

Product's name: The Oblivion

Medium: Pine tray, Balau timber with Birch poles

Finish: hand-oiled & waxed

Tray's size: W 230 x L 230 x H 55 mm.

Pedestal's size: W 265 x L 265 x H 720 mm.

Course: DR2013 Furniture Design I (AY 2021 - 22, Semester 1)

Project's title: Bedside table (informed by complimentary opposites)

Constructed by: mitre and dowel joints

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Photographed by: Justin Neo (2021)

Project's description

Inspiration (derived from complimentary opposites) *maximum 80 words*

'*The Oblivion*': the act or process of dying out.

The inspiration of '*The Oblivion*' was drawn from the sense of imbalance between a modernised and clean-cut generation with the almost forgotten beauty of organicity. With a top-heavy piece, but the irony of the legs being the star of the show, it questions audiences on what the focal point of this piece is.

Aesthetics (the linkage between tray and pedestal) *max 80 words*

A well-contrasted play of materials, colours, and visual hierarchy.

The visual flow of '*The Oblivion*' entices viewers to look from the bottom to top, with the bottom segment being the eye-catcher. This piece is topped with a light pine wood tray to further contrast the transition of colours and materiality play from bottom to top.

Both tray and pedestal are oiled and waxed to give a matte and non-greasy cohesive finishing look.

Originality or uniqueness (*max 80 words*)

Each gouge was planned explicitly to portray the gradient of intensity and scale – from well-spaced large gouges to tightly-spaced small gouges. Due to the nature of the birch poles, each pole is unique to its own regarding the degree of bends, retaining power of sanded white bark, and overall thickness/grip sense. The uniqueness also lies in the minute joinery detail of the pedestal base frame and legs where it holds less than 1mm of allowance between the rabbet and dowel joint.

The Major Project's E-Journal

Conceptualisation (complimentary opposites) *max 1 page*

The concept of '*The Oblivion*' stands contrast between "Soft, Organic and Hard, Rigid", "Feminine and Masculine", and "Traditional and Modern".

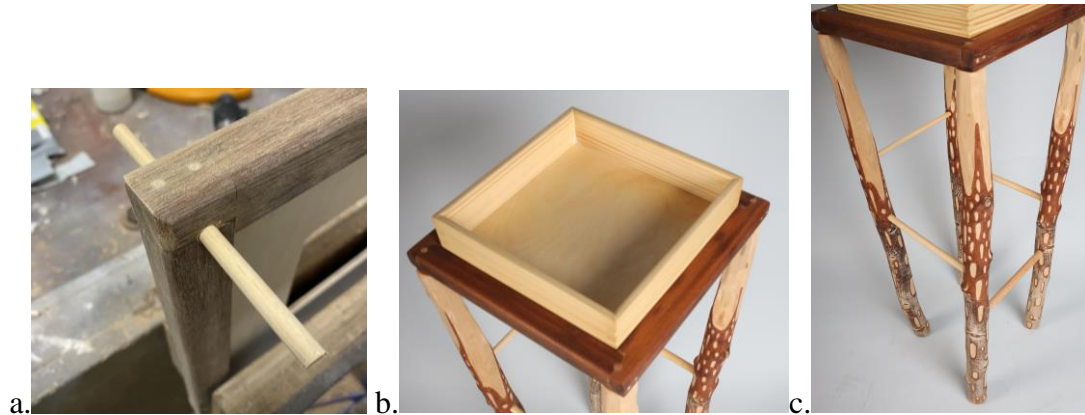
The rigidity of a right angled, machine-cut dark red balau wood contrasts, yet compliments the subtle organic growth of light-coloured birch poles in an irregular organic shape. The softness and rawness signify femininity while matched with the masculinity of well sanded hard wood.

'*The Oblivion*' aims to entice and question viewers on the topic of imbalance in our current state of obsession with urbanisation and what it entails living amidst complimentary opposite lifestyles.

Does complete urbanisation necessarily mean the best for the world?

