

TEACHER EXHIBITION NOTES LIFE ON FOOT: CAMPER AT THE DESIGN MUSEUM

13 MAY - 1 NOVEMBER 2015



Image: Himalayan shoe

INTRODUCTION

This exhibition explores focuses on shoes and walking through the footwear brand, Camper. It takes a contemporary look at shoe design and manufacture, drawing on forty years of Camper's history.

The exhibition includes many examples of Camper shoes, material samples and tools associated with shoe manufacture, prototypes and conceptual sketches, and graphics relating to the brand and advertising of Camper. Film and photography are used to provide insight into the context of Camper's shoe design and production. In addition, much of the exhibition's design is influenced by the design of Camper stores - iconic and individual spaces that contrast sharply from high street competitors that rely on a generic look and layout.

Life On Foot is organized around six iconic Camper shoes to explore six aspects of the company, including manufacturing, technology, materials, collaboration and shoe use. The exhibition also reflects on the culture of walking and the contribution that design has made to this, including a brief look at wearable technology, and the relationship between pedestrians and the built environment.



Image: Wabi Shoe

BACKGROUND

The family behind Camper have made shoes since the 1870s, but the modern company known as Camper was founded in Mallorca, Spain in 1975. The story of Camper is also the story of a transition from the traditional craft of shoemaking to mass stores across the world. Today, most of Camper shoes are manufactured in China or Vietnam, however, the roots of Camper remain firmly in Mallorca where the company headquarters are, and from where many of the prototypes and developments still originate.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EXHIBITION

HIMALAYAN

The 'Himalayan' is a unisex shoe designed by German fashion designer, Wilhelm Bernhard. It has a distinct zigzag heel and comes in a variety of bright colours with bold, sometimes chaotic pattern. The shoe is used to explore the design process of a Camper shoe and this section of the exhibition reveals a shoe from early concept through the prototyping stage to the final product.



Image: Camaleon shoe

PELOTAS

The 'Pelotas' is one of Camper's best-selling shoes. Over ten million pairs have been sold so far. This shoe design is used to illustrate the manufacturing process, contrasting the tools used at prototyping stage in Mallorca alongside the mass production machinery used to make the shoes in Vietnam. This section of the exhibition includes films of the production line in Vietnam and a dissection of a Pelotas shoe showing the many individual components that make up a shoe.

WABI

This pioneering model of shoe explored sustainability in shoe design and manufacture. The shoe was intended to be worn indoors and aimed to be as natural as possible. This was achieved by designing the shoe around the anatomy and ergonomics of the foot, providing a natural walking experience for its user. Camper also refined and minimised the manufacturing process to ensure that the shoe used as few materials and manufacturing stages as possible. This enabled the shoe to be made using less energy than the average shoe, and also resulted in an easily recyclable shoe because it used a small number of materials. Whilst this shoe was not a commercial success, it has informed the manufacturing and material innovation of Camper. In addition to the Wabi shoe, this section of the exhibition includes material samples and films of shoe testing.

CAMALEON

The Camaleon was the first shoe produced by Camper. Its origins date back to the 1920s, when the shoe was created from materials found on the island of Mallorca, including old tyres and canvas, and stitched together by hand. The shoe's first wearers were farmers and other rural workers. When Camper was born in 1975, the Camaleon was the first shoe sold - drawing on the history and heritage of the company, and signalling values that continue to this day - comfort, distinctive style, practicality and environmental responsibility. In 2000 the European Union awarded the Camaleon with an EcoLabel in recognition of the sustainability inherent in the shoe's design and manufacture.

BROTHERS

Brothers was a best-seller in Japan in the 1990s and expanded Camper beyond traditional European markets to become a global brand. Characteristics of this period of commercial expansion include the development of innovative retail stores around the world, created in collaboration with leading designers such as the Campana Brothers. This section of the exhibition includes a recreation of a Camper store alongside insight into the design process behind the creation of Camper stores.

TOGETHER

Camper Together is an on-going collaborative project where artists and designers are invited to customise shoes from the Camper collection. Past collaborators have included Dutch industrial designer, Hella Jongerius and Spanish illustrator, Javier Mariscal. The project is representative of the individual and experimental approach that Camper takes to shoe design. It also characterises Camper's bold and often playful approach to communication. This section of the exhibition includes a selection of collaborations with leading designers and artists and examples of visual branding.

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including bio technologies that provide sustainable alternatives to leather, wearable technologies that help to monitor walking and support a healthy lifestyle such as the UP band by Jawbone (<https://jawbone.com/blog/up3-design-story/>), interactive projects that have highlighted pedestrians' relationship with the furniture of the city, such as Pan Studio's 'Hello Lamppost' project (<http://www.hellolamppost.co.uk/>), and Marloes Ten Bhomer's boundary-pushing work about the form and manufacturing processes of shoes (<http://marloestenbhomer.squarespace.com/>).

EXHIBITION GUIDANCE

Objects in the exhibition are on open display rather than in cases. Care should be taken when moving around the exhibition and most objects should not be touched. We would be grateful if you could brief your students accordingly.

Depending on your group and your itinerary for the visit, we would recommend that you set aside approximately 20 minutes to explore this exhibition.

Photography is permitted without flash; however filming is strictly prohibited in the exhibition.

Please ensure that you read our school visit Terms and Conditions document before making your visit.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

Discover Design

A generic free downloadable gallery activity worksheet for students in KS2 or 3, can be downloaded from the museum's online resource:

[Discover.designmuseum.org](http://discover.designmuseum.org)

Sketchbooks and cameras

We welcome students using pencil and sketchbooks to record their visits. Photographs can be taken as long as flash is not used.

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