



## C... Lab

Conference in Offenbach  
from: dds 9/95

The announcement of the conference displayed on the shop-windows of the venue, a former furniture store in Offenbach.

**“From the good to the virtual form - product design in the digital age” was the theme of an event at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Offenbach (Offenbach Design School), which set new directions.**

The virtual form was at the center of the debate for two days. In order to avoid that the conference might lose itself in theoretical debates on a hypothetical digital future, the initiator, the C-Lab at the Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach, had the “C-Forum“ taking place in a former furniture store in the center of Offenbach. About 15 companies presented different kinds of computer-technologies in the “C-Workshop“. Here the visitor could get detailed and problem-related information on laser cutting, CNC-routers, CAD and visualization systems, data exchange in computer networks and various scanning methods.



On the next floor the impact of the exhibited technologies on design was shown in an impressive exhibition, the “MöbelDigitale“ (Digital Furniture), of CNC-compatibly designed furniture and several presentations of student projects at the Offenbach Design School.



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About 15 companies presented different kinds of computer-technologies in the "C-Workshop".



All participants agreed that the use of new technologies with the computer in a key role would bring along radical changes in future product generations. Numerous lectures by speakers from the most varied disciplines gave an insight or outlook on possible product strategies, their technological context in the areas of development, production and distribution as well as their design.

A prerequisite for the virtual form is the computer technology, respectively the information or communication technology. At the beginning it was mainly used to rationalize existing processes. Today the linking-up of computer systems of different fields of work in a company or company computer networks with the outside via data highway, opens up new potentials for future products. Certain aspects of these so-called virtual products and their corresponding design in a virtual form are of great importance: i.e. participation of the future product user in the design process and immediate and decentralized production. Even though these products are manufactured to suit a specific client, as opposed to those in industrial production, this does not mean that every product has its individual design. On the contrary, the variety produced is based on the generation of innumerable variations.



p 3

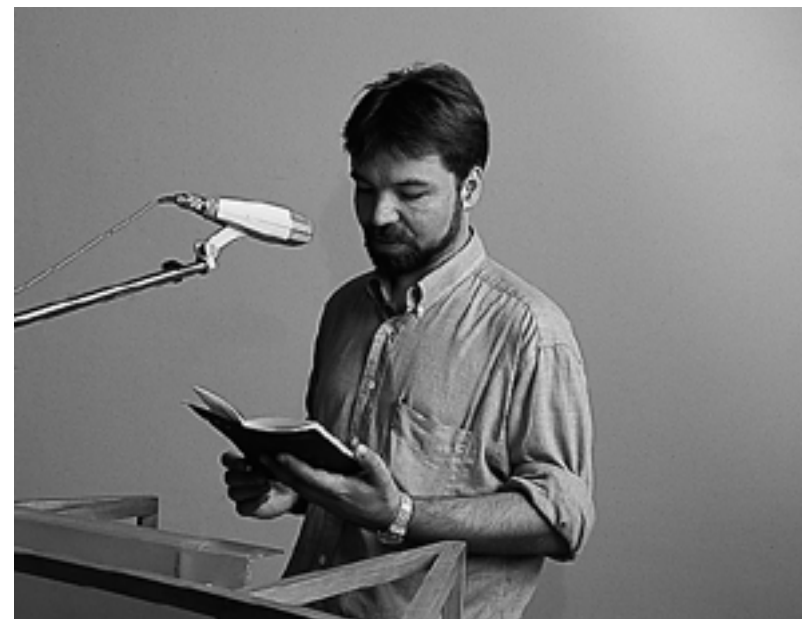


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Friedrich Sulzer, visiting professor for computer technologies at the Offenbach Design School, gave the introductory lecture.

The “MöbelDigitale“, an exhibition of CNC-compatible furniture, showed the influence of exhibited technologies on design.



However, this idea seems to be problematical at the moment, as various contributions to the discussion have shown. Prof. Jochen Gros from the Offenbach Design School presented his ideas on how virtual products might look in the future. With the help of his own furniture designs, which were also exhibited as prototypes in the “Möbel Digitale“, he showed possible design characteristics of the virtual form.



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Animated discussions on  
what had been seen and  
heard took place in  
the “C-Café”.



### Photos:

Erika Sulzer-Kleinemeier,  
Gleisweiler

dds was also represented  
with a stand in Offenbach.



With the redesign of the legendary Ulm Stool designed by Max Bill he demonstrated how CNC-compatible wood joints entail their own independent aesthetics.

The varied program of the conference was well balanced by a successful mixture of lectures on individual aspects of computer technology, like Virtual Reality, virtual modeling, possibilities of CNC wood working, and reports from the practice of design, craft trade and industry. It was a program that offered exciting and interesting information for all participants.

