

**BASICS**

**PRODUCT DESIGN**

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**01**

# idea searching

n  
a thought or suggestion as to  
a possible course of action

v  
look for information or an item  
of interest





Searching for an idea should require all of the senses and should not be a specific activity. The generation of an idea should be a continual process of observing, listening and recording. The eyes and ears are critical tools, but it can be easy to look and not see, and to hear and not listen. Inspiration is everywhere and everything can be inspirational.

There should be a need to share initial thoughts and views with others and to attract as many potential leads for development as possible. In the initial stages of idea generation, everyone is different and everyone has a different take on things. It is important to explore all possible suggestions. It is often the case that an initial proposal for an idea can be misunderstood or taken out of context, but in so doing can trigger stronger ideas and scenarios. There is a need to identify the potential in thoughts and ideas and be prepared to take a risk if there is belief in the suggestion. Individuals who do not take risks with ideas and directions will continue to follow the pack and not lead from the front.

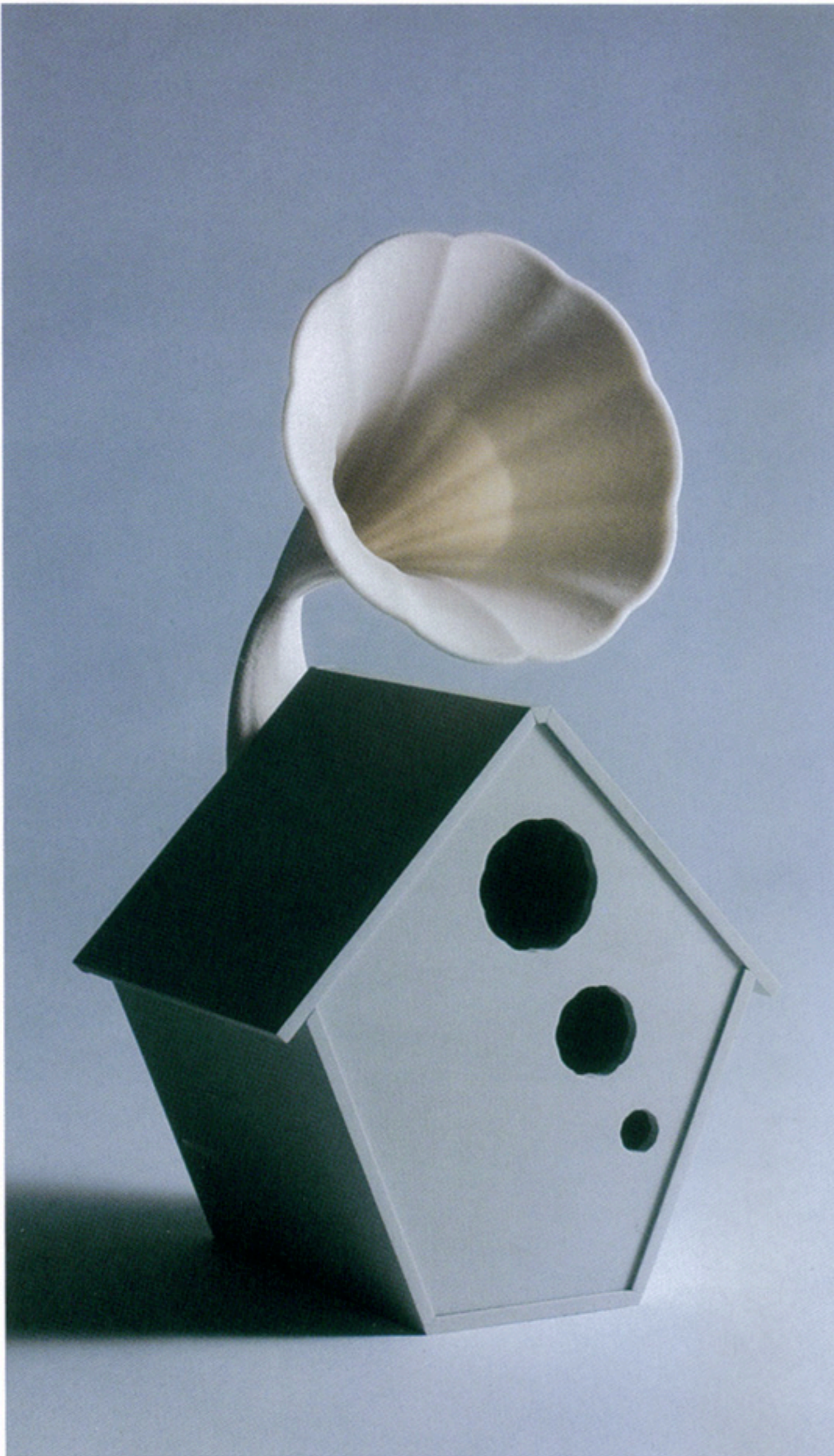
Searching for ideas is obviously a continual process of forming possible solutions and refining these, rather than something that only takes place at the outset of a project.

