportunity to be more particular about what we choose as a display of our character. Furniture became exceedingly accessible and interchangeable for the individual, because the prices and the production time decreased. The interchangeability could have stimulated an even easier curation of items that signify our character. Contrarily however the result is that the speed in which we replace and buy products does not give us the chance to develop a relationship with them and form an attachment.

Deyan Sudjic, writer on the subject of objects, design and human interaction, describes in *The Language of Things*, how this results in the extinction of products:

“So many product categories have not just been transformed, they have been entirely eliminated. We have lived through a period that, like the great dinosaur extinctions, has wiped out the beasts that roamed the landscape of the first industrial age, and in the wake of the extinctions, the evolutionary process has accelerated wildly out of control. Those industrial objects that have survived have survived have a life cycle measured in months, rather than decades. Each new generation is superseded so fast that there is never time to develop a relationship between owner and object” (p.21)

Many products that are being made now have a development cycle that is much shorter than it used to be for the same kind of products, hence it is not surprising that the outcome is not of a quality that deserves the devotion of multiple generations.

Jonathan Chapman, professor of Sustainable Design, (2005) says

that we believe it was the speed and streamlined efficacy of a modern manufactured world due to the industrial revolution in mid 1900s that accounts for today's overabundant production and consumption.

Lensvelt, a furniture company based in the Netherlands, has taken it upon themselves to counteract in that stream of abundance and consumption. A collection was designed aiming to take office furniture back to the basics. The collection includes chairs, tables and other office necessities made with simple shapes and all sold in just one color: grey. Their reasoning behind these decisions is that office furniture, because it is limited to European standards, does not change and evolve much over time. A lot of money and research therefore goes into making alternatives off the already existing types of office furniture, to still keep within the restrictions. Lensvelt decided to bring it all down in to a self proclaimed boring alternative. The collection is not an attempt to create more aesthetically pleasing furniture. They thought that would either become unaffordable or will lead to impossible compromises. This resulted in a process where they redefined office furniture by questioning what is truly essential about these items, no matter what office it is placed in.

Although the setting of the office is very different from that of the personal home I felt inspired by their approach to counteract abundance by taking furniture down to the core of what they should do. In this example the outcome was given boundaries also by the fact that there were already rules in place for office furniture but what I got most from it was their reinterpreting of what we consider necessity for this kind of object.



*the Lensvelt Boring Collection by Lemert and Sander, 2016*

### III. THE ENVIRONMENT

Creating objects without realizing the effects of consumerism is a thing of the past. As a new generation of designers we have been taught various ways of taking into account the carbon footprint your objects leaves behind, what happens to the parts after preparing for recycling and which materials can or are recycled. Where the word sustainability has had a bad connotation for years, it seems to be slowly gaining more momentum and becoming a unquestionable element of the making. The way sustainability is approached differs per field.

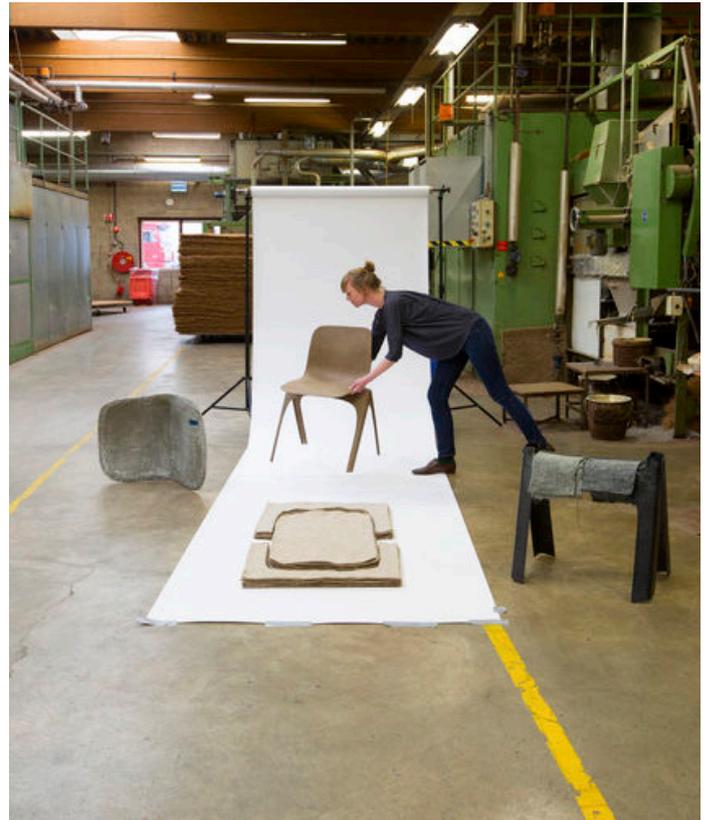
## 1. BEAUTY OF SUSTAINABILITY

Keeping the production local is an approach chosen by Lith Lith Lundin. They create items that can be made with product from a 50 km radius around their farm in Torsåker, Sweden. From the wood to the finishing, everything is made within that radius. If they cannot source the product they want they try to grow it themselves on their farmland.

The fact that materials are precious and must be cherished is more relevant with the growing sparsity of many materials and the abundance of waste. Christien Meindertsma works mostly with biodegradable materials like flax, wool and wood of which she likes to use all of the material. This is illustrated in her project Flax Chair. Flax Chair (2016) is a biodegradable chair designed for Label Breed made of flax fibre and PLA. The material is developed in close cooperation with Enkev and she set herself the goal to use as much of the material from one sheet and thus not creating waste.



*Dome (2012), Lith Lith Lundin*



*Flax Chair (2016), Christien Meindertsma*

## **2. FORGOTTEN FURNITURE**

Every generation makes a new selection of furniture pieces that is passed on from generation to generation. Many pieces however do not make the cut. Entire archetypes of furniture have been extinct for a long time and only survive in memories, books and paintings. The goal of this project is to learn from these extinct archetypes while creating new pieces of furniture. Creating new objects with an old history can be done in many ways, and this project is an exploration into the possibilities. The goal is not to make modern reproductions of old pieces of furniture but to make the evolved version of them.

## 1. THE HISTORY

The combination of a Bachelor degree in Industrial Design Engineering with a switch of material and focus has left me wondering what exactly signifies my design. All the products and pieces of furniture I have made, have been determined mostly by the design challenges that were formulated by others. I have made items that solved a problem a user had, objects that would fit the innovative strategies of the assigned company, objects that were a new take on a material but also pieces that were inspired by a specific location. Values that recur in my products no matter the nature of the assignment and that are of importance to me are:

**#1**

**A PRODUCT SHOULD BE CLEAR IN USE AND EASY TO HANDLE**

**#2**

**A PRODUCT SHOULD FULFILL THE REQUIREMENTS OF COMFORT. A COFFEE CUP ON WHICH YOU BURN YOUR FINGERS, OR A CHAIR THAT IS UNCOMFORTABLE TO SIT IN HAVE FAILED AS A DESIGN, TO ME.**

**#3**

**THE PRODUCT SHOULD HAVE A NEW TAKE ON THE SUBJECT FIELD.**

When starting my studies at HDK Steneby, working from a self formulated brief was a shift that took time to get used to. The pieces I made show the trials from an industrial background to a more craft based approach. Learning to work with wood has been a great pleasure. Wood has proven to be as multifaceted as ever and a playing with it challenging but rewarding.

Mixing materials with wood is something I would like to develop more. Play more with the shapes and what that material can do to create something I hope looks new and strong.

## 2. MY WORK

HIDE was designed as an urban equivalent of a secret hide-out in the forest. Inspired by a special place in the forest of Dals Långed, HIDE is the embodiment of all the good aspects this spot has and transfer it to a place where they are most needed. This resulted in an object with seemingly ambiguous characteristics: Strong on the outside, soft on the inside. Enclosed but not closed. Visible but not in plain sight. HIDE could be your own space in the dense forest of life. I chose a mix of materials that express a new way of making private spaces in public places like libraries or cafes. Instead of making them as calm and sound absorbing as possible, the goal was to make a piece of furniture that invited the user to sit and enjoy their surroundings.

*HIDE, 2015, placed in Bengtsfors Library*



Glass in lead has been around for many decades and has changed mostly in style. I wanted to capture the same essence in a new material. A material that is as versatile as it can be; wood. In churches lead glass was mainly used to display biblical stories and or picture holy events. For the people this was a means of understanding the stories If you were not able to read. The goal was to take stained glass out of the biblical connotation and portray the point in time we are at right now. Where we have animals still walking around while simultaneously building cities and industries quickly. We cannot foresee what will be the situation in a couple of years. I want to capture the turning point we are at right now for future reference.

*Framing Wood, 2016, exhibited at Ventura Lambrata Milano*



## VI. CONCLUSION

The house is not only a gathering place for families and storage for object, it is a home. The home in contemporary times has gotten the role of a place that is there for comfort and pleasure. It is also still a way of showcasing oneself, but the focus has shifted more to the exposure of the true self and not that of a chosen persona. We collect memories that transform our houses into our homes. By using history as inspiration for new pieces and to learn from the reason of their extinction I hope to create a piece that lasts and gets the change to become a vessel for memories.

Victor Papanek (2009), a designer and educator who became a strong advocate of the socially and ecologically responsible design of products, explains in *Design for the real world: Human ecology and social change*, that it is not possible to just move objects, tools, or artifacts from one culture to another and then expect them to work. Only when cultures truly intermingle “then both cultures are enriched and continue to benefit one another. But it is not possible to just take everyday objects and without regard to context expect them to work in a different society. (p.18)

The context in which a new piece of furniture will reside is of great importance to the survival and the benefit of the piece. I want to work with pieces of furniture that were forgotten and thus exploring the change in the context is a key aspect in the designing of the piece.

## 2. PURPOSE

## I. LASTING OBJECT

In order to make something I feel justifies the making of yet another object, the piece has to be something that is made to last. Papanek (2009) explains in his book *Design for the real world* the categories we unknowingly choose to divide our objects in during moving from place to place:

“If the trend towards disposability continues without jeopardising the environment, we may well see a great sorting out of the objects, tools and artefacts we own. Some will continue to be valued as permanent because they are family heirlooms, for sentimental reasons, for the love and craftsmanship that has been lavished on them, or for their intrinsic beauty. “The other categories are described as throw away (kleenex, medicine containers) and semipermanent (cameras, high fidelity equipment and so forth). (p.100)

I want the objects I make to belong in the category of the heirlooms. They have to stand the test of time and age gracefully. “The trick is to make objects that degrade gracefully, growing old along with their owners in a personal and pleasurable manner.” (Norman, 2004). The progress in new materials is accelerating and we can quickly manufacture vast quantities of product that will endure. We even create new materials of relatively untouchable material immunity (Chapman, 2005). The way the object will age has to be taken into account.

## II. HISTORY AS INSPIRATION

My goal is to make at least one piece of furniture that was inspired by an archetype that we have lost. The new object has to fit in to the current context though and have room to age. The piece has to have the potential to stay current.

A contemporary version of something that exists has been a subject of inspiration. Designers that have done that successfully in function, shape and context can be found in the Music Cabinets by Paolo Capello (2015) which is a new take on the LP table. The Prelude 6 (2015) by USIN-e which is a different approach to the cabinet. The High Table (2015) by Teknion is a great example of a piece that although it is part of a line of office furniture, hints to the past in function and form.



*the High Table by Teknion, 2015*



*Prelude 6 by USIN-e, 2015*

### 3. OBJECTIVE

### **RESEARCH WHAT WAS FORGOTTEN**

By examining art history books and old catalogs I want to find pieces of furniture that we have forgotten.

By examining old paintings and reading art history books I will examine what types of furniture have 'survived' and why.

### **EXPERIMENT WITH MATERIALS**

I will investigate which materials age gracefully or are almost not affected by aging.

In preparation to the designing of a new piece I will experiment with new materials to complement

### **MAKE A NEW PIECE OF FURNITURE**

I will design a new piece that is inspired by an old piece of furniture. One that is no longer common to have. I will primarily focus on the house as the setting for the piece.

## 4. QUESTIONS

### **I. HOW TO USE HISTORY AS INSPIRATION**

There are a lot of archetypes to choose from. How can I narrow down the search for a fitting one? What era will I choose to limit my choices to? Which era is still relevant to use for a contemporary piece? And is the chosen piece worth bringing back?

### **II. HOW TO TRANSFORM THE CHOSEN ARCHETYPE?**

How can I transform an established piece into something new and make it fit the new context?

### **III. HOW DOES THE PIECE FIT IN TO THE NEW CONTEXT?**

How has the context changed between the era in which the inspiration piece originates from and now? What context can we predict for the next 20 years?

## 5. APPROACH

## I. LITERARY RESEARCH

In order to gather all the forgotten furniture I will search Hofstede's (1989) History of Art and Litchfield's (1892) Illustrated history of furniture. From the pieces I find I will select the pieces that context wise have some similarities with the current day or are possible to reconstruct fittingly.

*The vip method consist of the two stages; deconstructing and constructing. In the method the deconstruction is parted in 3 parts. Form, function, context of which an analysis is done of the chosen piece. The original next stage differs from how I approached the project. The vip method is designed for industrial products and services and focusses more on problem solving and gives more room for technical solution generation. I modified the approach by using the same three levels for the construction stage as used in the deconstruction.*

## II. METHOD

With inspiration from the Vision in Design method (Paul Hekkert and Matthijs van Dijk, 2011) a piece is chosen and deconstructed on three levels.

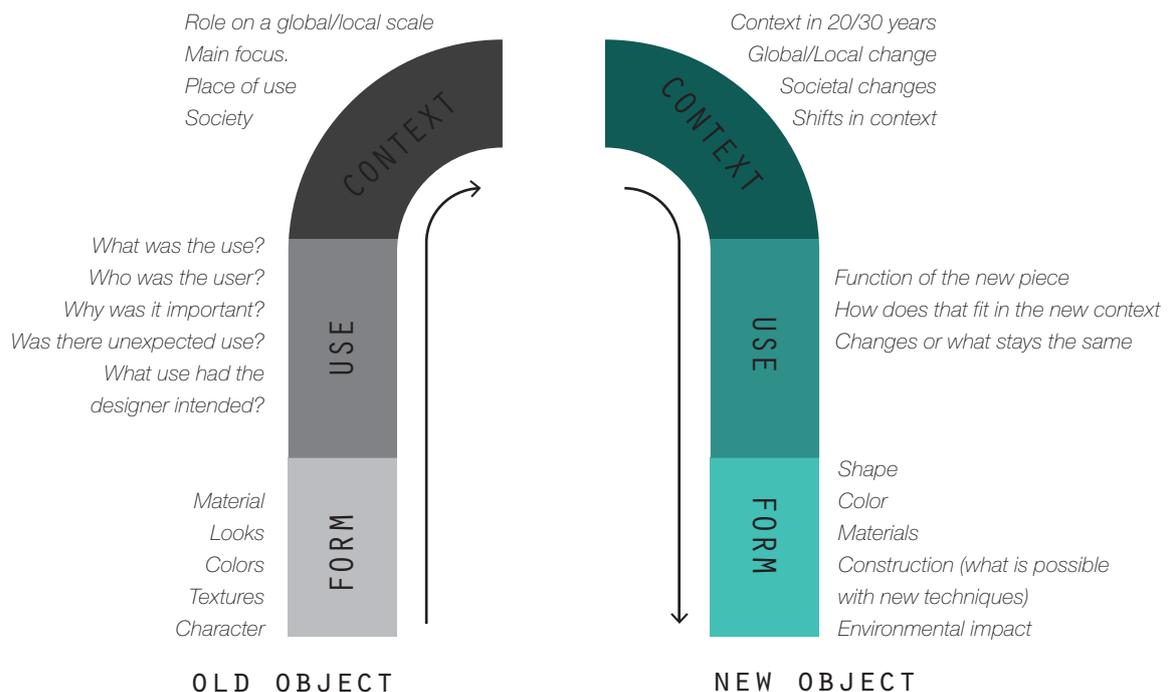
1. Form
2. Function
3. Context

The old piece is analyzed based on these three levels. The outcome of that analysis is used as a base for the new design which goes through the same three levels of design.

The outcome of this could be:

1. A piece that takes its inspiration from the form of the 'old' piece
2. A new piece with contemporary form and redesigned function
3. A new piece with contemporary form, redesigned function and fitted for a new context.
4. Conclude that what was lost, is lost for a valid reason and make a piece that fits the present time and would be considered a new type of furniture.

For this project I choose to go with option 3.



## 6. RESEARCH

In order to narrow down the options for forgotten pieces of furniture, a time-frame was chosen. Everything that was relatively forgotten after the 1900's and originated from Europe could be taken into consideration.

The six pieces of furniture that came from that selection were all chosen on the fact that in addition to aforementioned specifications, they were most likely "forgotten" because the context in which they once flourished has evolved.

