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diid
disegno industriale › industrial design

Design and Art

68/19



LISTLAB



diid

disegno industriale › industrial design

Design and Art

The issue 68 of **diid** offers a cultural dialogue on the relationship among the disciplines of design and art.

On the one hand, the essays stimulate reflection on possibly overcoming this relationship, while investigating similarities and differences; on the other hand, they critically analyze the mutual influence that design and art have constituted in the contemporary world, in terms of interference and cross-pollination.

In its complexity, the landscape is marked by a cultural context that, on a number of occasions, has historically articulated these reflections, seeking to critically grasp the most significant elements in their mutual contemporariness. The current affirmation of the new digital tools for action and production in the work of the artist and designer has ushered in new horizons and perspectives that, in this "new contemporariness", raise the need for an updated reconnaissance of the state of the art.

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ISSN 1594-8528



20102

9 771594 852009



9 788832 080209



Design and Art

diid
disegno industriale | industrial design
Journal published every four months

Fondata da | Founded by

Tonino Paris
Registration at Tribunale di Roma 86/2002 in the 6th of March 2002

N°68/19
Design and Art

ISSN
1594-8528

ISBN
9788832080209

Anno | Year
XVII

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Design & Arte

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Taking advantage of the issue's theme, it appears appropriate that I pay tribute to Gillo Dorfles, a critical and ethical figure of reference for "thinking about design".

He expressed himself on this topic with no ambiguity whatsoever: he contributed to considerations on art and design, with an invitation to conceive the latter by going beyond the conventions linked to the traditional disciplines, and therefore beyond an approach that, while effective for the culture of design, has now become obsolete and no longer able to provide an adequate response to the experience of our time.

It is a matter of need. Having already sensed the ambiguous relationship between the visual arts and design, it recurs from time to time in the alternation of events, and is one of those problems whose solution can never take place definitively, due precisely to the conflicting occurrences in art on the one hand, and design on the other, depending on whether it is exclusively aesthetic demands, or inevitable functional and economic couplings, that prevail.

Today, Gillo Dorfles reminds us:

[...] an additional sea change... ended up altering the relationship between art and design; [...] the sea change in which design found itself upon the rise of a new era, the electronic one, is certainly decisive for its future evolution, and perhaps as laden with consequences as what in its time marked the passage from the more artisanal design of "Arts & Crafts" to that of the mass-produced item of early rationalism. But what does this sea change actually consist in? It consists, above all, in the fact that the design of the industrialized item – based not on the mechanics of a time but on that of electronics – no longer follows, or follows only in part, the formal purposes valid until yesterday: that is, the inescapable relationship between form and function, given that, with the disappearance of the mechanical component, the exterior bodywork, based in fact on this component's "bulk", has now become superfluous. On the other hand, the product's new functionality is to a large degree entrusted to the "sign" factor, to semantic individuality, and to the increasingly decisive problems of the interface with the user, as well as to the indispensable influence of the external aspect as vehicle of the item's semanticity, and therefore of its saleability. This naturally brings the design product closer to that of many contemporary arts. For this reason, beyond the quotient entrusted to marketing, it takes on primary importance and lies at the base of some recent formal metamorphoses of the object. [...] It is in fact to be borne in mind that the speed of formal consumption or obsolescence – always present in design

precisely due to the need for its constant “attractiveness” – is now incentivized by the fact that many products, and electronics-based products in particular, encounter an unbelievable technological acceleration. [...] Just consider the home automation sector, the invention of domestic gadgets that will give rise to a new range of templates for the home and office, in which the importance of IT programming will be equal to that of design. What demonstrates this osmosis between the world of objects (artistic but also functional) and that of concepts (philosophical, but also materialized for aesthetic purposes) is precisely the rise of many hybrid and yet not negligible forms that populate our daily universe. This forest of hybrid forms (advertising billboards, articles of consumption, television commercials, artworks that may be likened to the latter) inures us – willingly or unwillingly – also to accept certain aspects that in the past would have appeared extremely equivocal.

It cannot be denied that cross-pollination between the two sectors, so distinct from one another until a few decades ago, has become more marked. What is this cross-pollination due to? Perhaps to a global aestheticization of life in our days. Unlike many past eras, we can now observe a subtle infiltration, into the most hidden receptacles of daily life, of artistic or pseudo-artistic elements that serve to sweeten the pill of our visual landscape.

This, then, explains the many attempts to create items for use that are increasingly close to those “art objects” that once lived in isolation, under a metaphorical bell jar, and were for the most part depositaries of mythmaking and magical values while they now invade the department stores and showrooms of high end furniture manufacturers and decorators. So, is it a merit or a fault, to have let down the guard of functionality at all costs in favour of irrepressible playfulness? It is a merit and fault at the same time: on the one hand, it is true that this attitude of recovering hedonism in the product design sector has made it possible to make new prototypes where the symbolic more than the aesthetic component is rediscovered (consider certain legendary furnishings: Ron Arad, Zaha Hadid, Bořek Šípek, Riccardo Dalisi etc.); however, it is also true that – given the well-known precariousness of taste, so often dying in kitsch – this trend has often made possible the misapprehension of considering artistic what is only playful, and of neglecting, in the article of consumption, those ergonomic constants that, whether we like it or not, we cannot do entirely without [...].^[1]

At any rate, on the topic being discussed here, as early as November 1940 and July 1942, in *Casabella* Pagano wrote:

That a mass-produced object can be a work of art, or that a standardized product can boast aristocratic origins springing from the artist’s loins, is something that many art writers have difficulty being persuaded of. They may perhaps consider with interest the artisan’s machinery, but see any industrialized automatism as a kind of servitude that flattens imagination. [...] The misapprehension is coarse and dangerous [...] One fine day, with us, too, certain relationships that are anything but insignificant, between

contemporary taste and so-called “industrial design”, will be discovered. One fine day, influences anything but superficial or fortuitous, between the physiognomy of the “machine” and certain formal predilections of contemporary artistic language [...] will be discovered.

Given the scenario described by Gillo Dorfles and Pagano, the contributions in this issue of *DIID* gradually examine the issue of the relationship between Art and Design, with points for more in-depth reflection.

In “*Design and art. An alternation of compromises and affinities*”, Vincenzo Cristallo recounts one of the aspects of “[...] a critical mosaic that yields not so much a thesis as the proposal for arguing the compromises and affinities present in the dialogue between design and art [...], maintaining, however, [...] that design is, by its own aptitude, a space for the mediation and synthesis of knowledge, a territory in which art can act as an instrument of knowledge and cultural integration, and technique as a model of progress and social innovation [...]”.

In “*Chromatic dematerializations. The development of the culture of colour between art and design*”. Federico Oppesidano “[...] proposes rereading the artistic influences in the culture of design in order to cast light on how the immaterial nature of the chromatic dimension today becomes a terrain for dialogue and collaboration between artists and designers engaged in valorizing the natural and artificial environment, precisely through the use of those values connected to the emotional nature of colour [...]”.

In “*Caring for the future*”, Elena Maria Formia and Elena Vai attribute to Art and Design a maieutic function: “[...] Uncertainty over the future and the simultaneous nature of the choices we are called upon to make are some of the common factors that bind together artistic and design cultures, paradoxically called into question to mitigate a condition of disorientation and confusion [...] Design has been able to range over open planes to go seek inspiration and be influenced, drawing from other knowledge and disciplines [...] But above all, Art and Design converge in wishing to comprehend and confine the complexity of the present, through synthesis, representation, the sharing of narratives projected towards possible futures. Starting from a reflection on the impact of the digital revolution under way in the field of productive statutes, the text investigates the cross-pollination between art and design through a shared aesthetic outlook understood as perception, experience, and knowledge of things through the mediation of the senses [...]”.

In “*Daily art for the design company*”, Annalisa Dominoni examines specific historic business cases that used Design’s relationship with Art as an added value in their output: “[...] examination of cutting-edge design firms that experimented with actions of “commercial art” shows an aptitude that places the “fascination of the object” sought by Alessi and Vitra, as well as the design’s “imaginative-visual” matrix maintained by Osvaldo Borsani, at the centre of the project, and that contributes towards preserving the design from the danger of a passive assimilation to the mechanics of

mass production. This confirms that “good Design” is an alchemist’s formula that results from the balance between technical, economic, and above all conceptual experience.[...] Designer/artists, or artist/designers, are now the custodians of quality in a world that is being quantified, because the quality of an object reinvented through an artistic approach, free to act on the more profound aspects of the human being, has the ability to resonate with him or her, reflecting the person’s own nature and capacity for invention. And if the company accepts this challenge, innovative products able to become Design icons can come into being [...].”

In “*The aesthetic ground of Fashion and Art*”, Gianni Denaro and Marta Laureti maintain that [...] “Within the multiform landscape of Design tout court, Fashion has been able to assert itself as a common territory in which both Art and Design have continuously fed this dialogue [...]. Fashion has come increasingly closer to Art – which has always defined products with a high impact of exposure – with the consequence of a crisis, nearly an identity crisis, that has struck Art as well: Art that, in the desire to replicate itself and reach the masses (Benjamin, 2008), has at times been commodified. All this did nothing more than to highlight the disappearance of that aura connected with their respective nature, obligating them to seek a response in perhaps a new territory where they could find themselves and investigate practices that would allow them to survive the commodification of the “aesthetic added value” (Baudrillard, 2012). Each of them approached this common territory in accordance with their own procedures, but using the content and references of the other [...].”

In “*Co-design of public spaces through design and art*”, “Davide Fassi and Anna Mazzanti.[...] explore, through comparison among the applied research experiences of the POLIMI DESIS Lab-PDL (Design For Social Innovation and Sustainability) research group at Polytechnic University of Milan, the possible modes of collaboration between professional designers and artists for the re-design of portions of public spaces – or spaces open to the public – with co-designing actions and the involvement of teaching activities in the design of spaces and services [...]. The three presented cases differ by modes of interlocution among the subjects involved and by impact of the obtained result. “Arnold – Arte e design in Nolo District” (2017) in Milan, “Il Giardino di Daniel Spoerri” (2018) in Seggiano (Grosseto), and “Trentami in Verde” (2019) [...].”

In “*Art and design: Toni Zuccheri at VeArt*”, “Rosa Chiesa reports to us a specific experience: [...]”. The encounter between the artist/architect/designer, who preferred to define him or herself as a craftsperson, and VeArt, a firm from Veneto born following the economic boom of the 1960s, oriented towards industrializing the processes for the manufacture of “artistic glass” (as the company’s name, including the Italian “*vetro*”, hints at), also through the use of semi-automatic technologies applied to glassblowing, is emblematic not only for the formal outcomes achieved in production, but also for

the possibilities and potentials for enrichment that intermingling among the different disciplines, art and design, can offer. [...] The events between VeArt and Zuccheri, articulated over twenty years of collaboration, show the interesting outcomes of a major effort to use new technologies at the service of artistic purposes, and at the same time show how art and design have found – and can find today – fertile terrain for exchange in the practice of experimentation [...].”

In “*Art and Design: from objects with an aesthetic function to Interaction Design*”, Rosa Maria Giusto immerses herself in the topicality of interactive inclusion, recounting her point of view: “[...] One of the primary aspects of contemporary art is the search for the interactive inclusion of the viewer within the space generated by the work. The more the work tends to disappear, the more the viewer becomes part of the perceived space, transforming him or herself into a user, fully involved in the processes of recognizing and perceiving the work (Marras & Mecacci, II, p. 159). This approach, inaugurated by minimal art, may be considered a precursor of Interaction Design, in which the progressive dematerialization and disappearance of the object/product in favour of an increasingly elaborate and refined interface system “transforms the interaction (and/or the Usability) into an aesthetic experience, into engagement and emotional participation”. (Marras & Mecacci, II, p. 160) [...] The employment of Human Computer Interaction (HCI), from a strictly cognitive plan to a tangible, experiential, and aesthetic one, marks the change of horizon during these years. From objects as traditionally understood, and from artefacts, we have transitioned to a system for using objects, including those with “aesthetic function”, in which design increasingly becomes a fundamental instrument in policies for the innovative exploitation and valorization of cultural heritage and museum holdings. [...] Starting from the age-old art v. design debate, the essay reflects upon certain thematic nodes that are essential to the relationships between art and design, and then critically reviews the epochal changes, and changes in meaning, that the discipline of “Interaction Design” is going through during this time [...].”

In “*Redesigning maps, amid art and design*”, Luca Guerrini and Raffaella Trocchianesi recount their research experience aimed at redrawing maps between Design and Art “[...] In 2014, a doctoral research programme was started with the aim of redrawing the map of their interrelationships. The text reinterprets the content of the study and proposes a reflection on the first results that were attained.

The research recognizes numerous trajectories for a renewed dialogue between the two disciplines: the one of the media’s contamination of art, making it essentially indistinguishable from products; the one reflecting the processes of “production”, between art as design and the product as art; the one that explores social behaviour towards “relational aesthetics”; the one that investigates the expressive potentials of digital technologies; and the one that dialogues with the inter-and trans-cultural dimension in the processes of globalization. [...] Through a series of specific in-depth

examinations, it concentrates in particular on the last three trajectories highlighted by the map, where they intercept the discipline of design in collaborative practices and in promoting “social innovation”, in conceiving and realizing immersive and interactive spaces, and in valorizing local cultures and artisanal traditions [...]”.

«The overall framework outlines a vast, networked system, now articulated on a number of levels, each of which describing new correspondences: not territories, but journeys that all the same appear to converge towards an idea of innovation as a social and civil commitment [...]”.

In “*Design and Art in the connective imagination*”, Gianpiero Alfarano, to comprehend the relationships between Design and Art, grapples with the most advanced contemporary opportunities and instruments. He does so with optimism, deeming them to be potential factors of useful and productive impetus towards new experimentation and the intermingling of the two disciplines “[...] Speed and enormous data processing capacity systematically involve the exploration of new combinations. Algorithms can process unthinkable quantities of data, and therefore act autonomously to configure wholly original and uncontrollable images and forms. In artistic practices and in design, an increasingly growing need for a “meta-design”, or a design that reflects and above all critiques the very systems with which it designs, is perceived. [...] If the model, more than designed, is calculated, then all the aspects of the design methodology, taken together, are to be cast into doubt. This is a paradigm shift from attention to the “final product” to the “process to obtain it”. The design process acquires sensitive variations with “generative programming”, in which a series of events produces a result never wholly predicted, but requires conserving, in the final result, the principle that generated them. New awareness regarding the technological potentials [...]”.

