**Found Objects**

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The “found object” is more associated with fine art than it is design, first through Marcel Duchamp’s “readymades”

in the 1910s, which took found designed goods and re-presented them, with more or less intervention

as sculpture. The concept of the found object is therefore something that is consciously presented as such,

disbarring almost all design practice until recent years.

By their nature, found objects rarely offer the control that manufactured goods demand. In general,

therefore, they are to be found as part of small-production craft design. It is debatable if one would use the

term “found object” in relation to reuse in the manner of many designs of necessity that use them. Such

design was explored by Victor Papaneck in *Design for the Real World*. This sort of design employs found

objects, such as car registration plates, reworking them as convenient and free material into other goods.

However, the issue here is the way in which the goods are designed. The found nature of their components is

not a statement, merely a convenience.

An overtly “designerly” approach to found objects is exemplified by the work of Droog Design such as

Tejo Remy’s “Chest of Drawers” (1991). Here found furniture parts, in this case drawers, are remade into new

pieces of furniture, with the aesthetic being dependent on the wide variation of style of the found

components. Similarly, in the 1980s, the designer/sculptor Ron Arad established his international reputation

by using found objects, most notably in the “Rover” chair (1981), which was made from front seats salvaged

from scrap Rover cars.

What is now termed “upcycling” is currently very popular and fits into current fashions for

vintage/retro and sustainability. Upcycling involves taking found designed goods (usually furniture) and giving

them a makeover to bring their style “up” to current tastes. Upcycling can also involve repositioning objects,

typically by domesticating industrial fittings and containers. While the term upcycling is new its process is not,

similar reconditioning of “old-fashioned” design as a conscious design statement was equally fashionable in

the 1950s.