

DIY for everyday

DIY is an exhibition of functional objects and homemade devices made by amateurs and professionals. Tools and technologies might be made to solve an immediate need, but they also tell stories - about the person who made them, or the situation they're responding to. One person's 'everyday' might be a comfortable home, an office or studio, and another's a shack, the street, or a prison. The tools they make could be for survival or convenience, legal or illegal, simple or complex - the bare minimum to meet a need, or full of ornament and excess meaning. What distinguishes them from mainstream, commercial design is their capacity to reflect the individual circumstances of their makers, and this is also what makes them interesting story-telling devices. Objects like these are part of a growing contemporary interest in amateurism, in making, and in alternative paths for design and technology than consumption and mass-production.



Trolley (left) and bin (middle) both by Michael Yeltsin (2014); Right: Broom/coat-hook by Christian Nerf (2014)

DIY is looking for submissions of everyday functional objects from South Africa for an exhibition and online archive. The model for submissions is to photograph the object, and capture the name, a portrait, and contact details where possible of the maker, whether yourself or another person. You should also record a brief explanation of how the person came to make this object, in their own words: what motivated them, what choices they made, what materials they used and what circumstances they were responding to. Michael Yeltsin for example, a homeless man living in Cape Town, made the trolley pictured above to collect waste wood from the streets, out of which he makes unique objects like this man-shaped bin. Christian Nerf, a South African artist, submitted this simple gesture for hanging his coat on a broom in his studio. Visit the project website for their descriptions of what motivated these designs.

Please submit work to us as soon as possible - we are collecting work for the online archive, to be officially launched in late November 2014 at Atlantic House in Cape Town. We will be staging the exhibition in 2015, and the more time we have to arrange for objects to be exhibited, the better.

DIY is curated by Ralph Borland [ralphborland.net, objectsindevelopment.net] in partnership with Atlantic House [atlantichouse.co]

For more information and to submit work
please see DIYexhibition.net
or email submissions@DIYexhibition.net



DIY for artists and designers

DIY is an exhibition of functional objects made by artists and designers, as well as by everyday people. Contemporary art has a long relationship with functional objects, whether found or original. They may be surreal sculptural puns, or practical, activist technologies; intended for contemplation in a gallery, or for use in the street. The type of designed object this exhibition looks to are those with different intentions to mainstream or commercial design: that engage with inquiry, speculation, provocation and criticism. For both functional art and critical design, the ostensible use of an object may be only one of its functions, no more important than its functions as story-teller and carrier of ideas. The stories they tell can be provocative, dystopian, humorous, cynical or sympathetic. They can provide real assistance to the user, or merely suggest function in the service of their message. They may provoke the comfortable, or equip the vulnerable.



Left: *Hypershopper* by Jacques Coetzer (2006); **Right:** *Trolley Works* project by Ismail Farouk (2009)

DIY frames objects at the intersection of art and design. Jacques Coetzer produced a functional stretch-trolley for *Hypershopper* (2006), while Ismail Farouk's *Trolley Works project* (2009) saw the artist designing equipment for luggage-carriers in downtown Johannesburg. The one is a finely crafted and desirable object offering a commentary on consumption, while the other a material outcome of an activist engagement with informal and marginalised workers. Tools made by contemporary artists with an interventionist or activist urge often intend to equip vulnerable members of society, while agitating for attention to the issues that affect them. In the design arena, 'critical design' or 'design for debate' uses product design as an artistic medium, for telling stories and provoking discussion – around the direction of technological development for example, or around social issues mediated by technology. Visit the exhibition website for references to work across this spectrum.

Please note - art, design and the everyday are present in the exhibition as themes rather than strict divisions. Artists and designers can submit objects that are their functional responses to everyday situations, and anyone can submit work that is critical and conceptual.

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