In “*Arianna’s wire: Valeria Scuteri between art and design*”. Claudia Bottini and Rossella Mana propose “[...] investigating, using the tools of the disciplines connected to the study of design and to art history, the production of one of the most important artists linked to the Fiber Art movement: Valeria Scuteri. The work by the artist – Piedmontese by adoption – moves through the use of innovative materials and manufacturing techniques that are also quite ancient. In this manner, the artist connects two worlds – the one of art and the one of craftsmanship – and two historic times: past and present. Through the use of non-conventional materials, she conceives fashion and design objects that are constituted outside of their daily use. This is the case of the potentially wearable garments and accessories that refer openly to mass consumption items, but that are conceived outside their value for use. Scuteri’s Fiber Art fits within that dichotomy between design items and artwork – a dichotomy that traversed the entire history of art and consumption during the last century, radicalizing their positions and showing their paradoxes [...]”.

[1] Gillo Dorfles in *Cuadernos del Centro de Estudios de Diseño y Comunicación n°2, Universidades de Palermo, Buenos Aires* ISSN Online: 1853-3523

Introduction

Contenent

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The presented essays respond to an induced and proposed reflection on overcoming two assumptions of reference around which the discussion of the relationship between Design and Art has been articulated.

The first assumption refers to overcoming the similarities and/or differences between these two scenarios. “[...] (The) first difference between Artist and Designer: the artist has subjective ideas and works in accordance with his or her own taste, for him or herself and for an elite; the designer is objective, rational, and logical, working in a group and for all of society, and to improve production both aesthetically and practically” (B. Munari, *Artista e Designer*, Laterza, 1971).

The second assumption, however, is critically joined to the mutual influence and the relationships that art and design have established in terms of exchange, interference, and cross-pollination.

«The relationship between art and design is therefore continuously evolving, and hard to label: the very differentiation between the two spheres now belongs to the past. The world of art and that of design in fact pass one another information, working methods, and stimuli, but are both constituted by different cases that are impossible to generalize in a single law” (A. Branzi, *Il Design è una forma d'arte*, in www.ligiornale.it, 12 June 2007). Today, notwithstanding the fact that these two visions may still constitute a point of reference for investigation and deeper critical and historical examination, the possibility has been raised of identifying new territories, barely visible and scantily studied, yet potentially fertile. These arise and develop both from the synthesis of the diverse and distinct methodological approach to the two disciplines, and from the different types of relationships that have been generated over time. The relationships involve different planes of reference between art and design, such as those relating to the aspects connected with the social and market value of objects; to the involvement of new productive and economic sectors and players; to the various schools of thought in the respective disciplinary formations; and to the trying out of new forms of products, manifestations and events in which it is increasingly difficult to distinguish their root of origin.

In the presented essays, the identification or existence of a “common territory” underscores, in a new and original way, the possible relationships that are created, with respect to the transformations and hybridizations of meaning that art and design are continuously subjected to, both theoretically and from the experimental and tangible standpoint.

The main objective was to represent the cultural visions that are developed in the relationship between art and design, in some cases overcoming the customary historical/critical and theoretical/speculative dimension in favour of a broader vision, also through the presentation of research and concrete experiences, with a strong content of experimentation, capable of reading the orientation and the new contemporary trends in a fresh and original interpretation of the phenomenon.

In the Focus section, the issues favoured an in-depth examination, from the cultural standpoint, of the methodological aspects related to the mutual influence between art and design, while in the Make section, the contributions made reference to identifying the places and territories of linkage between the design and art of objects and products – tangible and intangible, concrete and developed.

The cultural proposal offered by the essays on design was to register the degree of progress of cross-pollination between these two scenarios: distinct and autonomous, yet highly continuous.

Think



Artistic creativity, public space and social progress

François Burkhardt

Design and art. An alternation of compromises and affinities

Vincenzo Cristallo

Chromatic dematerializations. The development of the culture of colour between art and design

Federico O. Oppedisano

Caring for the future

Elena Maria Formia, Elena Vai

Interview with Martí Guixè

a cura di Giuseppe Losco

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Think

Artistic creativity, public space and social progress The experiences of the German *Urbanes Design* group

In the Postmodern era, the relationship between art and design becomes an integral part of the general evolution of culture, in perfect harmony with the continuous search for a connection between the creative disciplines.

The relationship between art, architecture, design and environment represents a unique and inseparable cultural experience, choosing from time to time the most suitable language to communicate the contents based on the issues addressed, in order to contribute to human progress through the multiple aspects related to psychology, perception, socialization, anthropology, biology, technological evolution, philosophy and in-depth knowledge of society.

The paper narrates some experiments with the *Urbanes Design* group in the field of interventions on public spaces and organization and preparation of exhibitions with the participation of art and architecture, planning and design experts, joined by sociologists, psychologists of perception, I.T. theorists, art historians and media specialists.

From the specificities of these different disciplines, the purpose has been to provide the inhabitants of urban neighbourhoods with solutions able to improve communication and to facilitate the social integration of people and groups for the development of a sustainable society.

It is therefore a question of recognizing the needs of the social groups that live near the area of intervention and of proposing, with the means of art, design and architecture, structures that allow them to habitually carry out activities that generate and consolidate the group identity and the historical reading of urban places. In the capitalist society, design has the productive and social task of giving aesthetic quality to goods and hence it is part of art (Deganello, 2019).

[urban design, critical art, creative connections,
sense of identity, human progress]

François Burkhardt

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It seems to me that it is an acquired fact to consider the relationship between art and design as an integral part of the general evolution of culture, in perfect harmony with that continuous search for a connection between different creative disciplines which is one of the characteristics of the Postmodern era. It was in fact Modernity, starting from the sixties of the last century, that pushed towards the separation between art and design to respond to the need for the division of fields and their autonomous specialization. It should also be remembered that at the Bauhaus the introductory courses to the various professions were based on artistic creativity, knowledge of materials and interdisciplinary practice that was to precede the acquisition of specific knowledge on the chosen discipline. The influence of art on design has become particularly evident in visual communication with constructivism, Pop Art, Programmed Art and Poor Art. But, above all, art must be considered a free and critical discipline, something that today is lacking in design, subject to the conditions of production and of liberal and globalized economy. Paolo Deganello writes: "In capitalist society design has the productive and social task of giving aesthetic quality to goods and in this sense it is part of art".^[1]

I take this opportunity to present this aspect of the relationship between art and design by describing some experiments I carried out with the *Urbanes Design* group, an interdisciplinary group that has been operating since 1968 in the field of interventions on public spaces and organization and preparation of exhibitions. The group was born from the conviction, shared both by my wife Linde (artist) and me (architect), that our professions, now increasingly subject to the economic conditions of the art market on the one hand and real estate income on the other, no longer offered the space necessary for emancipation, communication and the consolidation of people's identity. This task was relegated to the public space, which, however, was rarely designed to meet these needs.

This situation convinced us to create a group in Hamburg active in that sector, which later moved to Berlin. *Urbanes Design* was made up of the two founders, one competent in the field of art and the other in the field of architecture, planning and design, joined by sociologists, psychologists of perception, I.T. theorists, art historians and media experts, according to the projects' complexity. All the partners involved in each project had equal importance and equal rights. The group was born in the years of the so-called "student protest", based above all on the critical theory of the Frankfurt School. For urban planning and architecture we referred to the writings of Alexander Mitscherlich,^[2] Heide Berndt and Alfred Lorenzer.^[3] We were also influenced by the essays of the philosopher Herbert Marcuse,^[4] by Marshall McLuhan's^[5] Media Theory and by Kevin Lynch's studies on the urban image.^[6] Up to now, we can say that the aim of the group has consisted in finding alternatives to the usual practices of architecture and art. This theoretical basis was transferred to teaching both by Linde and by me in the respective university teaching paths.

The purpose of our research is not simply to make art or architecture, but to take advantage of the specificities of these disciplines to offer inhabitants of urban neighborhoods structures that can improve communication and orientation, generating that sense of identity that is often lacking. In other words, it is a matter of inserting new structures in public spaces that facilitate the social integration of people and groups. Taking up a definition by Alfred Lorenzer we have called these structures “crystallization points for close contacts”. A good orientation system offers safety to users of urban spaces, who need “niches” where to stop and perform activities: an opportunity that in recent years has been partially neutralized by the safety interventions promoted by public administrations. In addition, solutions are needed to satisfy the demand for intermediate spaces between the public and private dimensions. Account should also be taken of the positive influence that space and the atmosphere created by it can have on the behavior of individuals or groups. A final aspect that I would like to mention is the need to provide such spaces with symbolic elements that on the one hand are familiar to the public, on the other hand they offer a quality in which the different groups of users recognize and feel at ease.

It is therefore a question of recognizing the needs of the social groups that live near the area of intervention and of proposing, with the means of art, design and architecture, structures that allow them to habitually carry out activities that consolidate the group identity. In the context of each project dealt with, cultural, anthropological, psychological and social issues were investigated more than architecture or design. In fact, the concept of public space cannot only concern issues of aesthetics, technique or functionality: as professionals of creativity we must broaden our operating horizon in a multidisciplinary and transversal direction. Art, design and architecture are the starting point and not the arrival point of these processes.

During the period when we were finishing our studies at the Hochschule der Künste in Hamburg – Linde as an artist and I as an architect – we started to participate in public competitions. In Germany, as well as in Italy, there is a law on public art which requires investing 2% of the amount spent on construction in works of art. For this purpose, public competitions are held for designers, architects, artists and visual communication professionals who fall within the definition of “Kunst am Bau”, that is “art applied to construction”. In 1968, still students, we won the first competition for the arrangement of the pedestrian axis of the new Steilshoop district, on the outskirts of Hamburg. To our amazement, we ranked first for having replaced the usual supply of works of art with the proposal to use the means available to experiment with the creation of “crystallization points for close contacts” at the crossings between the pedestrian area and the vehicular road crossings. The first project involved an outdoor theatre, a rest area and a play area for adults and children with a kiosk-bar with seats.

For the second version of the project we grouped around the theatre, surrounded

by a fence of revolving doors, a system of steps with integrated tables and skateboard ramps, which had grouped various functions for adults, young people and children. The executive project was finally simplified by replacing the revolving portals with some fixed colored panels of different heights and widths, obtaining a sort of multi-colored crown with a rhythmic trend. This installation has announced the specificity of the place from afar, creating a sense of identity and integrating various activities for adults (especially those related to communication) with the functions intended for young people and children. The experiment was very positively received by the population of the neighborhood, despite the use of groups of young people at night which generated conflicts between the various user groups and the inhabitants.

After the success of the first competition, whose project was carried out and allowed us to start the group’s business by developing new knowledge, in 1969 we participated in a second competition by proposing an idea similar to the Steilshoop’s one, at the time under construction. It was another suburb of Hamburg, Bergedorf: the competition required a project of works of art to be installed along the pedestrian axis that connects the railway station to the center of the housing estate passing in front of the shopping center and the church with the square in front. Also in this case we have proposed the construction, in a corner of the square, of a “crystallization point for close contacts”. This time, given the lower urban density of the square area, we thought of another open-air theatre in the center of a body of water, framed by stairways to create a pleasant environment around which the public can take a seat and follow the theatre activity that serves as a stage.

The various steps are in reinforced concrete, while for the vertical elements we used sheet piles of different heights in steel painted in bright colors inside and neutral outside. Visiting the square after almost fifty years of use for the most varied activities, we found that this environment, despite the elimination of the water surface, is still used intensively and represents a social gathering point for the neighborhood.

Another field of action of the *Urbanes Design* group were the experiments on the theme of historical reading of urban places. The first project of this kind was entitled “Stadtbildreflektor” (*Reflector of the image of the city*, 1975) and was born from a competition launched by the “Berliner Festwochen” festival to revive tourism in Berlin through art and culture. We believed that strengthening historical identity through culture was an urgent need to guarantee inhabitants identification with each neighborhood by emphasizing the specificity and uniqueness that distinguished it from other neighborhoods.

A peculiarity of Berlin before the fall of the wall – that is until 1989 – was the presence of a large amount of urban voids, corresponding to the numerous buildings demolished following the war events that could not be rebuilt due to the lack of information on the owners who could have been disappeared, unknown

or resident in eastern Germany. These parcels were therefore legally non-buildable. Since there were more urban voids in each neighborhood, we proposed to the administrations of the individual neighborhoods to build “spotlights of the image of the city”, one per neighborhood. These were temporary prefabricated buildings, which can be dismantled and reassembled on other lots. On the lower floor of each Reflektor there was a cafe, on the upper floor a meeting room and on the back a staircase for assemblies to be held outside. From the street there was a large wall of panels that formed a concave surface on which some symbolic elements stood out which throughout history had contributed to building the public image of the neighborhood. It could have been paintings, the remains of buildings applied directly to the panels or pieces of reconstructed facades, which together constituted a large two or three-dimensional fresco. The “*Stadtbildreflektor*” was conceived as a venue for social and cultural activities and as a place for information exchange between the inhabitants and the district administration. The idea of recovering the identity of the neighborhoods found practical application on a more specifically architectural scale with our participation in the competition for the market square in Spandau, a suburb of Berlin. It was an area of the city partly devastated by the bombings of the Second World War. Our aim was to restore the volume of the square to its original size, including the old town hall, without proceeding with a reconstruction “as it was where it was” but underlining the differences between the state prior to the bombing and the current state. For this purpose, the space between the new facades and the original track of the ground floors was used to house various commercial activities, creating an intermediate area between public and private space. The pre-war layout was made partially recognizable by a metal structure to which pieces of facades of historic buildings were hung, made with the “sandcasting” technique devised by Costantino Nivola and used in those years for the walls of the Olivetti store in New York. This technique would have highlighted especially the outline of the old town hall, a very popular building in the neighborhood.

An example of this method of integration between art and design is the creation of elements for display stands. Starting from a work of art (environment) in plastic material created by Linde in 1968 and entitled *Labyrinth*, in various competitions we have developed the idea of a space conceived starting from prefabricated elements that can be used both as architectural structures and as separators and displays for interior. It is a system made up of quarter-circle panels, with which concave and convex shapes and straight panels can be obtained: the combination of these elements allows flexible display arrangements.

For another occasion, we designed elements that can be used as stepped seats, influenced by Pop Art. The back of each staircase can be used as an exhibition wall, while several elements can be combined with each other to create constellations of different spaces and functions. In this case the elements were used for the preparation of the hall of the University of Bergedorf in Hamburg (1975).

