



South-Eastern Finland  
University of Applied Sciences

## **NORDIC PRODUCT DESIGN**

**Extent** 3 ECTS Credits

**Responsible teacher** Sushant Passi

**Course contact person** Ulla Vuorinen

**Seats** 40

**Duration** 2. - 13.8.2021

**Application period:**

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## **COURSE INFORMATION**

### **Course objectives**

- Developing an understanding of design history, contemporary design and design-thinking in Nordic countries, particularly in Finland.
- Developing theoretical and practical knowledge in ecologically driven product and material design.
- Exploring themes of design thinking and critical design in the creative process.
- Fostering a creative process to produce a broader array of ideas, from ideation and experimentation to presentation.

### **Content**

The Nordic Product Design Summer School is an intensive interdisciplinary course focusing on a specific approach towards the design of products, materials and systems akin to Nordic countries. The course explores themes of design thinking along the current trajectory of Nordic design in the realm of ecological values, sustainable futures, aesthetics, materiality and critical design. The first phase of the course is focused on developing a theoretical understanding of these themes, its practice and history in Nordic Countries, particularly in Finland, through visual material, film, critical/ interactive dialogues and assignments.

The second phase of the course will involve practical explorations, assignments, workshops and experiments, initially in groups and later individually. The ultimate goal of this course is for students to foster a creative process, from ideation to artefact, and to be equipped with an approach towards design thinking and practice in the Nordic context.



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## Prerequisites

None

## Preliminary schedule

### Week 1

- Introduction to the course. Breaking in and getting to know everyone and their backgrounds. Some group bonding exercises. Learning Diary.
- Interactive lecture covering the history and journey of product design and applied art in Nordic Countries, specifically in Finland - A critical discourse that covers the works of Tapio Wirkkala, Armi Ratia, Rut Bryk, Alvar Aalto, Kaj Franck, etc. Suggestions on readings.
- Film/Talk screening on the subject followed by a critical discourse. Assignment.
- Interactive Lecture on Contemporary Design in Nordic Countries and its trajectories towards ecological design and material futures, including design and its impact on SDGs. Examples and samples of such work, including my own.
- Interactive talk from Aleksi Vesaluoma, founder of Caracara Collective & Mandin Earth. Examples and samples of his work.
- Trip to Nuutajarvi glass village and Kaj Franck's Design Museum - exploring the importance of glass in the Finnish design context.
- Suggestions on readings.

### Week 2

- Summer Nature walk/hike - Explore natural materialities and collect materials - blueberries, birch bark, pine tree resin, etc. Mood/material board assignment.
- Lecture/discussion on Critical Thinking in design and Speculative Design practices and examples of art & design as catalyzers of thought in the nordic context. Short films.
- Workshop on design thinking and speculative design based on readings. Envisioning future case scenarios.
- Use these found materials along with materials procured (like cellulose, natural rubber latex and some classroom friendly equipment) to experiment with and develop new materials.
- Apply learnings through an assignment to come up with an artifact that uses new materials and is discursive in some way.
- Presenting ideas and creations. Reviewing with peers.



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## Grading

Pass/fail or 0-5

Excellent (5)

Good (3-4)

Satisfactory (1-2)

Fail (0)

## Assessment

- Commitment to research and individual/group assignments
- Quality of personal learning diary
- Attendance

## Teacher of the course



Sushant Passi is a multidisciplinary designer and faculty at Aalto University with a deep interest in forms, materials and ecosystems that define the natural world. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Contemporary Design from Aalto University's School of Art, Design and Architecture with a minor in ChemArts. He is passionate about material futures and critical thinking in design. As a designer and researcher, he has worked with a variety of design, technology and innovation firms across Finland and India. His work varies across a range of disciplines in the realm of material innovation, critical design, social impact, product development and applied technologies. He also enjoys spending his free time in nature as an avid hiker and rock climber.