

# Room in a Room: the Design Triangle Project



'Room in a Room' is an international project funded by the Enkeboll Foundation for the Arts and Architecture. Design teams from three renowned schools—North Carolina State University, Raleigh; Henry Van de Velde Institute, Antwerp and Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh—were asked to explore the conceptual idea of a 'Room in a Room'. The results of their tireless efforts were presented in an exhibition at the Antwerp Fashion Museum – MoMu last June and will visit the other university cities this autumn.

**T**his exhibition is the result of an interdisciplinary project between universities in the United States and Belgium. Art, architecture, interior architecture, and industrial design students collaborated on the design of components in a room where the boundaries between the furnishings and the room itself are blurred. For the students of the Henry Van de Velde School of Architecture in Antwerp (Belgium), the Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh

© Maja Govaerts - 'Bed Buddy'  
Bedside table, high adjustable with a tilting top  
on removable tray, built lamp





the range of possibilities offered by computer-based manufacturing technologies applied to products that utilise wood. These technologies include laser scanning, vector graphic image manipulation, and computer-controlled machining.

We developed several new product concepts that show how utility can be provided in a room, and how a room's spatial divisions and aesthetics are affected."

Philosophically speaking, the student's concepts have two goals in common. The first allows the user to adapt a space to suit his or her needs, both in terms of utility and aesthetics. Secondly, the concepts all seek to maintain what they see as Enkeboll's philosophy of honouring the use of premium materials by emphasising both craft and design as an alternative to a disposable consumer culture.

The projections of a room may be related to changes in the realities and needs of everyday life. The Carnegie Mellon University team, made up of architecture students, devised a modular system that addresses the possibilities of changing a space to meet a user's needs. "It is our intention that the different pieces suggest different uses related to human proportions and positions. As a result, there is a two-fold dynamic experience where the user directly changes the environment, and where the environment can suggest interactions with the individual."

### The living environment

The group of the Henry van de Velde Institute comprises five interior architecture students. Consequently, their approach to the project differed considerably from that of the NC State University and Carnegie Mellon, as they include product designers and architects.

"We refined the subject to a 'Room within a Room', as a smaller space belonging to a larger one, which we then labelled as the living environment'. This smaller space has a particular purpose; both functionally and intuitively. The functional aspects deal with the construction of the space, the intuitive ones with the experience of the room."

Within the design triangle project several furniture masterpieces took shape: a reclining seat with several configurations; a seating object that is hooked on the wall; a large table, expandable and collapsible from a raised floor...

At the exhibition opening two interesting accomplishments from the Antwerp students drew our attention. One impressive piece of furniture is a luxurious lounge chair upholstered with flower-printed velvet, another masterpiece is a bedside table, height-adjustable with a tilting top and removable tray plus built-in fluorescent lamp. Apart from their freshness and functionality, these creations predict a brilliant future for the young designers.

ROOM IN A ROOM

Ontwerp Workshop voor

DESIGN TRIANGEL PROJECT



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©Terah Roux - 'Lazy Lady', lounge chair



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(Pennsylvania), and the North Carolina State University in Raleigh (North Carolina), the influence of the cultural context became a central theme in the development of their responses to the project.

In Belgian culture, a tradition of permanence in dwelling, combined with a high degree of craft and artisanship exists. Architecture needs to be able to adapt and modify the qualities and attributes of a permanent setting to meet the evolving needs of individuals and families over time.

The nature of contemporary society in the United States demands that architecture is able to respond to social and physical mobility. It is not unusual for an individual or a family in the USA to move from one home to another every 5 to 10 years until retirement. As a consequence, homes and offices both reflect the desire to establish a sense of stability while recognising the reality of continual movement.

The 'Room in a Room' project was made possible by a generous grant from *The Enkeboll Foundation for the Arts and Architecture*. The Foundation was established by Enkeboll Inc, of Carson, California, in memory of Raymond Enkeboll, a pioneer in the architectural woodcarving industry, who set a lifelong example of scholarship in the arts and architecture, combined with personal initiative and industry.

### Changing space within a room

The NC State University Enkeboll Project Team comprised faculty and Art, Architecture, and Industrial Design students. "We were particularly inspired by the visit to the Enkeboll factory in Carson, California, and as a result, wanted to develop our 'Room in a Room' projects around