In recent years we have set up various exhibitions on Linde’s objects and themes, which, being an established artist, requires, in the various museums in which it exhibits, a concept of staging consistent with the topics dealt with. Starting from the works, and therefore from art, my job as a designer is to find a language suitable for the exhibition setting, which on the one hand is not invasive and on the other highlights the theme explored from time to time by the artist. One of the best examples of this synthesis is the exhibition “From the joys of the Etruscans”, presented at the museum complex of Santa Maria della Scala in Siena in 2018. Here Linde’s rugs interacted with the original Etruscan works they inspired, creating an interesting symbiosis between history and modernity and canceling the distance between the very different eras in which the works were made. Both the Etruscan objects from the collection of the National Museum, chosen for the exhibition in order to correspond to the themes of the rugs, and the rugs themselves are brought together in order to make the historical objects more contemporary while at the same time forming a coherent visual whole.

To conclude, commenting on our experience I can say that our interdisciplinary group has always theorized and put into practice the relationship between art, architecture, design and the environment as a unique and inseparable cultural experience, choosing from time to time the most suitable language for communicate the contents based on the issues addressed by the individual projects.

We always started from the idea that art, architecture and design are the specific tools of a *Gestalt* process, each of which has individual functions and characteristics. The meaning to be attributed to *Gestalt* derives from activity in other fields in relation to the most current evolution and trends of society and the civilization process. The individual professions are called, within the limits of their possibilities, to contribute together to human progress. This is the reason why we chose to take care of the redesign of the public space, since the private dimension seemed less suitable for us to achieve that collective emancipation that has been and remains the main purpose of the group.

We have intentionally avoided taking on the self-referential attitude typical of many specialists, convinced that it is possible to participate in the progress of society starting from the limited knowledge of their profession. On the other hand, our support for social progress through interventions on the public space is a very broad commitment that involves various professional contributions to be coordinated, beyond the specific one of our professions operating in the field of culture, especially the material one. Multiple aspects related to psychology, perception, socialization, anthropology, biology, technological evolution, philosophy and in-depth knowledge of society must be taken into consideration, as they form the basis on which the advancement of human civilization is built.

Aesthetics is an important factor in setting and expressing quality: it acquires meaning when used as a vehicle to reach the goal described. The latter relates to the resolution of problems in the development of society.

Over the years, especially due to the expansion of digital technologies, the interest in public space has diminished in a society driven largely by the interests of a liberal economy whose main purpose is the expansion of markets. The value of the collective and social dimension of existence has decreased substantially in favor of the individual dimension of the consumer, a subject that is scarcely critical and easily manipulated through the mass media. However, this does not diminish the importance to be attributed to public space and the role of the community in the development of a sustainable society.

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Think

Design and art. An alternation of compromises and affinities

There is a historic bond between design and art – one, however, that results from a contradictory dialogue that inevitably includes the relationships with technique and the applied arts. A complex relationship follows, that theoretical investigations constantly attempt to explain by highlighting their strong and weak points. In particular, they encourage clarifying art's functions in the material and immaterial development of design. These reflections give rise to a contribution developed as a critical mosaic, from which it is not so much a thesis that appears as, rather, the proposition of arguing the compromises and affinities present in the dialogue between design and art. Despite this, the essay maintains that design is, by its own vocation, a space of mediation and synthesis of knowledge – a territory in which art may act as an instrument of knowledge, and cultural and technical integration as a model of progress and social innovation.

[design in art, design with art, design as art,
design for art, design *versus* art]

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One

Since design entered the scene of social life, making objects once again an image of time passing by and the shape of a need that is also intellectual, art has dialogued with design and design has explored art. This dialogue often overlaps, blends, and at times is confused in the attempt to achieve a synthesis; but it is ongoing. So it is not very original to wonder whether and to what degree design is contained in art and the other way around, if we were only to consider that:

objects are not and have never been just “objects”, which is to say instruments to carry out simple operations of work or domestic life. The “things”, great and small, found in our homes since the remotest antiquity have always been devices upon which people have exerted their efforts to realize metaphors and symbolic relationships [...] [E]ven if tools for living, the objects in the home are “active presences” with which human-kind has everywhere established complex bonds [...] (since they are, *ed.*) segments of a human universe made of material and immaterial affinities. (Branzi, 2006, p. 9)

What Branzi describes (2005) represents a line of evolution that, upon closer examination, has never been interrupted – not even with the industrial revolution. It has only perhaps changed shapes and materials, but not what may be defined as the tactile and visual sensitivity that has always bound humans to their own. A further possibility for understanding how spontaneous the osmosis between art, applied arts, and design is, is once again suggested by Branzi (2007) in one of the “seven obsessions” through which he describes the characteristics of Italian design: in the theorem of an “animist theatre”, the home is transformed into the *mise-en-scène* of objects moving like actors dialoguing with one another and with those who will be using them – not inanimate manufactured articles, but living presences with which people establish a metaphorical kinship that turns these presences into meaningful entities. Moreover, Branzi (2006) continues, “let us not forget that all civilizations developed by investing in ‘superfluous’ energies like art, poetry, music, and everything that is not directly functional, but the result of a surfeit of creativity. In fact, while there have been societies without architecture, societies without decorations and ritual forms have never existed” (p. 11).

The line Branzi drew between artistic values and the reality of things that compose our daily life is also supported by George Kubler (1972). The American art historian, in supposing that the “concept of art” could be expanded to embrace – in addition to “beautiful” and not necessarily useful things – all human products including tools, understands that this hypothesis would introduce a decisive change of scale, because it would mean that:

the universe of man-made things simply coincides with the history of art. It then becomes urgent to devise better ways of considering everything men have made. This we may achieve sooner by proceeding from art rather than from

use, for if we depart from use alone, all useless things are overlooked, but if we take the desirableness of things as our point of departure, then useful objects are properly seen as things we value more or less dearly. (p. 7)

Kubler's assertions impact not only the use of a new gaze by which to observe the set of things made by people: the intent is to reconsider the ways of describing, classifying, and interpreting art as human production, but also to find territories that may be shared, between culture of art and technical culture. This is to say that the rapprochement between art history and the history of science "displays[s] the shared traits of invention, change, and obsolescence that the material works of artists and scientists both share in time" (p. 17). Kubler maintains that science and art are similar because both take pains to meet human needs by producing things made using mind and hands. It is no accident that "tools and instruments, symbols and expressions all correspond to needs, and all must pass through design into matter" (p. 18).

But Kubler's deductions on the linkages between artistic production and the production of things, and the contained possibility that any design object may then be considered as an art genre, is implicitly addressed by a reflection by the philosopher Maurizio Ferraris (2012). Assessing how the ancients were "objectivists" – consequently also including art in the tangibility of the world – while the modern were subjectivists, and therefore certain that artworks manifest the human spirit, he believes that the outcome of the latter's orientation, already evident with Romanticism, was the reason behind the rise:

of twentieth-century conceptual art, in which anything can be an artwork provided that a human community, or a group of experts, or at least its maker, deems it as such. But upon closer examination, to maintain that anything can be an artwork, while corroborating one's thesis with the example of ready-made objects – for example a bottle rack or a urinal displayed in a gallery and qualified as an artwork [...] – is only slightly less paradoxical than maintaining that anything can be used as a corkscrew. (p. 10)

Two

But it does not end with the example of the corkscrew. Examining the relationship between art and design, Ferraris returns to it in a dialogue with Arthur C. Danto, an American philosopher and critic known above all for having theorized the end of contemporary art.^[1] Measuring the "questions" inherent to beauty and the transfiguration of the ordinary, Ferraris (2012) asserts that, today:

we are used to accepting the thesis that anything can be an artwork. Just buy a simple corkscrew and put it in an art gallery, give it an artistic name, and it is a de facto artwork [...]. However, if we take the same corkscrew and put it in a design shop, saying it's a work of design, it doesn't work. The users do not accept considering it a design work, and demand at least a corkscrew designed by Starck. (p. 89)

In this contemporary world, becoming a work, continues Ferraris, is equivalent to giving life to a "canonization process", while becoming a design object is a "beatification process" – something less demanding (2). And yet, in art, concludes Ferraris, canonization is, in these times, far easier than beatification. Danto replies that a single and singular migratory effect has been generated: while it cannot be stated that anything can be deemed a design object, to the contrary (and he deems this a painful truth) it appears that everything can be contained in art nowadays. And this is the effect of the fading of contemporary art which, at least in a democratic version, expresses at least an opening that is unlimited and free of prejudice.

Manlio Brusatin's theses run counter to this. In his *L'arte come design* in 2007, he asserts that "contemporary art [...] has gradually transformed into design in the fabrication of prototypes and installations, and has pushed on to adventure (graphics-advertising-entertainment), proposing to make the transmitted object liked, until creating a new culture of the event" (p. X). For Brusatin, then, not only has art given more than technique to design, but considering design as an art form is equivalent to explaining that "design is contemporary art, like photography and cinema" (p. 3). And when is this passage to be anchored? In "a perhaps imprecise historical moment, in which the traditional greater or lesser arts are transformed, modifying, with objects, the life of the subjects" (p. 3).

Conversely, if we reverse the terms, proposing "design as art", we enter into the field of "useful art" in which the "needs of mass culture" meet the "relative techniques of production and communication" (De Fusco, 2012, p. 16). In this direction we encounter Walter Benjamin. His famous *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, in 1936, assures us,

that what we call useful art is doubtlessly to be identified with "reproducible" art, which is to say an art that, out of technical and social needs, has lost the aura and value given it by unique, unrepeatable masterpieces. The German author's indication is all the more meaningful in that it refers not just to artistic experiences tending towards architecture and design, but to the whole sphere of contemporary art, which is reproducible also because it is intentionally disposed to reproducibility. If this is true, the gap between free art and applied art, about which so much was written in the past, is reduced. On the other hand, although all contemporary art is reproducible, it cannot – however useful or representative it may be – be reduced to the category of traditional applied arts: and for the line of the type of art we wish to describe not to fall within this category, Benjamin requires it to be politicized, while Calvin requires it to be interiorized. (De Fusco, 2012, p. 16)

The politicization being referred to falls under that condition that Benjamin calls the artwork's "loss of aura" – to put it better, the loss of that subjection triggered in the user by the physical presence of an artistic object capable of subjecting him or her to a sort of aesthetic mysticism used in its turn as a form of control by the

established powers. According to Benjamin, the new model of “possession of art” is introduced by the union between mass culture and the culture of the twentieth-century artistic avant-garde, and creates the conditions of an approach to art that is free and unbound by social and cultural hegemonies. The loss of the aura is therefore a direct consequence of the modern reproducibility of the work (cinema, for example, exemplifies the classic contemplation eliminated by the succession of images on film, and Dadaism the symbolic, desecrating entry of objects and materials into the space of the work), that regards not just access to the work, but also its duration, which may now be undertaken in printed images. For all this, Benjamin goes on to say, it no longer makes sense to wonder whether or not photography can be deemed a form of art; we must rather wonder how art has changed with the invention of photography, to the point of saying: “the more art conforms to reproducibility, the greater the effectiveness we can rely on will be” (Haks, 2001, p. 21).

On the repercussions relating to the transformation of the “concept of artistic purity” in contact with a technique that is both ideological and material, Argan himself (2003) recalled that:

“pure art” has generally been accorded a level of value or dignity higher than “applied” art: the very concept of application implies the idea of a precedence of pure art and of the secondary, subsequent use of its forms in the production of practical objects. This judgment depended on the assessment of technique as mere practice, and of practice as mere manual skill, before any character and ideal strength [...]. (With, *ed.*) the “industrial revolution”, that order of values was inverted: technique and practice, connecting to that positive science that constituted the century’s grand ideal, took on an ideal value, while the ancient aesthetic ideal declined, as is known, into useless academicism [...] and since technique and practice imply doing, the idea of beauty is (now, *ed.*) connected to doing and no longer to contemplating”. (p. 133)

“Artidesign”, a neologism coined in 1991 by Filippo Alison and Renato De Fusco, addresses this kind of triangulation. Although a term of uncertain fortune in the fields of criticism, it is useful for the possibility of understanding the exchanges between art, craftsmanship, and industrial design. This is to say it is a “third genre” capable of translating art’s aptitude for experimentalism and research relating to beauty, without requiring engineered, technical, or economic intercessions; craftsmanship’s aptitude for collecting the inheritance of tradition in the furrow of a history that accepts the modifications induced by technological devices and by the typically mercantile models of supply and demand; and the aptitude of “industrial design” for preserving the absolute and abstract value of the idea as the plan for the work, attention to the use of materials in innovation processes, but above all that semantic ambiguity of the term “design” as a reflection of the encounter between industrial culture and culture of the project (Cristallo, Lucibello & Martino, 2019). Having come this far, the art/technique relationship, in support of mutual strength-

ening and progress, is re-established on the level of training. The most serious attempt, as defined by Argan (2003), “of developing artistic production through industrial processes”, (p. 34) is the one notably carried out by Gropius’s Bauhaus, the school where “every technicality-based barrier between the arts” is cancelled and , “the ‘design’ or project, as a pure formal conception, is strengthened” (p. 34). At Bauhaus, between 1919 and 1929, the methods of artistic production and education are overturned: “the artist’s task is no longer to provide a pictorial or plastic sketch that can be ‘applied’ to the practical object, but a design that is integral in relation to mechanical production, which therefore becomes an expressive process” (34). It comes as no surprise that the pedagogical framework required artists to learn from industrial processes, and designers to use the content of art in projects in any event adapted to production standards. And this intentionality was also employed to understand the possibilities of art in impacting the solution of the uncertainties dictated by the modernization of society (Argan, 2003).

Three

It is not easy to establish the debts and credits hidden amid art, design, and technique. Clear, however, is the role of mediation that design takes on between art and technique, a kind of spontaneous function that also originates from a crucial alternation: the term “design”, in replacing “industrial design” – an expression that in its historic mandate has embodied the principle of progress, but that was then unable to contain the complexity of contemporary designing – was converted into a Postmodern word that, to laymen, includes design on its various scales (Cristallo, 2013). In this inclusion, simulated in a frank territory open to fragmentation and cross-pollination of genres and of different strains of knowledge, the objectivity of technique meets the subjectivity of art, and the matter of the object meets the spirit of art.

