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EXTENDED SUMMARY

WHERE DESIGN ENCOUNTERS ITS LOCAL DIMENSION

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1 INTRODUCTION

The current social and productive context promotes the appearance of an autonomous design. One that combines hybrid production with an industrial dimension and authorial experimentation. New possibilities of action appear. One is the figure of the designer-author who approaches the craft and the *modos operandi* of a craftsman. He dominates the entire production process. The new “designer” is also a consultant, integrated into multidisciplinary teams. One who unveils identities.

The interface that exists between design and other activities´ areas is also unquestionable. We named “local design” as a set of actions and its products that show local characteristics. One that is the expression of a collective, of a people, or a single craftsman. The objects of this production can carry the peculiarities of local culture.

What is the meeting point between design and its local dimension? How does product development take place when based on the partnership between designers and craftsmen? These are two of the questions that guided this text. They were also on my Ph.D. thesis ´Investigation of parameters of analysis of equipment design as a tool of social impact´ held in 2020 at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Lisbon University.

The meetings of a designer working together with craftsmen are the objects of this study. We analyzed 25 projects that involved:

- the community of the local production unit and/or the craftsman. Also all its social, technical, cultural, and economic context;
- the designer in his role of facilitator. The one that unveils the existing reality, its quality, and beauty. And also who presents his universe; and
- the entities or institutions that foster these partnerships. They are the ones that orchestrate the objectives and goals.

The article’s main goal is to investigate partnerships between designers and local production units. Its specific objectives are:

_produce a summary description of Brazilian and Portuguese partnerships; and

_delimiting (describing and analyzing) the relationships in this process.

We based that on the understanding of the analyzed experiences through case studies. In the thesis, we described them to understand the present contextualized reality. Here we summarized them for a general presentation of the proposals. It is a dialectical method and a reflection on this reality.

2 DEVELOPMENT

According to Victor Margolin, designers are responsible for the artifacts, systems, and environments. The ones that make up the social world. “Design is an act of invention: a process of conception and planning that can result in material or immaterial products” (MARGOLIN, 2014, p.54). Papanek argues that “all men are

designers. Everything we do is almost always to design because the design is the basis of all human activity" (PAPANEK, 1977, p.19). Donald Norman updated the statement when he said that "we are all designers" (NORMAN, 2004, p.221-222). There are a lot of definitions for this project activity.

Conceptualizing handicrafts is also a difficult task. Some seek to define it as a socio-economic activity. And those who define it as an activity that expresses the culture of a people, region, or race. It is also seen as a creative action, a technical skill, or the expression of the craftsman himself. He is a professional that dominates all stages of the work process and is aware of his part in the whole. Craftsman is also known for his link with the product. He understands the meaning of his effort. He bases his action on the association between theory and practice. It is impossible to distance intellectual work from the manual, or the know-how of doing.

Ratifying the similarities and particularities of making through design and making using local dimension was important. More than defining, it was essential to know the objectives, motivations, and expectations of these two actors. Especially, when they take part in such a complex, hierarchical, and collaborative partnership.

In the chosen case studies, the focus was not only on the formal or technical transformation of the object. Nor on the number of participants. Or even on the economic return achieved from the new collection of developed products. The focus was on the partnership established and the resulting miscegenation.

The diversity identified in the projects led to the identification of some factors. They made it possible to organize the complexity of the studied information network. The way of grouping the projects took place by the figure of the partnership "promoting agent". To promote is to stimulate. In this way, the "promoting agent" is the actor who encourages, articulates, and seeks support for the realization of the partnership. These can be translated into the figures of artisans (artisans or artisans' associations), designers (individually or in groups), and entities (colleges, industrial associations, public institutions, foundations, institutes, NGOs, etc.).

From the "promoting agent", we obtained four narratives: Beginning by local makers, beginning by designers, From an entity, and From an academic foundation.

3 CONCLUSION

Each location is unique, with a particular landscape and tradition. Each production unit is specific and presents its challenges, resources, and potential. Each collaboration network organizes itself in its way. All the case studies showed human and local development. The new market circumstances create a new economy (small local production units). They also create a new organizational (collaborative processes) paradigm.

The main investigation contribution was to understand that we are all artisans (SENNETT, 2009). The designer can transform into another one, but he also changes and develops himself. The impact is a two-way street. To be collaborative is

to be responsible for bilateral creation processes. The openness to exchange among the various areas of knowledge is important. To be in the complementarity of practices (scientific and non-scientific) provides the dialogue of knowledge. And it signifies the world to do it better. To be better.

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