

*Solid - Void*

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ABSTRACT >

The central theme of my degree project is the concept of *solid* and *void*, with each piece embodying a unique idea. The *void* element represents a container that can be filled with individual thoughts and perceptions. My goal is to create interactive objects that can be viewed from different perspectives, allowing for a personalised experience based on one’s expectations, experiences, and perceptions. I believe that the point of view from which we look at things (how we look at things) might be more important than what kind of thing it is. Through my work, I aim to induce people to change their perspectives on their daily objects and surroundings.

This thesis report is the story of my graduation work, which I worked on from December 2022 to May 2023. It contains the intentions and aims I was trying to convey through my work, the process of working on it, the difficulties I encountered along the way, and my concerns. I wrote this thesis report as a kind of working notebook or end-of-day diary, writing honestly about what I felt and learned during the process.

Key words : spatial design, furniture, sculptural object, spatial installation, interior architecture

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INTRODUCTION >

Furniture and Sculptural Objects

I have created one space. The space is completed with various objects. If we classify those objects into any categories, they would fall into the realm of furniture and sculptural objects. Let’s think about the meaning of furniture and sculptural objects for a moment. Furniture and sculptural objects can be a completely different realm. What criteria do you use to divide them? I am worried that it may seem shallow to say that furniture has practicality while sculptural objects do not, even if this was my initial understanding. Then let’s think about it based on the starting point from which it was created. If I made it in hopes of being used by someone else, I would say it is a piece of furniture, and conversely, if I made it in a subjective way as part of my expression, starting from myself without having a specific public in mind, I would say that it is a sculpture. The differences in the working process of artists and designers that Bruno Munari (Italian designer, 1907-1998) were explained in this way in the book *Artista e designer* (1971), however, considering today’s design, that seems not to be the perfect standard. Although we cannot precisely describe the criteria, we have the ability to determine whether it is a piece of furniture or a sculpture. Each person has their own standards or senses to distinguish them. We do not need anything else other than that. The works I made seem to be on the border between furniture and sculpture. So I would like to use the word “object”, which is used at the beginning of this paragraph and will be used often later, as an expression encompassing both furniture and sculptural objects.

Solid | Void

Going back to the original subject, I created a space using several objects. Those objects were created under a specific theme. The theme is *solid - void*, also the title of my thesis. *Solid* and *void* is an essential concept which is considered significant in the architectural and sculptural area. While *solid* has the characteristics of form and shape, *void*, which is regarded as a negative space, refers to the space between buildings, between columns, and between ceilings and columns. It projects the concept of time and space. The two concepts each play a role of “presence and absence” in architecture design and always exist together and interact. Looking at the concept of *solid* and *void* used in the realm of architecture and space design as a more expanded concept, I believe that it is related to the nature of human perception of objects. Concrete forms and shapes always create a negative space opposite to them, and depending on the relationship

between *solid* and *void*, people feel certain emotions about the object or space created by it. In particular, the concept of *void* was interesting to me because it creates a space where you can project your thoughts.

For my degree project, I applied the architectural concept of *solid* and *void* to the interior space and object design that are in contact with and used in our daily lives. That is, by applying the two concepts to furniture, objects, and the basic elements of architecture (door, walls, windows, floors, ceilings, etc.) that compose spaces, I want to create a space with new possibilities. I believe that spaces and objects to which the concept of *void* is applied can create *void* moments or empty spaces in our daily lives, create time to think, create a space in which people's emotions are projected.

#### The Reason (small happiness)

From now on, I think I should explain why this subject has become important for me and why I would like to apply it to furniture and our living spaces. It all started with my experience. I started working in Korea right after graduating from university in Milan in Italy. I worked as a designer for a Korean furniture company and at the same time ran my own independent studio. I had very busy days where I had to plan my day by the hour and move according to that schedule. Most of the days I had to start work early in the morning and come home around midnight.