In conventional terms, the entry of “things” into the sphere of art is established by the Dadaist action of Marcel Duchamp, who in 1913 placed a bicycle wheel on a stool. Less evident, according to Maurizio Vitta (2016), is:

the fact that this gesture had already been made some time before, but in reverse, when art – starting from the Great Exhibition of 1851 – turned its timorous gaze to the world of traditional-type objects, treating them with the respect owed to artistic events. The point of juncture between these moments was marked by the *Manifesto of Futurism*, which in the exaltation of an electric streetlight discovered a new image of the moon and intended to square the formal beauty of the object with its technical beauty, synthesizing this union in the image of electricity. The doors of art were swung open to the most humble objects. (p. 219)

However, Vitta goes on to say, the use of manufactured articles in traditional pictorial and scenographic depictions did not go further than the simple, basic inventory. It took the modern artistic currents for the articles to become “protagonists of a vision,

of a story to tell” with a modified social projection (Vitta, 2016, p. 219). In Italy, this vision was manifested in its most authoritative and authorial dimension. Starting from Futurism, many designers – including Nizzoli, Munari, Mari, and others – started out in the first place as painters and graphic designers. Then there is the contribution by the abstract artists from Como (Rho, Radice, Reggiani) linked to the earliest rationalist designers and, in the postwar period, “it is the concrete nature of the Mac that inspires some designers of industrial objects” (De Fusco 2007, pp. 156-159). The parallel experiences that followed, with Pop Art, kinetic and programmed Art, Arte Povera, Conceptual Art, and Minimal Art, are plain to see. This interdisciplinary process was widely experienced in the contradictory and ideologized season of the design project (Cristallo, 2019). “Group design” – in an itinerary that extended from the late 1950s to the 1980s, and spread via animistic, radical, post-radical, and post-modern positions – has experimented assiduously with the synthesis of the arts (3). However, we do not borrow this synthesis to abstractly propose that every design is an artist, and every artist a designer. More simply, in agreement with Bruno Munari (2003), we intend to maintain that the designer, acting as mediator of skills, enables contact with art, providing proof that there can be no art detached from life. This means acting in the depth of an “anthropological determinism” in which people and their experience are the reference point for the unceasing search for a harmonic convergence between art and technique (Weiß, 2001). And speaking of research, one may hope – in order for this determinism to be able to induce development – for the preference to be given to syncretistic models. In other words, this means to experiment with reconciling cultural and methodological elements of different natures and provenance, while seeking innovation and discovery in their relationship – including their spiritual relationship.

^[1] On these issues, see Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, 1981, published by Laterza in 2008.

^[2] Ferraris dictates five requirements for a “work “ to be “art”: the works must first of all be physical objects; the works are social objects; the works only *accidentally* provoke awareness; the works *necessarily* trigger sentiments; the works are things that pretend to be people; in: Ferraris. M., (ed.), *Arte. Perché certe cose sono opere d'arte?*, Op. cit., pp. 13-14

^[3] Chronological subdivision of design groups in Italy: 1960s: MID, 1964; Studio 65, 1965; Archizoom Associati, 1966; Superstudio, 1966; Studio 65 – 1965; UFO, 1967; Anonima Design, 1968; 9999, 1969; Zzigurat, 1969; 1970s: Strum, 1971; Libidarch, 1973; Global Tools, 1973; Alchimia, 1976; Cavart – 1973; 1980s: Memphis, 1981; King Kong, 1985.

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Think

Chromatic dematerializations. The development of the culture of colour between art and design

«Colour is hard for the weak. To make colour, you need blood in your veins and in your brain», wrote Giò Ponti in 1952, in the opening words of *Tutto il mondo deve essere coloratissimo* published in the magazine *Pirelli*. And indeed, the use of the emotional nature of colour in art and design has required the courage to overcome a certain degree of chromophobia (Batchelor, 2001). In the modernist conception, the chromatic dimension appears subordinate to form and structure, an approach criticized on a number of occasions in the 1950s by Ettore Sottsass Jr (1954, 1956). In art, as Carlos Cruz-Diez (1993) writes, due to its changeable nature, colour is employed «and absorbed in one single way: first form, then colour» (p. 2). However, in the late 1960s, the dematerialization of colour in art through additive synthesis appeared to influence a part of design culture that, interested in reacting to certain historical prejudices on colour, determined a new way of understanding the chromatic dimension and transformed intangible factors into parameters for building the quality of space. In this framework, this paper proposes reinterpreting these artistic influences in the culture of design to cast light on how the immaterial nature of the chromatic dimension today becomes a ground for dialogue and collaboration among artists and designers engaged in enhancing the natural and artificial environment, precisely by using those values linked to the emotional nature of colour.

[chromatic culture, primary design, minimalism,
additive colour synthesis, perception]

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Chromophobia between art and culture of design

For centuries, colour has been the subject of numerous reflections that have been updated in correspondence with the social, cultural, economic, and technological transformations succeeding one another over time. Ever since Wolfgang Goethe, aiming to bring colour back to the phenomenological, emotional dimension, developed his theory of colours in 1810 (to a great degree opposing Isaac Newton's 1704 theory), two perspectives through which to read the chromatic phenomenon have taken shape: one "scientific", and the other "emotional". It is precisely this emotional aspect – intangible, subjective, and fleeting – that makes colour an immaterial factor to be "governed".

In addition to the separation between white and colours made in 1925 by Le Corbusier in *L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, Teo Van Doesburg (cit. in Sottsass, 1954), as early as 1917 in *Grundbegriffe der neuen gestaltenden Kunst*, stated that «surfaces or lines in which colour is enclosed must be deprived of all emotion, because the smallest emotionality in the profile of the splash of colour could cost it its concreteness, and alter it» (p. 47).

In the modernist conception of the industrial product, the presence of colour appears connected mainly to the functionality of the object (Romanelli, 1987). At the same time, the prevailing trend in the architectural conception is to avoid polluting the clarity of compositional thought with colours, to preserve the purity of the structure by using white, or to define chromatics via processes of abstraction while restoring hues to the essentiality of the primary pigments, and to govern colour with balanced compositional relationships (Polano, 1990). Design culture therefore appears pervaded by a sort of chromophobia, which for David Batchelor (2001) manifests itself in the «varied attempts to purge colour from culture, to devalue colour, to diminish its significance, to deny its complexity» (p. 19). This also results from the observations of Adolf Behne (cit. in Romanelli, 1987), who, in *Wiederkehr der Kunst* in 1919, writes: «If there is anything that typifies today's educated philistine it is his fear of colour! [...]. Civilized people of our climes looks at chromatic art and chromatic architecture the way they looks at people of colour. With a sort of horror» (p. 8).

While colour appears subordinate to form in the design world, in art on the other hand it is relegated to the "certainty" of line. The counterposition between drawing and colour was already clear in the mid-sixteenth century, between the painting traditions of Florence and Venice. For the former, the line – *lineamentum* – represents a factor capable of joining the idea to practice, while for Venetian painting colour is employed in its chromatic essence. Giorgio Vasari bore witness to this conflict in *Tiziano da Cadore* in 1568, and Manlio Brusatin (1983) confirmed it when he stated that fifteenth-century drawing leads the reproductive arts to knowledge and truth, «while the world of colours is still composed in accordance with a seductive and apparent harmony of elements» (p. 48).

During the last century of the nineteenth century, Charles Blanc (cit. in Batchelor, 2001) maintained a moral rejection of colour, stating that: «The union of drawing

and colour is necessary to engender painting, just as is the union of man and woman to engender humanity; but drawing must conserve its preponderance over colour. If it is otherwise, painting will run to ruin, as humanity was lost through Eve» (p. 20).

The changes in the chromatic culture of the 1950s

In the eighteenth century, thanks to chemical synthesis, chromatic ranges began to expand, extending into the nineteenth century with the production of paints on an industrial scale; the twentieth century brought an additional increase through colours produced by electronic systems. Starting in the late 1940s, in the industrialized world, the influence of colour in mass communication gradually took on an important role. During this period, Edwin Land, the founder of Polaroid, studied the connections that the human perceptual system forges among colours, and in the 1970s developed the Retinex theory. The studies initiated by Faber Birren in the 1920s spread, such as consulting for major United States corporations with regard to colours' influence and effects on employees and sales. Since 1948, companies in the United States have been able to access information and forecasting tools dedicated to colour and functional to coordinating the marketing of large-scale production chains. In essence, since the 1950s, chromatic language, with the gradual shifting of interests from production to the market, has become the seductive lexicon of merchandise. Moreover, during this period, the development of nightlife established new conditions for perceiving the chromatic phenomenon. «In practice, in emotional terms, our interaction time with chromatic reality ended up doubling» (Moro, 2010, p. 192). After the 1970s, the spread of colour television and electronic media broadened the chromatic landscape and nourished possibilities for interaction with the chromatics produced by artificial light. This period saw the rapid transition from the nearly exclusive use of subtractive synthesis to the application of additive synthesis, «an expression of the physics of colour, which had never been exploited until that time» (p. 190).

Colour as a factor of design

The 1960s and 1970s were a period marked by a radical transformation of the artistic process and of design culture; the latter proposed going beyond the demands of the historical avant-gardes, taking as a reference expressions and actions of new artistic movements like Pop Art, conceptual art, Arte Povera, body art, Op Art, Land Art, and Minimalism. In a process of cross-pollination between art and design, not only were new languages experimented with, but alternative cultural models too, both to denounce the market logic of mass society, and to verify the possibility of generating new realities. It was in this climate, in the early 1970s, that the investigations of primary design by Centro Design Montefibre (CDM) were developed, seeking to examine the impact of all those intangible phenomena – “soft”, and bound to physical perception – while distinguishing them from the “hard” ones belonging to structure. CDM's design sector, established by Massimo Morozzi, Andrea Branzi,

and Clino Trini Castelli, developed new ways of intervening with the quality of the artificial environment, consisting of information, semi-finished products, and manuals, «capable of guiding the work of the designers themselves, and of industry» (CDM, 1975, p. 41). These studies were inspired by a radical reconsideration of the chromatic dimension, which until that time appeared to be a superstructure of the object. A contributing factor that favoured this process of the emancipation of colour was its dematerialization through additive synthesis, which allows art to use the changeable and precarious nature of colour to affirm chromatics in space; in design culture on the other hand, treated for its emotional essence, colour becomes one of the intangible factors of quality – one that is strategic and a priority.

The influences of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the relations between Dan Flavin and Clino Trini Castelli in developing a new chromatic culture in design

The use of artificial light in art was already present in the 1920s; in spite of this, artistic experimentation, beginning in the 1950s and consolidating in the 1960s and 1970s, was initiated, able to disconnect that subordination of colour to form; this experimentation involved perception, which during that period was no longer understood in the sense of Gestalt, but rather as experience of the body and senses. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, published in 1945, Maurice Merleau-Ponty holds the body to be «the point of view of the world», capable of identifying «that broad process of perception through which the subject gives meaning to the things of reality. And it is precisely in the body that the basis for all knowledge – perception – is embodied» (Merleau-Ponty, 2003, p. 122). This theoretical supposition entered into the awareness of American minimalist artists in 1962, when Merleau-Ponty's text was translated into English, twenty years later than the French artists of the 1940s, and «with Pollock, Still, Newman, and Rothko lagging behind» (Krauss, 2007, pp. 271-272).

Although it may appear reductive to ascribe the minimalist movement to the perceptive phenomenon, there is no denying that their works propose involving viewers precisely by stimulating their perception. In fact, these works are enlivened through reduced formal solutions capable of generating tensions with the surrounding space (Poli, 2003, p. 8). Although born in the 1960s, Minimal Art may be considered a trend referred to by various disciplines, that to this day constitutes the basis for a series of phenomena of art and of design culture. According to Baker Kenneth (1989), minimalism can refer on the one hand to essential works exalting geometry and eschewing expressiveness, and on the other to the tendency to present as art things that are «indistinguishable (or all but) from raw materials or found objects, that is minimally differentiated from mere non-art stuff» (p. 9).

In 1968, Morris, coming into contact with Merleau-Ponty's idea of perception, developed the concept of Anti Form (Nigro, 2003, p. 24), published in the magazine *Artforum*, proposing to overcome the residual, Gestalt schematism of the minimalist *Primary Structures*, deemed unsuited for grasping the complexity of

experience. Morris's intention was to go beyond geometric and compositional limits through the use of deformable and shapeless materials (lead, felt, rubber, or debris, sand, and steam), involving – in accordance with Merleau-Ponty's perceptive model – the body of the viewer, who becomes an active part in the very construction of the work that is transformed into a perceptive energy centre. However, this idea of the body as a medium of knowledge of the world appears to govern not only the interests of minimalist art, but also those of primary design, according to which:

Our body can actively elaborate the data it receives from the surrounding space, and transform it into experience and culture [...] it is an active instrument of cultural elaboration, able to act within a systematic complex of sensory signs [...]. (Branzi, 1984, pp. 98-99)

Additive colour synthesis, and Merleau-Ponty's way of understanding the perceptive dimension, makes colour in art not just a visual but a sensory phenomenon, capable of autonomously going beyond the confines of the work to generate space, as in the works by the minimalist Dan Flavin. This new dimension influenced Trini Castelli, leading him subsequently to work in design, staying outside of «traditional figurative culture, which saw the dimension of composition as the ideal reference» (Moro, 2010, p. 197).

Among the artists of the New York Minimalism of the 1960s, Flavin was the one who undertook a unique path through the use of the chromatics produced by neon lights. According to Trini Castelli (2004), Flavin did not feel the need to overcome the *Primary Structures* demanded by Morris through the use of the deformation of the material; instead, what he aspired to do was «to integrate, in a complete way, his work into space», making clear that «autonomy of light in the solidity of its additive form, perhaps the most immaterial *objet trouvé* in all of art history» (p. 93). Flavin connected to reality by employing fluorescent tubes available on the market, and was inspired by the iridescences characterizing nightlife, such as those in places of leisure and entertainment. Moreover, by using additive colour synthesis, he openly declares the work's precarious nature, with the awareness that his works are not destined to last over time. Initially, his works respond to the traditional principles of exhibition; he subsequently investigates the effects of chromatics of light in exterior and interior spaces, through restrictions of accesses, openings, alterations, manipulations, and reiterated lows of light (Gellini, 2004, p. 45).

In Italy in the late 1960s, American minimalism found no immediate access to the institutional exhibition channels; in fact, it was not present at the Venice Art Biennale in 1966, but only in 1968, representing the first important moment in American minimalism's encounter with Italian plastic experimentation during that period. It was, however, the galleries that offered opportunities for the encounter between Minimal Art and the design culture emerging at that time. In 1967, Flavin, after his European debut at the Zwimer gallery in Düsseldorf, showed at Milan's

Sperone gallery, where Trini Castelli was staging the lighting system (Trini, 1967, p. 33). This encounter proved to be decisive for Trini Castelli's chromatic experimentation and for changing the role of colour in design (Moro, 2010, p. 194.). In 1974, Trini Castelli, influenced by Flavin's works, designed a photoluminescent plastic laminate, *Print Lumiphos 14-580*, a semi-finished product also employed by other designers and conceived as a component of primary nature «according to the 'primary structures' concept of Minimal Art (and) the Anti Form theories of Robert Morris» (p. 196).

