

Craftsmanship and design

By André Ricard

Craftsmanship can not be limited to reproduce past tools and essentials. There is a minor market of handmade products that design should attend to.

The globalization entails producing in big series for covering this single global macro market. This plan favours the countries with more economic power and makes these countries, with their products, impose their way of life to countries with divergent socio-cultural contexts. Globalizing means standardizing and homogenizing the market, destroying native cultures they ignore and supplant. These globalized products do not have in mind the peculiar hints of the different cultures where they are sold, so this system leads to a terrible global decline of the culture.

In this context, it is obvious that, nowadays, only the craftsmanship can keep this existing plurality of sensitivities and create products that have in mind the necessities and tastes of minority people and markets. Products made in limited series and with high-quality materials. The “high-quality” these materials hold, lies on its long history of loyal and reliable service to the Man (with a capital M). The wood, the glass, the ceramics or the basic metals, are the materials that made possible the most and the best part of the human object culture progress. Nowadays, this high-quality stands out for being natural materials, naturally renewable and recyclable. Substances that will never commit an outrage against the environment: they do not produce pollution, they are recyclables and they have aesthetic and organoleptic qualities that we do not find in the artificial materials created by the alchemists of the industrial society.

There was a time when the industrial productive systems were feared to set aside the craftsmanship into a symbolic level, past traces for the touristic memories. It has not been like that, quite the opposite. The hypertrophy the industrial production has reached has made the qualities that the handmade elaborations offer to be more appreciated. But not only clients require products more attentive to the particular expectative of a certain market. Also designers would like to create more exclusive products, less mass-produced and less universal, thought for a more specific and close public. A collaboration line between the world of the design and craftsmanship is possible and desirable. It should offer closer and more accurate products, those that the market is waiting for. Useful objects with current characteristics that would not be regulated by the system’s strict standardized laws, but that would have in mind the diversity of sensitivities that coexist today.

Thus, the collaboration between craftsmen and designers seems really coherent. A collaboration where each part could provide its talent:

The craftsman could provide his perfect knowledge of a profession that allows him to make

works that would just be possible using techniques and materials that the industry does not control.

The designer could provide his capacity of detecting, in the most common stuff, those aspects that could be improved and imagine how and the ways of reaching it.

The collaboration between craftsmanship and design would be then, a way of linking the “know how to do” with the “know what to do.”

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