After working in that way for a couple of years, I suddenly came to Sweden. It was to study furniture making methods at a craft school called Capellagården in Öland. It was in 2012. My memories of the first two weeks after arriving in Öland are still vivid. The area where I lived was a very sparsely populated area surrounded by nature. At night, the neighbourhood was so quiet that it felt deafening. The first two weeks were not busy, so I even felt anxious. I think I felt that way more because of the difference from life in Seoul. After a little over a month, the strange feeling gradually diminished, and as I got used to the neighbourhood, I began to notice the things around me. After spending time in nature while taking a walk in the forest, I learned that the blue flowers (Scilla) blooming in the fields are a sign of spring. For the first time in my life, I heard the sound of ripe apples falling from an apple tree and saw the beautiful patterns of snow piling up in the vast fields. And above all, I experienced Swedish *fika* (coffee break) during these three years of Capellagården period. I would like to say that those times were *void* moments that I experienced in my daily life. I've found that these *void* moments make small happiness in my daily life. The happiness of small things

affects my quality of life a lot in a good direction as a whole. I thought that this change was due to the change in my living environment after moving from Korea to Sweden, but I did not think of bringing it as the subject of my work.

It was after going on a road trip last summer (2022) that I decided to design objects and spaces where I could create *void* moments in our daily life. I followed Peter Zumthor's architecture to several cities in Switzerland. I spent one day in Therme Vals, which was almost the last destination of the trip, and I thought that the experience in the architecture of Therme Vals was similar to what I felt in Öland. It made me look at surroundings that always existed from a new perspective, I had time to think back on myself, it revitalized my dull senses. It was then that I realised that well-thought-out and well-designed architecture can also convey the feeling I felt in the contrast between life in Seoul and Öland.

So, I wanted to bring this theme into my design area where I have been researching and working, and to experiment with whether the same feeling can be conveyed to people through the spaces and objects we live in. I have been thinking these days that the point of view of how to look at things is more important than what kind of things are. I want to induce people to change their perspective on their daily objects and everyday space through my works. Furthermore, I hope that designed objects and spaces can perform the same role as the ability of sculpture mentioned by Antony Gormley.

'A sculpture is this thing that has the capability of changing your mind, altering the way you feel, and inviting you to look at the world in a completely different way.' (Bloomberg Originals)

#### Structure

This thesis is written in the form of a work diary. It contains the concerns I had in the process of designing my graduation work during the last semester of Konstfack, the work process, the problems I encountered while working, the process of solving those problems, and my interpretation of the result. If you are going to read my thesis, I hope you will consider what I have tried to express and convey through my works.



## DESIGN PROCESS / ARTISTIC OUTCOMES

### 1. Two Realms \_ chair

Two Realms is the title of the first chapter of Hermann Hesse's novel *Demian* (Hesse, 1965). In the novel, the protagonist, Sinclair, explains two different realms that exist in his house. One is the peaceful world where parents live, and the other is the world of maids and craftsmen who work in the Sinclair's house. The world of servants where harsh words and scandals are rampant is quite different from the world of parents. The two different realms that exist in the same space give us a completely different experience depending on which perspective we look at them from. Then the story begins.

I wanted to design a chair. A chair is the most basic piece of furniture and is indispensable to our living space. For designers, chair design often becomes a means to show their philosophy symbolically. The chair was an indispensable element in my project of composing a specific space through furniture and objects. So which chair should I design? After several days of sketching and making 1:10 scale models, the frustrating days of not being able to move forward in earnest continued.

I had to go back to the space I wanted to create and understand the concept. The space should allow us to look at familiar things from a different perspective. It should be a room that awakens our blunted senses and allows us to find new things that we have not discovered in intimacy. It should not be a space with stimulating colours and flavours like cocktails, but a space like tea with a subtle scent that can be enjoyed every day. The space should be like *Omija*. *Omija* tea is a tea made by drying the whole small fruit of *Schisandra chinensis* Baillon. Each taste and aroma derived from the peel, flesh, seeds and stem of the fruit is sour, sweet, salty, umami, and bitter. So in the word *Omija*, *Omi* means those five flavours. However, the flavours are not directly conveyed strongly but convey subtly different feelings in response to the state of the tea drinker. In other words, the taste and aroma are delivered slightly differently each time depending on the condition of the tongue of the person drinking *Omija*-tea, their expectations for the tea, and previous experiences. Even if they taste the same tea, some people feel the sour taste first, while others sense the sweet taste first.

I decided to design a chair that can be interpreted differently depending on the observer's point of view, like *Omija*. I aimed to create a void space where the observer's thoughts can be projected in the unfinished part by placing the structure on the border between completion and incompleteness.