Again in the late 1960s, artists from the “Los Angeles School” on the West Coast of the United States – James Turrell, Robert Irwin, Bruce Nauman, and Mario Merz – made additive colour synthesis a central element of their work. These investigations on the dematerialization of space through light and colour later influenced the works of several artists and designers.

The chromatic dematerialization of space as current ground for dialogue and collaborative efforts between artists and designers

In recent years, designs employing additive colour synthesis as an integral part of space have fostered the development of different forms of collaboration between artists, designers, and companies in the lighting sector. Many of these projects – also stimulating the citizens' participation in design choices – propose augmenting the social value of urban spaces through interventions that combine innovative lighting solutions with art installations; for example: the designs published in the volume *Light and Art in Public Spaces* (2016) promoted by the Luci Light & Art Commission, involving various European cities like Amsterdam, Gothenburg, Helsinki, Lyon, Rotterdam, and Turin. On the other hand, other interventions engage architects, light artists, and interaction designers for the development of interactive projects, such as, for example, the group – formed by the architect Milo Lavén, the light artist Erik Krikortz, and the interaction designer Looove Broms – that recently developed *Colour by Numbers* (colourbynumbers.org), an installation for Telefonplan in Stockholm in which, through the use of digital devices, users can change their colour. Then there's the *Me. Here. Now* (atlondonbridge.com) project for the Deptford London Bridge station in Southwark, where the designer Alexandra Kalimeri and the artist Mark Titchner developed a design that deals with the relationship between the daily travel experience and the spiritual reflection it brings. On the other hand, the design study and the creative experiment Whyixd Interactive (it.m.hktdc.com), composed by artists, mechanical engineers, and interior designers, works on the themes of integration between media and innovative technological solutions for the development of temporary and institutional events, and musical and artistic events. In Taiwan, it recently staged *Magpie Bridge*, a lighted kinetic installation that proposes spurring the visitor to reflect upon the origin of light. In addition to urban spaces, natural environments are also the ground for experimentation by light designers and artists, as in *Descanso*

Gardens (descansogardens.org), where a series of installations is integrated with the landscape, also interactively, through the designs of digital artist Maotik and set designer Etienne Paquette, visual designer Jen Lewin, and designer Chris Medvitz. Then there is *Lumagination* 2018 (buffalogardens.com), a project supervised by the designer Philip Colarusso for the Buffalo Botanical Gardens, where plants are immersed in luminous chromatics, sound effects, and interactive itineraries. In other cases, the figures of the designer and artist coincide, such as for example in the *Coding* project (grawunder.com/sfo), for the car park at the San Francisco international airport, where designer and artist Johanna Grawunder, supported by a company in the Osram Group, staged a permanent installation that emphasizes the codes of programmed perception of time and events. These recent projects, which are just some examples of collaboration between artists and designers, show how chromatic installations that propose the intangibility typical of the dimension of light are a kind of “happening”. Although some of these experiences may be deemed cases of mere spectacle, they are still capable of fostering processes of convergence of the artist’s and the designer’s experiments with the artificial or natural environment, which becomes the device for doing works in which, to cite Merleau-Ponty (1989), «Quality, light, colour, depth, [...] awaken an echo in our body and because the body welcomes them. This is the carnal formula of their presence» (pp. 20-22).

Conclusions

The exploitation of additive synthesis has «marked the history of the figurative arts and of design – not only in terms of style, but with substantial changes capable of modifying, on the anthropological level, collective aesthetic conscience on the great themes of artificiality» (Moro, 2010, p. 191).

The influences between the iridescent works of the American Minimal Art of Flavin, and the new culture of the immaterial emerging in the 1970s, on the basis of a reconsideration of the perceptive phenomenon, demonstrate that art can influence design not only on the theoretical level, but on the experimental one, too. In other words, the use of colour in Flavin’s iridescent works offers design the possibility of verifying how chromatics, liberating themselves from light sources, can relate to the environment and expand into space, conditioning its perceptive quality. This influence supported a new way of understanding the chromatic phenomenon and lent the entry of emotional aspects to design culture, but also to the logic of production, placing the immaterial factors among the elements of mediation between professional practice and technical elaboration. As digital technologies took hold, additive colour synthesis pervaded various immaterial realities, bringing about a radical change of the artificial environment through the «dematerialization, superficialization, ephemeralization, and virtualization of experience» (Manzini, 1990, p. 22). These design territories always require more than a multidisciplinary approach to the chromatic dimension and the formation of heterogeneous working groups in which artists and designers overlap and intertwine their skills. In this

sense, the artist no longer appears as a figure who, as Bruno Munari maintains in *Artista e designer*, «works in accordance with his or her taste, for him or herself», but rather manifests willingness to integrate with the skills of other figures. Moreover, the digital world spurs new investigations towards the limits of all those intangible, unstable, and precarious factors that relate to the perceptive phenomenon, developing influences and cross-pollination that blur the boundaries of the search between art and design.

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Caring for the future

With the current crisis of globalization, it no longer makes sense to consider art and design as oppositional. The uncertainty about the future and the simultaneity of the choices we are called upon to take, are some of the factors that link artistic and design cultures, paradoxically called into question to alleviate a condition of disorientation and confusion. In the last decade, the role of the client in addressing the creative process has been lacking in both sectors; figures such as the curator and the entrepreneur who were in charge of valorizing the productive results, have disappeared; in the absence of any clear directive, the planning activity began to spread out over new horizons by seeking inspiration from and being influenced by other disciplines and knowledge. In this light, design has become more expressive, controversial, critical, and focused on addressing complex social, political and ecological issues. Artists, on the other hand, are increasingly interested in investigating design cultures and their impact on society, by focusing in particular on the new technologies (Rawsthorn, 2018). But, above all, art and design are converging in their efforts to understand and border the complexity of the present, through the synthesis, the representation, and the sharing of narratives projected towards possible futures. Starting from a reflection on the impact that the ongoing digital revolution is having on productive sectors, this article investigates the cross-fertilization between art and design through a shared aesthetic perspective, in terms of perception, experience and knowledge acquired through the mediation of the senses. Thanks to a phenomenological analysis based on the contemporary art and design scene, three possible approaches have been identified (integrated, relational and open) that denote the emergence of a common sensitivity linked to the aesthetics of possible futures.

[aesthetics of futures, digital culture, art, critical design]

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Drifting and docking

Until the second half of the eighteenth century, the term craft – from the Greek *téchne* – referred to both artisanal production and artistic production, as both were based on techniques and skills that were implemented and transmitted by means of craftsmen's guilds.

With the publication of the “*Encyclopédie*” in 1751, such means of transmission of knowledge began to disintegrate. Through a process of systematization, learning a trade became explicit, manifest and transmissible, for the first time; it became independent, freeing it from the confines of the *atelier* and the domination of the *maître d’oeuvre*. The “*Encyclopédie*” transformed the existing wealth of practical knowledge into a wealth of theoretical knowledge: the divorce of the status of a work of art from the status of an industrial product was thus accomplished, with a distinct separation between artistic practice, the practice of a craft, and the industrial production of objects. In those same years, the notion that art and aesthetics are intricately related (Baumgarten, in Todesco, 2000) was reaffirmed. This theory was no longer based on reflections on classical canons of beauty as developed in the Renaissance courts and later affirmed by the academies, but on an aesthetic that hearkened back to its origins (from the Greek *aisthesis*, perception), as a reflection on knowledge that comes from the senses.

We could read the contemporary panorama through analogous lenses: since the 2000s, with the affirmation of the digital age, an inversion of the transformation in the relationship between artist and artisan during the Enlightenment has been taking place (Anderson, 2013). Just as the industrial revolution legitimized itself through a process of widespread dissemination of knowledge, the third digital revolution is expressed by how knowledge itself gets mutated in the very environment in which we live. Knowledge is no longer a disciplinary corpus, but “is” the environment in which we are immersed. Therefore the artist is no longer confined to the role of the revolutionary-genius, but, like the designer, the engineer and the scientist (Antonelli, 2019), he investigates the environment that surrounds us. Art, cinema, theater, music, and design all recover the aspect of their craftsmanship, becoming themselves tools, overcoming disciplinary boundaries and contributing, through new fusion processes, to defining new aesthetics for the future.

The discussion below investigates the relationship between art and design beginning with reflections on the impact the digital revolution has had on the productive sectors, on artistic endeavors, and on industry, prefiguring a new aesthetic dimension linked to the sense of caring for the future. This theoretical position has evolved from that expressed by the artist and designer Neri Oxman who conceptualized the model of the “Krebs Cycle of Creativity” (2016), which defines this new era of connection, in which the link between art and design as culture impacts behaviors, reconnecting actions to aesthetic values.

Design and art: a dangerous liaison?

In 2005 Alex Coles drew international attention to the phenomenon of DesignArt as a form of cross-fertilization between artistic and design practices. Underlying this interpretation, we recognize the attempt to codify the progressive overlap between two areas of creativity historically oriented «the one, to design serial objects, useful and aesthetically pleasing, for the industry, the other to create unique and beautiful artworks, but with no purpose» (Di Stefano, 2016). The emergence of a theoretical-critical definition of this new hermeneutical category has been accompanied by a constant phenomenological confirmation. From 2000 onwards, collective exhibitions dedicated to the intersections between art and design have occupied the programming of international cultural centers. In the same period, a number of museums have hosted design artifacts in their collections, which have since entered the art market through the circuit of collectors, auction houses and galleries. Exemplary in this sense are the works of Gaetano Pesce, Marc Newson and Ron Arad, but also the various experiments in the form of limited editions. At the same time, an increasingly large number of artists, art institutions and art magazines have turned to the world of design, whose value and dissemination dynamics present a broader and richer dimension of opportunities.

The creation of a canonical formula has not stopped the criticisms that have arisen in the two fields, speaking about a dangerous *liaison* (Lee Maffei & Sandino, 2004), to underline the ambiguous relationship that exists between the social and market values of artifacts, on the one hand, and the emergence of *clichés* as simplified interpretations to narrate the forms, tools, and spaces of creativity, on the other (Celaschi, Formia & Mata Garcia, 2010).

However, the critical theoretical debate on design has never denied this relationship. Fifty years ago, Bruno Munari stated that «there must be no art detached from life: good things to look at and bad things to use» (1966). In this context, Filiberto Menna carried out a lucid and innovative analysis of avant-gardes and architecture of the modern movement, proposed in the essay *Prophecy of an Aesthetic Society* (1968). In Italy, this has led to the development of a complex theoretical debate linked to historical-aesthetic problems, which is articulated around the so-called applied or industrial arts, sometimes dismissively referred to as “minor arts”. Parallel to the definition of an aesthetic matrix capable of linking utility and beauty in a new interpretation of the everyday industrial object (Dorfles, 1968, 1992; Carmagnola, 1991), with consequent openings also into the field of semiotics (Koenig, 1991), the concept of «third culture» (Snow, 1959) began to take root in the methodological discourse on design, leading to explorations based on the concept of interdisciplinarity (Maldonado, 1979, 2010). The role of design as a mediator between different fields of knowledge (Celaschi, 2008) thus also involves its relationship with art, whose reciprocity manifests itself through language, style, form and meaning of artifacts. The broadening of disciplinary boundaries and the expansion of the concept of aesthetics, today enable us to trace new margins of possible overlapping areas. On the one hand, as Mads Nygaard Folkmann

(2013) points out, evaluating aesthetics in design is mainly a question of seizing the sensorial qualities of the objects and emphasizing their communicative and narrative function; on the other, in the field of art, we may consider the concept of «aesthetics of systems, environments and relationships» – that overcomes the aesthetics of the object, looking towards the *agency* dimension of the subject (Quinz, 2014). Therefore, if aesthetics is understood to be an intercultural category dealing with phenomena that encompass the entire scenario of a subject’s experience and social life (Caoci, 2008), art and design can become places of imagination, understanding, sharing, evaluation not only of the present, but also of the future.

Aesthetics of possible futures

Faced with the uncertainties of the present, processes of social sharing of futures are needed. The aesthetics of the future can make it alive, credible, realistic, and above all participated, because, as previously stated, aesthetic can also be understood as an analysis of the perceptive-sensitive relationship with the environment. With respect to the aesthetics of the futures, there are some socially accepted traditions. Literary, cinematographic and artistic narratives have been used to build different and original stories. Through such means, the aesthetics materialize the future as result obtained in a particular moment, but allows also to reason with respect to the process through which the specific situation represented was determined, and to what degree the end-user is involved (Celaschi & Formia, 2014; Celi & Formia, 2017).

In the last decade the disciplinary discourse on design has long been questioned regarding the relationship with futures and anticipation (Yelavich & Adams, 2014; Celi & Morrison, 2017). Building scenarios represents one of the fundamental elements of the design process, especially in the field of advanced design, an area of non hard-technology driven innovation, which is naturally projected towards a more distant future or towards complex design processes (Celi, 2015). However, what we are interested to investigate here, is the fictional dimension of a certain design’s reflection, conceived as a place where one can work free from the industrial constraints, characterized by critical and reflective values and, therefore, more akin to the traditional artistic processes. In this context, the visionary capacity of the design process, very close to that of the arts, gives shape to new propositions for the future and new aesthetics:

Purely hypothetical worlds which, though unreal, are not false but fictional [...] and possess the concrete strength of arousing and establishing, through disruptive action [...], a reaction in the user, leading him to perceive as real situations those that are not; to concretize, even for a brief moment, the hypothesis of ‘if it were possible’.
(Cosentino & Lupo, 2017, p. 115)

Critical practices, reflexive (Dunne, 2006; Di Salvo, 2012; Coombs *et al.*, 2019) and speculative ones (Dunne & Raby, 2013; Malpass, 2013), have tried to highlight the conceptual

aspect of design, drawing on the field of arts and technology. These approaches deal with what has not yet been built or is currently unachievable; they reach imaginatively what is beyond the perceived; they are based on a conjectural mode of investigation; they work discursively and often give rise to conflictual situations.

Starting from these ways of imagining the future, a particularly important question emerges:

- What happens when designers', artists' or engineers' work is no longer guided by any disciplinary imperative, formal or functional, but only by the intention to provoke reflection on the future?

We will try to answer this question by identifying three possible aesthetics, intended as ways of taking care of tomorrow. As reported in the presentation of the 2019 edition of Miart, art – and by extension also design:

looks upon reality in a way that is at once a form of attention and an invitation to pay attention: art, in fact, not only explores the most extreme aspects of life but also those that appear less relevant, transforming what appears insignificant into a powerful symbol of human existence. The gaze of art sheds a light of attention on things and, in doing so, it generates values that then history, collectors and museums decide to preserve, with a gesture of care.

Integrated aesthetics.

