

8. Exhibition Tour and Evaluation of Artefacts

The exhibition's purpose was to expose the table and chairs to as broad an audience as possible across Northern Europe and assess the response. It was also the purpose of the exhibition to expose elements of the Icelandic/Nordic culture of craftsmanship and design. The exhibition demonstrated what a valuable commodity the traditional crafts are, how they contribute to cultural identity and how modern industry could be influenced by them. The exhibition tour took place between 9 August and 9 October 2004. The author travelled with the exhibition to **HANDVERK OG HÖNNUN (Handwork and Design), Reykjavik, Iceland**, where the British Ambassador, Alp Mehmet opened the first exhibition in the tour, on the 16 August. On tour the exhibition spent approximately a week in each of the following venues:

HANDVERK OG HÖNNUN (Handwork and Design), Reykjavik, Iceland. This is an Icelandic Government funded project representing Icelandic crafts, with a permanent exhibition venue.

Gunnarsstofnun, Egilsstaðir, Iceland. This is a cultural centre in the east of Iceland, hosting regular exhibitions and events, including Icelandic craft and art.

Faroes Crafts Society, Torshaven, Faroe Islands. The Iceland project exhibition would join the Faroes Crafts Society's two week annual show in the centre of Torshaven, a cultural venue.

Shetland Museum, Shetland, Scotland. This is the local Government funded museum, a cultural centre in Shetland with a permanent exhibition space.

The Lighthouse, Design Museum, Glasgow, Scotland. This museum has a permanent exhibition on the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, the architect of the venue building. The venue hosts a number of temporary and touring, design orientated exhibitions, throughout the year.

The Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde, Denmark. This museum houses a permanent collection of Viking ships found nearby and a boat yard making reconstructions of them and other boats.

The exhibition tour venues are detailed in Appendix 13 (page 253). The following tables 5 and 6 provide details of the exhibition tour time schedule.

Table 5 Iceland, Faroe's and Shetland Exhibition Time Schedule

| DATE | MORNING | AFTERNOON |
|----------|--|---|
| 9 August | Depart Hundalee mill farm 1130 (175 miles to Aberdeen) | Check in Aberdeen North link ferries 1500 Depart 1700 |
| 10 Aug | Arrival Lerwick 7300 | check-in Lerwick on Norröna 2400 |
| 11 Aug | Depart Lerwick 0200 | Ariv. Dep Tóshavn 1500 1800 |
| 12 Aug | Arrive Seyðisfjörður Iceland 0800. Drive West (543 km 337 miles to Skógar) (700 km 434 miles to Reykjavík) | Drive West to Skógar Foss and camp. |
| 13 Aug | Drive West to Reykjavík | Meet and stay with Thórhildur, and family. |
| 14 Aug | Meet HANDVERK OG HÖNNUN | Set up Table and chair |
| 15 Aug | Set up Table and chair | Set up Table and chair |
| 16 Aug | HANDVERK OG HÖNNUN Exhibition write thesis draft | Exhibition - Exhibition opened by British Ambassador. Dinner at Halla's House. |
| 17 Aug | Exhibition | Exhibition |
| 18 Aug | Exhibition | Exhibition |
| 19 Aug | Exhibition | Exhibition |
| 20 Aug | Exhibition | Take down Exhibition. |
| 21 Aug | Drive east | Drive east Camp on the way. |
| 22 Aug | Meet Skúli Björn Gunnarsson at Gunnarsstofnun, set up table and chairs etc. | 1400 open exhibition |
| 23 Aug | Exhibition write thesis draft | Exhibition |
| 24 Aug | Exhibition write thesis draft | Exhibition |
| 25 Aug | Exhibition write thesis draft | Exhibition |
| 26 Aug | Exhibition write thesis draft | Exhibition |

