REVISTA DE ENSINO EM ARTES, MODA E DESIGN

ISSN: 2594-4630
Vol. 5, nº. 2

Dossiê 9
Arte, Design e Artesanato: Ressignificações e Relacionamentos em Rede

DOI: 10.5965/25944630522021006

EDITORIAL

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The Portuguese colonizers, along with the Indigenous native people, helped spread a certain intimacy between threads, needles, and various fibers in Brazilian lands. A fabric of human relationships woven via observation, creativity, and learning, the transformation of threads, whether cotton or other materials, intertwined on the loom, heralded the shape and warp, becoming fabrics and objects. Relationships of affection and belonging have always been very dear to Brazilian fashion.

This was one of our objectives when we set the subject of this edition: **Art, Craftsmanship, and Design – redefinitions and networking.** The theme and the texts gathered in this Dossier cross the fundamental and current areas trans- and interdisciplinary, especially in cultural, economic, social, and environmental terms.

At times, the boundaries between art, craftsmanship, craft production, and design are unclear, to the extent of stripping these terms of their own distinct meaning. However, from the perspective of those involved, the goals of art are internal and temporal; the goals of craftsmanship are internal or external, and temporal; and the goals of design are external and temporal. In turn, the goals of science are external and enduring. However, it is within the redefinition of production and labor practices that we have encountered numerous experts, translating these concepts with the colors of our Brazilian land, scientifically modified seeds, or even natural and ancestral dyeing processes, involving artisanal methods.

Craftsmanship constitutes a body of knowledge with an intricate array of values, expressed and legitimized as an activity based on expertise, implicit knowledge, and mastery—the “doing it well” that focuses on the relationship between hand and mind, according to Sennett (2020). It explores another dimension of artisanal skill, founded on a dialogical relationship between material and ideals practices, a process in which manual dexterity predominates.

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Anyone entering a house in the late 19th or early 20th century, across all social segments, would commonly find a multitude of handicrafts in diverse colors, shapes, and functions. These added care, coziness, and comfort to home decor, imprinting new contours of taste and distinction. They, in a way, professionalized "manual labor," such as feminine practice, which eventually transitioned from the home to elementary schools as domestic education, establishing a school culture in the first half of the last century.

Contemporary craftsmanship emerges following a practice and process inherent to artisanal production, operating simultaneously within the proximity between the producer and the consumer. It involves an artistic practice of the craftsman in their studio (in their creation), following a creative path that is unique, independent, diverging from the market system, and establishing new relationships with consumers. It is these silently woven relationships between the subject, nature, and creativity that result in product innovation.

The reconnection of knowledge that confers identity and memory to objects, rescued from tradition or local production, can enhance a more active, affective, and significant role, triggering a more fruitful and lasting relationship between objects and the consumer.

The design culture, as stated by Victor Margolin (1989), encompasses the entirety of disciplines, phenomena, knowledge, analytical tools, and philosophies that the design of usable objects must consider. It includes how these objects are produced, distributed, and used within the context of increasingly complex and allusive social and economic models.

Devemos acrescentar que, o design envolve a aplicação de vários tipos de conhecimento, começando inicialmente com a intuição (descoberta) e terminando com a razão (justificação), sendo a sua base epistemológica a dos processos humano-sociais de aprendizagem. In other words, design, in its function of solving problems, is a cultural phenomenon, through which it is possible to experience and optimize the world in a process that values history, meaning, and the human condition. Both craftsmanship and design move along a spectrum between art and technique, with constant oscillations and approaches depending on the nature of the project challenges.

The disciplinary area of design is rapidly expanding, being interdisciplinary with many other areas that revolve around it. Their boundaries are not always well-defined, but their intrinsic collaboration and cross-pollination have become an essential and critical practice for the design process. Design is a unifying element responsible for collective memory, encompassing tangible and intangible values and dimensions. It seeks to contribute to solutions that exhibit a high level of utility while also embracing the construction of an aesthetic oriented toward creating an imagery. Design goes far beyond utility and functionality, incorporating cultural references for society. It integrates personal meanings, communicates emotions, and facilitates interpersonal relationships that mediate between individual perception and self-identity. Thus, there

is a need for constant reflection in the field that allows for the implementation of new visions and strategies, contributing to the construction of a fairer, balanced, ethical, and inclusive society where everyone can have equal opportunities.

Our perspective treats both industrially produced objects (as archetypes), often products of design, and handcrafted objects with equal importance. And this equitable treatment is related to the observation based on the meaning constructed by the consumer and the resulting appropriation of the objects and the inherent meaning of their own genesis. Both types of objects are simultaneously repositories and testimonies of culture, tradition, and identity, representing an expression of creativity.

It is crucial to create relationships of “complicity” between these two disciplines—craftsmanship and design—with the purpose of blurring boundaries and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration.

Designer Paulo Ramunni, in the book Alma do Design, argues that it is possible to enhance the value of artisanal products by implementing co-creations, using co-design strategies. This involves articulating the knowledge, research, and ideas inherent to the designer’s way of thinking with the practical knowledge and expertise of the artisan.

This approach could lead us towards a participatory process of interrelationships in developing new artifacts, fostering collective work without the concern of classifying a specific product as design, art, or craftsmanship.

The cross-pollination between different domains can result in added value for all parties involved. The designer can emerge as a driving force capable of promoting innovation and transformation, maintaining tradition without distorting it.

Recent research brings together tradition and innovation in addressing various areas of knowledge. However, there are few studies focused on the aspects used in the creation, development, and coordination adopted in the design of new products. One of the solutions to face challenges in craftsmanship or design is to seek balance, allowing artisans and designers to create and maintain differentiation in high standard sustainable products. This can be achieved by a holistic vision, further enhancing local and artisanal work.

The artisans’ expertise combined with a holistic and multidisciplinary vision of the designer can allow, by producing new products and respecting local materialities, identity and knowledge preservation, combating the progressive extinction of some artifacts.

This type of participatory work and co-design seeks to give a new dimension to quality craft production, allowing for a new sphere of design intervention in other production systems. We are referring to the adaptation of this production to contemporary culture since working with traditional culture entails imbuing objects with identity, thereby creating a shared legacy, accessible to all, that endures and holds value, often intrinsic in the construction of individual, social, local, or global identities.

The various products are developed in a collaborative process, by understanding and adapting the designers’ proposals to the technical and artistic

possibilities of each artisan involved. If the craftsman bears traditional knowledge and expertise, the designer brings with him a conceptual reflection that proposes conceptual and functional adaptation to the market and the challenges of contemporaneity. In this way, it is intended to broaden the sphere of intervention of both sectors, through the manifestation of traditional artistic languages as an alternative to the standardization of globalized products, promoting regional culture and identities.

The inclusion of sustainable design strategies in local contexts and on non-industrial production scales, as is the case with handicrafts, is essential to reduce the generation of material waste, pollution, and environmental damage, given the exclusive use of natural techniques and materials, typical of the region in which they are located. Sustainable design strategies predict desired outcomes in all stages of product or system development, including determining product use, target market, costs, and execution possibilities. These strategies can generate flexible, durable, modular or multifunctional, adaptable, and/or recyclable products

There is a paradigmatic shift that translates into a change of scenario that can only occur with the pursuit of innovation through interpretation, environmental redesign, new products and services, and the encouragement of new productive ideas that are inherently more sustainable for the environment, socially just, and culturally appealing

To achieve this, there is a need for implementation of sustainable design strategies that hold significant potential for generating social innovation and adding value to developed products with greater and improved coordination between art, craftsmanship, and design.

We wish you all a delightful read!

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