## 1. BLANKET CHEST

An item that was not only of practicality but also an expression of history. Blanket chests were popular in the 18th and 19th century when closets were not common. It was a means to keep the moist out of the bedlinen. In parts of Europe the blanket chest was known as a wedding chest. Young single women would prepare these chests with the items they would need once married. The chest was also known as the hope chest. The detailing on the chest varied per country and class. Simple wooden versions for the lower classes and more detailed embellished for the higher classes. The chests that "survived" after 1900 were usually the most embellished ones that showed visitors that the home was filled with heirlooms.

Opportunity:

The biggest context switch for this piece is the fact that houses have closets now and textiles need less protection against the moisture. Storage solutions are being made to be hidden and less to be exposed like was the case with the chest. By bringing out the storage and transforming it into a display for storytelling again it can be given a new context in a new era.



## 2. KISSING CHAIR

The kissing chair, also called a courting bench or gossip chair, seems to have disappeared early on in the 20th century. The bench was a opportunity for two courting people to meet and sit relatively close without being obscene. The S-shape opposite facing chairs shared an armrest while the two lovers could whisper together.

Opportunity:

The unconventional shape triggers placing it in a new situation that might not lie within the home. However by removing the piece from the home it feels like it would alter my original project goals. I want to focus on the home as the context for my project.



## 3. CURIOSITY CABINET

The curiosity cabinet was still very popular in the end of the 19th century in England. Once a showcase to trigger what was considered polite but knowledgeable conversation became less important when the correlation between polite and upstanding shifted.

Opportunity:

The use of a curiosity cabinet seems more relevant now that a shift is noticeable in how we use cabinets. We use it less for books and more for displaying memories. This piece would be fitting in examining this shift.

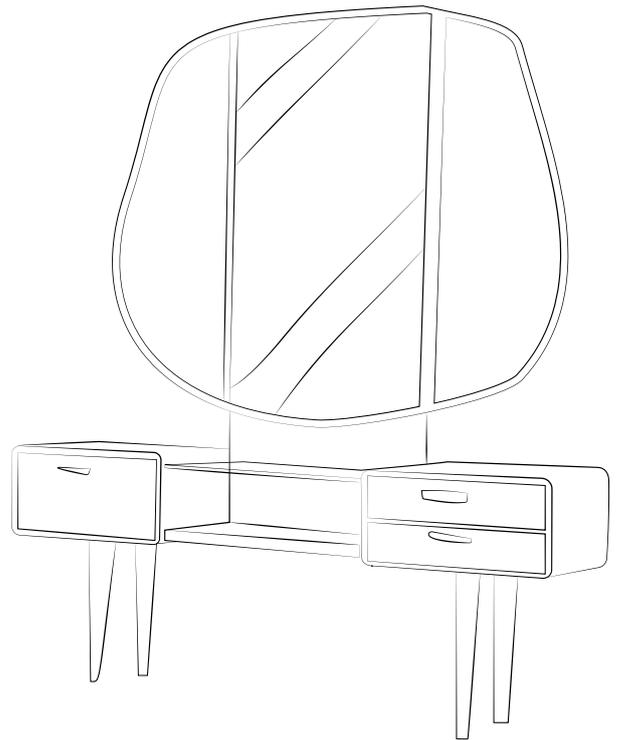


## 4. DRESSING TABLE

In the first half of the 20th century the dressing table was still common. After the 50's its popularity decreased because the houses got smaller and this generally beefy piece of furniture was the first to go. This statement of luxury as well as vanity could not compete with the more practical pieces of furniture that were left.

Opportunity:

The amount of people that live on earth increases every year which makes room even more sparse. The houses are getting smaller so the challenge to incorporate a piece that was once absolute because of its size into a new context gives clear restrictions.

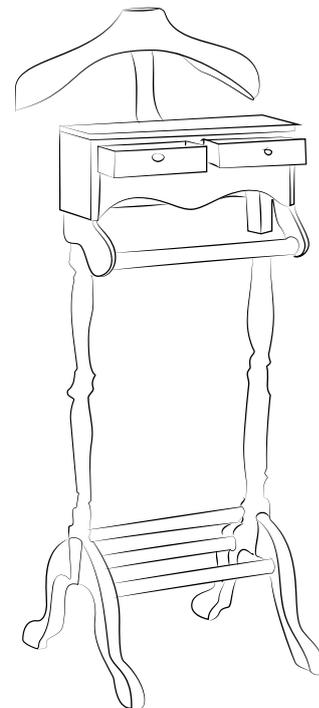


## 5. DRESS BOY

The dress boy was one of the first servant pieces to surface. The piece was mainly used by men to keep their suit on. Back then, one suit was worn until a new one was commissioned and this piece of furniture therefore had more means of existing then it does now.

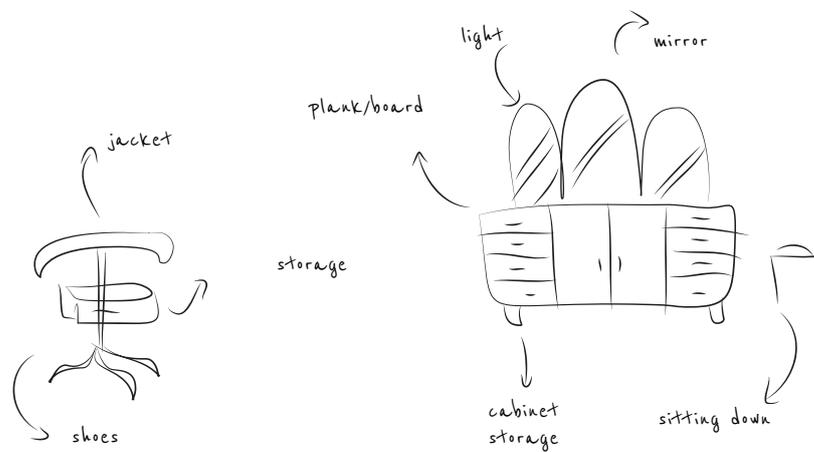
Opportunity:

The function of the piece can be altered so it fulfills more contemporary needs. It could give a solution for the chair in the corner of the bedroom that always gets cluttered by clothes that are not dirty enough for the laundry but not clean enough for the closet.

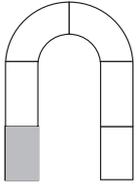


## II. CHOICE

If a piece has value and relevance it will survive. We can give an object value by using materials that look and feel precious but even more if we find a way to make the user relate to the object. If the piece can awaken and further the imagination it will keep the objects alive. From the chosen objects I felt that the dressing table in combination with the dress boy have the most interaction with the user. The other objects are being used but not conversed with. The way the dressing table and dress boy are being used testifies of an almost personal relationship between the user and the object.



In the deconstruction phase the object(s) will be analyzed on three levels. The form, the use and the context. In this stage I try to see what was thought when the piece was made. I have not focused on one object but on the kind of object (archetype) in general. There are always exceptions for these observations but it was chosen to focus on the broader image in order to make the outcome as general as possible.



## A. FORM

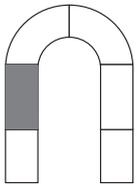
*This stage includes what the piece looks like, what materials have been used, is the detailing significant, what colors have been combined but also if it were a character what would it be.*

Dressing table:

Material: Wood, mirrored glass  
 Shape: Bulky, big  
 Elements: mirror, tabletop, cabinet/drawers, bench/stool  
 Character: Personal, inviting, hidden, feminine

Dress boy:

Material: Wood, metal accents  
 Shape: light and flexible  
 Elements: Place for hanging a jacket, putting a hat, storing valuables  
 Character: Hospitable, serving, formal, obvious and clear



## B. USE

*In this stage the use of the object is analyzed. The object stems from a different century but nonetheless I tried to picture how it was used in that era in the houses that would have had a dressing table/ dress boy. The words noted describe the way the object was handled.*

Dressing table:

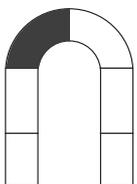
With modesty (not in public)  
 Opening up the parts  
 Unwrapping of yourself  
 Gives a feeling of security

Dress boy:

Feels personal in use  
 Gives a sense of an almost human interaction  
 Methodical in working down from cuff links, to hat to jacket for instance.  
 How to use it is very clear and open  
 The piece feels dedicated to the user

Conclusion:

The use focuses around the moment in the morning and evening. The morning being the time to wrap yourself and arm yourself for the day and the evening to unwrap yourself and come home.



## C. CONTEXT

*In this phase the context is the main focus. In which place was the piece used, what was going on in society, what was the role of the piece on a grander scale?*

Dressing table

female  
 beauty and grooming or more importance  
 situated in the bedroom - no mirror bathroom  
 status symbol

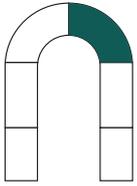
Dress boy:

male  
 readying for items  
 status symbol

Conclusion:

Where the dressing table seems to have a more female but robust character the dress boy is of a more serving and open nature. Both seem to be used most in the bedroom, making the use a more personal affair.

In the construction phase the variables from the deconstruction phase are used to mark a new context, use and form. In the construction phase it is key to let go of the image of "a dressingtable" and stick to the keywords that were left after the first part of the analysis. From the keywords a new definition and direction is constructed for the new piece.



## A. CONTEXT

*Describes the context that is predicted within the preferred time frame. In this exercise I aimed for life in 20 to 30 years.*

Context factors:

- Gender roles are shifting to a more blended state in which the appointed "roles" disappear and the appearance has less to do with the gender. For example: Grooming will also be considered an everyday activity for men.
- More electronics and input on a daily basis
- Filtering of the daily input to lower the impulses will become more necessary
- The lines between work and down time are blurring

Future context:

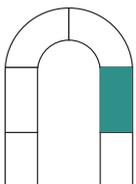
- Home is more used for work as well as personal life. The home as it is, is becoming less private because we open it up by showing it to the world (facebook, instagram, pinterest) and even opening it up for them (airbnb).

Result:

- Houses will become more private, with compartments to divide the personal and work.
- The quality of private spaces will rise because they are becoming more important.
- The house will have an allocated room for me-time; the me-room

Conclusion:

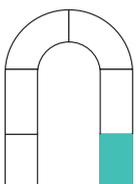
A new solution (fitting for contemporary and future homes) for efficiently but peacefully (un)wrapping yourself



## B. USE

*Describes the function the piece (of the future) should have. They can be similar to the "old" function or completely new.*

- Emphasizing the ritual of the morning and the evening
- Should be convenient
- Give a possibility to alter depending on the person



## C. FORM

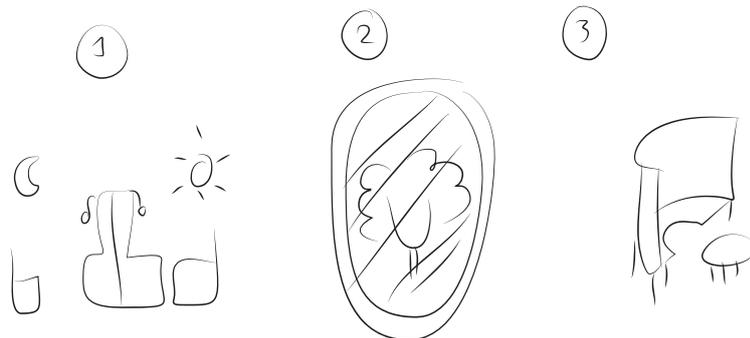
*The shape, color, material etc. that fits in the context and function of the envisioned piece. Because it is so early on in the process I have chosen to stick to words that describe but not name the above mentioned attributes.*

- Mystery, secret
- Not too big or invasive
- Accessible
- Fitting a new home
- I want the person to feel confident, calm, relaxed, ready
- Alternative to what is available.

## V. CONCLUSION FOR NEXT PHASE

### A. ANALYSIS

- ①
  - it's about the moment of starting & ending the day
  - it's about (un)wrapping yourself
  - it was a symbol of status and vanity
- ②
  - homes will change; part of it will become more open and the other more private
  - the necessity for me-time will grow and get a status of being the norm
  - beginning and starting the day are important for preparing and filtering input
- ③
  - it must feel like a (re)treat
  - give an air of mystery and security



### B. WANT AS A USER

- I want to see myself
- I want to store my things
- I want to sit and relax
- I want to feel special
- I want to prepare myself for the day
- I want to think over the day

### C. WANT AS A DESIGNER

- I want the piece to be airy
- I want it to look and feel like a (re)treat

# VI. THE FUTURE OF THE HOME

## 1. THE HOUSE

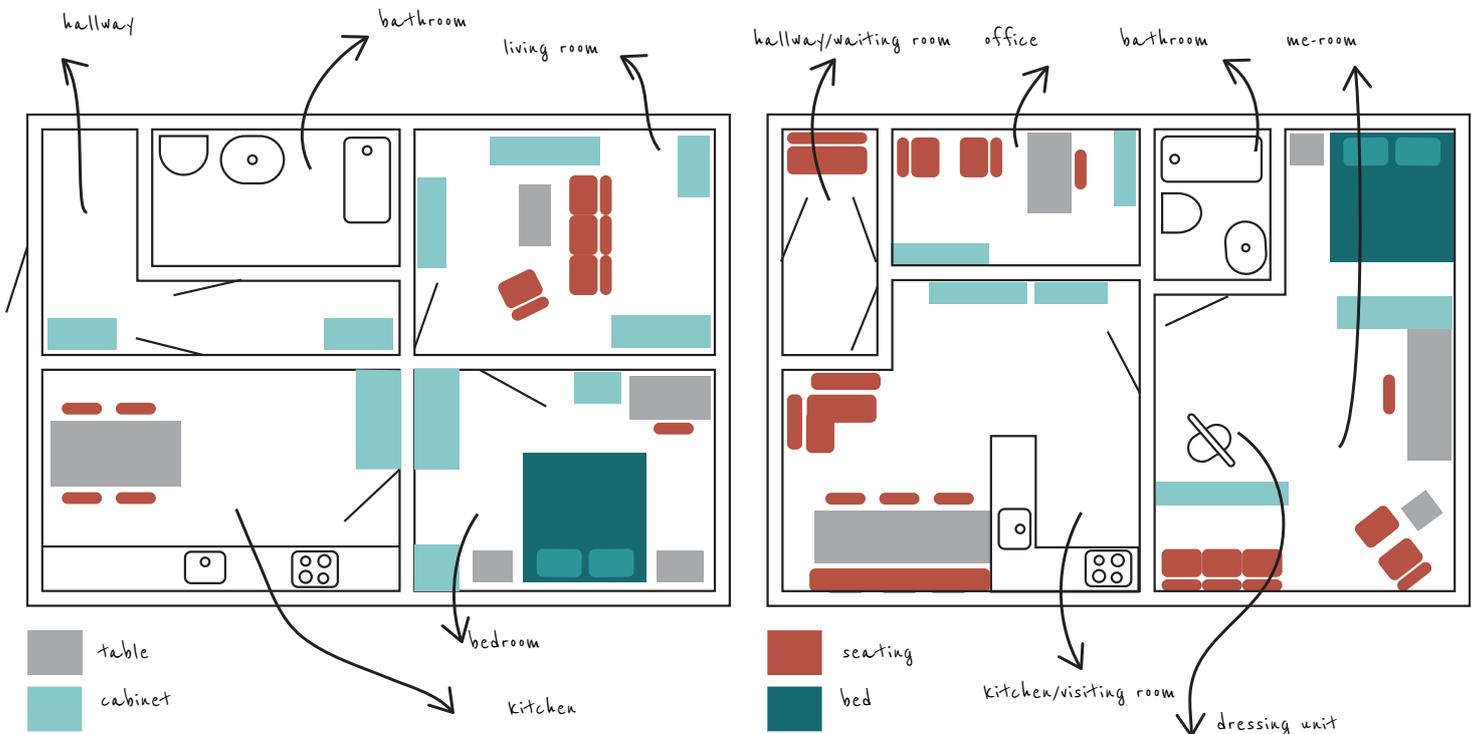
The house and the home is the setting for my project. The piece that will be made will be designed by taking into account the probable change in how we use our houses. Though we consider homes to be private places, we have opened them up more and more to strangers. Social media in the forms of pinterest, instagram and facebook invite people to share their lifestyle and to curate it to be fit for viewing. Services like airbnb take it even a step further, where we open up our private spaces to the public and let them stay in our homes. Airbnb is a fast growing internet company on which

190 countries and 34,000 cities have listings (The airbnb Analyst, 2016) and continues growing. The housing markets in popular cities are experiencing a rise in demand and an increase in competition because many houses are used for the sole purpose of listing them on airbnb. The effect such a trend can have on just the housing economy is shown in the increase in micro housing that is being build. These micro homes (around 45m2) (Van den Eerenbeemt, 2017, March 18) show a division in the sizes of houses where the gap between smaller and bigger houses increases.

