



— Redesign —

RE DESIGN



Loop project - National research
INTERVIEWS: Entry # 57



INTERVIEWS: Entry # 57

BY:

Kristina Ciganić
Lora Šturlić-Tupek
Jana Šimunić

JELENA ŠTURLIĆ TUPEK

Furniture designer, producer, technical engineer, store layout planner



Colour fan - <https://pixabay.com/photos/glaze-color-fan-structure-5109040/> - creative commons license

My name is Jelena Šturlić Tupek.

I am 37 years old and live in Zagreb. I have been doing this for the past eleven years and I love creating new stuff. Furniture and interior design are my passion as well as furniture production. My goal (when producing a new piece of furniture) is to have a beautifully designed, functional, ecological, sustainable piece of art.

TELL US a little about your business and how the idea of changing the approach for a greater circularity of design was born.

We produce children's furniture and manufacture furniture for public buildings, private homes and villas, which is a very specific branch of furniture manufacturing. Furniture that we are making is used in kindergartens and public buildings, hospitals and also in private houses. That only says that we have to ensure that every piece of furniture is made with extra care and safety, while following specific rules and laws.



Kids room - <https://pixabay.com/pt/photos/crian%C3%A7as-design-de-interiores-4508017/> - creative commons license

The idea of changing the approach was born intuitively while trying to keep pace with the furniture market. Every year, let's say, we have to add some additional value to our products to be competitive. We always think long term – to be able to meet the needs of people today without compromising the needs of future generations.

Doing this requires rethinking and inspiring changes in lifestyles and consumption, and adopting new ways of working. We are committed to leading the way forward together with our co-workers, customers and partners and to making a positive difference. This is both a responsibility and a business opportunity. The more people we reach, the bigger the impact we can have together, and the more people we can enable to live a better everyday life.



Dressing room - <https://pixabay.com/photos/dressing-room-wardrobe-design-1137941/> - creative commons license

Circular design is about creating products and services that no longer have a lifecycle with a beginning, a middle and an end. The purpose is to design products that can “be made to be made again”. What exactly does that mean? For example, if we are making a new dresser for kids, we do it in a way that it lasts longer, it's multifunctional and made out of materials from verified and certified sources. First we make a dresser that has an add-in on top which you can use to change the baby's diapers. You can use it as long as the child uses diapers, approximately until the baby turns two. While using it for changing you can also use the drawers of the dresser to keep the baby's clothes, cosmetics, toys etc.

When the child gets bigger, you can remove the add-in and use only the drawers. After the child no longer wants it, you can use it in any other room of the house. After that we encourage people to donate it or if it is broken, repair it or dispose of it according to the state regulations. Also, our clients often have the need to “freshen up” the piece that's close to their heart in terms of repainting, or adding new handles, hinges, legs, locks, drawers etc.



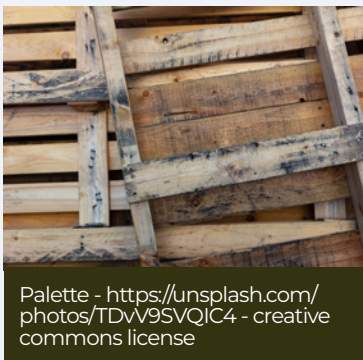
Kids bedroom - https://unsplash.com/photos/wN63YFU_JXk - creative commons license



WHAT WERE THE MAIN

difficulties you encountered in dealing with processes of change in product (or service) design?

First of all - the money and the costs! When trying to design and produce sustainable furniture, we had to make great changes. First of all, new and different wood-based materials, more expensive ones with an FSC certificate.



What does that mean? FSC certificate ensures that all the laws and regulations, local and national are being followed. It promotes efficient use of forest products and services to maintain the economic sustainability and wide range of environmental and social benefits. Our customers were used to buying low-cost furniture and never cared about sustainability, ecology, environment etc., only the price. But nowadays things are changed and people are more aware of the global problems that we encounter.

Waste, plastic, high cost materials, old machines, toxic liquids and glues, are all the things we use to manufacture furniture. Also, plastic wraps and non-recyclable packaging. Designs are intended to minimize waste while highlighting the natural beauty of the products used. Instead of using a chemical wood finish which seals the furniture, we use water-based wood finishes. Instead of using solid wood, we use particle boards, veneers and natural materials to use less wood matter and save our forests.



Second – how to get customers while being more expensive than others? Third - we had to buy new machines that use less energy and fuel and are computer-based and guided. We had to invest in a new software package that enabled us to work faster, better and more punctually.

