

**Niels van Eijk &
Miriam van der Lubbe**

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Subjective 152

Catalogue 162

Subjects

‘A lampshade that doubles as a light source – that was an idea that attracted me.’ Development of the Bobbin Lace Lamp started in 1998 with a collaboration between the Dutch design label Droog Design and the Italian lighting manufacturer Flos. Niels van Eijk recalls the years it took him to bring the idea to fruition: four in all, although the result of all the efforts long bore little resemblance to the mental image behind the design. ‘What I had in mind was to create a skin in which the light source would be invisible, while also addressing the customary construction of a lampshade.’

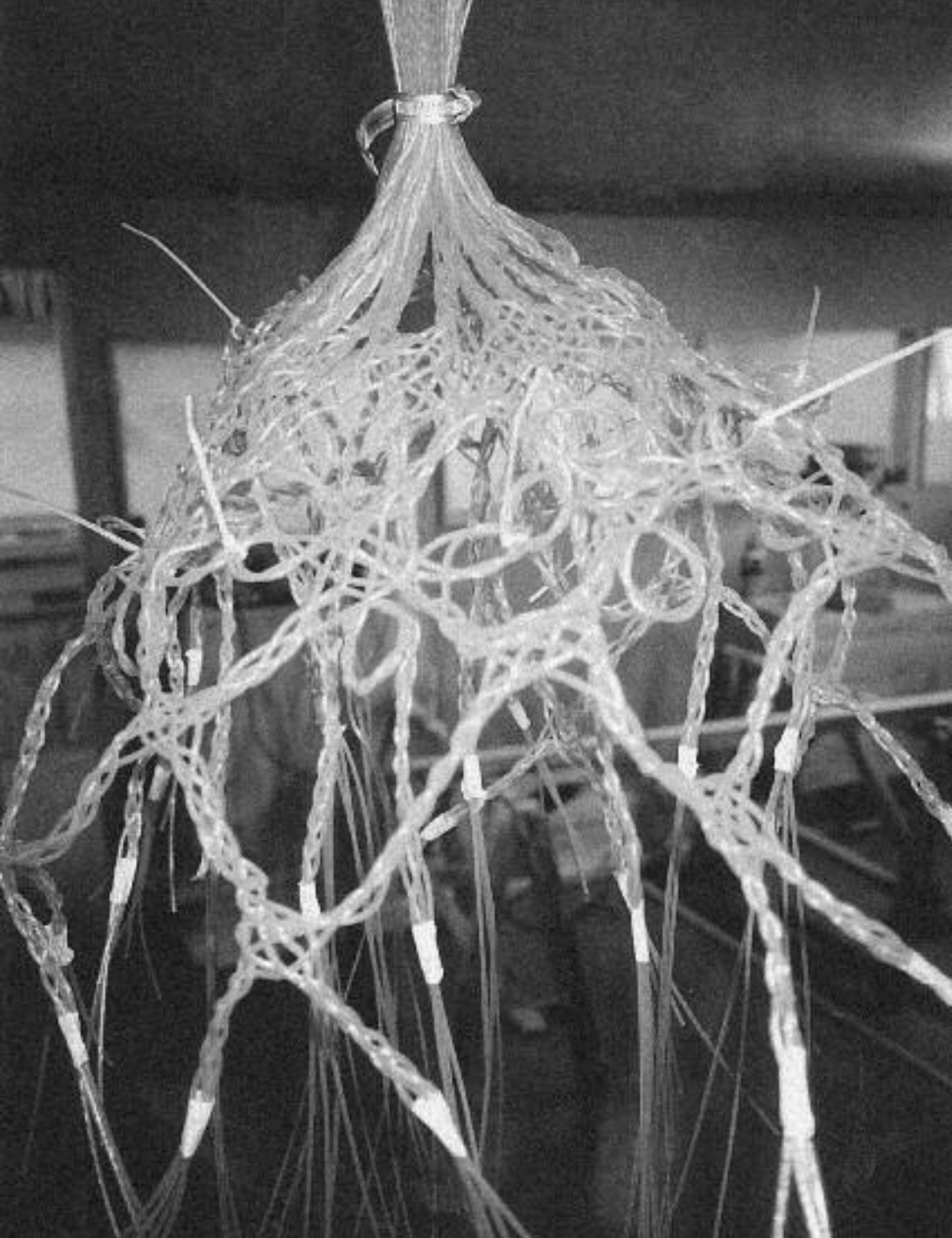
The manufacturer supplied the material that enabled the image to gradually become reality: optical glass fibre. At the time optical glass fibre was still a fairly exclusive lighting technology which was not widely used in consumer products. Opting for this material made it possible to approach the design from the standpoint of the fabrication technique. Van Eijk points out how important the production method is to him when thinking about form.

