

3.1. Defining the Table and Chairs Design Brief

To confirm that Icelandic makers shared the author's vision of the project and the proposed design brief for the table and chairs, a survey was carried out between September and December 2002 with a quantitative questionnaire. It was important to confirm that the author's understanding of the economic and cultural climate was the same as the Icelandic makers and that the project and an amended design brief would be accepted by them. The results of this survey are provided in Appendix 2 – Defining the Product Brief Questionnaire (page 180).

The questionnaire was designed to confirm and make any necessary changes to the original design brief which was the result of an investigation made by the author in January 2001, on an “Export Explorer Mission” supported by the DTI (as discussed on page 26).

3.1.1. Questionnaire Methods

The questionnaire was posted to Icelandic craftspeople, with questions they could answer easily yes or no in tick boxes and return by post. The questionnaire was translated and piloted by Gisli Thorsteinsson Assistant Professor in Craft Design and Technology at the Iceland University of Education.

Of the 24 posted questionnaires in September 2002, 8 were returned and a further 9 were completed by craftspeople visited by the author between 1st and 12th November 2002. It should be noted that to maintain consistency, craftspeople given questionnaires personally by the author, were not given any more information about the project, or the questionnaire, than those who received it by post.

The recipients of the questionnaire consisted of amateur or professional craftspeople practising mainly in wood, metal and wool, whose work

demonstrated a continuation of traditional Icelandic crafts or a modern development of them.

These people were sourced from:

- British Embassy, Iceland.
- Handverk og Hönnun, Icelandic government funded Handwork and Design organization.
- Iceland University of Education.
- The author's own research, from exhibitions and travel.

The British Embassy provided 2 names of craftspeople who were leaders in their field. Hnadverk og Hönnun gave 14 names, from their database of approximately 160 names. They were selected by the Director, Sunneva Hafsteinsdóttir, and Assistant, Harpa Bjorg Gudfinnsdottir, as best fitting the criteria. Gisli Thorsteinsson, Assistant Professor of the Craft Design and Technology Department in the Iceland University of Education, provided 16 names of craftspeople of an Icelandic traditional nature. When comparing the lists of names it was noted that some names came up in two or more lists.

All the supplied lists of craftspeople were included in the questionnaire mailing list. Six more craftspeople who satisfied the criteria were added, who were met by the author on his travels and no sorting or preferences were made in compiling the mailing list. Gender, materials used or degree of professional status was not considered important, only that their name had been put forward in consideration of the criteria.

Table 2 List of Questionnaire Recipients (page 54), is a list of all the craftspeople who have either been posted a questionnaire in September 2002 (all names up to 24) or were given a questionnaire to answer personally by the author (all names above 24) between 1-12 November 2002.

