

---

THIRTY

---

FOR

---

SALE

---

WRITTEN BY JEREMIAH TESOLIN  
EDITED BY ALAN PROHM

Author: Jeremiah Tesolin  
Edited by: Alan Prohm  
Graphic design: Chris Bolton  
Photography: Chikako Harada

University of Art and Design Helsinki  
Hämeentie 135 C  
FIN-00560 Helsinki  
Finland

Printed by Art Print Oy  
Paper Galerie art silk 150 g/m<sup>2</sup>  
Set in Gill Sans

© 2005 Jeremiah Tesolin and The University of Art and Design Helsinki

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or informational storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the University or author.

UNIVERSITY OF ART AND  
DESIGN HELSINKI



## /// INTRODUCTION ///

There's a shift occurring in the scale of design production. It's being driven by a body of consumers who are interested in buying objects with a unique story behind them, and by designers who don't identify with mass industrial production, but decide to take a different route. Responding to the trend, new design shops are emerging to sell these objects. Both the objects and the shops have a feeling of authenticity about them. Everything's done on a small scale and with a commitment to the people involved. It's the designers who create the objects and bring it all together.

The *30ForSale* project began as a proposal by Jeremiah Tesolin, and was launched at the University of Art and Design, Helsinki in the autumn of 2004, hosted by the Applied Art and Design program. The project was carried out by a motivated group of fourteen designers from five different countries. Each designer added his or her own unique perspective to the project and to the objects themselves.

The idea behind *30ForSale* was simple: produce an object in thirty units, exhibit it and sell it to the public. The theme, "materials from Finland" served as a starting point for the design process. While the idea and the theme were kept simple, the design results and learning outcomes were complex in a very positive way.

*30ForSale* as a project had two main aspects: education and business. The educational aspect saw young designers learning about the whole process of communication involved in creating a product. It focused on market research, competition, packaging, presentation and pricing, among other things. The business aspect involved attracting local Finnish companies to support the production efforts, and eventually selling the items produced. Neither of these aspects is separate from design, but both are crucial elements in the success of a product or event.

This publication is meant to conclude, document and promote the concept behind *30ForSale*. I've included an assortment of various articles written from various perspectives: the design industry, the designers, retail and producers. Dutch designer Ed Annink shares his observations on the production situation in The Netherlands. Timo Salli explains the thinking behind the Applied Art and Design program. I interview Jo Jackson about the *Beyond the Valley* shop in London and how it supports self-initiated production. Katrina Siltavuori of the Norsu Gallery in Helsinki discusses her first reaction to *30ForSale* as an exhibition. Artek, one of Finland's most iconic design producers, and Sokeva, the Finnish society for the vision-impaired, reflect from a company's perspective on being involved with *30ForSale*.

Most important, though, are the fourteen objects that together made up the *30ForSale* collection. A series of comments and interviews relates the designers' different experiences with the project in educational, business and personal terms. This project could never have happened without their enthusiasm and effort. ///

THIRTY

FOR

SALE

THE

CONCEPT

We started with the unifying design theme of “materials from Finland”. Often when we exhibit abroad there’s considerable interest in what’s new from Finland. It could be due to the design heritage, or to the isolated location, that there is this international mystique. “Materials from Finland” could be interpreted in various ways, as a physical material such as domestic wood or paper textiles, or in terms of the cultural material represented by a popular candy or a tradition. The idea was to elevate the status of the material domestically through the design, and to create interest abroad with a story told through the design object.

Producing thirty units of a design is a challenge, but not an impossible one. Most university design courses focus on creating an object up to the prototype phase. Creating a unique object in the form of a prototype is often challenging enough. The educational methods used in *30ForSale* went a few steps beyond prototyping into having the designers create “shortcuts” for production.

Producing thirty units challenged the designer to start thinking of easier ways to realize their design. This is often the same process they would go through with a company in order to get the object into production. Most designers had to simplify their designs in order to make it quicker to produce. Some created special tools or moulds in order to speed up the process. This process of refinement also made it possible for the designer to continue producing more units after the initial thirty were sold. Simplifying the design this way also made the object more attractive to companies interested in taking it further into mass production.

The designers in *30ForSale* had to develop their own personal business model. In some cases, making the objects on their own was quicker and more cost-effective than approaching a company. For example, some of the ceramic objects in the collection were easier and less costly to make independently. Other objects relied on establishing collaboration with a company.

For the companies, being involved with *30ForSale* was a chance to test a new design concept without much initial commitment. They could get market feedback from consumers to diminish the risks of a more radical product idea. The sales also gave indications of what is popular and paid for part or all of the production costs. They could also test packaging and pricing, get publicity through the event, explore a new market the company may want to enter, and build up the company’s brand through association with young designers and innovative designs.

One option was for designers to approach design-oriented companies associated with the material they had chosen to use. Artek, for example, produced objects for one designer, ended up selling all thirty units, and made up their full production costs. They also got to test a new product on the market that will now go into mass production. Designers also formed relationships with companies not usually associated with design. This was encouraging, especially in Finland where more companies could use the services of the design field to increase their competitiveness. ///

