

Written by Jeremiah Tesolin and Alex Estadieu, December 2005

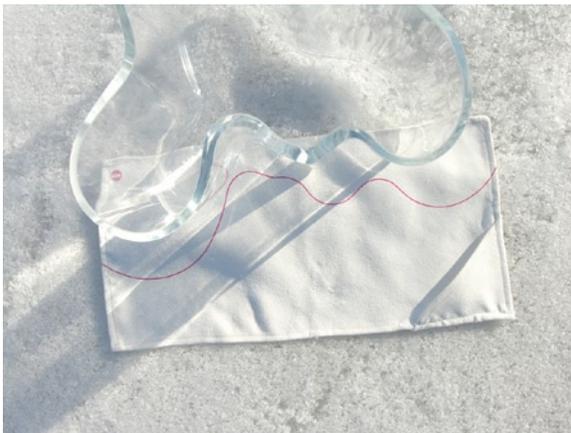
What would Aalto say if he'd be designing today? Material need in Western countries have exploded, global economies, advances in technologies such as the internet changing how we communicate, mobile phones and digital aided design. Then there's the affect these advances have had on society. In many ways society affects design culture, and Aalto's perspective on his work would have to change. Yet still in our culture we universally dream about a change for the better. And Aalto's design would relate and perhaps even comment on everyday cultural issues.

If we think in terms of designing for local culture, design has the power to communicate. Local culture can become a design object. For example, we created a series of ceramics named Cupts (cut cups): tableware designed for food, made entirely from ceramic cups. We intended Cupts to be used for eating Japanese food for a restaurant in Helsinki. By using iconic Finnish design, we modified the Teema cups by Finnish design legend Kai Frank for a new food experience. For local Finnish people this means experiencing food in small portions with tableware that is somewhat familiar, but presented as a completely new product.

With the explosion of global economies, Aalto would be faced with an enormous amount of objects being produced around him. He'd not only have to consider what we produce, but also how we produce it. For example, we created St8ls (pronounced stools) as a table created from iconic Finnish design. The design method is based on relooking existing production methods. Production for St8ls means a new production run inspired by the essence of Artek's and Aalto's design culture, but also reusing elements already in production. For the public it means the chance to own a product that is a continued design icon, presented and used in a new way.

Another side of cultural production is how people bond with an objects. In Western societies we often search to buy an object with an emotional attachment. The culture of associating a product purchase with an emotionally driven brand signals some of the work we've done for Iittala. For example, with our project named Iittala Care we support the brand on an emotional level, while elevating the objects as a true representation of modern luxury. Iittala Care is centered around offering inspiration to show Iittala objects in their best condition possible. The Iittala Care additional are designed specifically for polishing glass or metal objects, especially after washing by hand or dishwasher. Each care additional is made from a microfiber textile with a special hand insert for better contact with the material. The prints on the care additional symbolize both the general Iittala brand identity as well as iconic objects from the Iittala range. Iittala Care was the winner of the Iittala additional competition 2005.

The design culture in Finland has become truly international. Part of this has been the positive immigration of foreigners to Finland. They bring a fresh viewpoint and skilled determination to add to the already competitive design economy in Finland. We see living in Helsinki as being a great home base for our design work. With Alex being from France and Jeremiah from Canada, there's a combined experience of living in two continents, but based in a Scandinavian context. Being based in Helsinki for years has allowed us to concentrate on developing as designers. It's only been in the last year that we've been traveling enough to realize what our position is while living in Finland. We believe through our work that design isn't about where you're from. It's a mentality made up of what you've experienced.



Cupts, St8ls and Iittala Care are pictured above and designed by Jeremiah Tesolin and Alex Estadieu.