Fig. 1  
The initial design concept of an incomplete structure



Fig. 2  
1:1 scale mock-up using a chipboard, type A

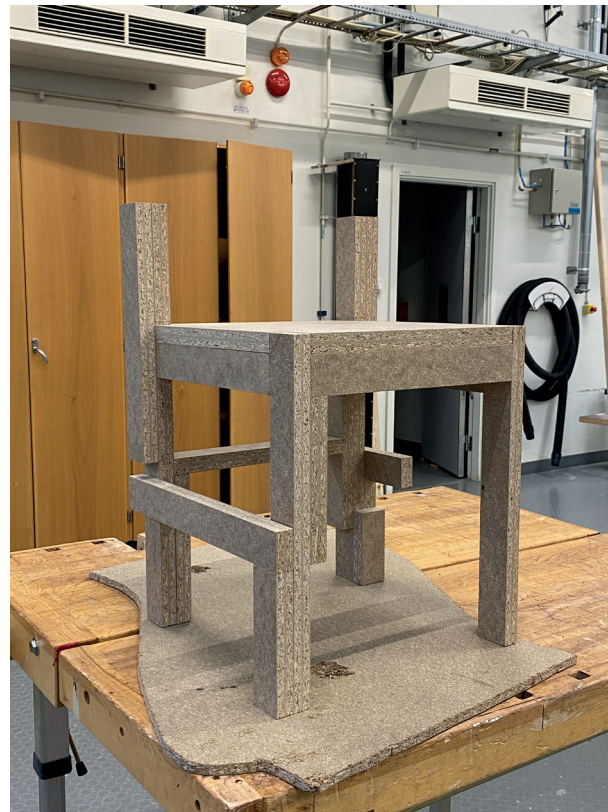


Fig. 3  
1:1 scale mock-up using a chipboard, type B

In order not to lose the design direction, I made the initial design concept of an incomplete structure with a 1:10 scale model. Then, the specific shape of the chair was completed in the workshop by a 1:1 scale mock-up using a chipboard. In my notebook, there were incomplete chair design sketches of various shapes that I had drawn for studying the parts, and it occurred to me that each sketch had a different starting point of design and had different shapes and perspectives. So, I began to implement the concept I had in mind by overlapping the several unfinished sketches.

I have made some restrictions here. Just as the thickness of the pen drawing line is fixed, the lines of the wood overlapping the chair are also set to a constant thickness and width. The thickness is 24mm, which is the thickness of two layers of my mock-up material (chipboard, 12T), and which is the thickness that can be obtained by minimising the discarded part by planing both rough sides of commercially available 32mm thickness solid wood. The width of the line was determined to be 48 mm, twice the thickness. Therefore, several chipboards were made in the form of long sticks with a thickness of 24mm and a width of 48mm, and the shape was made by repeating the process of cutting, attaching, and removing the sticks while adjusting the shapes. Thus, the shape of one chair was completed. It took a long time to add and remove the sticks as if drawing a picture, but the process itself of completing the design by making it by hand was enjoyable. And the 1:1 scale mock-up made it possible to intuitively judge the accuracy of the expression during the design process, and when it was completed, I was able to get a result that was very close to the concept I originally planned. By repeating the same design process, a second chair with a different shape was completed. While making the two chairs, the intention I was trying to convey through the design of the chair became clearer. The two mock-ups conveyed different impressions depending on the viewing angle. When I showed the mock-up to some of my friends, there was a friend who said it felt like two chairs were piled up, and another friend who completed the seemingly unfinished structure in his mind and made his own chair shape. Now, as if sketching, the completed mock-up was made into an accurate drawing, and the work continued with the process of remaking the chairs with proper materials.

In this project, I wanted the material to act as a supporter of the overall concept. Forcing the material to stand out by manipulating it and using it in a way that makes it could be reckoned to be a distraction from the overall story of the project. It is necessary to use intimate materials to create a result that does not have a strong personality so that it can act as a vessel to put people's thoughts flow freely into. I chose a wood species and planned to use it as the main material for the entire collection, and then mix and match other



wood species and other materials in the details. I wanted the main wood to be able to convey the warmth of the wood without having the strong texture of solid wood like oak or ash. A strong tree species that can withstand heavy loads at a relatively low thickness is ideal for the Two Realms Chair. The colour of the wood should be light wood that is sensitive to the colour temperature of the sunrise and the dusk. The most proper material that fits all of these factors is maple. Maple is a hard wood, but its texture is smooth and soft. When it is well sanded, maple feels similar to human flesh. Maple has a beautiful wood pattern, and its lustre deepens with age.