The fascination for body-integrated technologies (NBCI - nanotechnology, biotechnology, cognitive sciences, information technology) has been commodified and represented in disturbing ways by artists and designers and transformed into research-action by scholars and scientists, until any boundaries remaining between scientific experimentation and artistic performance have all been breached. Prostheses and sensors can be incorporated in biological tissues, big data and algorithms allow the enhancement of supra-human capacities, creating animated products, the result of the symbiotic relationship between the limited human body and the potentially unlimited enabling technologies. But, as Mancuso (2018) states, the artistic and experimental current that has been defined as New Media Art – which has its roots in the twentieth century avant-garde artists and continued to develop towards the end of the same century to find full maturity at the beginning of the Millennium – has always been characterized by great complexity in terms of languages, aesthetics, research and market relations. For various historical and cultural reasons, the movement has always suffered from a lack of institutional, academic and commercial recognition in the absence of a real understanding of its capacity for dialogue with other disciplinary areas, sometimes far from those of art itself, such as contexts of design, performance, sound, architecture and, of course, science. A forerunner of this movement is Steve Mann, a professor at the University of Toronto and founder of EyeTap Lab, which for more than thirty years has been researching technology for use in prosthetics and extensions, capable of allowing the human body to exceed its

biological capabilities. Throughout this time, he has been conducting a study applied to his own body in symbiosis, using a mini camera and a computer that records everything he sees (Mann, 1998). Somewhere between actionism and seventies-style performance art, donning his “WearComp”, Mann takes, manipulates, and selects images, sends e-mails, writes texts, processes data, through the device which is always on his body, in always-on mode (Mancuso, n.d.). Taking into account that the human body, since its origin, has been both a careful observer of natural phenomena and the raw materials for projects – despite being conditioned by its biological limits – today nano-digital technologies suggest that even the wearable computing devices defined by Mann may become obsolete, leading to experiments that «prefigure a world in which what is human appears superfluous, irrelevant» (Le Breton, 2019).

Relational aesthetics.

The project's perspective regards our relationship with nature on a macro scale and investigates ecological and environmental issues, to anticipate potential solutions and avert future catastrophes through a two-way collaboration for the restoration of ecosystems. The very concept of anthropocene, under critical scrutiny, leads to the need to materialize relational futures, in which man is no longer alone at the center of the project. With the project “MARS” (*Modular Artificial Reef Structure*) presented as part of the exhibition “*Broken Nature. Design Takes on Human Survival*” curated by Paola Antonelli (*XXII Triennale di Milano*, 2019), Alex Goad highlights how the reduction of printing costs in additive manufacturing allows us to redesign endangered forms of nature, such as structures of corals on which to cultivate new life.

Open aesthetics.

Aligned with a contemporary world in which the values of open culture, open access and creative commons dominate, Salvatore Iaconesi, an engineer, hacker and artist, embodies the “art-life” phenomenon, translating the reality of his disease, a brain tumor, into a public experience through the sharing of reports, medical records, and 3D models of the tumor on his website dedicated to the project. Presenting his clinical problems online activated a community of both doctors and lay people, united in the sharing and transparency of data, which allowed the research to evolve until a new cure was found (2012-2016). “The Art is Open Source” duo (with Oriana Persico) has been exploring the relationship between big data, advanced technologies, artificial intelligence and sciences since 2004. “La Cura” (“The cure”) as the project is called, is a performance of global proportions, born with the aim of Iaconesi regaining possession of his own body and identity, but then became a book of open innovation, an open work, as Umberto Eco (1962) called it, connected not only to the interpretative capacity of a restricted community, but extended to the world, beyond the known limits of interpretation, in order to open it up to new solutions, estranging the work from its original context and subverting the common understanding of the concept of “object”. This project, process, movement, has given rise to various initiatives

including the summer school project focused on the theme of «the ubiquitous body in the hyper-connection era», promoted by *Nefula. The first Italian study of Near Future Design*. The result of this experience is the concept *Baotaz*, an installation, a wearable device, a platform, a community aimed at materializing a future in which we will need increased senses to help us perceive the “social emotions” of the planet.

Conclusions

The approaches and cases reported herein illustrate aesthetics – immersive, relational and open – born from the collaboration between artists, designers, scientists, and engineers, as incursions and experiments towards possible futures. Studying what has happened in the last twenty years under the influence of technological and scientific developments, observing the current trajectories, and imagining possible evolutions, especially in relation to the body and its relationship with its external environment – social, political or natural, that is – (Mancuso, 2018), we have arrived at a point where productive processes of works of art, industrial objects, and artisanal artifacts essentially coexist, immersed in a new aesthetic, a reflection of the “extended” knowledge that derives from the application of enabling technologies.

Through these fictional worlds that allow us to read the blending of art-design-body-technologies-products-processes critically, we may hope that a sense of responsibility and care for the future will increase on a global level, thanks to open discussions and greater participation. Indications of the future can therefore be perceived in the wake of contemporary works – in the form of products, concepts, scenarios, models, videos, films, performances – intended as design solutions fielded by visionary “hybrid” authors, who respond to the – still completely human – will and responsibility ethics by materializing the aesthetics of possible futures.

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The article is the result of a joint effort by the authors. However, if individual academic responsibility needs to be attributed for academic reasons, we may specify that Elena Formia wrote the paragraph *Design and art: a dangerous liaison?* and Elena Vai the paragraphs *Drifting and docking* and *Conclusions*. All other parts were written together.

Interview with Martí Guixè

edited by Giuseppe Losco

translation from María José Ayala Ramírez

Martí Guixè (Barcelona 1964) Formed in Barcelona and in Milan as an interior and industrial designer.

In 1994, living in Berlin, he formulated a new way to understand the culture of products. Guixè started to exhibit his work in 1997, work that characterizes on the search for new product systems, the introduction of design in food ambits and presentation through performance.

His non-conventional gaze provides brilliant and simple ideas. He is based in Barcelona and Berlin and works as a Designer for worldwide companies.

Recent publications: *On Flower Power*, Corraini Edizioni, 2019 (ISBN 978-88-7570-799-6); *Transition Menu*, Corraini Edizioni, 2013 (ISBN 978-88-7570-392-9); *Martí Guixè, Food Designing*, Corraini Edizioni, 2010 (ISBN 978-88-7570-249-6); *Martí Guixè Cook book*, Imschoot Publishers (ISBN 9077362045); and *Don't buy it if you don't need it. All Martí Guixè's Camper Commodityscapes*. (ISBN 13 84 609 9135 0). Exhibitions at MoMA (New York), MuDAC (Lausanne), MACBA (Barcelona), La Galleria Nazionale (Rome) and Centre Pompidou (Paris). *Ciutat de Barcelona Prize*, 1999 and *National Design Prize* of the Generalitat de Catalunya 2007.

The theme of immateriality pursues both the art and the design scene, but in common thinking the immaterial is what can only be virtual.

Certainly, your experience as a designer is highly characterized by a different value of immateriality, linked to transformation, and dynamism. Do you find adjacent experiences on the art scene?

The virtual world probably is a way of immateriality, though in many occasions if the object does not exist, it is present as a graphic form or as a graphic representation. I have worked a lot with the subject of immateriality, even indirectly. At the beginning, mid 90s, with the idea that we are in a world that is constantly moving, the possession of physical objects makes the individual heavy. As a result, it promotes immobility. However, at the time, many news articles stated that I hated objects; this is inaccurate. What I hate is the possession of these objects, but not the use of them. The idea I had about the ideal object, was the one about an object that could keep its functionality but could avoid matter itself. Probably the best, and one of my favourite objects, were the edible ones, due to the fact that they vanish by ingestion, becoming energy. The way most people consume the art world is already a world of objects not owned, they are visualized and understood. Therefore, this act already promotes certain level of immateriality, even if the possession of the object is located in an institution or in a museum, a place that usually reflects a solid and fixed configuration.

The transformation and modification of the non-virtual artwork in its evolution over time may in some cases bear similarities with the temporary value of food. What are your experiences in which you believe you acted with an artistic approach, rather than one linked to the values of usability?

There is always usability implied in everything I design. Most of the times the artistic approach is on the creative process, in the contextualization or on the risk factor or on the individualism of non-conventional proposals, often times too radicals. This can be clearly seen especially in the fact that my projects are sometimes mostly accepted in the art world than in the design one. The world of classic design is mostly driven by commercial parameters and its final purpose is to have a positive economic output. Not even the idea of improving society by the end of the 60s and 70s is reflected on the designs that can be seen in the contemporary world nowadays.

Food has been displayed by a great many artists; many times what is set aside is intentionally depicted as consumed, as the trace of an event, or highly iconicized. How would you like to represent food in a museum?

My Food Design proposal is completely speculative and mostly refers to the design world, revealing the conflicts with the “craft” and tradition. It is through the design

project, and the fact that by an intellectual process and not physical that proposals related to the food world can be developed.

In art, food is used multiple times as a metaphor or as a material to elaborate pieces related to the subjective world of the artist. Also, culinary performances can be seen talking about hospitality or human relations.

In my case, the Food Design project should be exhibited in a museum as speculative project, as Hibe was showcased at the MoMA in NY in 2001, or Digital Food in KGM Hamburg in 2017, with models and related explanations of the systems and the pieces.

In some of your works, you propose a participatory, playful vision that was so dear to Bruno Munari. The participatory offer in art has seen many examples; for instance, we may consider – only for the freshness of the event – Olafur Eliasson’s workshop at the Venice Biennale in 2017. He relies on the lamp object as the pretext for reflecting on the work and the affect it has on people and on the Earth, in terms of impact. What experience would you propose in a museum in opposition to the contemplative approach?
MG

Yes, I suggest many times the participation, but it is not related to an event or an experience. It is more as a collaborative element in the elaboration or the final creation of an object, or an interior. Let’s just say it is more like an act of collaborative economy. In this case I do not share the experiential element as something playful. It makes no difference whether it is The Spamt Karaoke or the Camper Temporary Shop of Via Montenapoleone of Milan, both projects of 2000 require participation with the purpose of building or finishing something. This participation requirement is the result of my lack of interest in the manual work. Therefore, I usually develop a protocol or directions where I ask the audience or the consumer for help. In other cases, people take part to build, elaborate or finish something.

For instance, The Spamt Karaoke made a guide projecting on a screen a Snack for yourself or for others. In the case of Spamt Karaoke, to elaborate guided by a projection on a screen a Snack for oneself or for other people, and in the case of Camper to build thanks to the drawings of the clients a patina of authenticity in each space of sale.

In the case of a museum it would just be accepted if it is to build something that can be experiential but never as a simple experience.

Many designers have grappled with the design of a pasta type, but tradition seems to have won out; what role does tradition have in design? Is there some “invisible wall” that does not allow the past to be independently innovated? Has art often been able to renew itself with a prior destruction – design?

The tradition achieves to debug in a functional and in a formal way a piece with the “trial error” for years, even centuries in some cases, for that reason is very

difficult change or find a typology that exceed the traditional one. Just a lifestyle change can allow the creation of new elements and typologies. Additionally, due to technologies and perception changes, new objects are created. Design does not change by destroying the previous one, but with generational changes and new habits acquired every day, on top of perception changes of reality and the way to understand the world.

Like design, art is also a system, and a market, too. Assuming you agree in part with this statement, there are many designers who, with their work, are often attracted by or appealed to by this very system; at that point, the work becomes “unique”. Is there a difference between art and design as a “unique” value?

I think if we talk about art (and not of art market) and design, the main difference is that art focuses on life important subjects, while design takes responsibility for the every day. A unique designed object, from my stand point, has the purpose to create a new perception or to demonstrate something referred to the everyday. It can be a house appliance, urban, edible or a system, but most of the times it is contextualized in the “allday”.



Think gallery

A matter of context

The definition of a reference scenario can act as an antidote against the semantic confusion that is caused by the contamination of the languages of the present, helping us to place a work in a well-defined historiographic process. Let's assume for a moment that the first reflections of the radical collective Superstudio, instead of being presented at the Moma in New York in 1972, at the exhibition *Italy: The new domestic landscape*, had been exhibited at the Kunsthalle in Bern, in the contemporary art exhibition *When attitudes become form* from 1969. The visionary work of the Florentine group would probably have been pertinent in that context, which included "Different works in terms of style and material, but united by the same research concerning new ways of producing art outside the consideration of the work as a marketable product" (Stazzone, 2014).

However, Superstudio's contribution was decisive due to the fact that it contradicted the precepts of the Modern Movement in architecture. More recently, the Danish artist Olafur Eliasson traces an inverse path: in the installation *Your Rainbow Panorama* he creates a panoramic walkway above the Aros museum in Aarhus, a space of contemplation where the chromatic variation of the windows guides the visitor towards an investigation on the relationship between color and image and the architecture of the city turns into a photographic backdrop.

If the author's previous artistic research were excluded, would the work in question be charged with the same meaning? The gallery of images below attempts an investigation into this question in relation to the different attitudes of contemporaneity. The continuous search to affirm our own individuality, from the virtual showcase of social networks to the personalisation of our objects of use, apparently coexists with the current approval in uses and customs.

The use of dry and persistent visual languages in the manner of Pop Art permeates the grammar of everyday signs, from the product to advertising, between real and virtual, with forms and messages strongly codified in our imagination. It is the virtual that aims to overcome the consolidated relationship with the screen support, to pervade the space of reality, in an enveloping and dynamic ubiquity.

Manuel Scortichini

[art and design, design as art, context,
overlaps, contaminations]



01

The individual at the center

> Contemporary man is a single person, in a dense and heterogeneous context, an urban nomad who does not recognize himself in the old system of social categories. Design and art investigate this difficult dimension of being with greater interest.



02



03

01 *A/cove*, Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec, 2006. The armchair intended as a microenvironment in which isolate themselves.

02 *Death of Leviathan*, Anish Kapoor & Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin, 2013. A black cloud of PVC as a metaphorical vision of a sense of social state in trouble.

03 *Rewrite*, Studio GamFratesi, 2009. The desk as a private place in which to feel protected and immersed in one's work.

04 *Work capsules*, Studio Aisslinger, 25 Hours Hotels, 2019. A micro environment in which to hybridize the singular dimension with the collective one.

04





01

Radical Forever

> Strong, provocative and rhetorical, radical design continually returns to the scene. Its expressive immediacy fits well with the era of fleeting communication. Iconic artefacts, mere exercises of style or effective examples of a functional design for the affirmation of one's own style.



02



03

- 01 *Siesta*, Emanuele Magini, Campeggi, 2015. The rigid seat of a metal bench turns into an elastic hammock.
- 02 *I see a halo around you*, Yun Sun Yang, Royal College of Art, London, 2017. A jewelry collection that redefines the relationship between body space and jewelry.
- 03 *Love in Bloom*, Marcantonio Raimondi Malerba, Seletti. A vase that reproduces the anatomy of the human heart in all its fascinating complexity.
- 04 *God*, Drocco / Mello + Toilet paper, Gufram, 2013. The combination of two design icons for a sculptural and irreverent piece of furniture.