Aesthetic consideration

(component linkage between 2D, 3D, spatial, and consequent elements) *max 1 page*

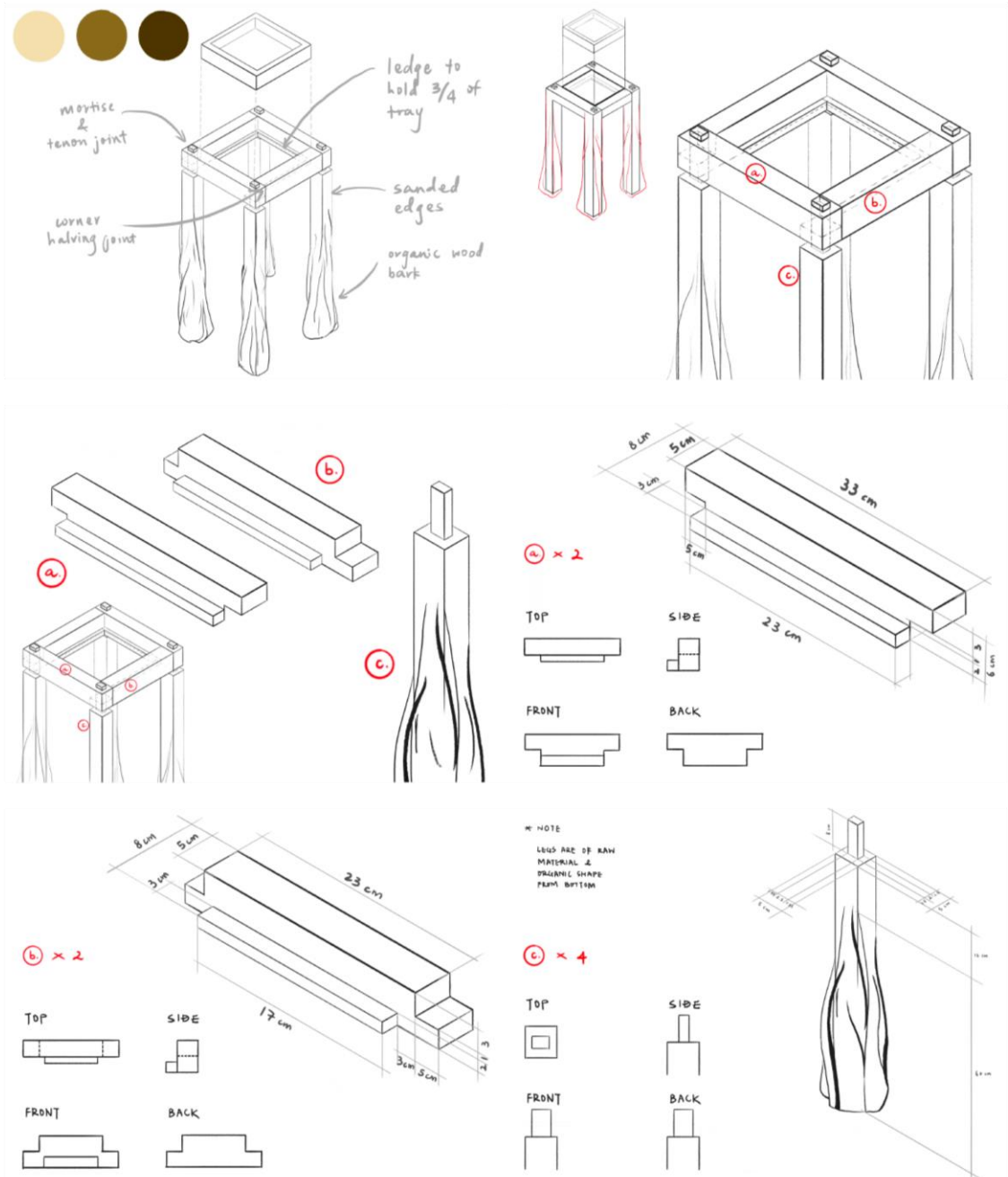


Considerations include joinery, edges, and cohesive balance of the piece.