| DATE | MORNING | AFTERNOON |
|--------|---|---|
| 27 Aug | Exhibition write thesis draft | Exhibition. |
| 28 Aug | Exhibition write thesis draft | Exhibition |
| 29 Aug | Exhibition write thesis draft | Exhibition |
| 30 Aug | write thesis draft | |
| 31 Aug | write thesis draft | |
| 1 Sep | write thesis draft | |
| 2 Sep | Check in at Seyðisfjörður 1000 for Norröna Depart 1200 | |
| 3 Sep | Arrive Tórshavn 0500 | |
| 4 Sep | Set up Exhibition with Faroes Crafts Society | Exhibition |
| 5 Sep | | |
| 6 Sep | Exhibition write thesis draft | Exhibition |
| 7 Sep | Exhibition write thesis draft | Exhibition |
| 8 Sep | write thesis draft | |
| 9 Sep | write thesis draft | |
| 10 Sep | Check in Tórshavn for Norröna 0630, Depart 0830 | Arrive Lerwick 2100 |
| 11 Sep | Set up Exhibition at Shetland Museum | Exhibition |
| 12 Sep | Spoon carving workshop | Project Lecture to crafts community |
| 13 Sep | Exhibition write thesis draft | Exhibition |
| 14 Sep | Exhibition write thesis draft | Exhibition |
| 15 Sep | Exhibition write thesis draft | Exhibition |
| 16 Sep | Exhibition write thesis draft | Check in Lerwick North Link Ferries 1700, depart 1900 |
| 17 Sep | Arrive Aberdeen 0700, Drive home to Hundalee. | |

Table 6 Glasgow and Denmark Exhibition Time Schedule

| DATE | MORNING | AFTERNOON |
|--------|--|------------|
| 20 Sep | Set up Exhibition at The Light House, Glasgow. (90 miles) | Exhibition |

| DATE | MORNING | AFTERNOON |
|--------|--|------------------------|
| 21 Sep | Exhibition | Exhibition |
| 22 Sep | Exhibition | Exhibition |
| 23 Sep | Exhibition | Exhibition |
| 24 Sep | Exhibition | Drive home |
| 25 Sep | | |
| 26 Sep | | |
| 27 Sep | Check in Newcastle 1300, Depart 1500 (50 miles) | |
| 28 Sep | | Arrive Gothenburg 1700 |
| 29 Sep | Drive to Roskilde (175 miles) | Set up Exhibition |
| 30 Sep | Exhibition | Exhibition |
| 1 Oct | Exhibition | Exhibition |
| 2 Oct | Exhibition | Exhibition |
| 3 Oct | | |
| 4 Oct | Exhibition | Exhibition |
| 5 Oct | | |
| 6 Oct | Drive to Gothenburg | |
| 7 Oct | Check in Gothenburg 0800, Depart 1000 | |
| 8 Oct | Arrive Newcastle 1000 | |

8.1. Methodology for Exhibition and Questionnaire

The type of exhibition venue approached (advised by Stephen Jackson and Paul Western, page 37) was that of a cultural centre, a museum or art gallery. The type of venue space asked for was a small auxiliary space, which would be surplus to normal requirements. The exhibition went between different countries, so similar venues and spaces were requested in order to find similar audiences in the different countries. This was important so the assessment of the surveys carried out during the exhibitions would be from comparable audiences.

A quantitative tick box type questionnaire and a qualitative open question interview type questionnaire was conducted in each venue during the exhibition tour. A minimum of 15 interviews was required in each venue for both questionnaires, however, the more questionnaires that there were completed the more compelling the results. The questionnaires were designed to find out the following information:

- How likely are people to buy the table and chairs?
- What elements are the most appealing?
- Would people like the product in their own home?
- Would the product sell well over the internet aided by word of mouth?
- What do people think the table and chairs would cost to buy?
- Do people like to be aware of the cultural origin of their dining table and chairs?
- How well does the product express its Icelandic and Nordic cultural origin?
- How is the product seen to express its cultural origin?

