

The Brief

The White Box Challenge

Context & Aim

In a time when objects speak, tell stories, and create relationships with their audience, **packaging is no longer just a container, it can become an artwork, a symbol, a cultural vehicle, and a lasting artifact.**

This project invites you to rethink packaging as a hybrid object that blends design, art, and communication, and engages with the languages of contemporary culture.

Objectives

Design packaging that can:
Go beyond the „disposable“ logic and live a second life as an artistic and/or functional object.

The goal is to explore the boundaries between art and design, transforming packaging into an aesthetic, symbolic, and narrative medium, capable of moving, inspiring, and use the EPDA process:
Think. Don't think. Think again.

Project Requirements

A group of students is to develop one single project, which must include and integrate all three of the following aspects:

- The box must have a cubic size
- The packaging must be able to transform into an artistic, decorative, or functional object i.e. it must not be thrown away
- The project must be designed for a product sold in a real or hypothetical shop, but also a museum, exhibition, festival, etc.

Project Phases

Phase 1.

THINK: Research and Inspiration

- Explore, define direction, and ask yourself why this box matters. It can include case studies of artistic packaging, transformable objects, brand–artist collaborations etc.
- Analysis of the chosen cultural context (museum, exhibition, event..)

The first phase is about thoughtful analysis and strategic thinking. It's about finding the essence of the product or idea, what it feels like, and letting that guide the creative journey. Instead of analyzing it step by step, you begin to paint the vision in broad strokes, creating space for your instincts to come through.

What does it look like in your mind's eye? How does it speak to the audience without saying a word? This phase is about setting the tone and direction before diving into the "how" of execution.

Phase 2.

DON'T THINK: Imagine without limits

Experiment, play, embrace intuition and push boundaries.

The „Don't think“ phase encourages you to break free from constraints and explore ideas without worrying about the final outcome. It's about trusting instincts, embracing creativity, and focusing on the act of creation rather than perfection. The goal is to foster discovery and creative freedom without the pressure to get it right:

- Creative Freedom
- Intuition Over Perfection
- Reimagining the Product
- Creating New Stories

Phase 3.

THINK AGAIN: Concept development

Now you need to turn the vision into foundation!

The „Think again“ phase is a key moment to reconnect with the artistic core of the designs while refining them for practical output. It's about infusing the everyday with creativity and thinking outside the box, all while maintaining focus on the final goal.

Here's why this phase matters:

- Bringing Art into the Everyday
- Thinking Outside the Box
- Balancing Freedom and Focus
- Seeing Opportunities for Artistic Innovation
- Allowing Art to Lead the Process

The Inside and the Outside:

What it contains and how can I explain it, in a creative way, on/with the container?

This phase is fundamental: here you decide **what** will be inside the packaging and **who** it is for. It's not just about picking a random product, you need to have thought about the **meaning, everyday use, and narrative potential of the product**, and how it can be reimaged and elevated as an artistic or cultural object.

What kind of product can you choose?

Any consumer product, for example:

- Food and beverages: coffee, cookies, tea, chocolate, honey, wine, mineral water, etc.
- Cosmetics: creams, oils, soaps, perfumes, etc.
- Everyday items: candles, handmade goods, small gifts, etc.

These are just some examples, give space to your creativity!

How do you choose?

Ask yourself:

- Why is this product interesting and/or how can I make it look even more interesting?
- Is it connected to a ritual, an emotional or social moment?
- Can it be interpreted symbolically or visually in an artistic way?
- Who is the target audience? Young people? Families? Art lovers? Collectors? Museum visitors?

Imagine a packaging that is not disposable, but transformative and worth keeping.

Always remember: whatever you decide should be put inside, the container must have value just as much as its content! It should live beyond its original use: it must become something people want to keep, display, reuse, or even collect.

Packaging as Part of the Artwork

You're not just designing a pretty box, you're creating an object with artistic, symbolic, or functional value.

Worth noting:

THESE PHASES ARE EXPLAINED TO GIVE A CONTEXT AND TRY TO HELP THROUGH THE PROCESS. ONLY THE OUTPUT NEEDS TO BE SHARED.

Structural and Visual Design

- Choice of materials, form, and transformation mechanism
- Optional experiential or interactive elements

Prototype or Mock-up

- Digital/3D render (physical prototype not mandatory)

Final Presentation

- Digital boards with concept, research, formal development, and visuals
- Visual and oral storytelling that explains the connection between art, context, and function
- All parts of the presentation need to be compiled as a video (see „Deliverables“)

Evaluation Criteria (as guidelines for the School)

Criterion	Weight
Originality of the concept and narrative	40%
Integration of function, art, and cultural identity	20%
Design quality (form, materials, transformability)	15%
Visual presentation and storytelling	25%

Expected Deliverables

Until 15 March 2026

- 1. Design School Logo and Images**
 - Vector format school logos
 - High-resolution pictures of the school

In between, optionally

- 2. Impressions of the Creation Processes**
 - Images sharing impressions of teams working on their projects
 - Images capturing moments of discussion and decision-making

Until 15 October 2026

- 3. Top Project per Design School to be presented at the Festival**
A video of max 90 sec, visually presenting the concept, including
 - 1 complete concept of transformable packaging
 - 1 cultural context (product/museum/event)
 - 1 digital/3D mock-up
 - Design School logo and mention of the student team members
- 4. Project Pictures for Communication on epda social media channels**
 - The 3 selected best projects per school (including the top one for the Festival): max 3 high-resolution images in portrait format (1080 x 1350 px) per project, images must be free of text, logos, or watermarks

5. Challenge Summary Document for Communication on epda social media channels

For each of the 3 projects and student team as open file in WORD:

- Project Title
- Team: Names of team members
- Short Description: A brief summary of the project (max 80 words)
- Social Media Tags & Permissions: If students would like to be tagged on Instagram, please include their handles. Please ensure we have their permission to share names and projects on social media and communication channels.

Intellectual Property Rights and Data Protection

See THE WHITE BOX CHALLENGE Design School Agreement (Clause 4 and Clause 6).

Remember, now it is not only necessary to think outside the box.. but to think about the box!



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