The production process, whether handcraft or entirely industrial, has always determined the eventual appearance of the resulting product. Trying to get to grips with the realization of an idea can sometimes force him to spend time reinventing the wheel. The development of the Bobbin Lace Lamp illustrates his approach perfectly.

The form research was initially carried out with simple strings of plastic fibre. Humble washing-line cord stood in for the glass fibre. Logically, the formal principle of the design came about by knotting the washing-line to make a three-dimensional structure. It would be interesting to see if the basic, rather antiquated, bobbin technique for lacemaking would prove suitable for the high-tech material in which the bulbless lighting product was to be made. A quick course in bobbin lacemaking led to the first test designs in 2001.

Around that time, Flos and Droog Design ended their cooperation. The breach could have meant the death-knell for the project. Optical glass fibre was too expensive a material to permit the designer to finance development of the lamp out of his own pocket. Besides, the design was still a long way from production-ready. But Niels van Eijk decided to continue. ‘Right from the start, I felt I was onto something. At a moment like that, people are welcome to tell me it’s not feasible but I won’t listen. I was determined to carry on with it. You can call it pigheaded if you like, but I believe you can do anything if you set your mind to it. Our aim was to present the prototype in Milan at the earliest opportunity. We managed to do it, and the lamp immediately attracted attention.’

The use of optical glass fibre allowed integration of the light source into the lamp itself. It was also the intention to design the structure to be entirely self-supporting, but getting to this stage took some time. The first working model needed rings and ribs to maintain the shape of the lamp. Similar structural supports would be needed several years later for an equally ingenious design, the ‘woven’ lamp based on the traditional Jacquard



01.010
Bobbin Lace Lamp

Flowers have been cropping up in their oeuvre for some years now as a separate area of work. In 2006, their cooperation with Flower Council of Holland, a worldwide industry marketing organization, resulted in designs for huge floral dresses. These were astonishingly sensual experiments in wearable floral architecture. They conveyed not just the gentle, beguiling quality of flowers but also something of their potentially sinister character.

06.007-010

The dresses were presented at the Furniture Fair in Milan; a strange context, perhaps, but the Flower Council were keen to bring their product to the attention of 'influentials' in the design world. Visitors to the world's leading furniture event gaped as four mannequins modelled the dresses daily on the forecourt of Superstudio. Their dramatic appearance had exactly the effect the clients wanted: astonishment, a buzz of discussion and massive media attention. Since their debut in Milan, the four dresses have been travelling the world, constantly adorned with freshly-cut flowers.

Van Eijk & Van der Lubbe have elaborated new concepts for presenting the floral industry in Milan in the two years that followed. In 2007, they collaborated with the industrial designer Jan Hoekstra to develop a system of modular blocks capable of functioning as house plant supports. These were used to construct a series of large, wind-up objects. For example, the blocks were assembled to make a life-size tank and a huge bear, each complete with a key to wind up the clockwork mechanism by which it is propelled.

07.037

07.038-039

For the third year, the designers decided to take a fresh look at the primary object associated with cut flowers: the vase. Why is it, they wondered, that vases usually do so little with the flowers they contain? Would it be possible to design a support whose own character was modified by the arrangement of flowers? Their answer was Bloom My Buddy, a design that immediately showed its potential as a consumer product.

08.003-004

The studio's close relation with the floral industry bears witness to their aspirations to introduce some continuity and a longer-term perspective into their work. It has proved a fruitful area for those prepared to keep up the effort. That a process of this kind can only develop step by step is demonstrated by their relation with Flower Council of Holland.