- Can the influences of Icelandic/Nordic traditional crafts be recognized, and can any of these be identified?
- Does a product with Nordic cultural identity have added value in the Nordic market?
- Does a product foreign to the Nordic region with a clear cultural identity of its own have added value in the Nordic market?
- After learning how the table and chairs were designed, made, and how the Icelandic/Nordic traditional crafts have influenced the design, does it change the viewer's perception of the table and chair?
- How does it change their perception?
- How interested are people in the story behind this product?
- How much would it influence a purchase decision?
- Having heard the story behind the table and chairs, how much would they pay for the table and chairs?
- Is the choice of materials, oak, aluminium and wool appealing?
- Do the table and chairs appear to be traditional or modern in their design?
- Is there cultural value in the continued practice of traditional crafts?
- Has this project demonstrated the successful use of traditional crafts in a modern way?
- What bit of the design do people like the most?
- What bit of the design would they change?

General information about the Interviewees was required for consideration when compiling the results.

- Where they are from and age to filter these who are most likely to buy the table and chairs in the Nordic region.

- Prior knowledge of the project, or no prior knowledge.

A draft questionnaire was written as provided in Appendix 15 (page 255) and with it a pilot interview was conducted on Peter Hawson (relative of the author) on 29.7.04. With consideration to this pilot and correspondence with Tom Burnham,³⁵ an experienced international marketing consultant, the following points for amendment were raised:

- As the questions repeat themselves if the same person goes on to do the longer questions, it was thought a better idea to make them into one, with green colour-coded questions.
- Some of the questions could have a scaled answer from 1 to 5 instead of yes/no.
- Reading out the names of craft practitioners sounded boring, but it was felt necessary to read out all people responsible to be fair
- Some answers should have areas for separate answers regarding chair, table, oak, aluminum, wool.
- Where the product would sell well, does not answer what needs to be known, that is, would the internet and word of mouth method work.
- Space at the end should be made for any other comments and sketching.
- The different currencies should be worked out.

Appendix 16 (page 260) provides the amended questionnaire as used for the exhibition survey.

³⁵ Tom Burnham, who since 1997 has been an International Trade Adviser working for UK Trade and Investment, a British Government branch of both the DTI and the Foreign Office. Between 1985 and 1997 he ran his own marketing consultancy business.

8.2. Results of Exhibition Survey

Eighty-seven questionnaires were completed during the exhibition tour. The raw data from these answered questionnaires has been put into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, file name 'exhibition data copy.xls' and is provided on the **multimedia disc 3**, image and data files (CD). This raw data has been filtered to make 3 separate spreadsheets, which are referred to in the text and provided in Appendix 17, 19 and 20 (pages 268, 270, 273). On the spreadsheet the qualitative answers have been abbreviated and a copy of these is provided as a Microsoft Word document, on the **multimedia disc 3**, image and data files (CD) and abbreviations referred to in the text are provided in Appendix 16 (page 267). The abbreviations were made with the following guide-lines:

- Qualitative comments meaning the same thing such as 'I like the table', and 'I think the table is nice', have been given the same abbreviation, 'LT'.
- Answers which say something particular e.g. What part of the table design do you like the most? Answer: The whole design, have been recorded with a '/'.
- Answers that have been unclear, sometimes due to language problems have been given the abbreviation, AU.
- Q8 regarding cost of table and chair? The first category recorded as '1', second category recorded as '2' etc. If the answer given was less than minimum amount in first category, this was recorded as '0'.
- Q11 Are you familiar with Nordic culture? 'yes' was recorded even if only familiar with Icelandic culture.
- If a reply to a question was that they would have to think about it, or they did not know, it was recorded as 'dk' or '/'.
- Entry numbers with the star sign * in front of them only completed the quick green colour coded survey.

8.3. Interpreting Exhibition Data

The following is a presentation of statistics from the exhibition survey data that assess whether the table and chairs were a success, would the market they were made for buy them, was the Icelandic/Nordic culture expressed in the design recognized and did this cultural element have added value. More information was recorded in the survey than was necessary for the purposes of the project; this additional data has broader relevance with respect to potential postdoctoral applications.

