



## Innovation: designing for a sustainable future

*The history of a chair.*

Edwin Datschefski

Hidden ugliness is my term for all the problems, the damage, the pollution, the oppression that goes on behind the scenes in the manufacture and distribution of a product. It's something that the public at large aren't aware of when they buy a product and often manufacturers and even designers aren't aware of all those impacts going on, and to make a product what I would call totally beautiful across its whole life cycle would mean looking at those issues behind the scenes, looking at the provenance of the product and making sure the entire life cycle is elegant.

An example of hidden ugliness would be a piece of wooden garden furniture. You can imagine yourself sitting by the pool sipping lemonade but what's the story behind the chair that you're sitting on. The wood could have been illegally logged from a nature reserve somewhere in, in Southeast Asia. That wood would have been sent over the border and used to fund the activities of a corrupt army. There may have been child labour used in the processing of that wood, the making of the chair, and then it was shipped across and sold and you thought 'gosh this is a cheap chair I'll have it' but did you know the full story and the whole hidden ugliness behind that chair.