Table 2 List of Questionnaire Recipients

ID	org	introduced	name	town	country
1	ULLARVINNSLAN ÞINGBORG		Hildigunnur Halldórsdóttir	801 Selfoss	Iceland
2	handverksstofa	HH	Philippe Ricart	300 Akranes	Iceland
3	Rita Freyja Bach & Páll Jensson	HH	R. F. Bach & P. Jensson	310 Borgarnes	Iceland
4	Sculptor museum man	TH	Guttormur Jónsson	Akranesi	Iceland
5	GALLERÍ HNOSS	GT	Bjarni Þór Kristjánsson	101 Reykjavík	Iceland
6	Beate Stormo	HH	Beate Stormo	601 Akureyri	Iceland
7	HADDA VINNUSTOFA	HH,GT	HADDA VINNUSTOFA	603 Akureyri	Iceland
8	Birkir Fanndal Haraldsson	HH	Birkir Fanndal Haraldsson	660 Mývatnssveit	Iceland
9	Valdimar Bjarnason	GT	Valdimar Bjarnason	801 Selfoss	Iceland
10	LISTIÐJAN EIK	HH,GT,BE	Edda Kr. Björnsdóttir	700 Egilsstaðir	Iceland
11	Þórey S. Jónsdóttir	HH	Þórey S. Jónsdóttir	531 Skagafjörður	Iceland
12	LISTIÐJAN EIK	HH,GT,BE	Fjöltnir B. Hlynsson	700 Egilsstaðir	Iceland
13	Gull og Silfursmidjan Erna hf.	GT	Gull	105 Reykjavík	Iceland
14	ULLARVINNSLAN ÞINGBORG	GT,HH	Guðmún Hamelen	801 Selfoss	Iceland
15	ULLARSELÍÐ	HH	ULLARSELÍÐ	311 Borgarnes	Iceland
16	Black smith	TH	Poul H justinussen	FO-100 Torshaun	Faroe
17	Sculptor	GT	Vignir Johannsson	105 Reykjavík	Iceland
18	Tresmidjan Grein ehf.	BE	Grein Oddgeirsson	200 Kopavogur	Iceland
19	Sueinn Olafsson	HH	Sueinn Olafsson	105 Reykjavík	Iceland
20	Stick carver	TH	Nigro A. Hermansen	FO-100 Tórshavn	Faroe
21	The Viking ship Museum	TH	Søren Nielsen	DK-4000 Roskilde	Denmark
22	Malmsteypan HELLA ehf.	BE	Gretar Mar Thorvaldsson	220 Hafnarfjörður	Iceland
23	Kogga	GT	Kolbrun Björgólfsson	101 Reykjavík	Iceland
24	LISTIÐJAN EIK	HH,GT,BE	Hlynur Halldórsson	700 Egilsstaðir	Iceland
25	Þórhildur Þorgeirsdóttir	TH	Þórhildur Þorgeirsdóttir	101 Reykjavík	Iceland
26	Sigríður Kristjánsdóttir	GT	Sigríður Kristjánsdóttir	801 Selfoss	Iceland
27	Lára Vilbergsdóttir	TH	Lára Vilbergsdóttir	700 Egilsstaðir	Iceland
28	Þingborg	GT,HH	A. Saem	Selfoss	Iceland
29	Þingborg	GT,HH	Hilur Hákonardóttir	Selfoss	Iceland
30	Helga Magnúsdóttir	GT	Helga Magnúsdóttir	845 Flúðir	Iceland
31	Ragmlúldur Magnúsdóttir	GT	Ragmlúldur Magnúsdóttir	801 Selfoss	Iceland
32	Gudmundur Magnússon	GT	Gudmundur Magnússon	845 Flúðum	Iceland

3.1.2. Questionnaire Findings

Comments made as additional information on the questionnaire were few. Two craft practitioners at the wool workshop said that wool should be used, because the resource was going to waste in Iceland at the time. Lára Vilbergsdóttir also said the same thing. This comment on wool being an under-utilized material in Iceland made it attractive to the project. As a material wool has a lot of potential and given the potential quantity available it also makes it an abundant resource. One craft practitioner suggested that Asp wood, as an indigenous natural resource, should be explored as a

potential resource in the design brief. This comment is offset by the fact that Asp as a raw resource, or a pre-processed one, does not exist in any large quantities in Iceland unlike kiln dried Oak. Its potential is not ruled out as a useful natural resource for some applications, but it is neither appropriate for furniture making nor is there the potential scale for production, as it is very soft and is only available in very limited amounts. This ruled it out of the design brief.

It was decided from the additional comments made on the questionnaire to change the original brief, and include the addition of wool as a material to be used on the seat of the chair. Also it was felt by the author from the start of the project that his position as the design team leader may not be welcome amongst such resourceful Icelandic craftspeople, who may prefer to lead the project themselves. The results of question 12 (Appendix 2, page 182), “would Icelandic craftspeople be the best equipped to design and produce demonstration products made from oak and aluminum”, were negative, suggesting that craftspeople did not have the confidence to lead the production of prototypes themselves. Question 8 (Appendix 2, page 181) however confirmed that Icelandic craftspeople could influence and provide inspiration for designs. These results strengthened the position felt by the author that he could work between industry and traditional crafts and lead the design/making development process with confidence.

3.1.3. The Amended Table and Chair Design Brief

The table and chairs were to be designed and made collectively by a selected group of craftspeople and the author. They would all contribute to the designing and making process, via an agreed method of interaction. The following design brief was developed after considering the results of defining the product brief questionnaire (Appendix 2, page 180).