## 1. ME ROOM

The size of the houses and with who we share them will change the configuration of our houses. In addition to that the house is not only used for private life but more and more people are starting to work from home. A survey (Mind the Gaps, the 2015 Deloitte Millennial survey, Deloitte) from 2015 already showed that 34 percent of business leaders at the Global Leadership Summit in London said more than half their company's full-time workforce would be working remotely by 2020. I believe we will want to separate our work from our private life even more in 20 to 30 years. The daily input of information is growing and we need a place to process that. I believe the house in 20 to 30 years will most likely use their hallway in a

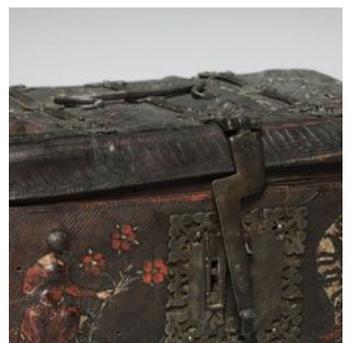
different way. The hallway will become the part where the private and the work life are separated. It is at that point where we decide if we lead the person into the private or the work area. The office would be separate and the house will become more and more personal the further into the home you will be lead. Another big change I believe we will see will be the counterpart of the office: the me-room. A bedroom in combination with what we now consider the living room but more focuses on leisure time and not curated for the outside world but optimized for you. It is a place for exercising your hobbies and the private life. The kitchen will be even more a place for inviting people to come and enjoy food and thus decorated to entertain.



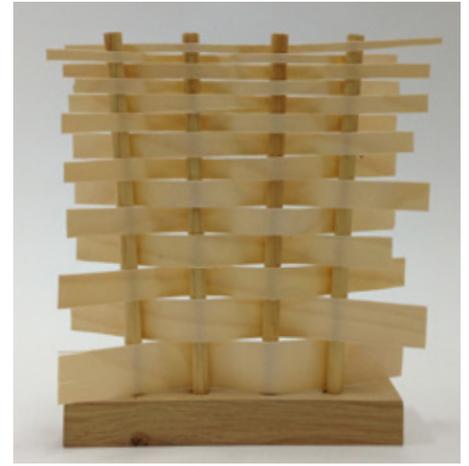
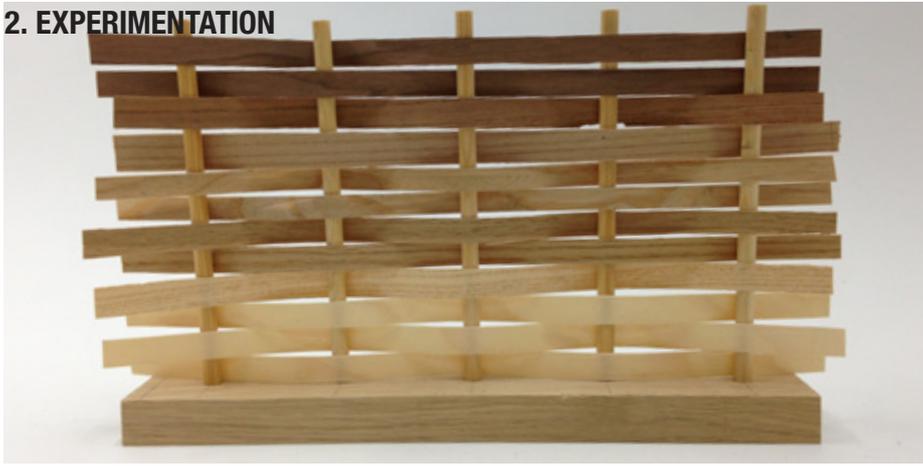
As an example I have shown how the layout of my apartment could change with the evolving needs for a home

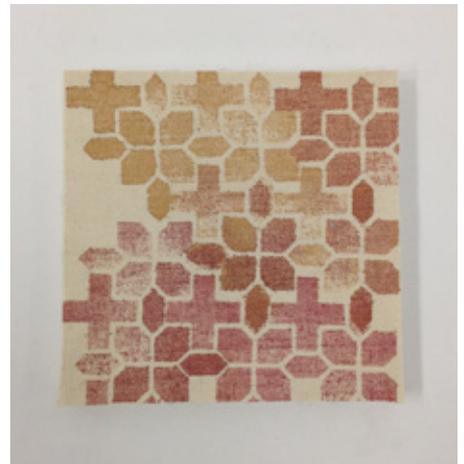
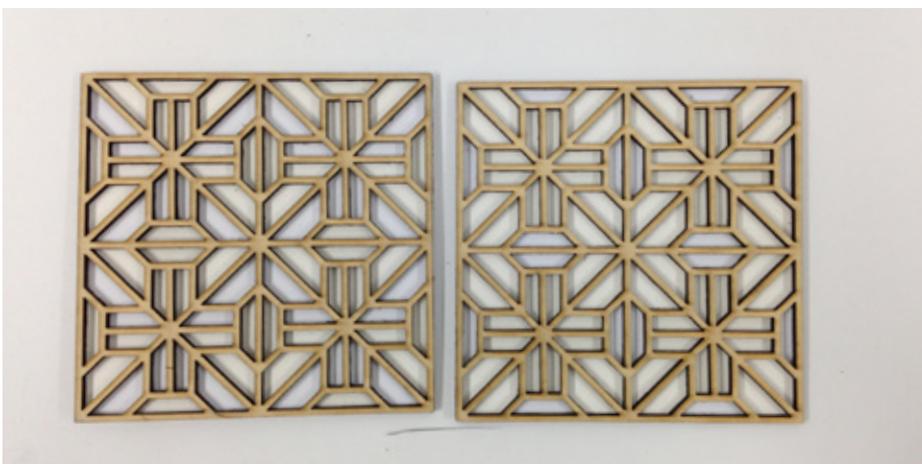
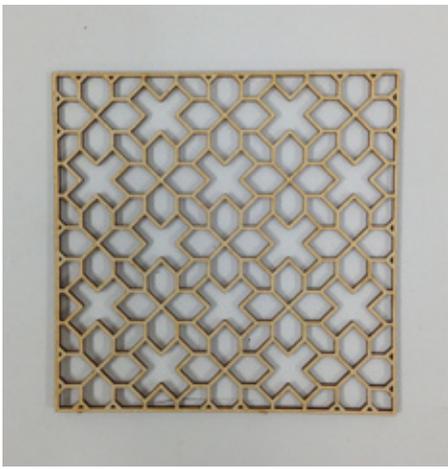
1. INSPIRATION

Designing an object that should still be valid in 20 to 30 years means choosing materials and finishes that age gracefully. With this I do not necessarily mean that they should not age. Materials like leather or wood have the ability to become even more beautiful while they age. The marks, the cracks, the scars make it look like it has been alive. Metal, when treated with the right substances, has a very long life. For my material experiments I tried to capture the essence I see in the pictures below. Decoration and decay going hand in hand. Some of the pictures refer to old decoration techniques and other show old age in a beautiful way. The experiments on the next pages show my attempt to capture those elements into something as abstract as a material experiment.



2. EXPERIMENTATION





## 7. RESULT

## I. CONTEXT

The context in which the piece would be used is that of the home. I would like the piece to have an airiness that lacked in older versions of it. It should be an alternative to what already exists and fit into the houses as we use them now as well as the house in the future. Although I envision the piece in the me-room it will most likely be used in the bedroom for now.

## II. USERS

I see the piece to be used by a wide variety of people ranging between the ages of 15 to 70. All sexes. It will be aimed at users that would like to expand the experience surrounding a dressingtable and those who would like an alternative to what exists. The piece will most likely be a more high end version because I want to focus on the concept in this project and not on the produceability as the main target.

## III. NEEDS

The needs of the users:

Physical

The piece needs to be functional and usable  
It needs to give convenience in use  
It needs to be practical and keep all the things you need.

Emotional

These are needs that I as a designer would like to fulfill.  
I want it create a place of rest  
I want it to feel like a (re)treat.

Social

The piece needs to invite to be interacted with  
The piece should look and feel different for every user  
The piece should be useable by two people  
The piece should feel personal

## IV. IDEA GENERATION

With the outcome of my analysis, as the base, I continued sketching on shapes and forms. Now that I had guidelines for the use and context I could start playing with them. The sketches played with the following: freestanding, more traditional, playing with two sides for either two partners or the morning and evening use.

When going through the sketches however I could categorize them into three directions:

1. portal
2. station
3. modular

Within these three directions I continued sketching. I set up what was most important in that category and what the advantage would be in comparison to the other categories.

## 1. PORTAL

The ritual of wrapping and unwrapping yourself can almost be felt as a transformation. You start with “you” and end up with “another you”. This transformation was what I tried to visualize in these sketches. The goal was to invite you into a portal where you go through the steps that are part of your routine in the morning and evening.

Strengths:

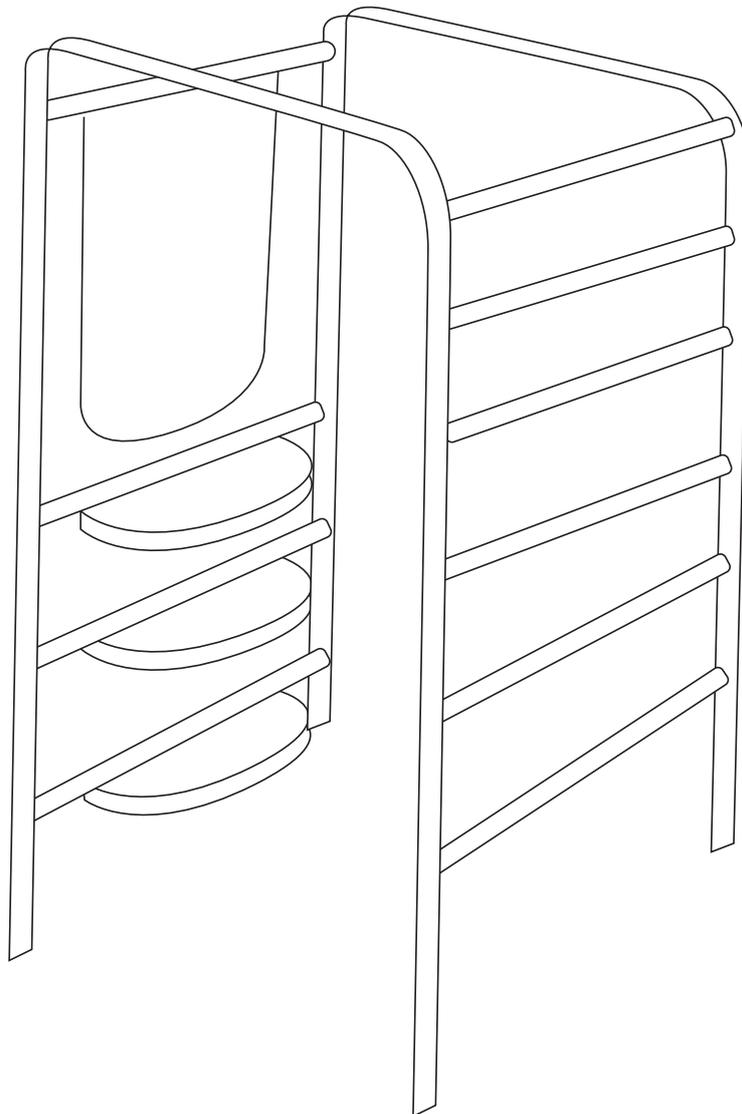
A new way of approaching a piece of furniture

Easy access for hanging stuff

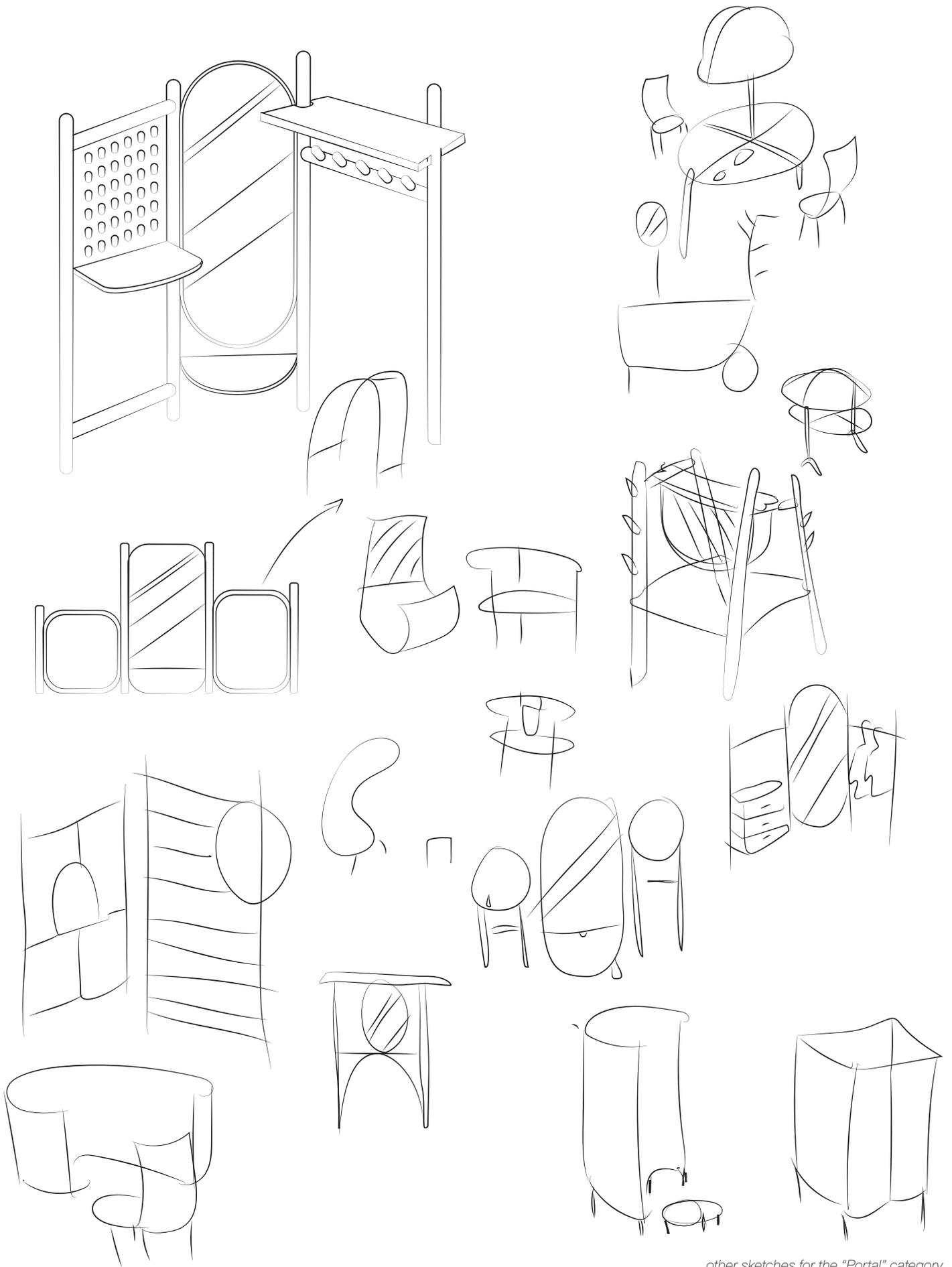
Weaknesses:

Takes up a lot of space

Very bulky



*chosen concept sketch for the “Portal” category*



*other sketches for the "Portal" category*

## 2. STATION

The station category focuses more on creating one solid space where you can find your tools (all that you need to get ready for the day or the night). They should be easy to reach and preferably give the possibility to use with a day and night side or with a roommate.

