

PRESS RELEASE

MOBIKADABRA

Child designers

Based on the MobiDécouverte idea



Model and final prototype for *Babycool*, season 2



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mudac

PL. CATHÉDRALE 6
CH-1005 LAUSANNE
www.mudac.ch

T +41 21 315 25 30
F +41 21 315 25 39
info@mudac.ch

MOBIKADABRA – Child Designers

The exhibition “MOBIKADABRA” falls within the framework of the project “Mobidécouverte – les enfants designers”, an initiative of the Industries Françaises de l'Ameublement (IFA, French Furnishing Industries) conducted in France since 1998 and involving teachers and their pupils, designers and manufacturers. MOBIKADABRA has allowed the discovery of a world that is still little explored by children: that of everyday arts and design. The result of a close collaboration between the professional sector, the Industries Françaises de l'Ameublement and the Ministry of National Education, its ambition is to enable primary school pupils (4 to 10-year-olds) to discover the processes of creating and making furniture. Supervised by teachers and aided by designers, primary school classes were invited to create new pieces of furniture and make models of them.

Around sixty prototypes have been produced from these “children’s dreams” by IFA with the assistance of designers. A highly informative experience for those – industrialists, designers – who plan worlds for children that sometimes fall short of their expectations. The world of a child is not simply a miniature version of our adult environment: other stories, other images underlie it.

The mudac has decided to present a “best of” selection of prototypes from seasons 1 and 2 of Mobidécouverte. Around fifteen prototypes will therefore be exhibited in the two galleries on level 0 at the mudac. This is the first time the project has been presented outside France. A phenomenon worthy of interest in a museum, here design retains its functionality, since every object can be touched and tried out by visitors of all ages. Accompanied for the most part by the models made by the children, as well as preparatory drawings and photos of children during the development of their projects, the “MOBIKADABRA” furniture will make visitors aware of the process of creation that lies behind the making of every single object.

In view of the highly educational nature of the entire project, the mudac has decided to integrate a certain number of educational “flower-games” into the exhibition. These offer additional information about furniture making: function, form, colour, material, message, etc. Basically, what is being done at the mudac is the opposite of the MobiDécouverte process: from the final exhibited object, the visitor – child or adult – is sent back to the conception phase.



Drawing for « Cœurs en fête », season 1.

The principle

Take a teacher, some children, a designer and a furniture industrialist, sprinkle with energy, add a pinch of curiosity and a lot of passion, then stir methodically. Afterwards, ask the children to draw the furniture of their dreams. Go back a year later... The results are surprising. The teacher has done mathematics, history, geography, technology or poetry, but in a different way. The children have discovered new tools to grasp and understand the world around them. They have visited museums, exhibitions and factories; they have drawn, written, constructed models... They have learned in a different way, imagining forms in proportion to them: they have invented, here, furniture that is to scale and within their scope; they have imagined, there, objects with novel functions... The designers have stimulated their imagination and accompanied the progress of the projects. As for the industrialists, they have welcomed classes and put everything on to a concrete basis by making prototypes of the furniture "for real", prototypes which have been able to be presented in a travelling exhibition permitting the idea to be made known to the greatest number, pretty well all over France.

In bringing together in the same operation children and their teachers, designers and the business partners without whom the prototypes would never have seen the light of day, MobiDécouverte's intention is to allow primary school pupils to investigate the history and the process of creating and making furniture, to help them take a critical look at the objects that surround them, to note their expectations and desires.

The whole operation testifies to the enrichment of the children but also to that of the adults who accompany them in observing the framework of their lives, in becoming aware of their universe. Their models emphasise the way in which they see the environment that adults design for them. The manner in which they use materials, shapes and colours expresses their wishes, certainly, but also their discernment. Their rejection of the superfluous and their need for functionality reflect their critical minds and their level of demand. Free from all constraints, including economic ones, the children's "creations" do not remain any less lacking in naivety. They were able to appropriate and take into account the various creative parameters for functional, aesthetic productions that match their needs and their dreams. Dreams that they have had the talent to name with a great deal of humour!



Prototype for « Petit voyageur », season 2.



Model for « ronde de fleurs », season 1.

History of an ambitious project

On behalf of the Industries Françaises de l'Ameublement (IFA, French Furnishing Industries), MobiDécouverte was launched in 1998 with primary school pupils from the 13th district in Paris. For two years, under their teachers' responsibility and with the aid of VIA (Valorisation de l'Innovation dans l'Ameublement, Economic Development of Innovation in Furnishing), these children explored the furniture world by means of numerous activities: expressive and creative workshops, taking on board different functions, initiation into styles and materials, exchanges with designers, learning about production methods, visits to specialised museums and to the Salon du Meuble (Furniture Trade Fair) in Paris...

Expressing their expectations and their desires, they participated in designing the furniture of their dreams. These pieces of furniture, drawn by the children and then developed by designers, were sculpted from polystyrene, then a single example of each was made by IFA. These formed the subject of several exhibitions: at the VIA Gallery in 1999, then at the Salon du Meuble in Paris in 2000.