Table and chairs design brief:

- Product to be a domestic dining table and chair (and carver).
- Made from oak, aluminium and wool.
- Its design to be influenced by the traditions of Icelandic crafts.
- To carry or present in the nature of its design, Icelandic culture.
- The product to be sold to the home market and exported to other Nordic countries.

3.2. Proposing the Interaction Plan to Icelandic Makers

The next stage of the project involved proposing a plan of interaction with makers to design and make in close partnership with them a table and chairs to meet the design brief. The interaction plan was designed to provide a framework in which selected makers could contribute in a measured way to a collectively designed and made table and chairs.

The following overview of the interaction process and the proposed formal interview questions, recording method and archive presentation structure provided in Appendix 3 (page 184), were presented by the author in November 2002 in Iceland to two Icelandic makers and potential partners in the project, Fjólnir Hlynsson and Thorhildur Thorgeirsdottir for their opinion and criticism of the plan.

Overview of the interaction process, as presented to the Icelandic makers for their consideration:

- Define method of interaction.
- Prepare presentation of interaction method.
- Expose interaction method to craft practitioners and ask for their opinion on and their willingness to participate with the defined interaction method.
- Redefine interaction method with consideration of their opinion.
- Choose craft practitioners to work with.
- Carry out practical work with craft practitioners, work alongside craft practitioners for as long as seems necessary or possible to provide insight into, and sympathy with their work.
- Carry out formal interview, collecting any reference material. Record interview and reference material with video/audio and digital photography methods.

- Prepare multimedia archive of interviews.
- Consider interview findings, draw conclusions and produce draft designs.
- Expose draft designs to craft practitioners for their opinion.
- Amend draft designs considering craft practitioner's opinion.
- Draft design complete.
- Produce prototypes with the assistance of craft practitioners where appropriate.
- Record craft practitioners direct contribution to the prototype production and append to appropriate multimedia archive.

The following question was asked to Fjólur Hlynsson and Thorhildur Thorgeirsdóttir, having presented the proposed interaction plan to them.

Do you think this method of interaction is acceptable, good or bad, please explain your thoughts, in your own words and how you would improve on this method of interaction?

Transcriptions of their responses to the proposed plan are in Appendix 4 (page 192). A summary of their responses and the amendments made to the interaction plan are provided in chapter 3.2.1. page 59.

3.2.1. Icelandic Makers Responses and the Amendments Made to the Proposed Interaction Plan

From the interview with Fjólnir Hlynsson on 8.11.02, the following points and suggested amendments were raised:

- The questions and interaction method provide a way of getting to the essence of each craft practitioner's work and practices.
- There should be no problem in obtaining reference materials and information from the practitioners once they have agreed to participate in the project, as it was quite clear in the introduction to the project what is to be expected from participants.
- The language of the questions should be made simpler for people from different countries to understand.

From the interview with Thorhildur Thorgeirsdóttir on 11.11.02, the following points and suggested amendments were raised:

- The project is a good thing.
- We should develop on from these traditions that we craftspeople practice.
- Yes, we could try the project out and see what happens it would be interesting.
- Within the interaction process we could see how it develops, by leaving the questions more open. The response to the questions would be more individual and the presentations of the interviews would represent more of the individual nature of each craft practitioner.
- The project should include Faroese craft practitioners, ideally in wool. This strengthens the idea of using wool in the project and points to the Faroes as the place to find a craft practitioner with whom to work.

3.2.1.1. Amended Interaction Interview Method

Consideration was made to the Icelandic makers suggested amendments and the following interaction interview method was prepared:

- The interview structure was a qualitative, semi-structured, in-depth method. Within basic interview sections i.e. background, materials, workspace etc, open questions were given to the craft practitioner to answer. For each open question the checklist of specific questions are sought to be answered by the interviewer and ticked off in the provided tick box. With the minimum input the interviewer was to guide the conversation so the craft practitioner might answer the checklist questions. This open and conversation style of interview²⁹ was designed to make the interviewee as comfortable as possible. It was hoped this method would provide an in-depth view of the craft practitioners' thoughts and ideas, it was important that the interviewer was conscious enough not to lead the conversation towards their own bias or opinion. This potential bias would be considered in the outcome of the interviews.
- When carrying out the interviews it was important to find as much reference material to substantiate statements by the craft practitioners as possible. This reference material would include photographs, documents, video etc. After each set of questions, sources of reference material should be requested from the craft person being interviewed and noted down for collection at the end of the interview.
- A new set of formal interview questions were prepared, these questions were to be recorded on video along with the reference material and edited together in the same format, as an archive