Strengths:

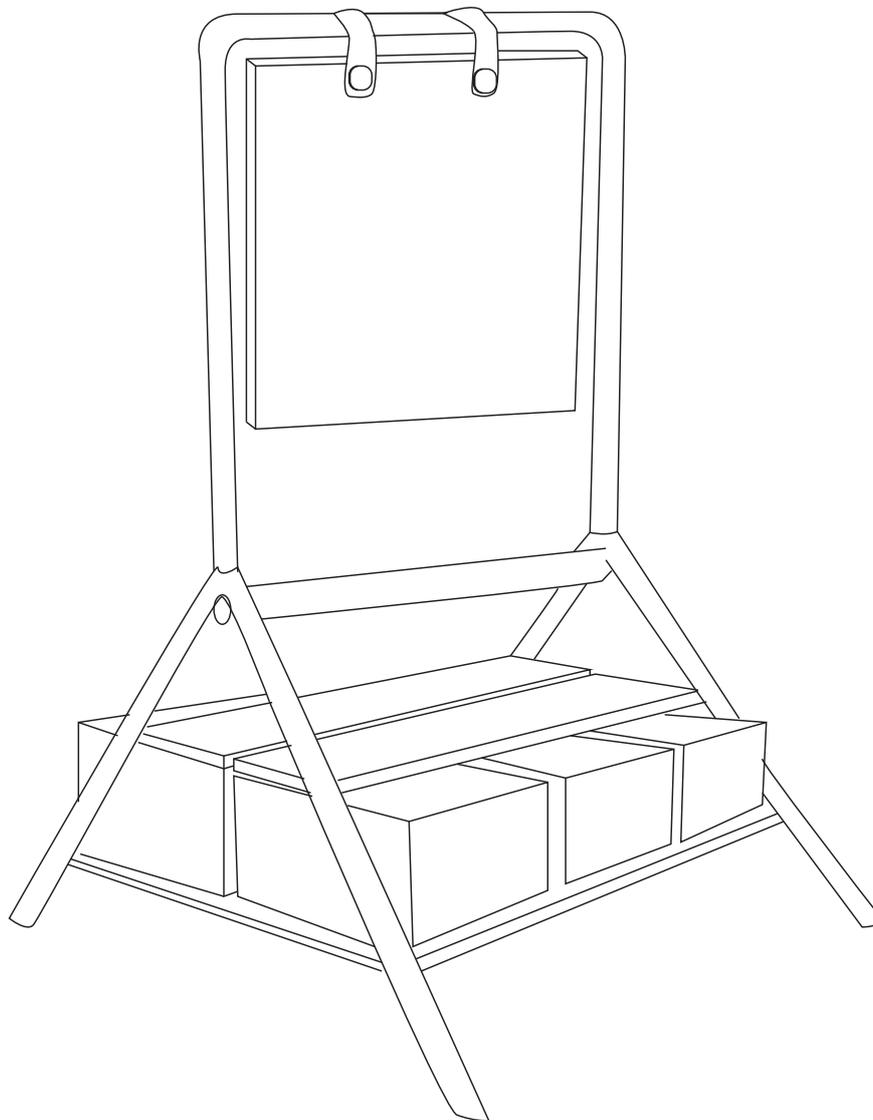
Stable

Stays in one place

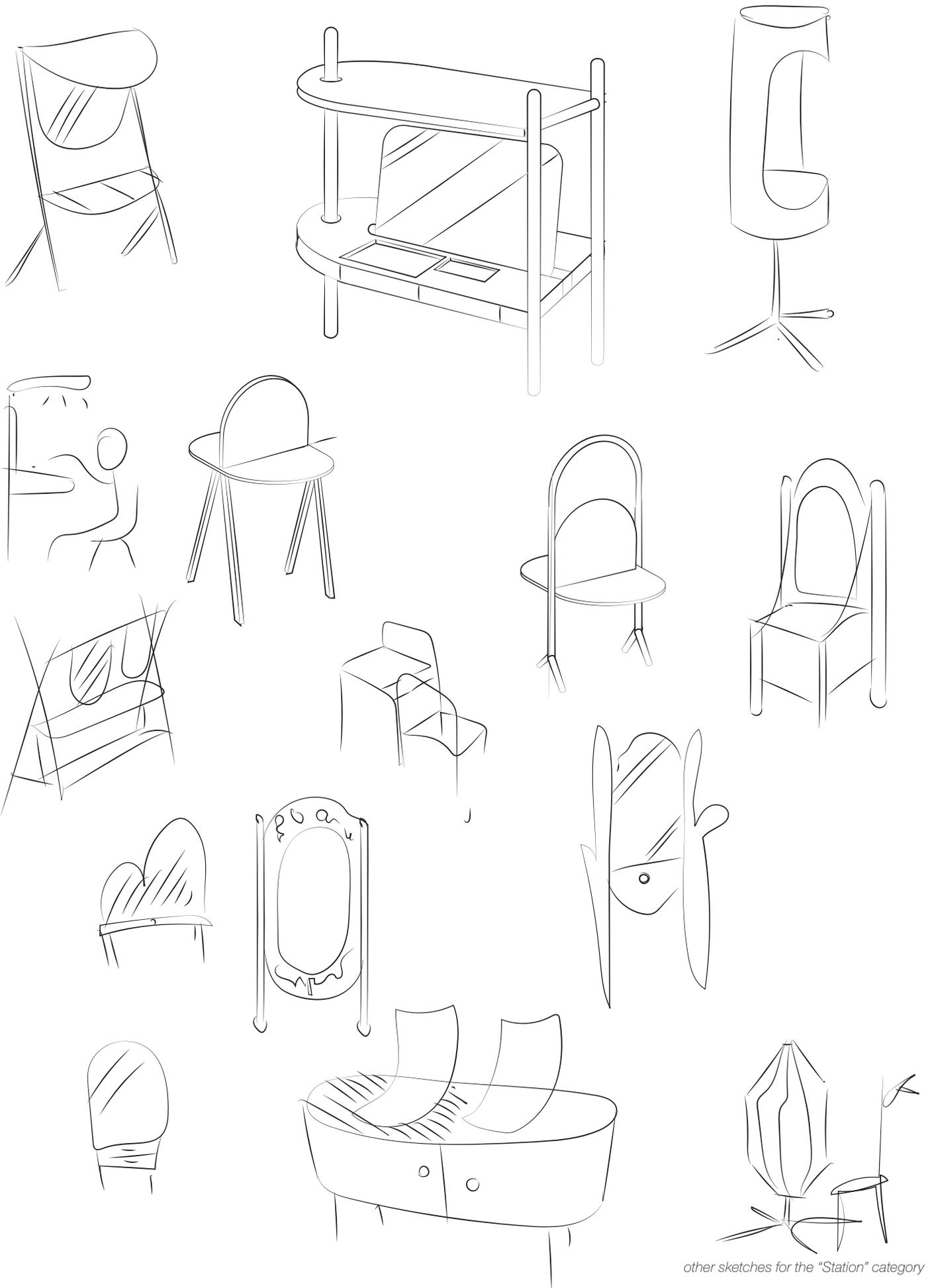
Weaknesses:

Refers back to the "old" style of dressing tables

Becomes more of an utensil instead of a treat



*chosen concept sketch for the "Station" category*



other sketches for the "Station" category

### 3. MODULAR

This category focuses on the fact that everyone has a different routine when it comes to the morning and evening. The piece can be used in the middle of the room and give easy access from all sides making it part of the physical routine in the morning.

Strengths:

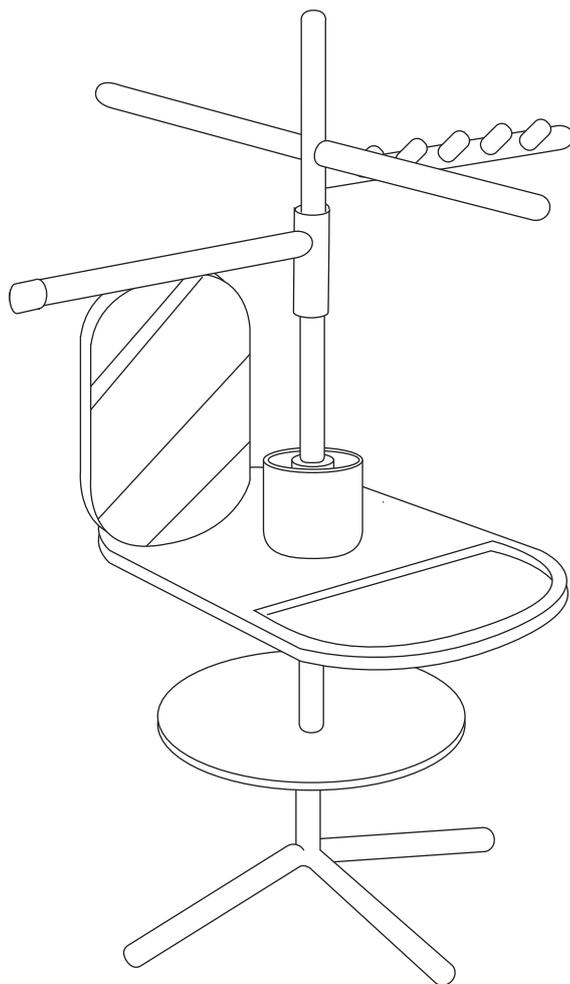
Can be placed freely in a room

Can be used from all sides

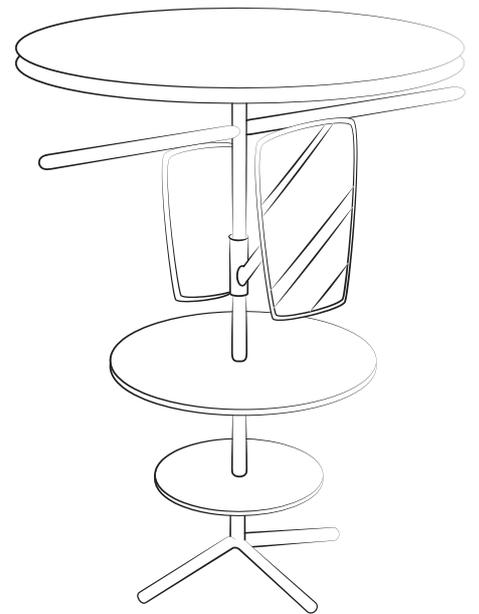
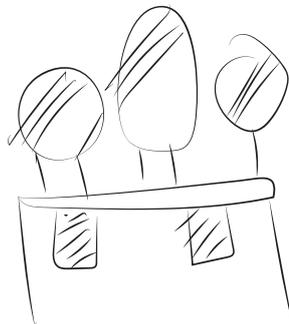
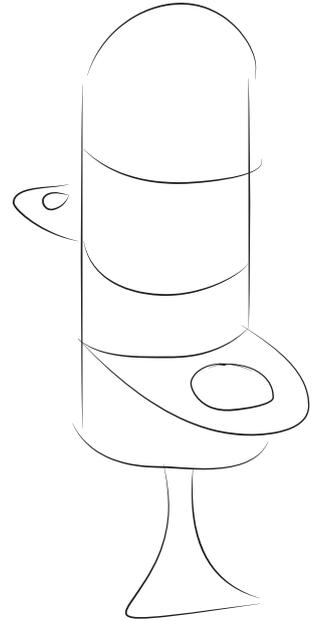
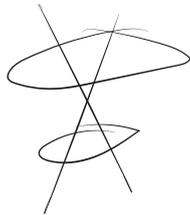
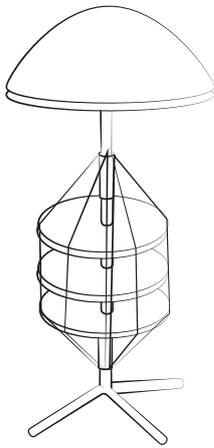
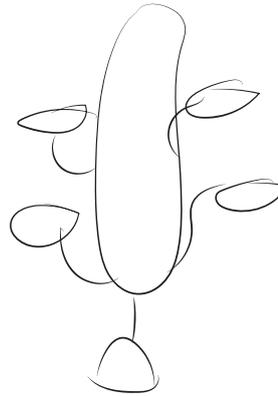
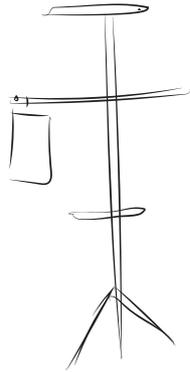
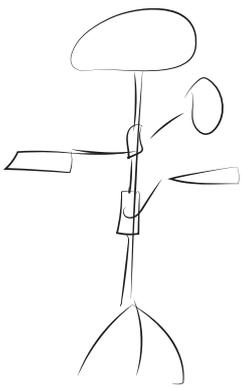
Weaknesses:

Less stable

Less easy to use with another person since it is so personally designed



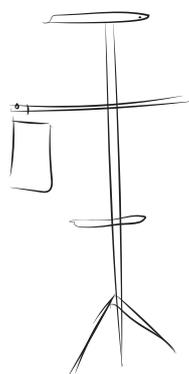
*chosen concept sketch for the "Modular" category*



*other sketches for the "Modular" category*

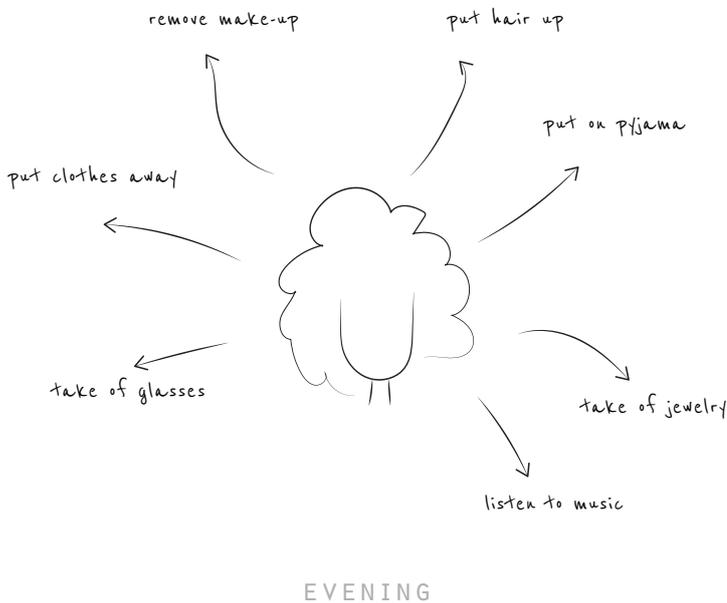
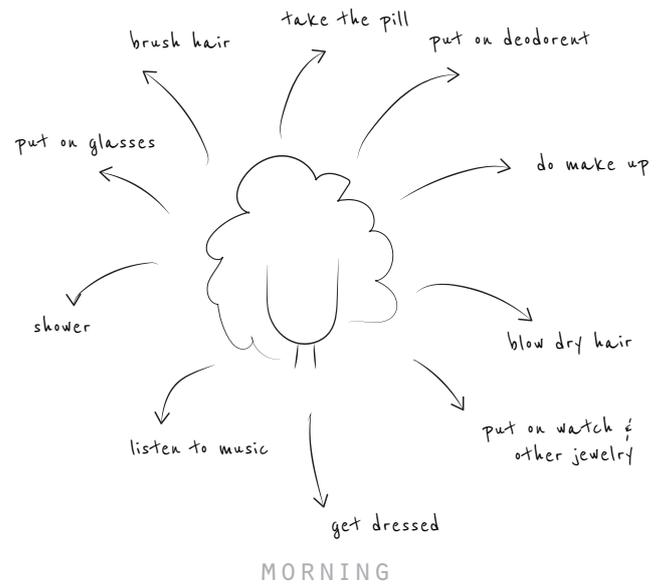
## V. CONCEPT CHOICE

I decided to continue with the modular category. It gives a challenge to execute it in a smart way, use different materials and really dive into giving "a dressing table" a new context. A shift in context is something I have worked with before and enjoy greatly. I like making objects that will be used and to think about how they will be used. In addition I think this concept works best in the new environment of the home and gives the user the most opportunity to bond with and make their own.



## 1. DESIGNING A RITUAL

The dressing table was/is a piece of furniture that is not just used but interacted with. The two main time frames in which the interaction mostly occurs is the morning and evening. We, people, tend to put more value on an object if we feel a special connection with it. The way we could use this piece of furniture gives room for strengthening the bond. The piece is recurrently used in the morning and evening for different reasons. In order to enhance this role of the piece in the rhythm of the day I analyzed my own rhythm on these times and talked to other people about their routines.



## 2. EMPHASIZING ON YOU

While going through my own routines in the morning and the evening, I noticed my days feel better if I have time in the morning and do not rush the getting up and storm out of my house. Sitting down and drinking a coffee or tea with some radio gives me the rest in the morning I need to commence a hectic day. The piece of furniture I am designing could be a stage for these needs as well. Conversing with people about their routines and what they would wish for those moments in a day gave me great insights. For one it was important that things happened in the same order every day. For others the end of the day was far more important because that was the moment they called their relatives.