So I set out to make the 2 pieces of Two Realms Chairs that I had completed as mock-ups in maple. I started by planing long, rough logs into sticks (lines). The maple wood has a wood grain that the chipboard I used for the mock-ups didn't have. Since the impression of the furniture is subtly different depending on how the wood pattern is used, the shape was perfected by fitting the wood pattern one by one. The glue work was not easy because I had to assemble several sticks overlapping each other, and I had to carefully plan the order of assembly. In the actual work, I added one part that wasn't in the mock-up then added intaglio lines to the seats. These are more like unfinished drawing marks than defined shapes. Now that I have completed the engraving on the seats, it works with the other lineal structures and the whole form now speaks with one voice.

Two Realms Chairs, finished in maple solid wood, became a representation of the concept I was going for. Several unfinished sketches were superimposed on one chair, conveying different expressions depending on the angle of view. The design is on the borderline between finished and unfinished, allowing for different interpretations depending on the viewer's perspective.



Fig. 4

The main material : maple



Fig. 5

The glueing process



Fig. 6

The engraving on the seats



Fig. 7

Two Realms \_ chair \_ type A(right) and B(left)



Fig. 8

Two Realms \_ chair \_ type A(right) and B(left)



## 2. Void \_ cabinet

In the Autumn of 2021, Christo and Jeanne-Claude's idea sketch had been realised a new installation known as *L'Arc de Triomphe Empaqueté* in French. The installation was a massive art piece that involved the use of fabric and rope to wrap around one of Paris' most iconic architectures, The Arc de Triomphe. This installation had garnered significant attention in the art world due to its scale and the innovative use of materials, which were hallmarks of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's work. The report highlighted the impact of this installation on the urban landscape and the public's perception of The Arc de Triomphe, demonstrating the power of art to transform and reimagine the built environment.

This iconic architecture measures 45 meters in width, 25 meters in depth, and 50 meters in height, and holds a commanding presence within the city. The wrapping of the building was achieved through the use of 25,000 square meters of silver-blue polypropylene fabric, a sustainable material, and 3,000 meters of red rope. The cost of the installation was reported to cost a staggering 14 million Euros. Despite the short duration of the exhibition, which lasted only two weeks, the artists' effort and dedication to this work raised curiosity about the message they were trying to convey.

The interpretation of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's wrapping work is not explicit. Some scholars have suggested that the work may relate to the concept of freedom, given Christo's experience attending art school in Bulgaria under a communist government where art and education were heavily restricted by the state. However, the artists themselves do not specify the interpretation of their work, leaving it open to different interpretations by different viewers. Christo and Jeanne-Claude allowed for a multiplicity of meanings and perspectives to emerge, reflecting the diversity of experiences and perspectives among audiences.

So what did I see in their work? Before the *L'Arc de Triomphe Empaqueté* installation, I had the opportunity to learn about Christo and Jeanne-Claude's site-specific environmental installations through various books. As seen in their well-known works *Wrapped Reichstag*, *The Pont Neuf Wrapped*, they wrapped iconic architectures that represent a city, the architectures that have existed around people for a long time, almost 100 years, half a century or even longer.

It is a common occurrence for us to overlook the significance of things and objects that hold personal values, especially the longer we have had them. The presence of these things can become commonplace and taken for granted. This phenomenon extends to architectures that serve as symbols of the cities in which we reside,

personal belongings that we carry daily, long-standing familial homes, and the constant presence of loved ones. The works of Christo and Jeanne-Claude are noteworthy due to their ability to provide a fresh perspective on these familiar entities. The grand scale of *L'Arc de Triomphe Empaqueté* effectively conceals the properties and intricacies of the building beneath cloth and ropes, resulting in a void space that exists yet does not exist in the heart of Paris. This space allows individuals to project their own perspectives, ultimately creating unique stories and experiences. Following a brief two-week period, the building was revealed in its original form to the public. While the appearance of the structure remains unchanged, individuals are afforded the opportunity to scrutinise it more closely, thereby uncovering previously unnoticed details. It is within this context that the message of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's work becomes apparent.

