Sustainable design technology: A case study of a master student's lamp project

Abstract
Creatively treated materials from nature transform, through technological processes and design practice, into cultural objects containing function and meaning. Views on nature, culture, and technology are gradually in a process of change and thus contribute to new practices. Multidisciplinary, innovative thinking within the Norwegian forestry industry has led to new, aesthetic experiences in nature that might influence product-design thinking. Forestry business with complex technologies has been linked in various ways to the built environment, architecture, and design. The research question of this study was: how sustainable products can be developed through an innovative combination of nature, culture, and technology in a master student project? This was illustrated through a case study of a master student’s development of a lamp design. The product included semantic references to old woodworking techniques and cultural heritage, and evolved to an innovative product with commercial success. Methods used were document analysis and participatory observation. The product has contributed to a marketing strategy of corporate, social responsibility for the Forest Owners’ Association. Students can get an expanded view of how design practice can be seen as an integral part of a sustainable worldview that includes both self-realisation and commercial realism. The learning outcomes from this study are related to knowledge, skills, and general competence.

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