The needs in order of recurrence:

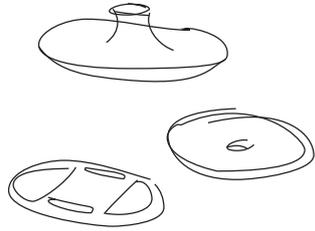
- needing to place items I use every day
- wanting a place to store items that were needed sometimes
- wanting a mirror to look in
- need light to see what I am doing
- need a place to put my watch/valuables
- would like a place to put my pyjama
- would like to know the time
- would like to listen to music or put my phone somewhere
- wanting a magnifying mirror

The needs I found were the guidelines for the elements on the next page:

### 3. ELEMENTS

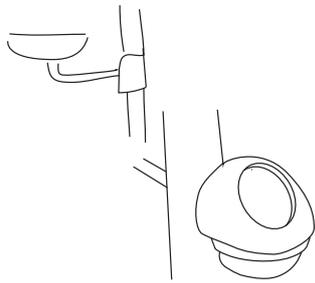
#### SURFACES

Big surface  
Small surface



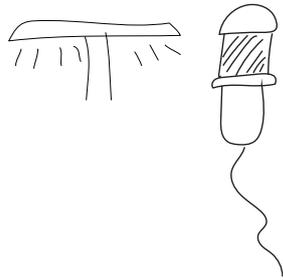
#### CONTAINERS

Big container  
Smaller one for jewelry  
Plant container



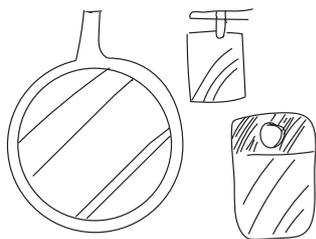
#### LIGHTING

Broad light  
Smaller direct light

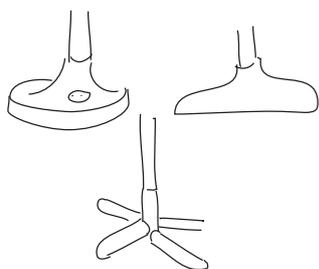


#### EXTRA'S

Clock  
Mirror  
Magnifying mirror  
Clothes hanger  
Hook



#### FOOT





#### 4. MODELS

After deciding what kind of items I would need for the piece, I made small models to see how many levels I should make and in what way I could use all the elements a user

could need and still give a clean and stable look. From the models I chose three options of which I continued with the far right model. 5 layers divided over the central pole.

## 5. PROTOTYPING

1.  
The top would consist of a lamp that would shine down and light up the whole piece.

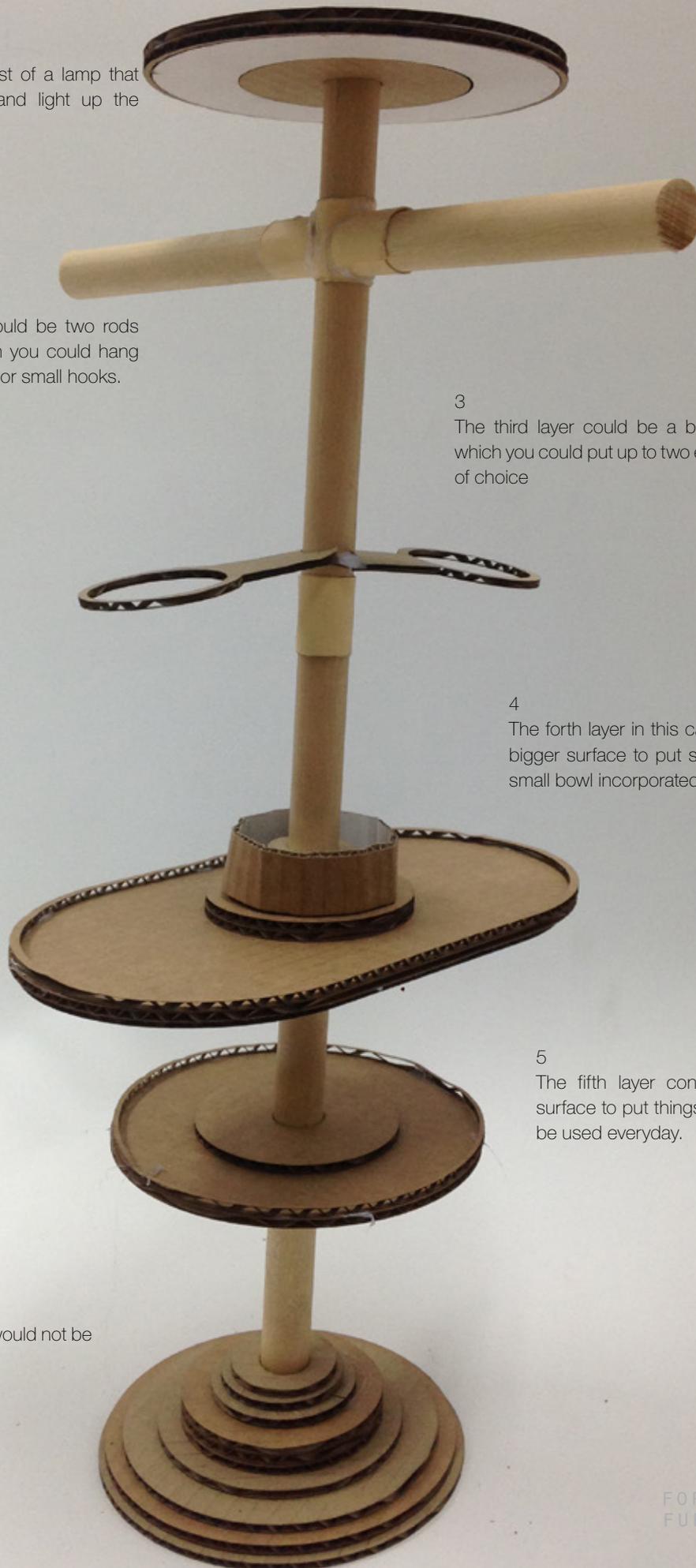
2  
The second layer would be two rods sticking out on which you could hang elements like a mirror or small hooks.

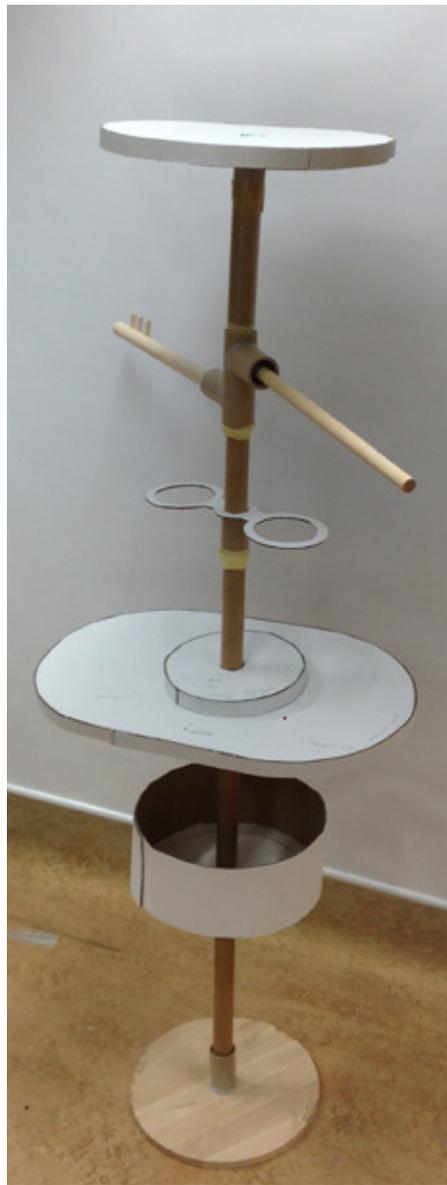
3  
The third layer could be a bracket in which you could put up to two elements of choice

4  
The fourth layer in this case would be a bigger surface to put stuff on which a small bowl incorporated.

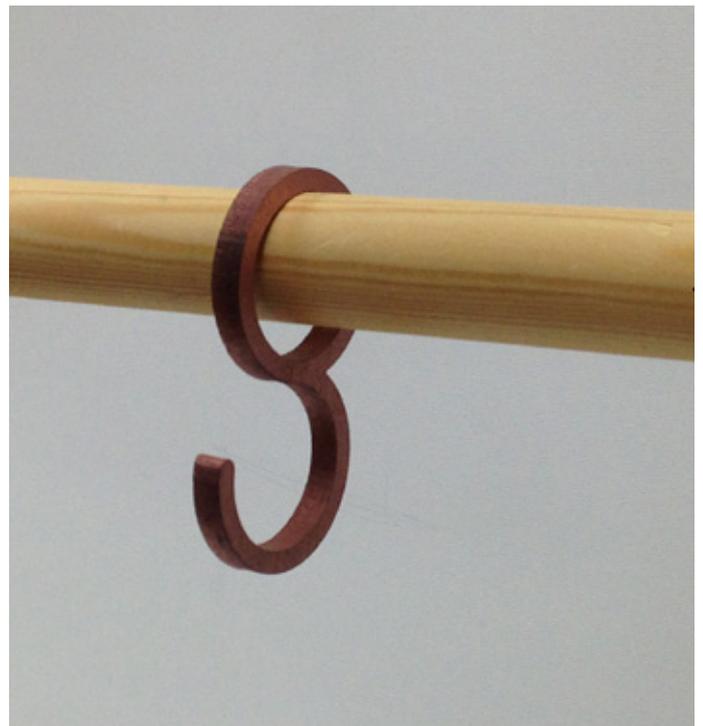
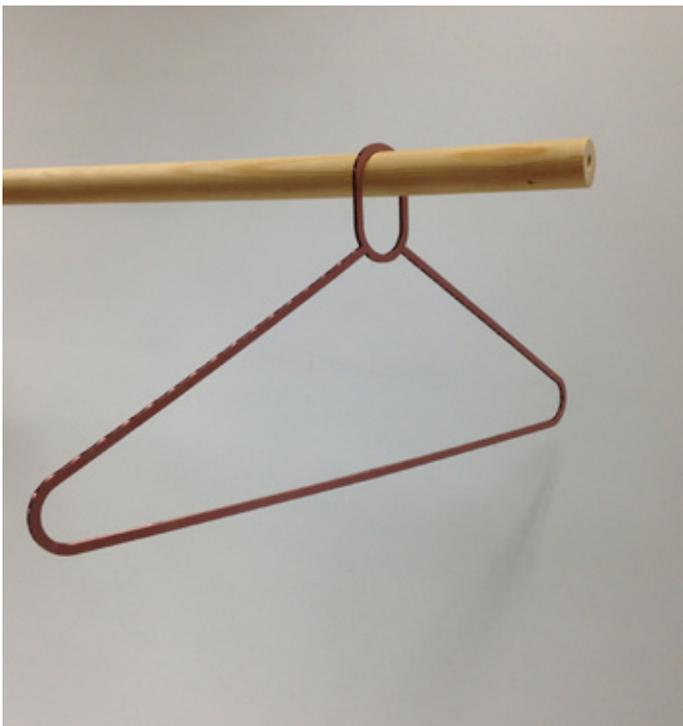
5  
The fifth layer consists of a smaller surface to put things on that would not be used everyday.

The last and only part that would not be interchangeable: the foot



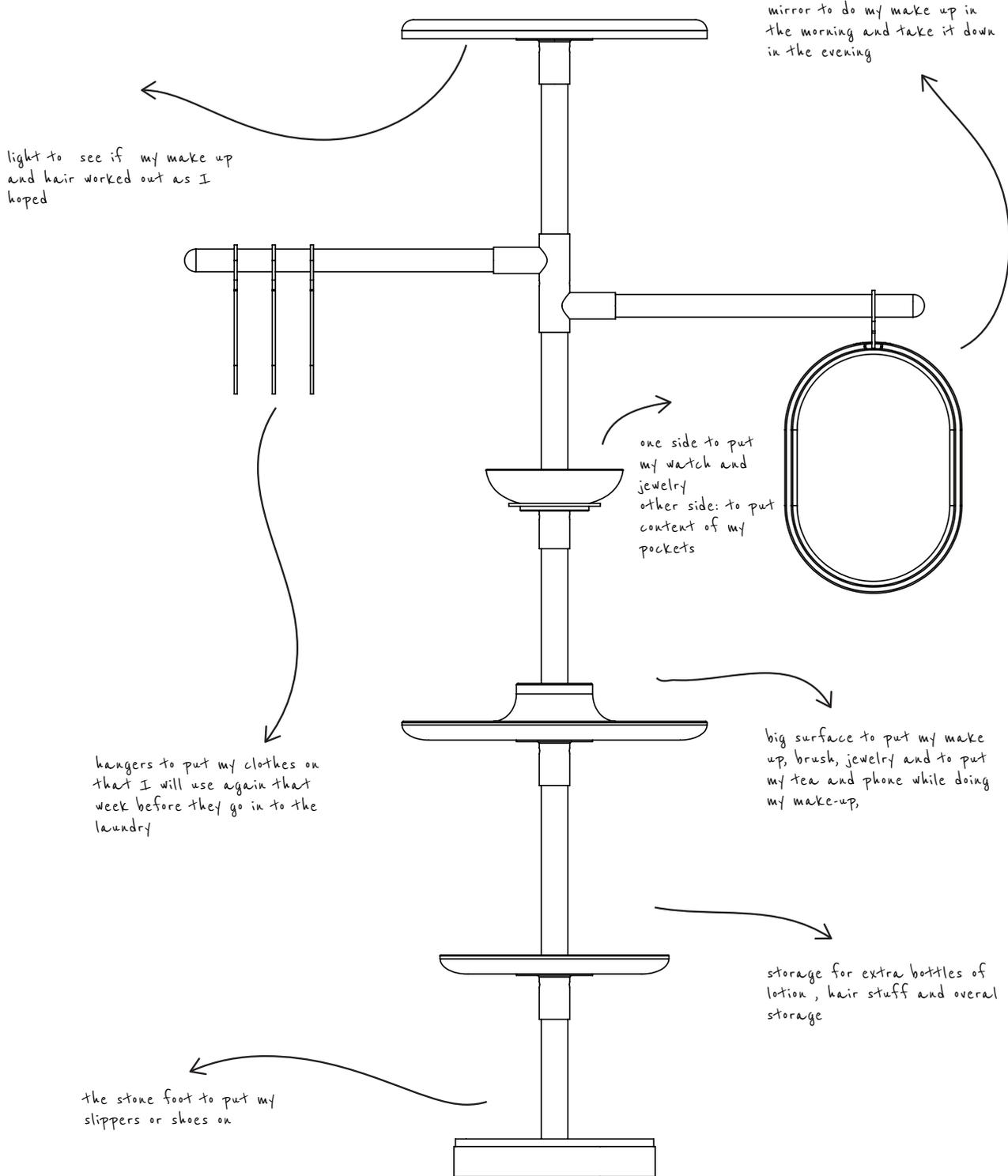


After the smaller model I continued with a life sized model. After figuring out the size I realized that in order to be able to use all the elements I had to use the bracket and the rods to an optimum. I created a clothes hanger and a small hook to go on the rods. The small hooks doubles as a hanging system for other elements that you would want to hang on the rods like a clock or a mirror. Small bowls for precious jewelry can be put in the bracket, as do a small light and a pot for a plant.



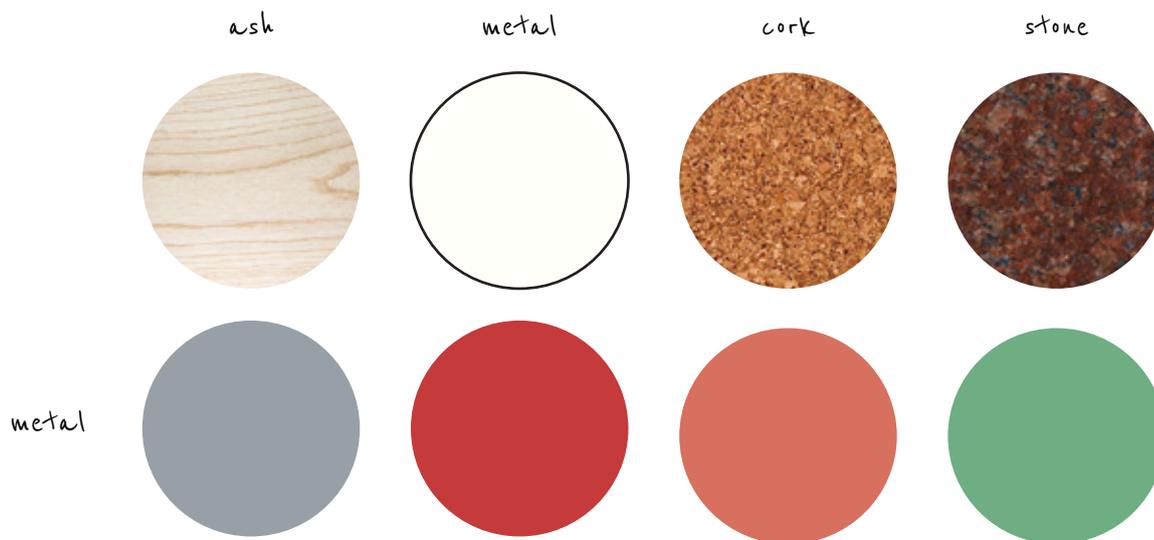
### III. THE DESIGN

The development of the next stage focuses on my preference as a user. All elements are chosen because I would like them at that place in the system with those attributes.



