

JOHANSON

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SUGAR – a future classic



Photographer: Emil Fagander



For the fifth consecutive year Johanson has worked with students at Beckmans College of Design to create a new item of furniture. Over the years these projects have proved to be an instructive and truly stimulating way of working that gives both partners valuable insights into one another's worlds. This year Johanson has pleasure in presenting the result in the form of SUGAR, a chair designed by Rebecca Wiik and Emil Ahlgren.

The name SUGAR is a reference to the distinctive padded elements in the seat and backrest, which are similar in form to sugar cubes. Over the years projects have varied greatly in scope and style, from giving students totally free hands to specific assignments with a clear brief and stricter limitations. Two explicit demands were made with regard to the project that Rebecca and Emil were commissioned to work on. The first was to explore how to make the best possible use of materials left over after the production of other items of furniture. The second was to give prominence to the upholstered characteristics of the finished result by making these a focus of attention.

If possible, however, there was also another wish to be taken into consideration – to base the design around a frame made of plywood. We are delighted to announce that Emil and Rebecca have satisfied all three of these requirements. Consequently we are pleased to present SUGAR – the result of a fifth year of successful collaboration between Johanson and Beckmans.

SUGAR is a lounge chair built around a plywood frame of elegant simplicity that can be finished to produce the desired expression and colour. Great attention has been paid to the upholstery, which opens up opportunities for re-using small textile patterns left over from other production. After a challenging but rewarding process it has been possible to arrive at a solution for how all the separate “sugar cubes” are to be incorporated into the upholstery. The aim was to find a solution that enabled the result to be viewed from as many angles as possible. The answer was to create a small cavity in each “sugar cube”, so the upholstery could be secured in place around the supporting slats to create an attractive and durable construction.



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Despite its compact size SUGAR is big on personality. It serves as an obvious focal point in any room. The lines, simple yet appealing, have already secured SUGAR's place as a firm favourite in the hearts of many of us here at Johanson. The question is: Might this be a future classic that has now seen the light of day?

By way of a conclusion to this year's project we asked Rebecca and Emil three questions.

What has been the most instructive part of the whole process for you?

Our formal studies have not provided us with any really good opportunities to truly get to grips with the process of designing seating furniture. It was an interesting challenge to try to find solutions for constructing the chair and linking the different components. At the same time we learnt a lot about what it takes to create an ergonomic chair. It has also proved to be highly instructive to work with an actual manufacturer. It has given us an insight into how things function in everyday working life.

What has been the most difficult part of the process?

It's a much more complex process to create a product outside the safe haven of the educational environment. In the real world you suddenly find yourself dependent on many different partners and you have to find new solutions using only the production methods that are actually available to you.

If you were to add further products to the SUGAR family, what might these be?

It would be interesting to explore in greater detail how to utilise the possibilities for re-using materials that would otherwise simply go to waste. Why not take sustainability a step further by applying the same criteria to the frame and creating something more like a knock-down/knock-up chair? In addition to this, you could use the modular cube system to create a stool that has a smaller number of cubes, or a complete sofa with many more cubes.

SUGAR is manufactured by Johanson in Markaryd, Sweden, where assembly and upholstery work are in the capable hands of skilled craftsmen and women. Thanks to Johanson's on-site manufacturing there is almost limitless flexibility in terms of the colours and fabrics you can choose.

Press contact

For more information, images or product loans, please contact Ulrika Görefält, who is Johanson's press contact. Email ulrika.gorefalt@plodder.se or phone +46 (0)708-27 05 53. All press releases and images are available to download at <http://johansondesign.com/news-press>