²⁹ From Renneus experience as a researcher interviewing craftspeople in Scotland “an open interview, lead more by the interviewed participant was considered to provide more reliable and a larger quantity of information about the interviewed participant.” A. Renneus, ‘Contemporary Woodcarving in Scotland’, Decorative Arts Diploma Dissertation, University of Glasgow, History of Art Department, 1988, p. 2.

presentation for each maker. A copy of the amended formal interview questions and archive presentation structure is provided in Appendix 5 (page 197).

3.3. Pilot Interaction Interview

The interaction interview method and amended formal interview questions and archive presentation structure is provided in Appendix 5 (page 197). It was piloted between 13.02.2003 and 14.04.2003 with Janis Embelton, a practising weaver from Coldstream, in the Scottish Borders. The pilot interview tested the general method and the technical side of recording the interview and reference material with video and photography and editing this material into a presentable format on DVD.

Having completed the pilot interaction method, including; working alongside Janis, carrying out the interview, collecting reference material and producing a DVD video presentation, the following points in the method were considered for amendment.

It would be better to:

- Carry the interview out in two parts. The interview was carried out in two parts to fit in with Janis' working schedule. This was a better way of conducting the interview which is quite long and in two parts it was less tiring for the interviewee. This is an advantage to the quality of the answers to the questions.
- Record all material for DVD presentation directly onto digital video camera. The method of recording the interview and the reference material for the purposes of the DVD presentation were completed using only the video camera. It is easier in the editing process if all reference material visual or audio is recorded directly to digital videotape.
- Record a visual and audio diary. As a separate reference to the project, a visual and audio diary will be kept. This diary will be recorded with a digital camera and mini disc recorder and stored on CD's in JPEG digital file format for pictures and as a normal audio CD for use on any CD player. During the interaction process keeping the diary will be most

important for future reference in the final project, for the presentation of findings.

- Record more reference material. During the interview, notes must be made by the interviewer of possible reference material and the interviewee must be encouraged to refer to reference material where possible, to highlight their ideas and thoughts. As much reference material must be recorded, including material that may not seem relevant, to put the craft practitioners, and what they say, in context and underpin the final presentation.
- Change angle and scale during interview. While recording the interviewee speaking, it is important to change the angle and scale of the camera shot. This provides material for the presentation that will keep the viewer interested.
- Have the same thing said twice. Having the same thing said twice by the interviewee but in a different way will provide material for the editing process that will better convey the ideas of the craft practitioners.
- The order in which the checklist of questions is answered in each section is not important. It is only that the questions in the checklist are answered. The interviewee should be allowed to speak as freely as possible. The quality of what the interviewee says is improved given more freedom.
- Make the questions from the checklist simpler. Some of the check list questions are complicated and long, these should be made as easy to understand as possible.
- The universal opening introduction should be made shorter. The introduction was too long and complicated for a listener to take in.

The following formal interview method is the result of the above considerations having completed the pilot interview. This interview method would be conducted with all the participating craft practitioners in as similar a way as possible.

3.3.1. Amended Craft Practitioners Interaction Interview Method

The following interview structure is a qualitative, semi-structured, in-depth method. Within basic interview sections i.e. background, materials, workspace etc, open questions are given to the craft practitioner to answer. For each open question the checklist of specific questions are sought to be answered by the interviewer. With the minimum input the interviewer is to guide the conversation so the craft practitioner might answer the checklist questions. This open and conversational style of interview is designed to make the interviewee as comfortable as possible. This method aims to provide a more in-depth view of the craft practitioners' thoughts and ideas. It is important that the interviewer is aware not to lead the conversation towards their own bias or opinion. This potential bias would be considered in the outcome of the interviews.

