

Bobbin lace and upcycling: an innovation proposal

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1 INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is a systemic concept encompassing economical, sociocultural, and environmental aspects. Proposing sustainable scenarios demands changes in production and consumption, and encompasses the development of cultural activities that promote new criteria and values. Fashion should be understood in direct relation to Design, both having expressive social scope in contemporary society, combining creative and disseminating activities involving symbolic patterns of desire and consumption. In line with sustainability and circular fashion, *upcycling* can be understood as an eco-friendly alternative to give new meaning to materials that would have been discarded, transforming something at the end of its lifespan into something new and of higher value.

Bobbin Lace is a traditional craft and folk art brought to the Island of Santa Catarina by Azorean families between the years of 1745 and 1748. Bobbins are small wooden coils which, when handled in pairs in rotary motion, weave line threads to make lace.

Considering this, and acknowledging the relevance of lace craft in the city of Florianópolis, the present study aims to present results of field research seeking new innovation possibilities for Bobbin Lace in Florianópolis. For this purpose, an innovation project was developed based on the Guia de Orientação para o Desenvolvimento de Projetos (Orientation Guide for Project Development or GODP) with a focus on Fashion Design (MERINO; VARNIER; MAKARA, 2020), resulting in a user-centered design project methodology, developed with the potential of local traditional crafts in mind.

2 DEVELOPMENT

Design sees the transition towards sustainability in a potentially fertile way and takes on the complex task of mediating production and consumption, tradition and innovation, local qualities and global relationships. This section is going to present the innovation project developed from the identification of Bobbin lace potentialities among the Bobbin craftworkers in Florianópolis.

GODP is a critical methodology with a user centered approach divided into 8 steps understood in three main moments: Inspiration (Stage -1: opportunity; Stage 0: prospecting; Stage 1: data collection), Ideation (Stage 2: data organization and analysis; Stage 3: creation of alternatives), Implementation (Stage 4: execution; Stage 5: feasibility; Step 6: final verification).

The method's objective is to consider the user as the starting point, to ensure planned systematicity to allow data collection, organization and analysis, thus providing relevant information to the project and, therefore, favoring the creative and marketing direction in product development.

In the first phase, Inspiration, initial research on macro-tendencies in the textile and clothing sector is conducted. This research showed that sustainability and immaterial values were the main innovation trends in this sector. All definitions for the project had product choice as their source, focusing on immaterial values and social, economical, and environmental sustainability of artisanal work developed in local communities: Bobbin lace in Florianópolis. During data collection, the first step was to define reference blocks: product, user, and context. Concerning the product, surveys were conducted to assess sales location, the products to be offered and their prices and, from the user's end, a survey was applied to identify their profile and map their potential expectations and needs. As for the context, the research accounted for the places where the product is inserted: from the origin to the territory where it's produced, sales channels, and contexts of use.

The second phase, Ideation, is composed of two stages: data analysis (2) and creation of alternatives (3). The opportunity identified in the market, by means of the 174 answers to the survey, is selling Bobbin lace through *e-commerce*. A chart was then designed by linking clients' needs, in order of priority, to product requirements and suggestion of possible solutions and innovation possibilities. The innovation project developed for the present research came to its conclusion with data analysis.

The project's challenge was to reconcile the consumer needs in terms of quality, costs, and access with artisan production aspects without the cultural values involved in such a production. To design environmentally oriented solutions with a focus on the reduction of the environmental impact of materials and processes, seeking eco-sustainable raw materials, such as Bobbin lace, represents a potentially sustainable production option, as it comprises small scale and usually cotton-based production. However, as the understanding of environmental sustainability evolves towards increasing a product's lifespan, a consideration of all the stages of production, distribution, consumption, lifespan, and disposal are necessary to further reduce the overall environmental impact. These considerations led to seeing circular fashion as an innovation proposal: offering a sewing and *upcycling* service for disposed and thrifted items and adding Bobbin lace to them.

3 CONCLUSION

Both Fashion and Design are fields related to social transformations. However, it's necessary to understand, and question, the mechanisms that feed fashion dynamics: ephemerality and obsolescence, the environmental impact and the lifespan of products, and their cultural function to social and individual identity, as it's necessary to strengthen diversity and transform social perspectives. The present study presented the development of a project to identify innovation opportunities in the areas of fashion design, more specifically traditionally handcrafted Bobbin lace in Florianópolis, to stimulate sustainable production and consumption. In Fashion, sustainability has been increasingly seen as a synonym for quality, comprehending ethics and social responsibility in production chains, combined with eco-efficiency in processes and raw materials management.

By shedding light on the valorization of local resources by means of value analysis in the productive chain, the present research contributes to a better understanding of the complexity of handcrafting activity and Design's potential as a strategic tool to develop the artistic, tourist, traditional, and cultural vocation of Bobbin lace to the sustainable development of the city of Florianópolis.

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