8.3.1. Would the Market Buy the Table and Chairs

The data has been filtered to give the opinion of those that are most likely to buy the product, ages 26 – 65, from within the home market (Scandinavia/Nordic region). Appendix 17 (page 268) is the filtered data that shows a mean 84 % (sample 43) of the potential market would like the table and chairs in their home. Appendix 18 (page 270) shows data (sample 36) of the potential market that would have the table and chairs in their home. It shows they think the chairs would cost between £250 and £500 and the table would cost between £1500 and £2000. Considering the predicted cost from the feasibility study of £2975 for one table and £452 for a chair, both without the cost of the wool components or delivery, the potential markets expected costs for the table and chairs were low. Appendix 18 also shows (mean) that the potential market thinks that quality and aesthetic appeal is just under very important (4.75/5) and price is only little over (3.5/5) mid way between not important and very important, when considering to buy domestic furniture like a dining table and chairs.

8.3.2. Does the Market Recognize the Cultural Content and is it Important?

The filtered data, in Appendix 19 (page 273), of those who are most likely to buy the table and chairs (sample of 43), shows that the table and chairs were

thought to express Icelandic and Nordic culture well, a mean answer of 4, on a scale of 1(not at all) to 5(very well), was given. A mean 70% of this sample felt that products with Nordic cultural identity had added value. From the same sample the Nordic traditional crafts were well recognized in the design of the table and chairs, a mean 4 was given from 1(not at all) to 5(very well). Thirty-five people from the filter data in Appendix 19 (page 273) (sample of 43) gave answers to question 15, which asked; what specific Nordic traditional crafts can you recognize in the table and chairs design? Table 10 gives the frequency of descriptions for the different crafts recognized (abbreviations provided in Appendix 16, page 267). Of the 19 people who recognized Viking ship shapes in the design, 4 of them saw the exhibition at the Roskilde Viking Ship Museum, which may have given them an unfair advantage. It can be said however, that all the main traditional crafts influencing the design were clearly recognized within the sample.

| Abbreviation | Description of abbreviation | Frequency of description |
|--------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| VS | Viking ship shape | 19 |
| WW | Wood work | 9 |
| F | Felting/wool work | 7 |
| C | Carving | 4 |
| CA | Metal casting | 1 |

Table 7 Recognized Nordic Traditional Crafts (sample 35)

8.3.3. Project Success

Towards the end of the questionnaire, after receiving the description of how the table and chairs were designed and made as part of question 18, nearly all of the most likely buyers thought that the project did demonstrate the successful use of traditional crafts in a modern way. A median of 5 and mean

of 4.6 was given on a scale of 1(no) to 5(yes) in reply to this question, data provided in Appendix 19 (page 273).

8.4. Summary of Exhibition Process and Information

Gathering

The exhibition of the project's dining table and chairs, designed and made in partnership with the six selected Icelandic and Nordic makers, went on tour from Iceland to Denmark between 14 August 2004 and 8 October 2004 (see map, page 32). The exhibition went to the following six venues (see schedule, Tables 5 and 6, pages 114, 115):

HANDVERK OG HÖNNUN (Handwork and Design), Reykjavik, Iceland.

Gunnarsstofnun, Egilsstaðir, Iceland.

Faroese Crafts Society, Torshaven, Faroe Islands.

Shetland Museum, Shetland, Scotland.

The Lighthouse, Design Museum, Glasgow, Scotland.

The Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde, Denmark.

During the exhibition tour, a survey was conducted on the visitor's response to the dining table and chairs (see chapter 8.1. page 117). The raw data ('exhibition data copy.xls', multimedia disc 3, image and data files CD) from this survey was analysed and the results (page 121) show that the table and chairs were thought (by a filtered sample) to express Icelandic and Nordic culture well, a mean answer of 4 on a scale of 1(not at all) to 5(very well) was given, and a mean 70% (of the same filtered sample) felt that products with Nordic cultural identity had added value (page 121).