Experiences are important and these do not need to be specific to the idea that an individual is searching for. Visiting a dog race or attending a ballet may well provide the inspiration necessary for developing a seemingly unrelated project – an individual should always be on the look out for a thought catalyst. Changes in context can enable things to be seen in a different light and perceived in a lateral fashion, rather than a literal one.



'Generating ideas in design for me means to enter a trip.  
Just give your ideas the right time to speak with you.'

Simone Simonelli, 2008



Explore and have fun!

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**Bird's House**

The inspiration for the designer was a combination of nature and dreams; the dreaming of new sounds was initiated during exposure to a noisy and chaotic environment.

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**Design:**

Simone Simonelli at Industreal®  
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**Photography:**

Ilvio Gallo  
[www.industreal.it](http://www.industreal.it)



'For me design is a question mark. That is how I start every new project.'

Gijs Bakker, 2007

*Idea Searching* has been developed to explore different pathways for identifying ideas and to understand what is being observed and recorded. The process of searching for ideas often begins with a basic understanding of what is needed. Too much information can be restrictive and can also prevent random thoughts from being given an opportunity to surface. Idea baggage, such as a preconceived notion, can become a mental barrier. An open mind enables thoughts to emerge and develop. Searching for ideas is a process that involves many diverse activities. Brainstorming is often regarded as the initial stage in idea development, but really the process begins much earlier.

The identification of set criteria and themes is an important aspect in the formulation of thoughts and provides direction and boundaries, which if not set out, can lead to a situation that is both unmanageable and without purpose. *Idea Searching* has been divided up into several stages and although these have been presented in a logical order, the purpose of generating ideas is always to question convention and why something is done the way it is. It is therefore possible to refer to different sections of *Idea Searching* and still formulate a reasonable approach.

*Idea Searching* introduces the subject by exploring areas such as why we do things and observing target groups, activities, and the unconscious actions of others. The need to have empathy with others and not to make assumptions on directions is explored, along with the all-important need to have fun with the design process.

*Idea Searching* references the approach strategies of many of the leaders in the subject of product/industrial design and the difficulties that can often be encountered in the generation of a 'blue sky' thought through to reality.



If something is fun it is often addictive and captivating. The natural instinct is to want more and to become submerged in associated activities. When a venture is relegated to the status of a task it can become difficult to be motivated, inspired and to keep the necessary momentum. Consequently, it is all-important to ensure that tasks are not frequently encountered or allowed to evolve into burdens; rather, fun aspects should retain control in the search for ideas and stimulation.

The instigation for thought can come from all directions, and intrigue and curiosity should provide sufficient diversity to explore and engage in virgin territory.

When an activity is informative and responsive it captures the imagination and progress can be made. A 'why not' and 'do what others don't' attitude presents enjoyable and rewarding experiences that usually culminate in a deviation from the anticipated – a place where ideas can flourish.