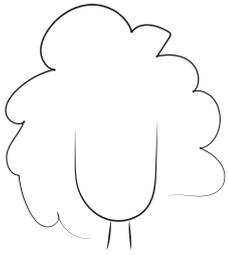
## 1. MATERIALS

The materials I want to use for the piece are all selected on the fact that they age well and that they fit the function that that part of the piece fulfills. The different functions of the metal pieces will be signalled by a different color. Cork will be used for the two bowls so they keep the precious items that will be stored in them, save and scratch free. The stone will be used in the foot because it is heavy and keeps the piece stable, gives the piece a sense of luxury and because it invites to use the foot as a platform for shoes or slippers. The wood species I want to use is ash. Ash has a great grain that will become even more visible with the rounded shapes of the platforms. The color of the wood is fairly light, which helps to make the piece light, airy, fresh and inviting.

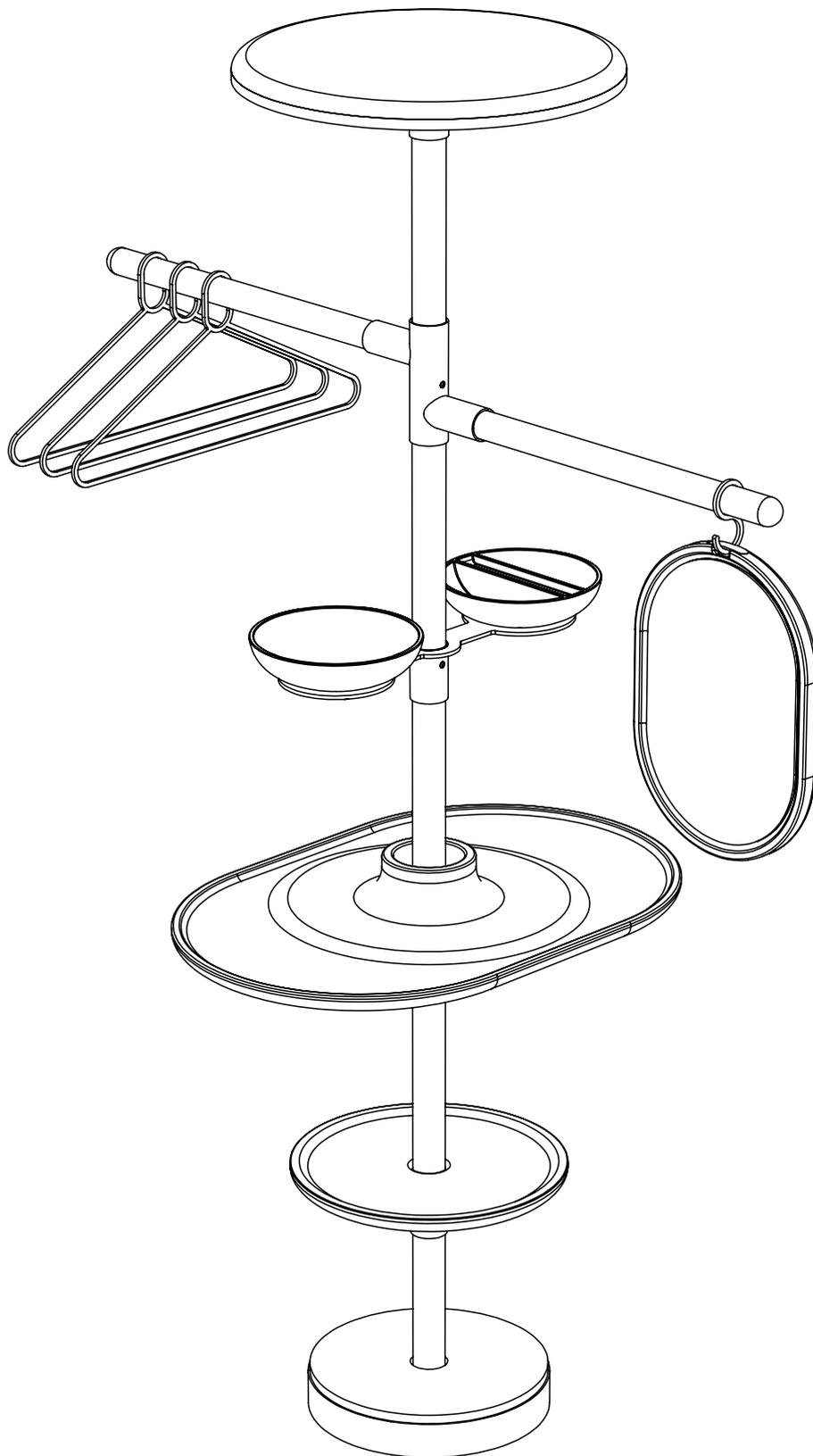


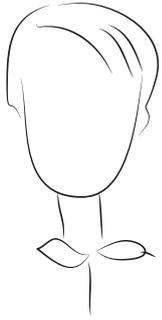
## 2. TRYING OUT

Since the object is meant to be used by the targetgroup that was chosen I conducted a small research into how other people would configure the dressing table and how it would be part of their rituals. I chose three different people, different lifestyles and sexes to signify the targetgroup.

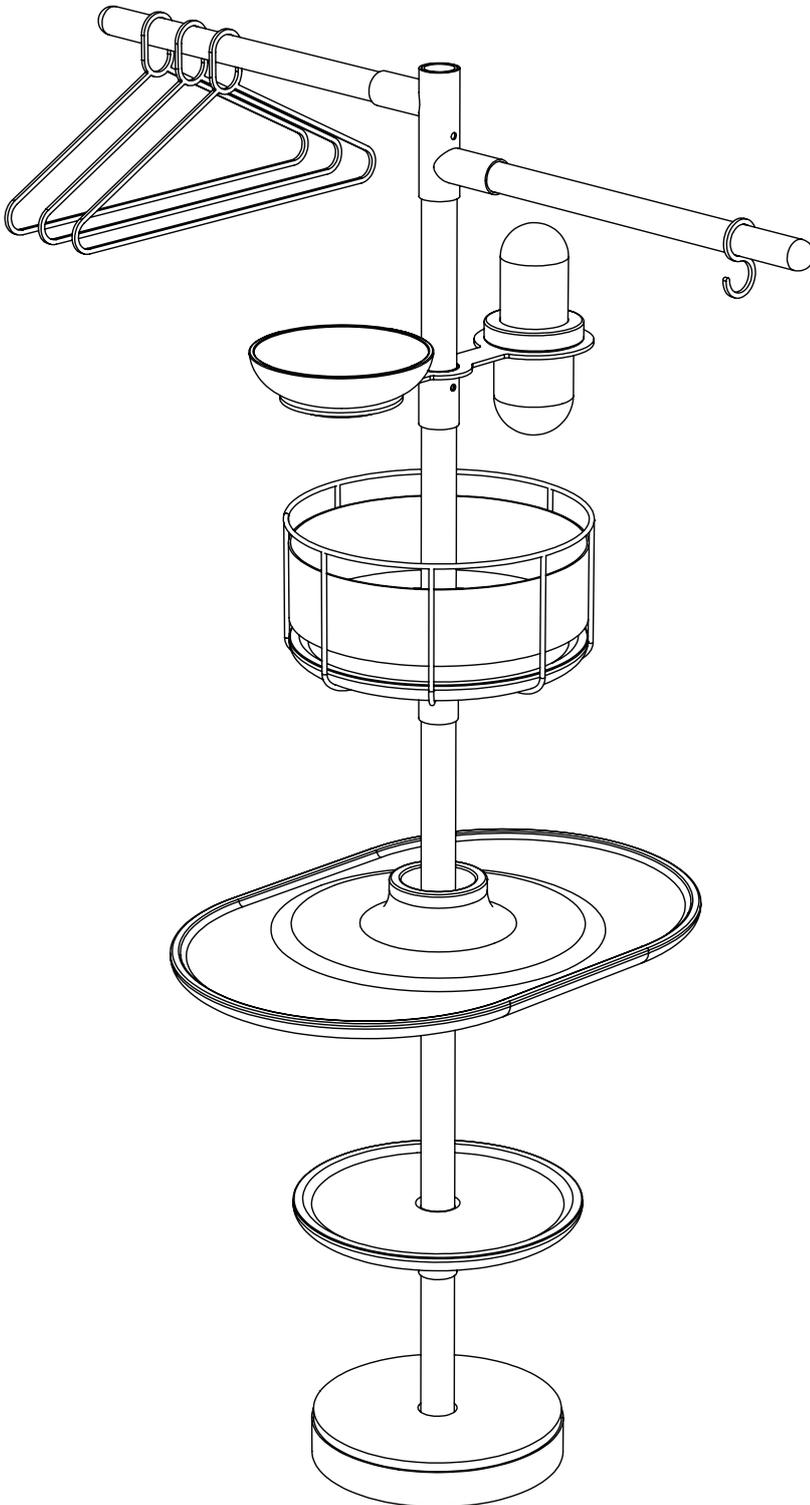


Marie-Louise Velthuisen  
Female  
25 years old  
Student  
"NOT an early riser"





Steven Polak  
Male  
26 years old  
Works  
"Early riser"



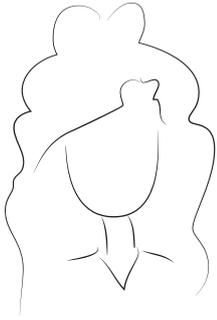
No light is attached to the top but the rods are. Steven is tall (1.90m) and would like his clothes to hang a bit higher. He also stated to not need much light because the only thing he needs a mirror for and or light for is his hair, which he does in the bathroom.

A hook for his belt. A light for use in winter. A small bowl for his watch.

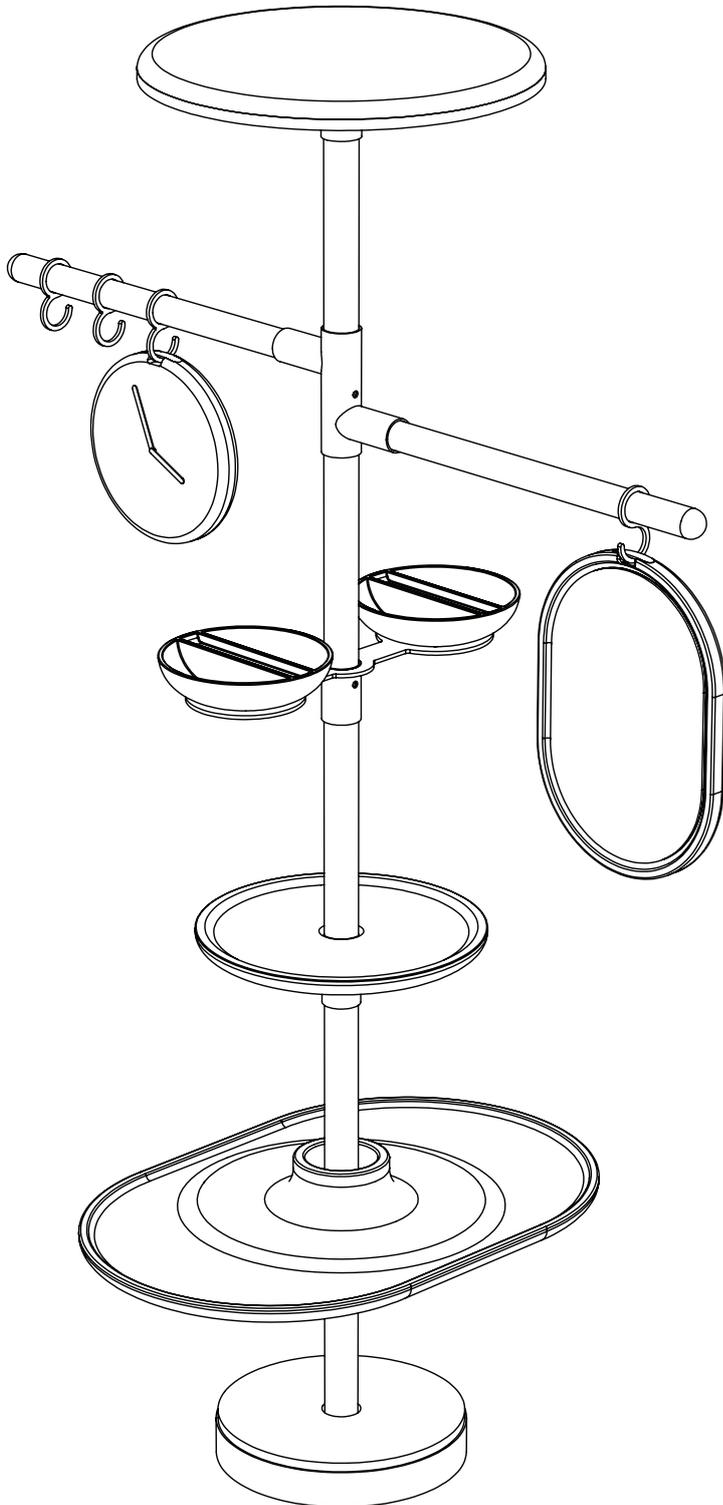
A container for storage of his extra bottles of shampoo, toothpaste, hair gel and sorts.

A big surface to put a cup of coffee and a phone on in the morning so he can listen to some radio while dressing. He mentioned he would be likely to position this piece in the hallway in which case he would put his keys, wallet and other pocket content there.

Extra surface for an extra pair of shoes.



Alexandra Velthuijzen  
Female  
20 years old  
Student  
"Chaotic by nature"



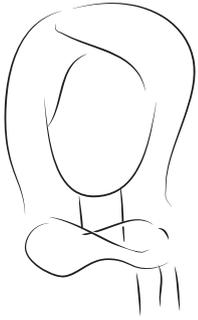
Light to do make-up and hair and find contact lenses

A mirror for doing make-up and hair. A clock to make sure Alexandra is still on time. Hooks for bathrobes and pieces of clothing. Mentioned to not take the effort of putting clothing on a clothing hanger.

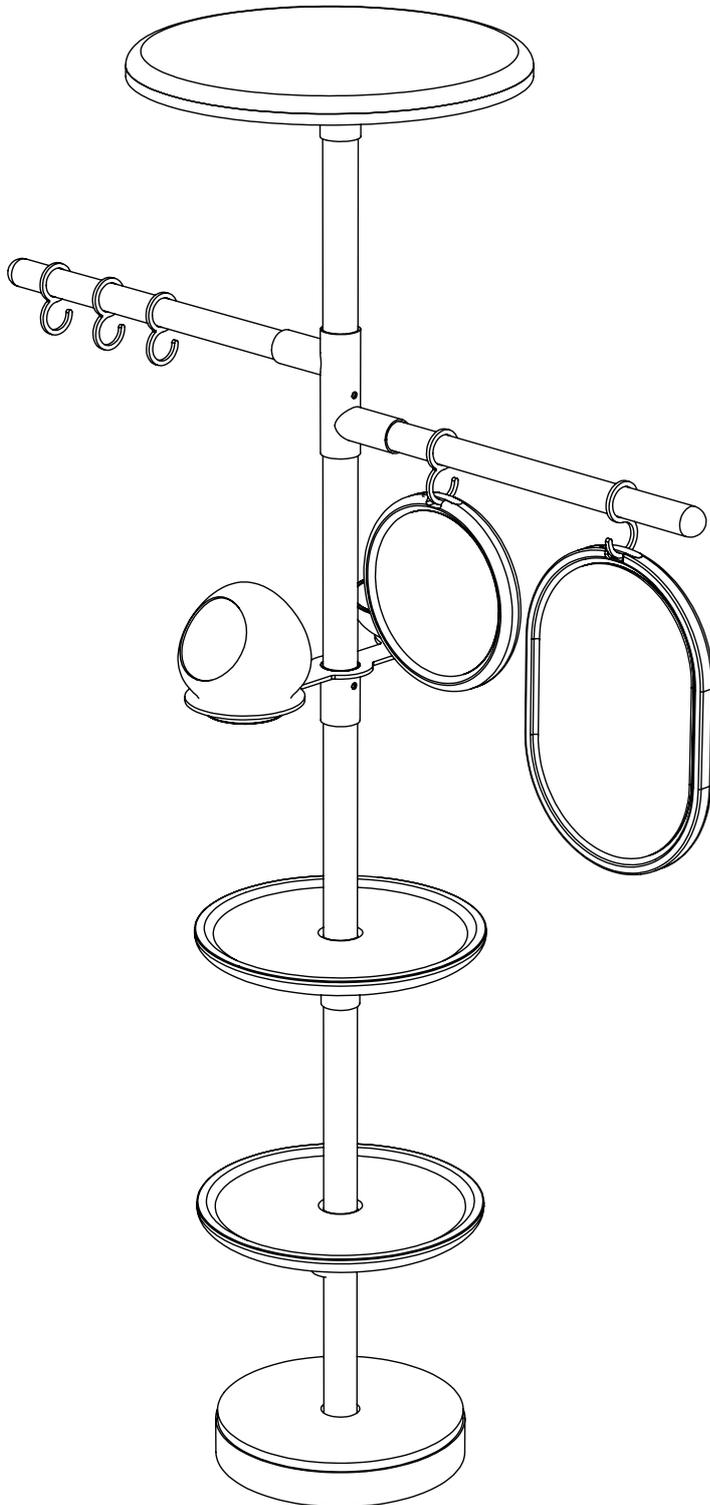
Small bowls both with dividers for different kind of jewelry.  
Necklaces  
Bracelets  
Earrings  
Watch

Small surface for putting make-up tools on.