04





01

The omnipresence of the virtual

> Immersive spaces, augmented realities, viewers for immersive reality; virtuality exits the old screens to invade the public space. The old physical world no longer satisfies our search for information and movement.



02



03

01 *Design Holding stand*, Dotdotdot, Flos, B&B Italia & Louis Poulsen, 2019. An interactive tunnel where, by interacting with the infographics, light narrations are launched.

02 *Apani*, James Turrell, Ganzfelds, 2011. An artistic installation in which to immerse yourself, in a space of light with undefined borders.

03 *Terracotta Warrior AR*, Yetzer studio, 2017. Augmented reality as a support to museum storytelling to increase narrative levels.

04 *Bordless*, Teamlab, Mori Building Digital Art Museum, 2018. An innovative museum where the visitor can experience total immersion in dynamic digital projections on an area of 10,000 square meters.



04



01

The predetermined uniqueness

> The archetypal object of design tells of the evolution of the industrial process. Thanks to generative design, the designer manages to obtain originality in every single artefact of a serial production.



02



03

01 Nutella Gemella, Ogilvy Agency, Ferrero, 2019. Three million pairs of cans with original graphics: the consumer is challenged to find the only twin can.

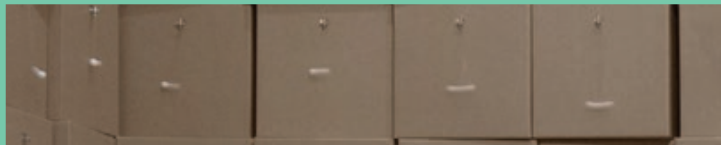
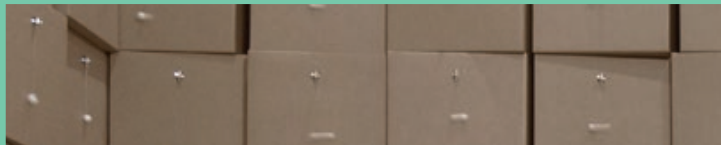
02 100% Make-up series, Alessandro Mendini, Alessi, 1992. A Mendini-style operation in which 100 famous artists work on the pictorial decoration of one of his original vases.

03 04 Collective works, Mischer-Traxler, Design Miami & W Hotels, 2011. The spatial interaction of the user with the production machinery determines the surface texture of the vases produced.



04

Make



Daily art for the design company
Annalisa Dominoni

The aesthetic ground of Fashion and Art
Gianni Denaro, Marta Laureti

Co-design of public spaces through design and art
Davide Fassi, Anna Mazzanti

Art and design: Toni Zuccheri at VeArt
Rosa Chiesa

Daily art for the design company

Beauty inspires people. Mediating creativity and needs is the goal of enlightened entrepreneurs who get involved in an approach process, in certain cases of fusion, between “making design”, that is, between producing everyday objects, and “making art”: they are “art mediators” capable of hybridizing the worlds of art, design and market transforming the best expressions of designers and artists creativity into objects able of touching the public’s heart. Through cases study of avant-garde design companies that have experimented with “commercial art”, an attitude emerges that places at the centre of the project the “fascination of the object” sought by Alessi and Vitra, as well as the design “imaginative-visual” matrix, supported by Osvaldo Borsani, and which contributes to preserving the design from the danger of passive assimilation to the mechanics of serial production, confirming that “good design” is an alchemic formula that results from the balance between technical, economic, but above all, conceptual experience. Without denying the importance of aspects relating to the use of the object, materials, or production processes, we want to highlight the dominance of the idea, which is capable of arousing attention in a world in which the indiscriminate proliferation of images reigns : the idea, which arises upstream of an object to make the public think, amuse it, or provoke it, without denying the nature of the object, which usually also includes a utility. The designers-artists, or artists-designers, are today custodians of quality in a world that is quantifying, because the quality of an object reinvented through an artistic approach, free to act on the deepest aspects of the human being, has the capacity to resonate with him reflecting his own nature and inventiveness. And if the company accepts this challenge, innovative products that can become design icons can be born.

[art, beauty, design, company, innovation]

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Attraction for beauty

«When the objects we use every day and the environment in which we live will also be works of art, then we can say that we have reached a vital balance». (Munari, 1997)

With these words Bruno Munari in the mid-sixties promoted the designer as a “designer with an aesthetic sense” capable of creating useful objects made artfully to be integrated into daily life, so that there should not be an art detached from life, with beautiful things to look at and ugly things to use.

The attention to beauty, and the recognition of the fundamental role of art to improve society and inspire people, began to infect a way of designing that was widespread in Italy already after World War II, and the famous artist and designer is a brilliant spokesperson.

The history of our design was written in those years by entrepreneurs and designers who exchanged thoughts and visions in handcrafted laboratories, in literary salons, in small and medium-sized companies factories as well as in art galleries and cafes. Today, in a hectic and lack of memory age, where few seem to remember people and places that made history, when you hear the name “Bar Jamaica” you immediately think of artists like Lucio Fontana and Piero Manzoni, poets like Salvatore Quasimodo and Giuseppe Ungaretti, but also to the designers who from the fifties onwards have transformed the language of the project compared to the tradition of the “Modern Movement”. In the autobiography of Ettore Sottsass (2010) the historic Milanese bar – located in the heart of the Brera district and a stone’s throw from the Academy of Fine Arts – is cited as an authentic laboratory of artistic avant-gardes, a theatre of confrontation and discussion often burning. This perhaps explains why almost all the Italian designers of the second post-war generation come from the world of architecture and art, and are united by a strong ethical and aesthetic connotation. Many of them in the development of the projects have challenge themselves, often with remarkable results, with technicians and engineers sensitively immersed in a humanistic culture that invited them to look first at the “sense of things”, beyond the pure technical function, where thought is the basis of making – whether it is the major arts or minor arts, as *artes mechanicae* – and drives the artist’s vision.

The conceptual idea that anticipates the project plays a main role in the creative process of Italian designers and has its deepest roots in a rich and complex heritage of expressions and languages built over the centuries in continuous dialectical and rhetorical clashes, where thought, united to a continuous experimental verification, it gives life to the ideal figure of “artisan-philosopher” (Bosoni, 2007) present as much in the studio of the prince as in the atelier of the master, but which over time is still found in a large group of enlightened entrepreneurs, true own prime-designers, as well as in the atelier-workshops of many architects-designers or artists-designers, and still in the factory-laboratories of a great history of artisans-entrepreneurs.

The projects of the artists and designers of the second half of the last century were born precisely from the need to give answers to questions still unexpressed by the

dominant culture of the time through visions that concerned a new way of living, moving, working, living the everyday life.

Their ideas were, in most cases, autonomous to the internal logic of the company or the market, so it was rare that they could be generated in the technical design offices of the companies, or in the style centers of large industries. Entrepreneurs who managed to mediate the ideas of artists and designers with the business needs of the company, and to bring to market products that arose from research aimed at renewing aesthetic languages, would have come like original protagonists in the history of design: in fact, without an artistic vision “the stuff”, understood generically as a set of useful objects, tends to become asymptotically goods (Gold, 2008).

Mediate creativity and needs

extending the reflection beyond the Italian borders we find realities not very different from ours. If we retrace the history of object design in Europe, starting from the artistic movement for the applied arts reform “Art & Crafts”, passing through the artistic circle “Wiener Werkstätte”, the “Bauhaus”, the “Scandinavian phenomenon”, up to the experiences of “Italian Design”, we can observe that all these movements – which have had the disruptive power to resist history and to have provided models to inspire and refer to introduce objects of high aesthetic and artistic value into daily life – they are based on relatively small groups of entrepreneurs and designers who have confronted, and sometimes clashed themselves, with very powerful cultural, intellectual and even spiritual visions.

Beyond the different types of relationships that have arisen in the specific contexts of each movement, or schools of thought in disciplinary education and in the productive and economic sectors, we can recognize in all these experiences the figure of an “aesthetic operator” who can compare himself with a sculpture, an architecture, a piece of furniture, a typographic page or a mechanical part with the same “artistic-poetic” attitude.

Within this vision, the task of the design company would be to practice a continuous, tireless mediation activity between the most advanced instances of international contemporary creativity of “product design” and public expectations, approaching the definition of “commercial art” – used by the philosopher Gianni Vattimo to define those forms of activity with an “artistic-poetic” component such as fashion, cinema, rock music – which, unlike the so-called major arts, as a justification for their existence need the consent of the public. Without the consent of the public, of any kind of public, as long as it is extended and not restricted to a circle of experts, as in the major arts, design cannot exist.

Among Italian companies there are some interesting avant-garde cases that have experimented with “commercial art”, especially between the 1980s and 1990s, achieving great critical and public success and contributing to the formation of a deep and widespread belief today more extensively: that emotions play an increasingly important role in the purchasing process, and that the success of an object is

therefore closely linked to its ability to fascinate the public, just as happens with the works of artists.

The merit of the most enlightened entrepreneurs was that of being an “art mediator”, as Alberto Alessi states, mediating the worlds of design and market to transform the best expressions of creativity of designers and artists into objects capable of touching the public’s heart .

Who doesn’t know the 9093 kettle designed by Michael Graves in 1985, with the little red bird that seems to come to life and take flight in a joyful cry? A pivotal product and a forerunner of a “cartoon” trend that developed in the nineties from a playful-psychoanalytical research of the company, and based on archetypal forms linked to our childhood, able of activating emotional relationships with objects. The juicer *Juicy Salif* by Philippe Starck, the corkscrew *Anna G* by Alessandro Mendini, or the *Girotondo* trays by Stefano Giovannoni, are still “icon objects” of the company that have given life to successful extended families of products over the years.

Alberto Alessi has always maintained that the true nature of his company is that of an industrial research laboratory in the applied arts, careful to create new products bearing of artistic and poetic values, and not only based on the principle of commercial success, in which sometimes the functional aspect is provocatively denied:

You make chairs that have to afford to sit and that have to cost as less as possible, otherwise you don’t do industry anymore. But then if you sell a chair it’s because people fall in love, not because you sit well or because it’s cheap. At the centre of the project is the fascination of the object. I would have stopped producing and I would not be able to keep the company together if I only focused on the functional aspects. (Castelli, Antonelli & Picchi, 2007, p. 258)

While the Alessi brand still continues today to be synonymous of household items, its products are present in the largest number of permanent museum collections worldwide. A success that rewards the ability of “artistic mediation” in the field of design in which the role of the entrepreneur is not very different from that of the director of a museum or the manager of an art gallery, or even of a film maker, except for the fact that he uses the industry as a medium to touch the emotion of the public. If we retrace the official career of Alberto Alessi in his company that began in 1970, we realize that since then he had shown a strongly utopian and favourable vision for a form of “multiplied art” advocating – through an ideological and programmatic manifesto – a new commercial civilization able to offer the masses of consumers real artistic objects at a reasonable price. Among the authors involved for art multiples there were artists, such as the Italian sculptors Carmelo Cappello with *Forma Orizzontale Circolare*, Pietro Consagra with *Girevole*, Andrea Cascella with *Narciso*, Giò Pomodoro with *Guscio N. 1*, and the Yugoslav Dusan Dzamonja with *Multimodel X*.

"Icon" objects

Art is therefore recognized the possibility of limiting the uniformity of serial production, and consequently the ways of life and unnecessary consumption, recovering the aesthetic value within the current system of production and consumption which, to quantify, de-qualifies.

The *ABV Collection* was born in 1992 with the desire to reclaim the conversation between "furnishing project" and "artistic creation" – that the historic company Arredamenti Borsani Varedo had already begun in the fifties, involving emerging artists such as Lucio Fontana, Agenore Fabbri, Giò Ponti, Fausto Melotti, Arnaldo and Giò Pomodoro, Aligi Sassu and others – to design furniture, not sculptures, on which one could "even" sit or rest. Not art multiples. Furniture, in the full sense: shapes designed specifically for a function, objects made thanks to industrial production techniques. The company therefore believed in the hybridization of the object of use, contaminating it with pure creativity, as an artist, which at the same time respected the primary functional needs:

The Tecno company culture was deeply marked by this relationship between the designer and the artist. We can certainly say that the figure of Giò Ponti is the one that comes closest to the image of the architect-artist, and that his *Triposto* in the *ABV Collection* can be considered the ideal – *trait d'union* – between the past and the present design experience. (Pomodoro & Squatriti, 1992, p. 9)

The initiative undertaken by the Borsani family was aimed at supporting the belief that the whole history of design witnesses the coexistence of "invention and project", albeit with greater or lesser incidence of one and the other, highlighting that yesterday as well as today the "imaginative-visual" matrix of design is not only vital, but helps to preserve the design from the danger of passive assimilation to the technical mechanics of serial production.

Therefore not only architects and designers but also artists, as "image technicians", are involved in an action that is essentially aimed at preventing the imagination from ceasing to be an intellectual faculty. But why the artists?

According to Carlo Argan (1992) the artists live the life of their time and simply reject consumption as a goal, therefore they propose beyond it a new value of being, of doing, of using. Through the intellectual recreation of the serial object, they recreate the individuality of the subject: using objects reworked by art means re-proposing the value of intersubjective communication, which the seriality of industrial production tends to eliminate.

The designer-artist does not communicate anything other than his own being an artist, his ability to invent and invent his own authentic way of being and doing, which includes a critical attitude to the existing, and very often an ironic and poetic component. This type of designer ironizes about the design obedient to the laws of consumption, always and in any case, just as artists keep the irony in their history: we think of Marcel Duchamp, but also of René Magritte, Man Ray, or Paul Klee. The serial

object reinvented by the artist, who does things that are useful to live, solicits criticism and judgment, freeing the user from the obligation of unreflecting consumption. *Nastro di Gala*, the enamelled steel bench by Agenore Fabbri, "is a demonstration of the artist's non-conformism and freedom of thought. The slight sign that seems to defy gravity derives from a gesture of the author", who took the metal sheet and bent it in the same way as when he paints or sculpts, obtaining an object that is not only functional, but stimulates sensations and emotions that transcend styles and fashions. The proof is that even today, thirty years later, Tecno exhibits in the main shop windows of its showrooms this "icon-product" precisely because of its attraction that it is able to exercise outside of time, thanks to the relationship that the artist was able to create with the material. The *Table 1/2/3/4/5* by Getullio Alviani also highlights the close relationship that exists between creativity and matter and the need to discover and deeply feel the "material soul" that gives shape to the idea of a project:

I think that art should affect the evolution of doing and I believe that in designing functional objects there is the same spirituality as in making purely visual art. For me, designing always happens as an interrelation with some primary, simple, elementary material, to which I can give something that it never had; this creates the third thing that is the interaction which is established between me and it. Today, however, I think that the function of the maker, of the doer, is a more critical function than the sole function of manual work, of activity. The role that an ideational artist can play at this time, rather than that of producing new things, is to look at and suggest new ideas, which can also be very far from those already realized. (Alviani, 1992, p. 31)

Tecno's design culture has always been deeply characterized by a patronage aimed at promoting "the relationship between the Designer and the Artist" because Osvaldo and Fulgenzio Borsani, anticipating a trend that is very evident today, had already understood that the designers-artists are the only guardians of quality in a world that is quantifying, because the quality of an object reinvented by art has the ability to resonate with the user, arousing in him emotions and reflecting his inventiveness. The confirmation of the value and success of the strategic choice pursued by the two entrepreneurs and aimed at involving artists' thinking in the creation of objects has determined the exponential growth of the Varedo company that has brought the Tecno brand to the top of the market and to become the world leader in the office world, and beyond, for several years.