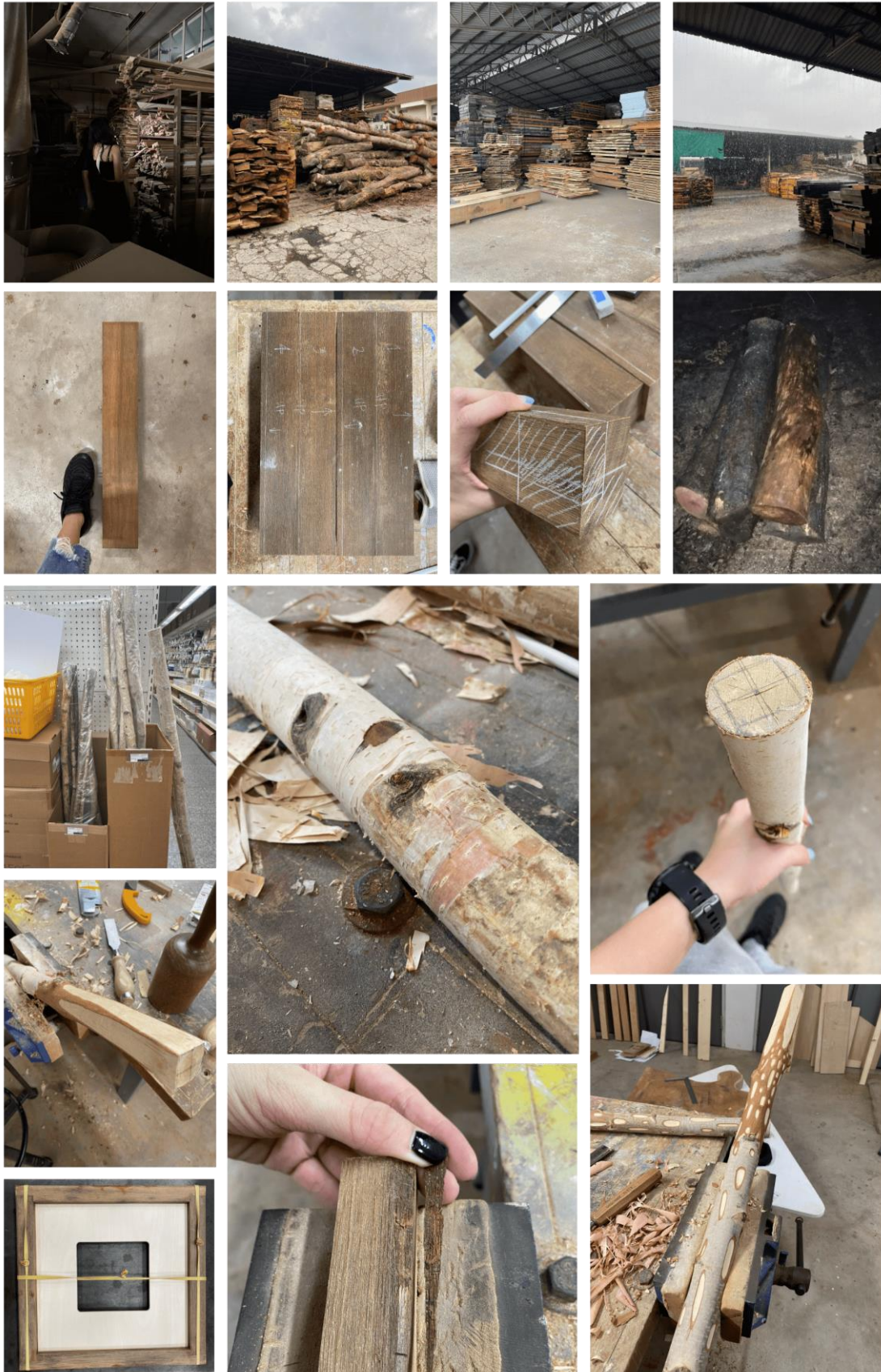
- a. Cross-dowel joints joining pedestal base frame (the component that the tray sits on) and legs are thought out to be a combination of two sizes of dowel – 3mm and 7mm to show a gradual progression of scale. To retain the integrity of intended slim 21mm thick base frame, there is no room for errors with 4mm margin from both ends (4 + 3 + 7 + 3 + 4 mm).
- b. Edges of pedestal base frame are filleted on the outer rims with router, retaining a 90-degree inner rim, whereas the tray that sits inside is filleted on the inside with a 90-degree outer rim to fit seamlessly into base frame. These two separate pieces of complete opposite edges component complement each other when fitted together into one. A play on hard and soft look.
- c. Gradual transition of gouges on legs are planned to visually entice audience. It goes from a small unit closely gouged pattern (a mix of circular and elongated) to widely spaced big gouges at the bottom. This gradient element not only include the patterns but also the bark retained. The bark of birch pole is removed completely from the top, showing the core light colour, transitioning to the mid dark brown colour, to finally the raw beige-white skin of birch at the bottom, sanded intricately to effect.