Bigger surfaces on a lower level because she is smaller (1.60m) and will put things there that she uses less. Her regularly used items are put on the smaller surface.



Annemieke Gehrels  
Female  
60 year old  
Retired  
"Loyal to my routine"



Light to help wake-up in the morning.

Hooks for clothing. Two mirrors. One for the hair and a smaller magnifying mirror for make-up. She cannot see much up close without glasses.

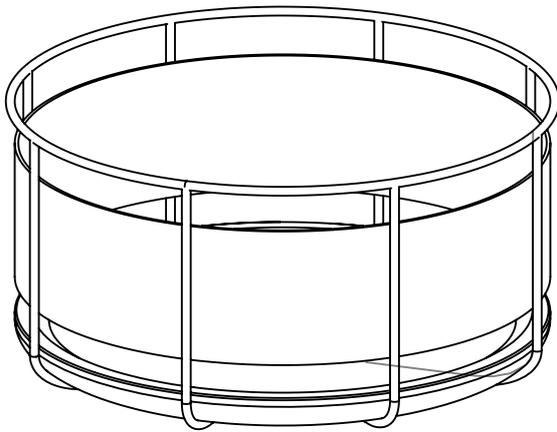
Small bowl and a pot for a plant. She feels it would feel more like a special place if she has to be there to water a plant and not only consider it a functional piece.

She prefers the straightforward smaller surfaces so she can see where everything is. The first level for things she uses often and the lower level for stuff that she uses less. She also mentioned that she would put some memorabilia on one of the surfaces.

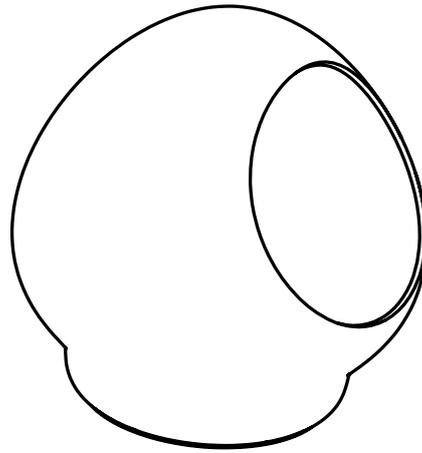
An extra element that had not occurred to me was mentioned by Annemieke. She said she would use the stone for her tea in the morning. If she pours it in the cup, the tea is still quite hot and the stone would help cool it down quickly.

## IV. DETAILS

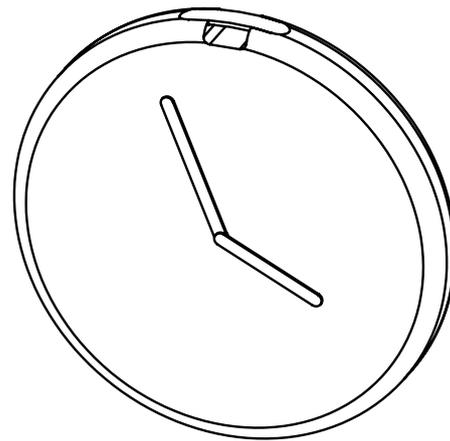
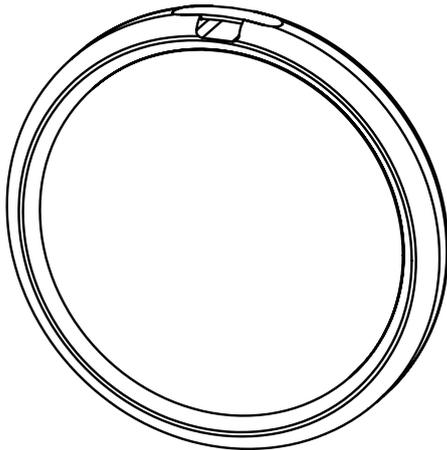
All the pieces are attached to the pole in the middle. The details of the construction are shown in the next couple of pages. There are elements that I thought were important to design within the process but were not using in the version I am making.



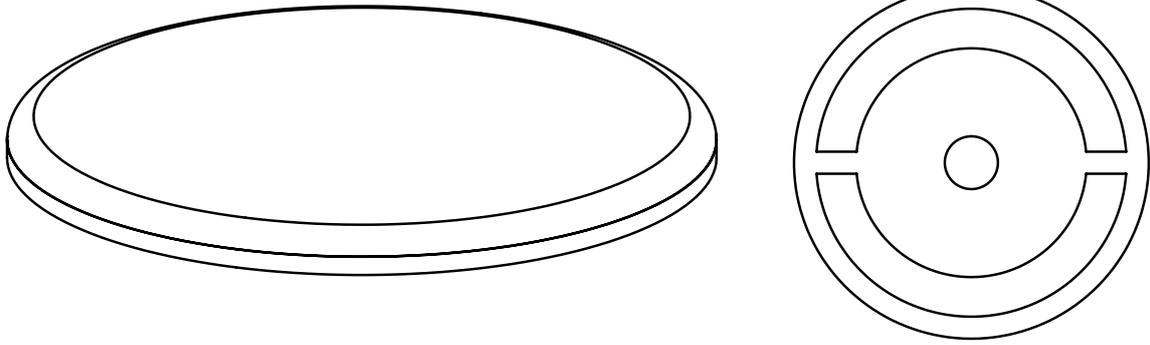
Big Container:  
Metal wire frame with an ash bottom inside  
and a metal rim to hold in items



Pot:  
Small ceramic pot for a plant or other items

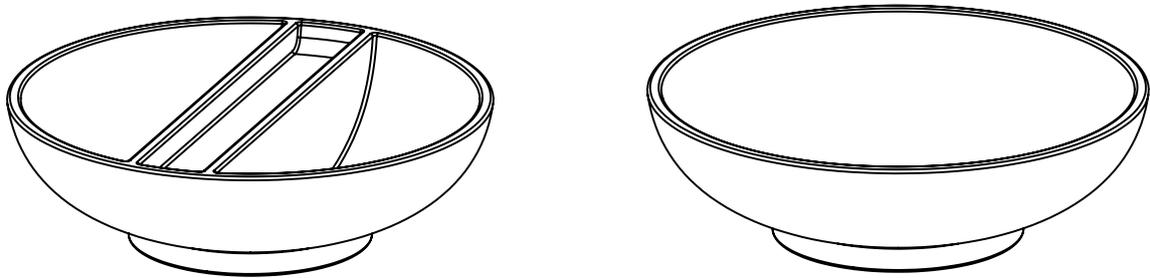


Mirror/Clock  
This piece is a magnifying mirror on one side and a clock on the other side. Can be hung on the poles with one hook.



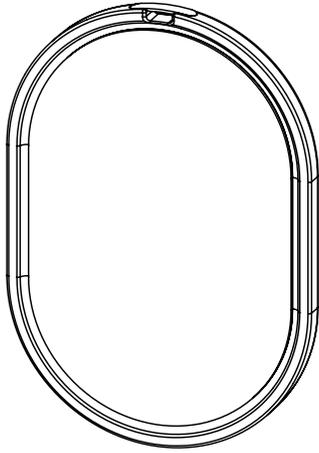
The lamp:

On top of the piece is ash with matte acrylic strips in it that soften the light that comes from the LED's.

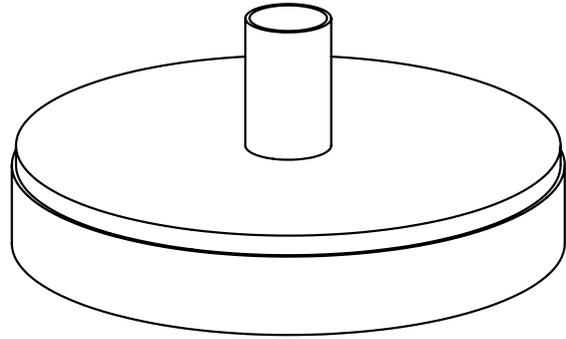


Two small bowls:

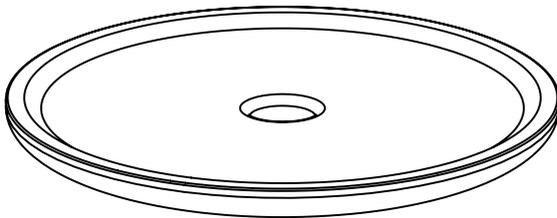
The left bowl has a dividing part in the middle in which you can store small items and keep your valuables from touching and scratching each other. The other one is the same size without the wall in between. Both are made from cork.



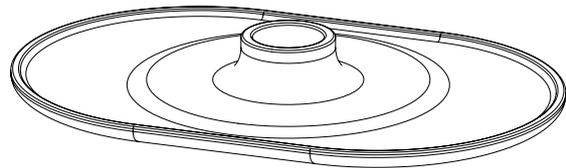
Mirror:  
Ash wood with mirrored acrylic that can  
be hung with a hook on the rods



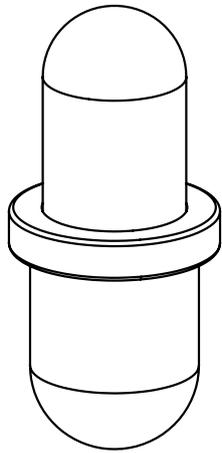
Foot:  
Swedish granite inlay in a metal foot.



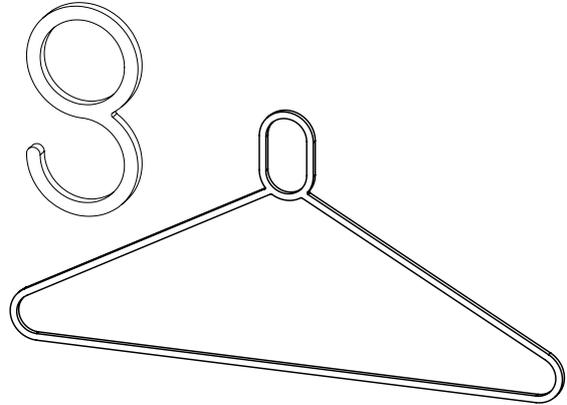
Small surface:  
Ash surface with small protruding rim



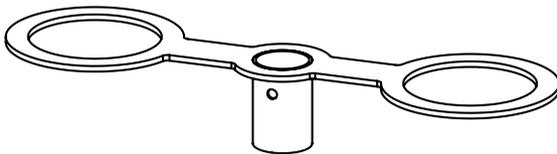
Big surface:  
Ash surface with small protruding  
rim, small podium and a bowl.



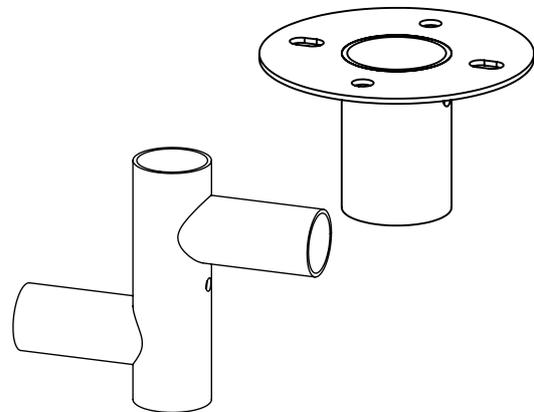
Light:  
Small light that fits into the bracket. Bottom part is ash and a matte glass cover fits into it.



Hook & Clotheshanger:  
Small steel lasercut hook that can be used to hang clothes on as well as elements.  
Steel lasercut clotheshanger that fits over the rods.



Bracket:  
Steel bracket that holds up to two items. The light, as well as the bowls and the pot fit into the piece.



Attachements:  
Two pieces of which the left connects the wooden rods to the pole and the right connects all the other items.

## 6. INSITU

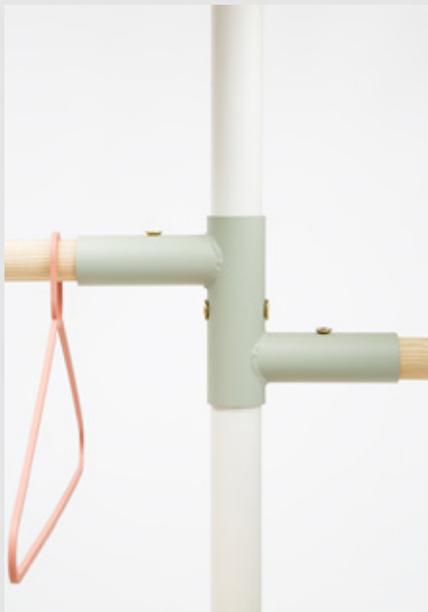


photo: Ekaterina Lukoshkova

## BEYOND THE DESIGN

This project for me has had a focus on the execution of a concept into a piece of furniture with a focus on a reinterpretation of a context. The result being a piece that might look like it is a finished product ready for production but has not been designed for that specifically. This being the case I have ideas on how it could be produced and how different materials or ways of production could influence the outcome.

### WHERE

If I would like to produce the piece I would love to see it something resembling ikea where it is available to the public. However, in the current state it would not be possible to produce it for an ikea worthy price. If the surfaces would be laminated plywood and the metal parts optimised more to standard sizes that are available to regular distributors the price could be lowered.

### HOW

The wood:

Although the wooden objects seem quite complex and flowing, they are all made from a block of solid wood milled on a 3-axis CNC milling machine. The stock material used in the project is Ash, a widely available European hardwood which I have sawn, planed and glued together to form the slabs for the milling. Since the pieces only require two different widths of material, it is relatively easy to construct.

The milling part requires milling pockets and contours, operations easily done with a 3-axis milling machine. Since the parts are relatively small, they require limited machine time and space on the machinebed so multiple parts can be cut simultaneously.

As for finishing I have used a hardwax/oil mixture (Osmo brand), but in production I would advice to use a PU lacquer that has a tiny bit of white pigment mixed in, to maintain the original colour of the wood.

The horizontal rods are straight round rods, easily bought in on lengthy stock and cut to required size. These rods can either be milled on a milling machine with the right cutter heads or by turning regular square stock on a lathe. The finish would be the same as the other wooden parts.

The stone:

For the base I have chosen to work with stone; heavy, durable and beautifully marbled. The stone used in the prototype is Swedish Granite, mined in Dalsland and the piece is manufactured by a stonemason in Bengtsfors. The basic round shape is similar to the curves and shapes used in kitchen tops and grave stones, so easily manufactured by a stonemason. The stones can be easily cut in batches, since no warping or decay will affect the object. After the cutting polishing will be needed on the visible surfaces.

The metal:

All of the metal pieces in the project are designed in a way that they require no manual machining. The flat faces of the brackets are cut (laser or water) from a sheet of regular steel with relative ease. The tubes used are also industry standard sizes and therefore easy available. These tubes can also be lasercut (tube laser), which leaves clean and accurate parts too. The tubes and flat faces are assembled and TIG welded along the edge and then they are ready for coating. For the prototype I have used regular spray paint, but I would highly recommend using a powder coating, for durability reasons.

The hangers:

The coat hangers and hooks are also lasercut from the same sheet of steel. I have chosen to have a relatively large tolerance between the pole and the hole in the hangers and hooks to accommodate for paint and still be able to easily slide around.

All the pieces of wood are rounded of on one side to appear thinner and open.

The light was given a diffuse layer of acrylic to make a bright but not harsh light to give the user light to see themselves while being flattering, so they enjoy the experience.

The rods have been rounded of to create a soft look so putting your clothes on them doesn't seem unappealing. The hangers are a play on the same shapes as used in the whole piece but a more geometric approach to them. I wanted them to look contemporary but fitting the style of the furniture

The colors of the piece are chosen on the fact they match with other colors so they blend in to any home but give a tranquil mood. The smaller elements have been given brighter and more contemporary colors to brighten up the hole piece and give an element of surprise

The holder for the bowls has a serving shape to refer back to the dressboy and show that this is a special place for your special belongings.

I have chosen to combine round bars with round shapes or elongated pill shapes because it gives variety but creates a continuity that makes the piece not to obtrusive.

The grain direction in all the wooden pieces is pointing in the same direction to emphasize the small curvatures that have been put in to the surfaces.

I have made the foot relatively small because it is heavy and I don't want it to take away from the elegance of the rest of the piece.