The inspiration behind the Void Cabinet came from my admiration for Christo and Jeanne-Claude's work, which creates large-scale void spaces in cities and nature that allow people to project their emotions and thoughts. I wanted to create a void space that was more relatable to the interior spaces we inhabit.

To convey the concept of void space that is more familiar to interior spaces, I began by creating a series of 1:10 scale models using a contrast of hard and soft materials. Drawing inspiration from Christo and Jeanne-Claude's work, I used a technique that involved wrapping a solid structure with a soft cloth to remove its materiality, creating a form that blurred its materiality and structure. The hard material was used as a structural part of the object, while the soft material enveloped the object as a whole.

In order to find a material that was transparent enough to allow a glimpse of the structure and objects inside from the outside, while still inviting curiosity about what is inside, I used solid pieces of beach wood piece for the structure and translucent tape for the soft parts. The intention was to enable the structure and materials to be used to create new stories and memories.

To visualise and develop the concept, 1:10 scale models with the varying proportions were created using solid wood. Following the creation of the 1:10 scale models, they were placed in a random 1:10 space along with other object models to assess their fit within the space. The two sizes of models were selected, and the process of transforming the concept sketch models into full-scale mock-ups began. However, the proportions of the sketch models resulted in the 1:1 scale mock-ups appearing somewhat peculiar.



Fig. 9

1:10 scale models



At the initial stages of the project, the specific structure and materials for the cabinet had not yet been decided. To address this, chipboard was utilised to create the desired volume, and specific details were determined from there. The chipboard was cut and glued together to create the envisioned appearance of the cabinet. This approach allowed for flexibility in the design process, enabling adjustments to be made as necessary to achieve the desired outcome. Once I had a 1:1 scale mock-up of the two cabinets with a satisfactory volume, I decided on a rough structure. After finalising the rough structure using the 1:1 scale mock-up, I proceeded to model the structure in pine wood. During this stage, I made decisions regarding the specific joining methods, as well as the width and thickness of the wood.

While durability was a crucial factor, it was more important to create objects that effectively conveyed the intended concept. To this end, I carefully considered all the details. From the outset, I had envisioned using textiles as the wrapping material. However, when I attempted to match different textile samples to mock-ups made from pine wood, the result was unsatisfactory. Although the combination of wood and textiles is a traditional one, it was not suitable for the structure of the Void Cabinet. Therefore, I needed to identify a material with different physical properties that would be well-suited for use as a wrapping material. Additionally, I had to devise a solution for connecting the wrapping material to the wood structure.

After expanding my research to include plastic, silicone, and urethane materials, I discovered a company that produces silicone sheeting in various thickness. The length and width of the silicone produced in rolls were suitable for use in the Void Cabinet. Upon visiting the company and examining the samples, I found that the silicone was exactly what I was looking for. I purchased both 0.3mm and 0.5mm thickness and brought them back to the workshop to match them to a mock-up made of pine wood.

Due to its elasticity and transparency, the 0.3mm silicone was ideal for conveying the desired sensations. The silicone was constructed by carving grooves into the solid wood structure visible from the front opening of the cabinet, with the connections starting from the inside of the grooves and sealing them with wenge. The wenge detail was the same material used to detail the seat of the Two Realms Chair and served as a way to show the connection between the two works. With the overall structure, details, and materials now set, I translated the size and structure established through the pine mock-ups into accurate drawings and began prototyping using maple, the same material used for the Two Realms Chair.



Fig. 10

1:1 scale mock-up using a chipboard, type A



Fig. 11

1:1 scale mock-up using a pine(left), chipboard(right), type B



Fig. 12

Wrapping materials test



Fig. 13

The connection between silicon and wood structure





Fig. 14

Reading the maple pattern and grains



Fig. 15

The veneer work process for the cabinet shelf

The creation of prototypes posed several challenges, such as accurately reading the maple pattern and grain, positioning the wood, and working with the veneer utilised for the cabinet shelf, however, no other unexpected difficulties were encountered during the process. The maple was used to create two Void Cabinet structures of different sizes, which were finally covered with silicone to conceal the structure.

One interesting property of silicone is that it tans in the sun like leather and changes colour. While the colour of the silicone seen on the monitor was more of a translucent white, the sample I saw in person was a pale yellow. According to the salesperson, the silicone tans when exposed to the sun. I appreciated the tanned colour and the concept of the material reacting to its surroundings (sunlight) and expressing time in the material itself. In this way, the two Void Cabinets were completed.