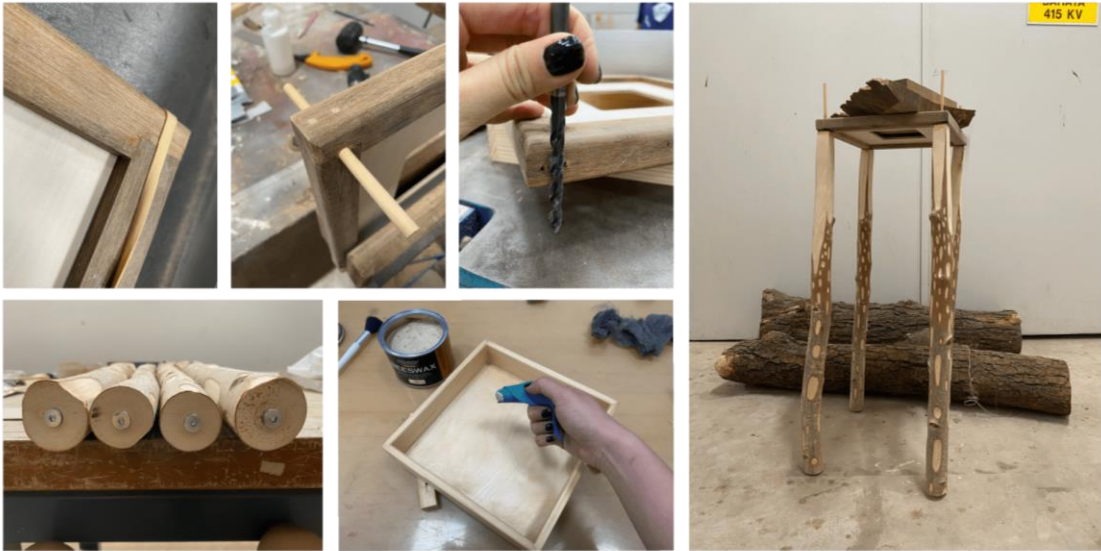
Design trials (a sequence of stages in developing and embodying your ideas through a series of sketches/ mock-ups/ digital renderings/ or technical drawings) max 3 pages