The surfaces have been given a small rim to give a sense of protection that the things you put on it won't easily fall off.



photo: Ekaterina Lukoshkova

## 7. REFLECTION

### **PREPARATION**

The last days before the presentation left me with little time to think. The exhibition was designed the way it was by separating the experiments a bit from the eventual piece and giving the final piece most of the attention. I wanted to give a glimpse into the process of the making with construction experiments that were separate from the material experiments I did before the choice in piece of furniture. The project ended up being a modular system and I wanted a visual support of how this could be applied and decided to hang alternatives up in the form of real size graphics. During the presentation I wanted to show the whole process and take time to walk the audience through my analysis. It felt like that was necessary because I felt that the outcome otherwise would look too simple. Simpler than it had been to arrive there. The project was centered around figuring out how to use history as inspiration and the presentation as well as the exhibition were an attempt to show the process with the different stages in it.

### **EXPERIMENTATION VERSUS REALITY**

Questions that were raised by Petra Lijja as well as others were concerning the seemingly missing connection between the material experiments and the eventual piece. Though for me it felt like these were connected in the way that they were different stages in the process, it seemed to not make sense to others. The material experiments were a first investigation into "the ageing of material and texture" and turned out of a more ornamental nature. I felt like the one on one transmitting of these appearances on the piece would not benefit the intended use of the piece of furniture and have thus not transferred them in that way, but by use of the color scheme and choosing materials that would age gracefully by nature or not at all. I realise that this decision either needs to be made clear if it would be displayed in this setting again, or shown as two separate parts of a project.

### **CONTINUATION**

The material experiments could also function as a material library in the continuation of this project. During this project more directions within the theme of Forgotten Furniture rose and a few I would like to work more on.

- Save a piece that could be forgotten but is not yet
- Make a piece that fulfils a new need.



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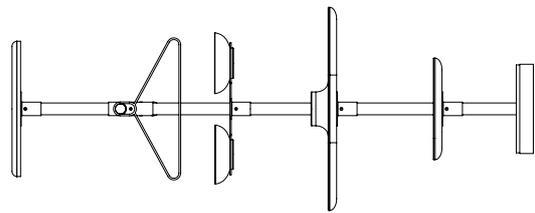
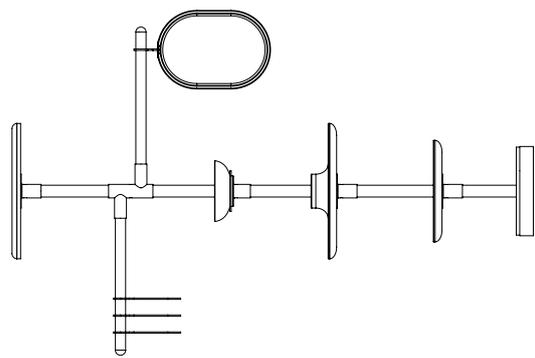
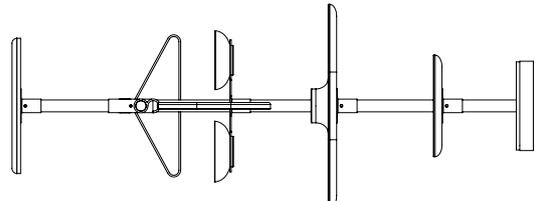
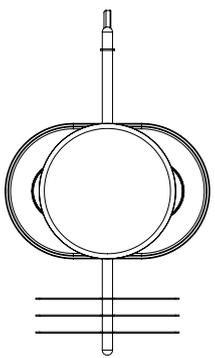
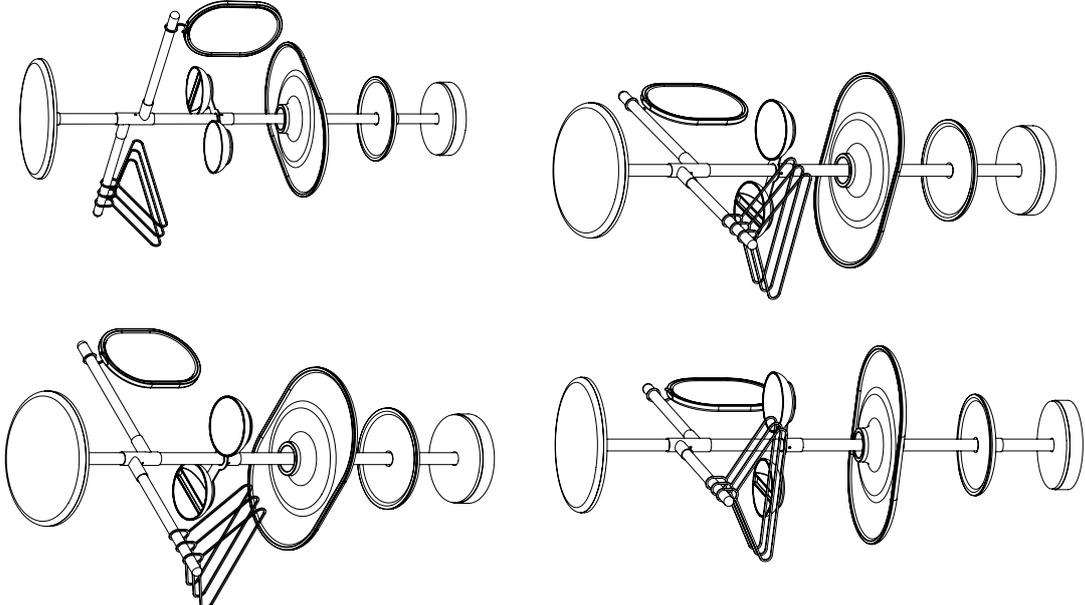
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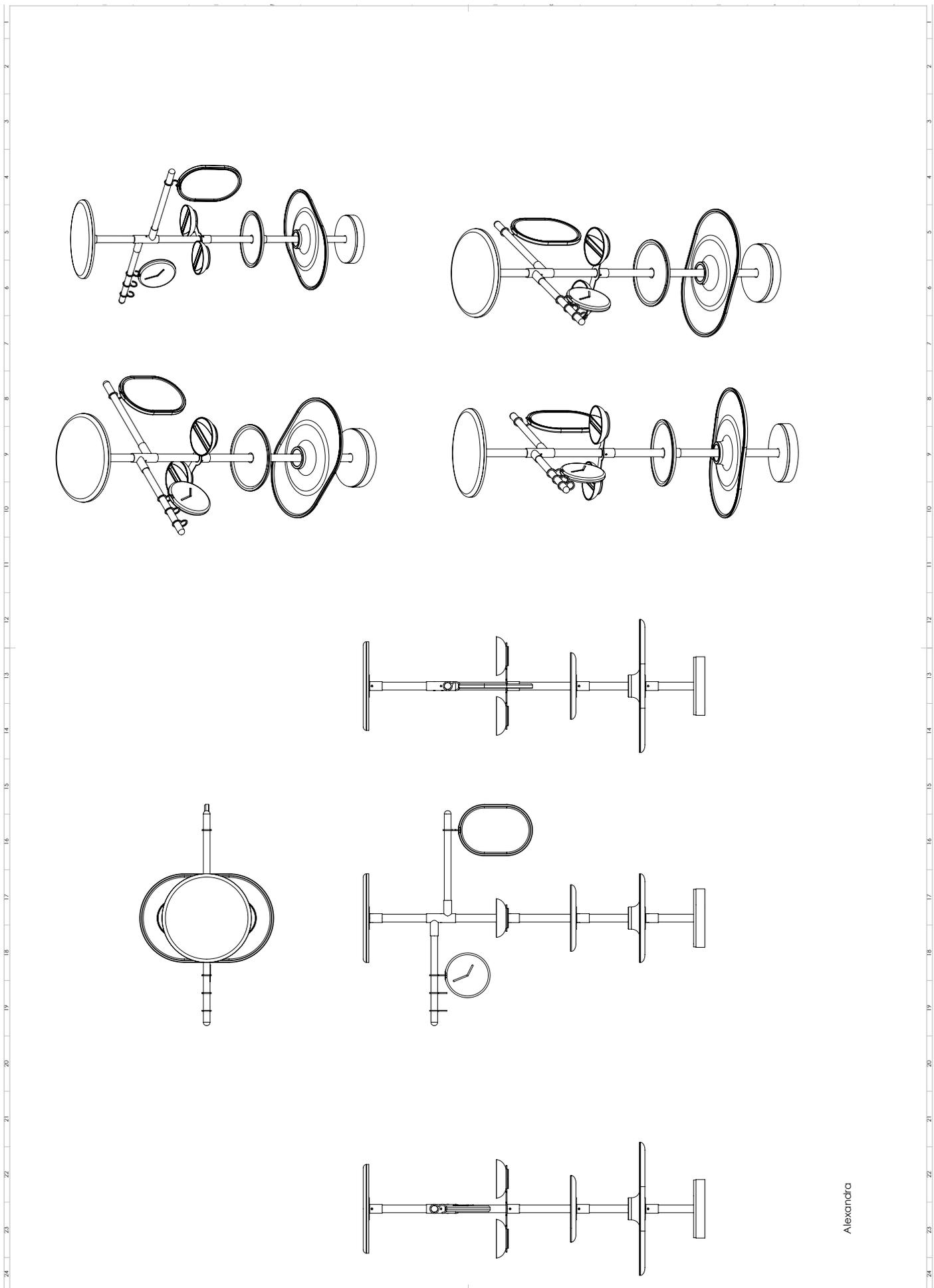
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## 9. APPENDIX

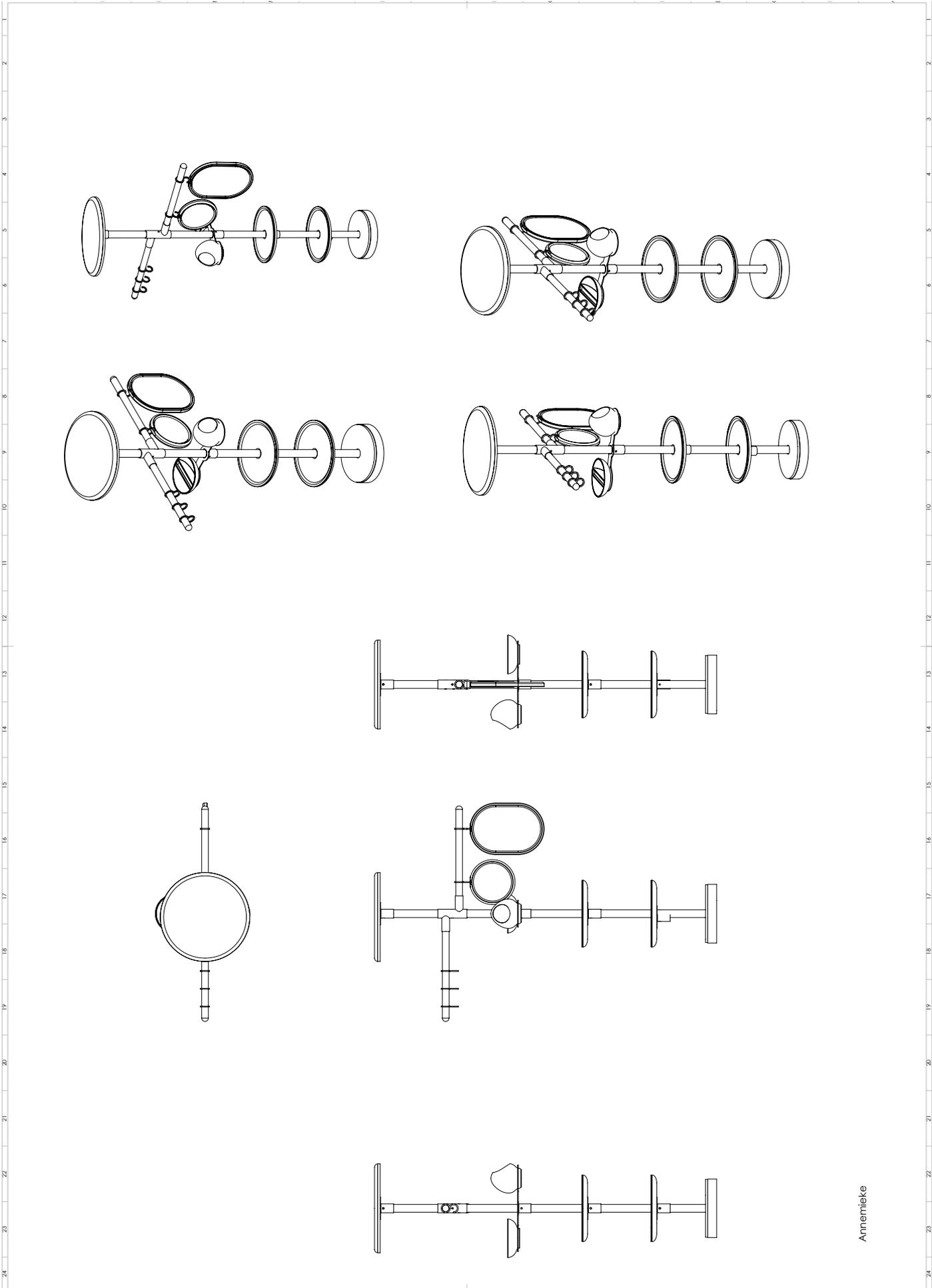
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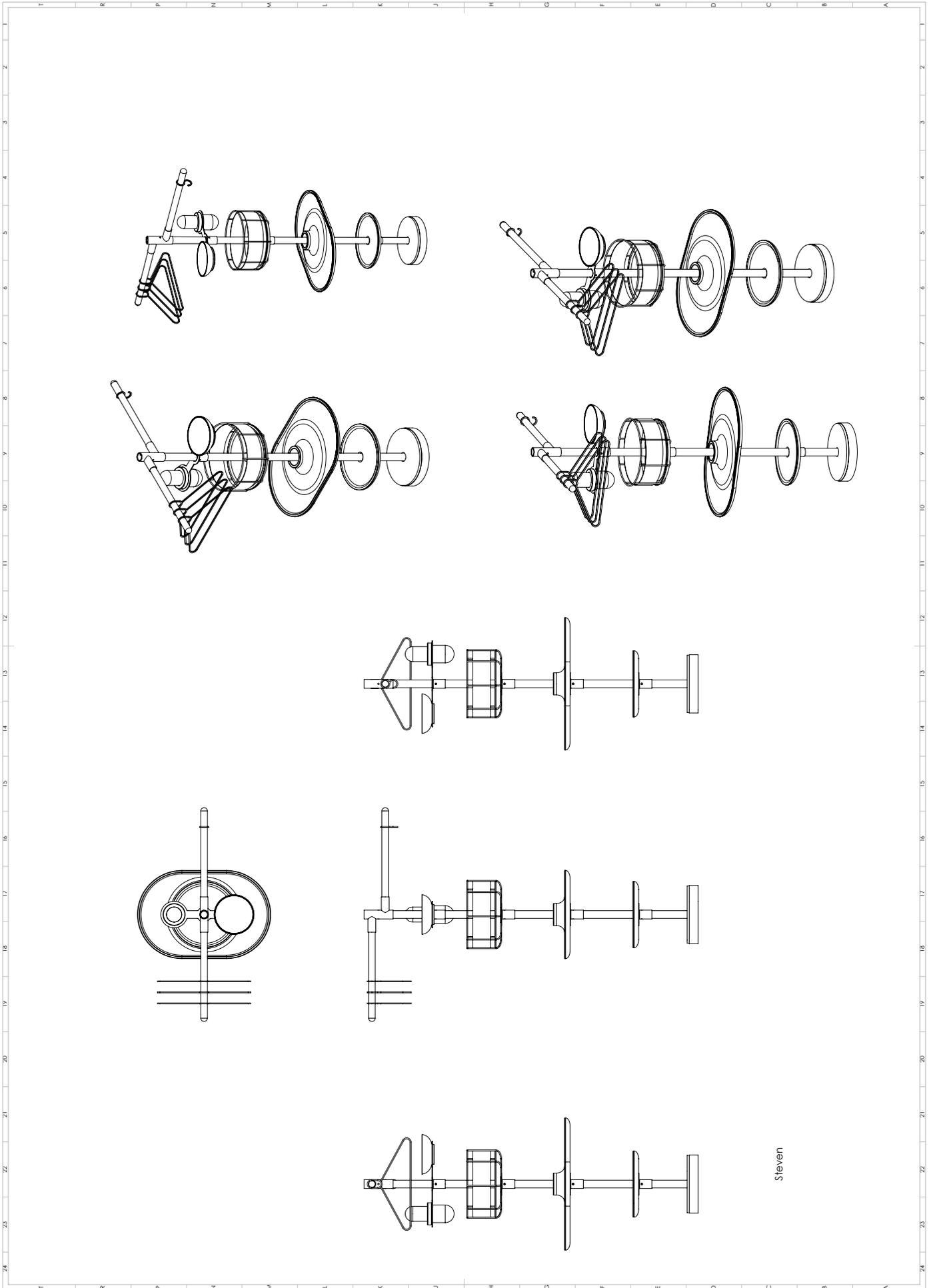
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Alexandria



Annemieke



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