Fortified by the success of this initial experiment, IFA, in partnership with the Ministry of National Education, hoped to expand the venture by giving it a national dimension. Numerous schools all over France have already engaged in this innovative educational process which, thanks to an artistic and cultural project conducted in the classroom, permits access to fundamental knowledge but also to recognition of the pupils' sensitive intelligence, besides their rational intelligence. Businesses, designers and teams from VIA have joined with them in this superb project. This mobilisation has resulted in nearly 30 prototypes, which made up the exhibition that has just toured France.



Prototype for « tour z'animé », season 1.

Project timetable

Every MobiDécouverte project is a remarkable and unique experience. Each class defines its own subject, writes its own story, develops its own method according to the local context and resources. MobiDécouverte thus concerns both urban and rural environments; the project can be developed everywhere. A MobiDécouverte project does not really have fixed and rigid rules; there exists a sort of common methodology which organises its progress over time. One can say of MobiDécouverte that it is a play in five acts, with simply the framework of a story based on pioneers' tales about their experiences:

1. Discover and explore
2. Draw and imagine
3. Proceed from drawing to model
4. The idea becomes a piece of furniture
5. The furniture is put on display

Prototypes exhibited at the mudac

Season 1

Culbut-on
Cœurs en fête
Canacommode
Stella Moon
Z'animo
Citrouille

Season 2

Corolle
Fourmi
Maisonmous
Manoblanca
Ronde de fleurs
Babycool
Petit voyageur
Linge au vent

Opinions...

Joseph Grange, President of CODIFA (Committee de développement des industries françaises de l'ameublement, Development Committee of the French Furnishing Industries):

"... For children, furniture is generally non-existent: they use furniture every day, but they have no awareness of it. Furniture is there; it is a fact of reality... Children know the world of clothes, of music, of the car... but the world of furniture does not exist. At best, furniture concerns the family, the territory of parents, even grandparents. What better tool than this type of operation to contribute, in the long term, to reducing this present-day lack of knowledge? Later on, our young fellow citizens will thus be enlightened, demanding consumers as regards the framework of their lives... and I hope happier!"

Gérard Laizé, Director General of VIA (Valorisation de l'Innovation dans l'Ameublement, Economic Development of Innovation in Furnishing):

"You will undoubtedly have noted that a lot of MobiDécouverte furniture is over-sized, indeed often a little "obese". Children see objects from the bottom up, and not from the top down like adults do. Now generally, one devotes oneself to miniaturising adult furniture, one makes small things! Another remark, [is] the strong presence of "potato-like" shapes, rounded, bulging, soft, reassuring: that is "mummy", that is the cocoon..."

Practical Information

Press Conference	Tuesday 6 March 2007 at 11am, with the participation of Yves Morel, designer and representative of MobiDécouverte
Private view	Tuesday 6 March 2007 from 6pm
Guided tours	Thursday 22 March at 12.15 noon and Saturday 5 May at 11am. Tours conducted by one of the mudac's curators.
In parallel	the exhibition <i>CRISS+CROSS, design in Switzerland</i> , from 7 March to 28 May 2007
Opening hours	Tues-Sun 11am-6pm Monday closed
Special opening hours	The museum is open from 11am to 6pm on all public holidays, including Mondays if applicable.
Workshops	Children : Saturday 10 March, 3-5 pm Wednesday 14 March, 3-5 pm Families : Sundays 11 March, 1st April and Friday 6 April, 11am to 1pm Adults : Sunday 29 April 2007, 11am to 1pm Reservations obligatory
Documentation for schools	On request, a document intended for teachers can be obtained from the mudac's secretariat, info@mudac.ch .
Illustrations	A CD-rom containing images of the exhibition is available on request. The images can also be downloaded from our website, www.mudac.ch . Choose the option « press ». Login : presse2007; password : images2007
Press liaison	Claire Favre Maxwell or Susanne Hilpert, curators. Tel. +41 21 315 25 30 or e-mail: claire.favre-maxwell@lausanne.ch susanne.hilpert-stuber@lausanne.ch
Address	mudac, Musée de design et d'arts appliqués contemporains Pl. de la Cathédrale 6, CH - 1005 Lausanne Tel. +41 21 315 25 30, Fax. +41 21 315 25 39 info@mudac.ch ; www.mudac.ch

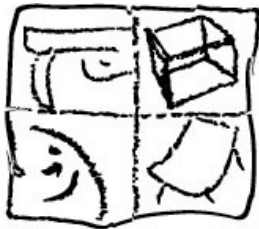
The project MobiDécouverte was initiated by :



Industries Françaises de l'Ameublement

CODIFA

(Comité de développement des industries françaises de l'ameublement)



MOBI
découverte

les enfants designers

www.mobidecouverte.com

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