That way we produced less waste. Also, we had to teach our employees the new ways. We were earning less and spending more but we were aware that it was the only road for us. It was hard. Still, we have difficulties earning the trust of our customers, while constantly defending our high prices and great quality. We still produce waste, but minimal quantity and have problems with proper disposal of wood-based materials and plastic. Often it is not enough just to have a great product, but we have to offer more to our clients.



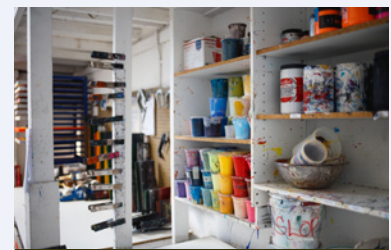
Bedroom - <https://unsplash.com/photos/ICP7YIDf7LE> - creative commons license

Then we use our business partners and their goods which we implement with ours, but the main problem is that we usually cannot find partners that share the same ideology as we do in terms of circularity and sustainability.

SPEAKING OF DESIGN: what shape do you think the future of your business could have in terms of circularity and sustainability?

People are becoming more and more conscious of the impact their choices have on the planet. They no longer want to be wasteful and throw things away, and are seeking better value in what they buy. We know that resources are limited so we must find smarter ways to use them. It's about extending the life of products and materials, seeing them as raw materials for the future and eliminating waste at every level.

Sustainable furniture is made from materials that have certain eco-friendly characteristics. These materials often are recycled or repurposed. Sustainable furniture can also be made from materials that are easily renewable, for example wood, textile, glass, thread, leaves etc.

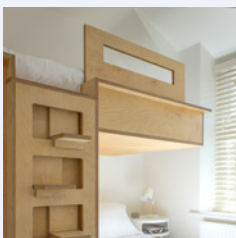


Paint - <https://unsplash.com/photos/koy-5uzlPU> - creative commons license



INTERVIEWS: Entry # 57

We want to be circular in every aspect of our business. We want to make it easier for customers to acquire, care for and pass on products in circular ways, such as repairing, reusing, reselling, and recycling them.

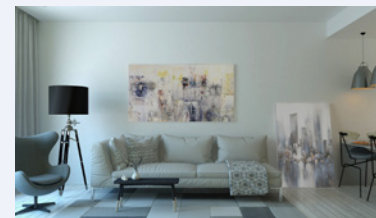


Bunk bed - https://unsplash.com/photos/hzwaWw_Vnxw - creative commons license

One aim of circular design is to develop products that can be useful throughout the changing lives of our customers. For example, we have baby cots that transform into toddler beds, or modular products, where pieces can be added or taken away as needed, to adapt to constantly evolving needs. We believe that you shouldn't have to compromise on quality of life or products to act responsibly.

People should still be able to refresh their space as often as they want to and improve their life at home, with functional, beautiful and affordable furniture of good quality, without damaging the planet. When the products are no longer needed, we encourage our customers to give their furniture a second life.

This can be by repairing, reusing, passing them on, or recycling them. We are also looking for ways to turn materials from old products into resources for new ones. The change can be as little as changing the wheels on the coffee table to changing the doors on your kitchen and creating a brand new space, by just using color or some accessories. My personal attitude leads to small businesses and well organized ones, not enormous factories which produce much waste.



Living room - <https://pixabay.com/pt/photos/sala-de-estar-design-de-interiores-1835923/> - creative commons license

This means better conditions for the workers also, as well as for the owners - better interpersonal conditions and healthier surroundings.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is the so-called “circular economy”?

A	B	C
93%	0%	7%

2. Do you believe that a more sustainable economic system can be equally productive than the current one?

A	B	C
27%	43%	30%

3. Which of these consumer choices have you decided to implement in the last 10 years to protect the environment?

A	B	C
13%	43,5%	43,5%

4. How will the so-called “circular economy” affect the job market?

A	B	C
10%	50%	40%

5. In your work, how many strategic choices related to sustainability have been made in the last 10 years?

A	B	C
43,5%	33%	23,5%

6. Which of these 4 “Rs” is more important to ensure a better future for humanity?

A	B	C	D
7%	23%	67%	3%

7. Which of these 4 “Rs” is most present in your family’s daily life?

A	B	C	D
7%	13%	80%	0%

8. In your opinion, what link is there between technology and the “circular economy”?

A	B	C
80%	13%	7%

9. Do you think we will be able to change the way we consume so as not to affect the environment and its limited resources?

A	B	C
33%	43,5%	23,5%

10. Are you familiar with the UN 2030 Agenda or have you ever heard of SDGs?

A	B	C
60%	23%	17%

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

11. Do you think that the economy in the past was more sustainable than it is today?

A	B	C
63%	20%	17%

12. Which of these 3 statements do you consider the most true and important?

A	B	C
37%	53%	10%

Loop project - National research
INTERVIEWS: Entry # 57