The finished Void Cabinet has a thick, solid maple structure surrounded by translucent silicone with a soft, pale colour tone. The translucent silicone creates a boundary between the inside and outside of the cabinet, but the boundary is vague, not clear. The light that exists on the outside of the cabinet also flows inward, connecting the inside and outside. The objects inside can be glimpsed from the outside, and the ambiguity creates a story with curiosity. The Void Cabinet, whose structure is wrapped and hidden, creates *void* space where people's individual thoughts can be transparent in the space.





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Fig. 16

Void \_ cabinet \_ type A



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Fig. 17

Void \_ cabinet \_ type A(left) and type B(right)



Fig. 18

Void \_ cabinet \_ type B



Fig. 19

Void \_ cabinet \_ type B

## CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION >

I had one sudden thought before getting started on my graduation project.

The point of view from which we look at things (how we look at things)  
might be more important than what kind of thing it is.

People tend to think that they need to have something new to make their lives better where the abundance of information on new technology, furniture, clothes, cars, apartments, and other items is readily available at our fingertips. But that lack is not easily filled. When you buy a new outfit, you may feel like you have something, but it doesn't last long. With a new car, the satisfaction may last a bit longer, but again, after a while, we move on to something else new. In other words, in the category of space and objects, newness doesn't have a very big impact on our quality of life. I think what is important is how we relate to our given environment, objects, and spaces.

My graduation work is a project that allows objects and spaces to form a positive and organic relationship with the people who use them. I use the concept of *solid - void* as a medium for this relationship, creating a *void* space in each object where people can freely project their thoughts and create their own stories.

The structure of the Two Realms Chair is on the edge of completion and incompleteness. The lines of the chair's structure overlap and are unfinished. People who encountered the Two Realms Chair at the exhibition created their own interpretations and shapes of the chair's unfinished parts, and I designed it to blur the clarity of its form, conveying different impressions depending on the viewing angle. I wanted the Two Realms Chair to respond to the viewer's state of mind and be interpreted in various ways.

For Void Cabinet, I concealed most of its structure and form by wrapping it in a thin, soft, translucent silicone. When I designed the Void Cabinet, I hoped that it would do the same thing within the spaces we live in, just as Christo and Jeanne-Claude's work has created a huge *void* in the cities and nature, inspiring people and generating questions and stories. People who saw the Void Cabinet in the exhibition came closer to the cabinet to get a better look at the hidden structure and were curious about what was inside the wrapped furniture. I think this was the beginning of a relationship between the Void Cabinet and the people who use





Fig. 20

The space with 12 objects, 1:10 scale model

it, a relationship that will organically change depending on the viewer's perspective.

In my project, I did not approach from a design perspective of furniture or objects. Instead, my objective was to create a specific space that could be envisioned through the use of furniture and objects. The conceptual space that I aimed to establish is intertwined with our daily lives, and the objects and compositions that are placed within it are intended to provide opportunities for healing, reflection, and void moments that can be described as small everyday happiness.

The *solid - void* project holds great significance for me due to its approach. The objective of this project was to effectively communicate the emotions that I was experiencing to others. Emotions are highly subjective and abstract, and it can be challenging to convey one's feelings to another through objects. Furthermore, I did not opt for a direct, overtly expressive method. My intention was for the emotions to be conveyed naturally through subtle and delicate means, akin to the enjoyment of tea. I have dedicated myself to this project with the hope of achieving this goal.

The space that I had initially envisioned for the project consisted of a total of 12 objects. Along with the Two Realms Chair and the Void Cabinet, the space, as depicted in the initial sketches, included a ceiling mobile, a large mirror, side tables, low tables, benches, and candle holders. The process of transforming a concept into reality requires a significant amount of time, effort, and cost, which can often exceed initial expectations. Despite my disappointment in not being able to complete all of the objects, I remain optimistic that the project will continue to progress towards its intended completion. It is my hope that the entire composition will be realised, and that I will have the opportunity to complete all of the objects as the whole initial envisioned.





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Fig. 21

Void \_ cabinet \_ type A(right) and type B(left)

Two Realms \_ chair \_ type A(right) and B(left)



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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS >

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