



The Joy of Movement

Based on reviving traditional Irish furniture the Rocking Stool has been designed by Aimee Hartshorn, a recent graduate of DIT's furniture design course

Words by Alan McDonald

The Rocking Stool is a modern take on the traditional Irish creepie (milking stool). The creepie, regularly found in use by the fireplace, was one of the most common pieces of furniture in a typical Irish household. Traditionally a three legged stool with one leg longer than the rest, the creepie was a workman-like stool not only used on the farm but in a social aspect. Aimee found particular interest in the social importance attached to the stool. "What really lured me towards this particular piece of furniture was that it was generally one of the most prized pieces of furniture in a household and only special visitors were allowed use it."

The stool, which was part of Aimee's final year design thesis, was based on reviving traditional Irish furniture. "I achieved this by focusing on what I felt was the most important aspect of the time – community. My use of traditional and vernacular methods is primarily based on my desire for sustainability for furniture design."

Aimee put great emphasis on using methods and materials available at the time and keeping with the theme, she used traditional wedge joints and locally sourced wood. Due to its tight grain nature, beech was chosen as the ideal material. Perfectly suited to making wedge joints, beech is also a durable timber which will cope effortlessly with the stresses and strains created from the rocking. Measuring 450mm x 450mm x 460mm, the stool gives the user full control of the movement by allowing their two feet to be based firmly on the ground to control the rocking.

The Rocking Stool manages to create a unique social environment allowing each user to sway forward, backward or side to side in order to aid communication. Due to its ease of movement the stool interacts effortlessly with the user; in time movement on the stool becomes second nature and feels almost like an extended part of the user's body. A refreshing idea and beautifully produced, the stool intends to challenge the way we interact in a social setting and consequentially make communicating and interaction more efficient.

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