



Slate Bench Redesign

Applying design theories to improve a former design

What is a Product Metaphor?

Product metaphors are used to make a product or system more understandable and enjoyable for the user. This is done by applying key characteristics of one entity, the source, onto the target product or system. The goal is for the user to see the metaphor and use their knowledge about the source to better understand or enjoy the target. Poetry and prose metaphors are used for symbolism (Paul & Nazh, 2015, p.196 - 203).

The Product

The goal of the Slate Winter Bench was to highlight winter through design that promoted outdoor activity, community, and celebrated the beauty of winter. This design included a product metaphor, wherein Slate resembled the rocks surrounding the frozen pond. The purpose of this metaphor was for prose and poetry, to be a poetic accent in the winter scene while also being sturdy and blending into nature like the rocks.

Product Analysis

This metaphor was applied through the rigid form and dark stone of the bench, which matched the rocks. Though the metaphor was seen, the message was unclear. The sturdiness of the rocks was represented, though the main goal to accentuate the winter scene was lost due to the dark colours and non-winter form. The dark colours also drew attention away from the winter scenery.

Improvements

To improve this product metaphor, a glacier would be a better source. Key properties of glaciers include being large, solid, and naturally occurring like rocks. However, glaciers are also associated with winter. This metaphor would be applied through the bench's form, including a more glacier-like structure and an ice-like material. The lighter material would also allow the bench to blend into the environment. This product metaphor would better highlight the beauty of winter, while still encouraging outdoor activity and community.

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Bibliography

Paul H and Nazh C, (2015), Handle with care! Why and how designers make use of product metaphors, Design studies (40): 196-217