When carrying out these interviews it was important to find as much reference material, to put in context and underpin statements etc, by the craft practitioners as possible. This reference material included photographs, documents, video etc. After each set of questions, sources of reference material were asked for from the craft person being interviewed and noted down for collection at the end of the interview.

It would be necessary from time to time during the interview to ask the craft practitioner to repeat what they had just said and change the camera angle and or scale. It was also important to continue changing the camera angle and scale whenever possible between the questions.

The final interaction interview questions and presentation structure is provided in Appendix 6 (page 207). Appendix 6 provides a copy of the blank form used during the interaction interviews that were filled in by the author. These completed forms included notes of the reference material given by the interviewees that was then captured by the author on video and digital photography. This reference information aided the process of editing the video and digital photography into the DVD presentations. The format of the form also represents the structure of the DVD presentations.

3.4. Selection of makers to participate in the interaction process

The selection process was conducted between January and March 2003. The selection was made with the purpose of finding makers with specific characteristics. These characteristics included:

- willing to participate in the project
- ability to speak English
- professionally practising
- being from a separate discipline/craft tradition to the other participants
- being from a discipline relevant to the table and chairs design brief

This method may not have provided a full cross-section of the Icelandic maker's community because the selection size was too small but it took makers from a discipline relevant to the prototype brief. The selected participants came from well-recognized sources and are representatives from the top of their profession. Gender did not play a part in the selection process.

The following makers from different disciplines were selected.

Birger Anderson, Shipwright at The Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde, Denmark. The author requested to work with someone from the Viking Ship Museum because they use the same methods of building ships as the Vikings did. Birger Anderson's name was put forward as one of their most experienced shipwrights. There was no one working in shipbuilding of a Viking nature in Iceland.

Ása Hátun, Wool Worker, Tórshaven, Feroe Islands. The chairman of the Faroe Islands craft association Randi S. Vang, put Ása Hátun's name forward as an artist in wool and expert in the field of hand working it.

Fjolinir B. Hlynsson, Sculptor, Egilsstathir, Iceland. He is the third generation in a family of recognized Icelandic wood carvers, and has an inherited understanding of this tradition. He works as a contemporary artist, using mixed materials and film.

Thórhildur Thorgeirsdóttir, Goldsmith, Reykjavik, Iceland. She combines wood and silver in her work. The author saw her work in 'SPOR', an exhibition of contemporary Icelandic crafts, organized by Handverk og Honnun (Handwork and Design, page 53), on the 9.11.02, in Hafnarfjordur, Iceland. She recently exhibited in 'Nordic Cool: Hot Women Designers', at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, in Washington D.C., USA, between 23 April and 12 September 2004.

Geir Oddgeirsson, Cabinet Maker, Vogar, Iceland. He has the longest established cabinet making business in Iceland.

Gretar Mar Thorvaldsson, Foundry man and Pattern Maker at Malmsteypan Hella ehf. Hafnarfjordur, Iceland. He is the only working Icelander both trained as a Foundry Man and Pattern Maker. He has experience of making a wide variety of artefacts.

3.5. Schedule for the Interaction Interviews

Formal arrangements were made to visit the selected makers between one to two weeks for the author to work as their apprentice and carry out the formal interviews. The schedule for these visits can be seen below in table 3 interaction interviews schedule.

Table 3 Interaction Interviews Schedule

DATE 2003	MORNING	AFTERNOON
21 April	1400 check in Newcastle Royal Quays for Gothenburg	
22 April	Arrive Gothenburg, drive to Denmark	Drive to Denmark. Camp out on the way
23 April	Arrive Roskilde Viking Ship Museum	Work for Birger Andersen
24 April	Work for Birger Andersen	Work for Birger Andersen
25 April	Work for Birger Andersen	Work for Birger Andersen
26 April	Work for Birger Andersen	Work for Birger Andersen
27 April	Rest	Rest
28 April	Work for Birger Andersen	Work for Birger Andersen
29 April	Work for Birger Andersen	Work for Birger Andersen
30 April	Work for Birger Andersen	Work for Birger Andersen
1 May	Work for Birger Andersen	Interview Birger Andersen
2 May	Work for Birger Andersen	Interview Birger Andersen
3 May	Record reference material	Record reference material
4 May	Record reference material	Record reference material
5 May	Record reference material	Work for Birger Andersen
6 May	Work for Birger Andersen	Work for Birger Andersen
7 May	Pack and Rest	Drive to Gothenburg