In Bouquets of Emotion, the designers have given a new twist to the relatively staid heritage of Dutch floristry, the traditional 'say it with flowers' bouquet. Like a bouquet of the kind you can order from a florist for instant delivery to someone in another part of the world, a Bouquet of Emotion is assembled according to a formula. In this case, however, the emotions concerned tend to be more ambiguous and provocative than those of the conventional product. Van Eijk & Van der Lubbe have devised formulas for a Bouquet of Sympathy and a Bouquet of Jealousy, for example. Their Bouquet of Anger consists of 80 percent fury, 10 percent irritation and 10 percent disappointment, with each ingredient expressed by a specific flower and colour. Only their Bouquet of Love is pure and unequivocal – a heart of white roses embraced by a surround of red ones.

06.017-022

07.013-016

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06.019

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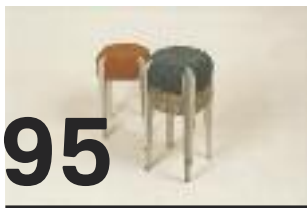
06.017

08.012



Catalogue

1995



95.001 **Textile Recycling** L
33 x 33 x 43 cm; recycled cotton, aluminium



95.002 **Personification** L
9 x 8 x 7 cm; ceramic, silver



95.003 **Personification** L
8 x 31 cm; glass, silver



95.004 **Personification** L
8 x 31 cm; glass, silver



95.005 **Personification** L
10 x 7 x 6 cm; glass, earring



95.006 **Personification** L
8 x 30 cm, 8 x 10 cm; glass, labels, wine, peas



95.007 **Personification** L
8 x 31 cm; glass

1996



96.001 **Mass Produced One-Offs** L
7 x 10 cm; glass



96.002 **Glass Bowls** L



96.003 **To Measure** L

997



97.001 **Ovase L**
12 × 12 × 12 cm; oasis



97.002 **Decobulbs L**
10 × 10 × 17 cm; glass, transfers ● Stolzle Oberglass AG



97.003 **Multilamp L**
16 × 16 × 29 cm; glass ● Stolzle Oberglass AG



97.004 **Reflector Lamp L**
15 × 15 × 3 cm; glass ● Stolzle Oberglass AG



97.005 **Cow Chair E**
43 × 38 × 75 cm; formed cow hide ◆ Droog



97.006 **About the Back Side E**
38 × 41 × 78 cm; reinforced polyester



97.007 **Tweety Tower E**
18 × 20 × 123 cm, 18 × 20 × 242 cm; plywood
◆ ELI



97.008 **Yellow Bench E**
350 × 280 × 65 cm; wood, bisonyl
● Design Academy Eindhoven / Bas van Tol
■ collab. M. Mulder

998



98.001 **Workshop Pekha Harni L**



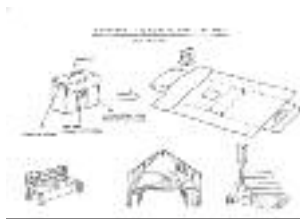
98.002 **Zinc Bar E**
220 × 80 × 170 cm; plywood, zinc ● Van der Lubbe Family ■ collab. M. Mulder



98.003 **Kitchen Table with Chopping Block E**
205 × 85 × 95 cm; beech ● Van der Lubbe Family ■ collab. M. Mulder



98.004 Embracelet L



98.005 Wherever I Lay My Head L
● Auping Design Competition



98.006 Nowadays L
A4 ● BNO



98.007 Mandarin Duck E
● Droog ■ collab. M. Mulder



98.008 Bladder Lamp E
Pig's bladder



98.009 Stove 1 E
50 x 40 x 200 cm; steel ◆ ELi



98.010 Purthing E
35 x 35 x 45 cm; polyurethane



98.011 A4 Hat L
30 x 60 cm; wool



98.012 A4 Shawl L
30 x 150 cm; wool



98.013 Chocobarbie L
33 x 10 x 3 cm; chocolate ◆ ELi



98.014 Candy Necklace (For Grown Ups) L
15 x 15 x 12 cm; Paracetamol, Panadol, Rennies, vitamin C, elastic



98.015 Cleaning Device L
30 x 30 x 5 cm; chamois, sponge, leather, elastic ● Hema Design Competition