SKETCHES



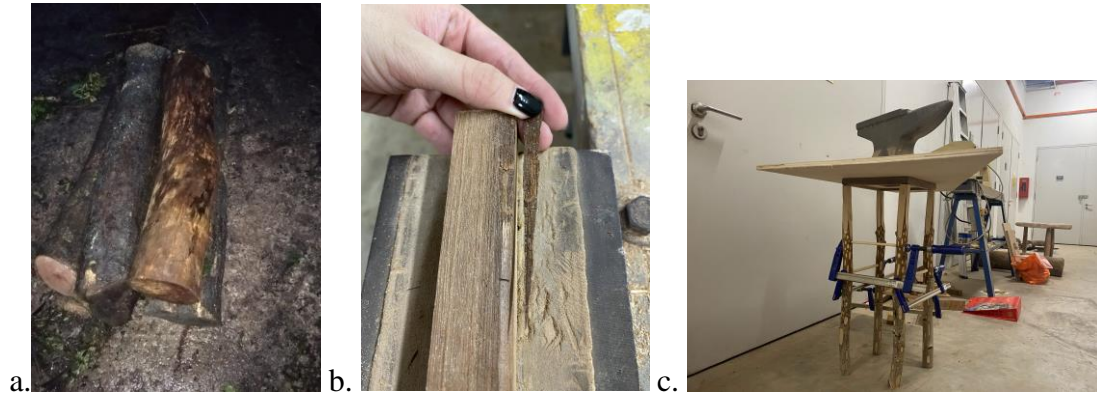
DOCUMENTATION – wood sourcing, process, finishing





Problems and solutions (occurred while developing and testing your ideas)

max 2 pages



- a. Initial wood log that I sourced was not dry and is way too chunky, so I had to search for a substitute log/pole for pedestal legs without compromise of concept.
- b. Wood for pedestal base frame cracked, learn to embrace it and find a solution to rabbet in a way the chipped off wood stays on the inside underside of frame.
- c. Changing of initial joinery on sketch as I did not plan my time well (juggling with other modules). Plan to do organic mortise and tenon failed, so I took the advice from Chalit to do a dowelled joint and it worked out.

First attempt at gluing the legs with dowel did not succeed (it came off pretty easily and was very wobbly). Legs were not stable, resulting in reduced usability of it. I took advice from Chalit and with his help, we managed to add in a few different sized dowels across the legs and it added a lot of stability and functionality back into my piece (it could even withstand 50kg weight load). I sanded the top part of my legs with help from Zherrine on a flat piece of sandpaper clamped onto a stable tabletop.

Feedback (received from weekly consultation and your presentations) *max 1 page*

- Good technical drawing details inclusion of dimension and consideration.
- Time management could be improved. Not enough time for organic mortise and tenon, slight change in pedestal base frame.
- Tray to be rabbet and dowel instead of mortise and tenon due to lack of time.
- Instability of legs, no structural integrity. Should add dowels across legs to reinforce.
- Adjustable legs to consider for user convenience.
- Flush the top part of legs to pedestal base frame.
- To make it cohesive, consider making tray a rabbet and dowel too. It adds on to the gradual progression of the entire piece.
- Base of tray could be of darker coloured wood, just like the pedestal's play of light and dark wood.

Self-reflection (*max 1 page*)

What did you confront, overcome, and realise?

I have learnt that patience and endurance play a huge part in making a furniture. It is important to have a clear state of mind while working a physical piece as there is no “Ctrl + Z” function like digital modelling. Planning plays an equally huge part in kickstarting the project, from going to various locations (do not just stick to a few) to source for materials, to having a clear idea of what you want to do without being too rigid. I am personally someone who is quite stubborn when it comes to sudden changes due to unexpected outcome and may struggle with accepting and adapting to change. This module has taught me to be flexible (it is okay when you have to make a decision to change, it is not the end), and get out of my comfort zone to be accepting and learn to deal with the inevitable. I have also overcome the small lingering fear of working with large machines and trusting the process with proper guidance and supervision from my professor, Chalit.

Lastly, I also realised that having a strong bonded group of kind workmates really do bring up morale in every situation and hiccup faced. At least 1 person was there for each other when physical help is needed (to carry heavy wood, offer to walk to canteen to buy dinner for everyone), when mental support is needed (to encourage and cheer each other on when chasing the road ahead seem endless), and to bounce off creative ideas when any of us feel trapped in the design process.

I would not have been able to complete this smoothly without a strong-willed mind, professional guidance, and a loving team. I am grateful.