8 May	Depart Gothenburg 1000 for Newcastle	
9 May	Arrive Newcastle 1000	
gap		
23 June		1700 check in at Aberdeen North link ferry terminal. 1900 dep. for Lerwick
24 June	Arrive Lerwick Shetland at 0700.	Check in Lerwick Smyril line 2400
25 June	Depart Lerwick at 0200	Arrive Tórshavn Faroe Islands 1500. Find a place to stay and meet Ása Hátún
26 June	Work for Ása Hátún	Work for Ása Hátún
27 June	Work for Ása Hátún	Work for Ása Hátún
28 June	Interview Ása Hátún	Record reference material
29 June	Record reference material	Rest
30 June	Interview Ása Hátún	Record reference material
1 July	Record reference material	Record reference material
2 July	Prepare to leave	Check in Smyril line Tórshavn 1600 depart 1800
3 July	Arrive Seyðisfjörður 0800	Find a place to stay/camp and meet Fjölur B. Hlynsson
4 July	Work for Fjölur B. Hlynsson.	Work for Fjölur B. Hlynsson.
5 July	Work for Fjölur B. Hlynsson.	Work for Fjölur B. Hlynsson.
6 July	Interview Fjölur B. Hlynsson.	Rest
7 July	Interview Fjölur B. Hlynsson.	Record reference material
8 July	Record reference material	Record reference material
9 July	Record reference material	Record reference material
10 July	Prepare to leave. Drive west.	Drive west. Rest. Camp out.
11 July	Drive west. Visit Skógar Folklore museum, and meet keeper Þóddur	Record reference material. Camp out.

	Tómasson.	
12 July	Drive west	Meet Thórhildur Thorgeirsdóttir and work for her.
13 July	Rest.	Rest.
14 July	Work for Thórhildur Thorgeirsdóttir.	Work for Thórhildur Thorgeirsdóttir.
15 July	Work for Thórhildur Thorgeirsdóttir.	Work for Thórhildur Thorgeirsdóttir.
16 July	Interview Thórhildur Thorgeirsdóttir.	Record reference material.
17 July	Interview Thórhildur Thorgeirsdóttir.	Record reference material.
18 July	Record reference material.	Record reference material.
19 July	Record reference material.	Record reference material.
20 July	Rest.	Rest.
21 July	Meet Geir Oddgeirsson and work for.	Work for Geir Oddgeirsson.
22 July	Work for Geir Oddgeirsson.	Work for Geir Oddgeirsson.
23 July	Interview Geir Oddgeirsson.	Record reference material.
24 July	Interview Geir Oddgeirsson.	Record reference material.
25 July	Record reference material.	Record reference material.
26 July	Record reference material.	Record reference material.
27 July	Rest.	Rest.
28 July	Arrive at Malmsteypan HELLA ehf. Meet Gretar Mar Thorvaldsson.	Work for Gretar Mar Thorvaldsson.
29 July	Work for Gretar Mar Thorvaldsson.	Work for Gretar Mar Thorvaldsson.
30 July	Interview Gretar Mar Thorvaldsson.	Record reference material.
31 July	Interview Gretar Mar Thorvaldsson.	Record reference material.
1 August	Record reference material.	Record reference material.
2 August	Record reference material.	Record reference material.
3 August	Rest.	Rest.

4 August	Rest	Rest
5 August	Rest	Drive east. Camp out.
6 August	Drive to Seyðisfjörður	Camp out.
7 August	Check in Smyril line Seyðisfjörður 1000, depart 1200	
8 August	Land Tórshavn 0500.	Record reference material. Camp out
9 August	Rest. Record reference material.	Rest. Camp out
10 Aug.	Rest. Record reference material.	Rest. Camp out
11 Aug.	Check in for Smyril line departure to Lerwick 0630, depart 0830	Arrive Lerwick 2130. Camp out.
12 Aug.	Record reference material.	Check in for Northlink departure to Aberdeen 1700, depart 1900.
13 Aug.	0700 arrive Aberdeen.	Drive Home for 1300.