The strategic role of art for companies

the experience of Tecno shows how art – understood as pure thought, original idea from which the project originates – actually has a very important strategic role for the growth and competitiveness of companies, especially if they move in a market that has the boundaries of the world and where it is impossible to make predictions, even in the short term.

Rolf Fehlbaum quickly understood this and transformed Vitra – the company founded in Weil am Rhein by his father in 1950 – into a large project in which today, in addition to the product catalogue, there is a collection of unique pieces and a historical archive. Within another collection of architectural masterpieces, the *Vitra Campus*. In the eighties he began to buy the products of great architects and designers, from Charles and Ray Eames to Jean Prouvé, from Alvar Aalto to Eero Saarinen, with the same spirit of an art gallery owner who aims to build a collection of works, including both products characterized by the emphasis of author's creativity and the expression of an anonymous and popular action. His collection is based on selection criteria that favour designers able to go beyond the limits of realistic possibilities: you can find numerous objects that do not correspond to the traditional and qualitative concept of "good design" precisely because their authors, just to be truly original and innovative, they preferred to sacrifice the usual idea of quality. In an interview by Stefano Boeri for *Abitare*, realized on the occasion of the release of the celebratory book for Vitra's 50 years of life, Rolf Fehlbaum states that for him collecting represents a sort of "unnatural" selection process, while often tends to think that only the best objects should become part of a collection. But in reality it is not so: the interest of a collector often focuses on the most extreme objects, those that have crossed the boundaries until then shared. Let us imagine that Marcel Duchamp has created a chair. Whether this chair is more or less good and efficient is irrelevant: his is an object that has passed from the sphere of the profane to the altar of art, it is treated as art and therefore becomes art. It is this way of thinking that opens the door to the archive idea of Rolf Fehlbaum and that leads to collecting the objects obtained from experimentations on new meanings. The choice of enhancing the unique objects, the result of a search aimed at exploring the margins of the allowed, proves to be a winner due to the intrinsic ability of the same objects to preserve their original strength over time, setting themselves for this reason beyond the commercial logic that very often they feed the strategies behind the new products. The *Chaise* by Charles and Ray Eames in 1948, the *Panton Chair* created by Verner Panton in 1960, or the *Ball Chair* by Eero Aarnio in 1965 are objects-sculptures that have become symbols of Vitra as well as, in more recent times, the *Wiggle Side Chair* by Frank Gehry in 1972, up to *Vegetal* by Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec in 2008.

At the center of Vitra's project there is still the "fascination of the object", researched by Alberto Alessi, as well as the "imaginative-visual" design matrix – supported by Osvaldo Borsani and which contributes to preserving the design from the danger of passive assimilation to the mechanics of serial production – confirming that "good design" is an alchemic formula which results from the balance between technical, economic, but above all conceptual experience.

If the project is a sincere expression of the idea, the work translates into an awareness of the creative gesture, into an emotional force through which it is able to touch people's hearts and create environments and objects that are works of art. This is

why the designers-artists, or artists-designers, are today custodians of quality in a world that is quantifying, and the quality of an object reinvented through an artistic approach, free to act on the emotions and on the deepest aspects of the human being, has the ability to resonate with him reflecting his own nature and inventiveness. And if the company accepts this challenge, innovative products that can become design icons can be born.

In this essay have been described three emblematic cases of historical companies recognized all over the world that have survived to the transformations of two generations thanks to their ability to integrate artistic languages in their products, and that for this have become an inspiration for many others. A very articulated and complex scenario is now opening up in which digital technologies have a new influence on all the arts and styles of contemporary living. Perhaps it is still too early to trace the behaviour of companies that are confronted today with this profound transition and the impact of their products on the market: it takes time to develop awareness on how to respond to new needs, integrate innovation and create new languages and artefacts for consumer experiences in the near future.

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The aesthetic ground of Fashion and Art

The dialogue that has always characterized the comparison of art and design seems to be constantly gaining new and peculiar characteristics. Within the context of the manifold panorama of the *tout-court* Design, fashion has been able to serve as common ground from which both art and design have continued to fuel this dialogue. In fact, in emphasizing the “exhibition value” of attire, to the detriment of its function (Benjamin, 2008), fashion has always drawn itself closer to art, which has always influenced products with high expository impact, arguably with the consequence of an identity crisis, which has also affected art. This affected art has sometimes been commodified as a result of the desire to be replicated and distributed to the masses (Benjamin, 2008). This development throws light on the disappearance of the aura associated with its own nature, consequently compelling it to respond, potentially within a new territory, where it might find itself again and investigate practices that allow for survival of the commodification of “aesthetic plus-value” (Baudrillard, 1992). Each of these has approached this common territory in its own way while using the contents and reference points of the other. This new behavior is setting the stage for potential dialogue that describes a positively contemporary relationship between fashion and art. In this relationship, neither of the two prevails, but this relationship encapsulates their strength (Frisa, 2015), which has the potential to give new meaning to their common activities.

If the boundaries of contemporary art have been on the verge of disappearing for some time now, the same has happened to fashion and its products. This contribution attempts to offer a reflection on the epistemological nature of both and their relationship.

[fashion, aesthetic products, impressions, expressions, communions]

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At the dawn of western civilization, aesthetic activity was intimately connected with notion of technique and technical production (Aristotle, *Poetica*, 1447, pp. 8-10). However, this production is not quite *praxis* (πρᾶξις) but rather *poiesis* (ποίησις): a technical and poetic production in which the product remains unknown to its creator, surviving him and becoming something of its own. Consequently, beauty and technique converge for this product.

However, industrial production has put strain on this Greek unity, and in doing so, created a rupture which intrinsically distinguishes between an “industrial aesthetic object” and an “autonomous aesthetic object” (Simmel, 2007). The former is produced industrially with a specific function and pertains to the material world, while the latter is rooted in the world of ideas, is more elusive and is less useful (Veblen, 2009).

Within the horizon of design and in contrast to other commodity types, for which a precise function is maintained, fashion has a peculiarity of its own; as soon as the industrial production penetrates its interior, fashion’s product loses its function of protection and its path changes course towards pure “cult value” to become something of “exhibition value” (Benjamin, 2008).

From this perspective, fashion’s product edges closer to art, rather than being any other product of design. Therefore, the formal aesthetic origin becomes more important than the functional one, and in this way, it reveals these products’ aspiration to recover their lost quality, a harmony of beauty and technique, which was once shared with art.

In this sense, fashion is prefigured as the ideal environment for design, in which it converges with art and with which it shares contents and objectives. The interest is not univocal. Both disciplines prove to be attracted to one another and prefigure as feasible territories in which mutual qualities can be experienced, seeing how society’s attire and language practically has a character of universality, right to the extent that it’s formal (Barthes, 2010).

In approaching each other, each discipline has a specific motive. On the one hand, fashion, having lost its original function, wants to elevate itself to the level of art, by exploring connections on the level of expressive and narrative content. On the other hand, in the design of fashion, art finds the preferred context for fulfilling the goal of “democratization of art”, which is set in motion by the progress of technique and the possibility of replication of the work of art. As diagnostics, Benjamin (2008) offers:

A painting has always exerted a claim to be viewed primarily by a single person or by a few. The simultaneous viewing of paintings by a large audience, as happens in the nineteenth century, is an early symptom of the crisis in painting, a crisis triggered not only by photography but, in a relatively independent way, by the artwork’s claim to the attention of the masses. (p. 36)

Therefore, art also has to deal with the process of industrialization; adapting to this new reality has brought about the sterilization of art itself and the loss of its *aura*, as Proust (2015) already realized:

Although we are justified in saying that there can be no progress, no discovery in art, but only in the sciences, and that the artist who begins afresh upon his own account an individual effort cannot be either helped or hindered by the efforts of all the others, we must nevertheless admit that, in so far as art brings into prominence certain laws, once an industry has taken those laws and vulgarized them, the art that was first in the field loses, in retrospect, a little of its originality. (p. 454)

On the other hand, this is how today a process of investigation that compels art to search again for those territories, within industrial planning, that may satisfy this need for democratization begins. In fashion, art finds the only form of design capable of guaranteeing that democratization for which it entered into a crisis. What seemed to be an entirely negative challenge is rather a path on which research, experiments or also simple citations are defining new connections. These connections are establishing a new relationship of osmosis, which in contrast to how it was in the past, uses for both the “exhibition value” that is no longer aimed towards simply formal research but that rather tends towards a realization of a broader and transverse basin of utility.

In this sense, the sharing between art and fashion reveals itself to be a symbiosis in which each of the terms lives off of the other. From fashion, art finds fulfillment in the need for universality, while thanks to art, fashion reaches its goal of beauty as art integral to the collective everyday experience and to its own practice (Vitta, 2011).

Fashion and art possess their own different tools, and in the moment that they both build this exchange, they observe each other from two different levels. On the one hand, using the expressive narrative contents of art, fashion attempts to attain ‘aesthetic solutions’ capable of responding to the question of identity which would rip the contemporary man who faces the crisis from his values (Valle, 2008). On the other hand, in the context of the product and process of fashion, art searches for an artistic diffusion capable of involving more population segments (Banfi, 1956). In fact, fashion:

has the ability to press all the buttons of contemporary life. It represents a convergence between high culture and popular art that gives it real power. It can address serious issues, but it has also got a grasp of the popular imagination in a way that design more narrowly drawn has reason to envy. (Sudjic, 2008, p. 141)

However, the two do not operate autonomously. In fact, they mostly succeed in fulfilling their respective intentions when they begin to collaborate and establish a synergetic relationship, in which the activities of both find meaning. This contemporary co-existence is giving rise to a new path on which a new trend in the dialogue between art and fashion is being defined, and which in collaborations between creative directors and artists satisfies the:

[...] need for artistic production and taste that are necessarily developed in other sectors usually neglected by the traditional “art scholars” or even not taken into

consideration as a source of artistic impulses. It is all about the immense baggage of perceptions [...] that become part of the urban landscape, of advertising, of clothing, of traffic signs, etc., and which should be considered “aesthetic” and fundamental in regards to their psychological impact. (Dorfles, 2008)

In searching for an interpretation to help illustrate these relationships, it has been decided to use the terms “Impressions” and “Expressions” to describe their actions towards the outside world. Fashion imprints its values on the outside world, making use of art’s tool to accomplish this and relate to it; art manifests with an opposite inside-out motion: a method of action which finds its means of expression in the product of fashion.

Impressions: on the trail of art

In the context of attire, the triumph of form over function of merchandise is characterized by designers as an instrument of expression of a language that can communicate its own being (Barthes, 2010), and can elevate the attire to an “autonomous aesthetic product”. In art, fashion searches for and finds those expressive contents that are not inherent to it and that are capable of expressing the aforementioned communicative value. The approach employed by designers is focused on the replicability of a work of art, whose visual content is capable of bringing to mind another world now accessible to all and capable of broadcasting the product’s expressive value by means of the simple impression of a work of art on the fabric. Ingraining a woman’s body on a canvas using color, as in the “Anthropometry of the Blue Age” by Yves Klein, means to transfer the body, dematerialize it and elevate it to a work of art. The same impression on a white fabric, like with one dress of Celine’s Spring/Summer 2017 collection, designed by Phoebe Philo, assumes a symbolic, aesthetic and almost feminist value, rematerializing the body and re-appropriating the flesh from its original physical state. This gesture renders the clothing into a framework and therefore a work in itself. As Restany affirms, this is because the transition from a poetic system of design to a linguistic system provokes an increase in the existential load (1985), driving the clothing to be closer to the work of art it had oriented itself to. This process evokes a specific perception of the clothing; rather than just being a product, it’s now a *medium* through which a work can be manifested. This is also made evident in Raf Simons’ work for the Spring/Summer 2017 collection, through the U.S. photographer Robert Mapplethorpe. The designer applies the efforts of the artist, who is known for his strong erotic references, on pure-white shirts whose volume manages to dilute the sexual cross-reference but at the same time transfer it to the product which once again becomes an object of desire. Fashion after all has always been an instrument capable of interpreting the desires of contemporaneity (Frisa, 2015). This tendency can be characterized as a designer’s will to track down the significance of works of art, giving them relevance and rendering them accessible to the general public. Not being tied to a fixed location, unlike a work of art, which may or may not be restricted in

this way, attire can potentially reach any person's space, first and foremost the space of their body but also any space to which they move.

There are those who use fashion as a means to restore value to a work of art, as was the case within *Comme Des Garçon* (Spring/Summer 2018), through which Rei Kawakubo reinstates the sculptural volume that characterized Arcimboldo's works by means of extremely accentuated volume of the attire. Then there are those who reference works of art as a *medium* recognizable by a certain number of people, and thus able to arouse specific memories in those who observe or use that clothing. This is the case for Marco De Vincenzo, who with the Autumn/Winter 2018-2019 collection fashioned the portraits of Antonello da Messina by *pixelating* his face, reestablishing indefinite lines like those from his memory of the work of art from the same area.

Every fashion designer approaches and appropriates art in a completely personal way, at times maintaining originality, sometimes reestablishing value and at times leveraging recognizability.

This process of rebuilding art, alluding to it and manipulating it, resurfaces through a specific intent of fashion design. This intent increasingly tends to lead to the re-awareness of past artistic products which:

gives meaning to the stratification in which we have been and are immersed, contrasting the loss of cultural depth in the direction of the tutelage of common heritage and consequently of history of social, economic, [and] anthropological frameworks. (Dal Falco, 2014)

Expressions: on the trail of fashion

Fashion has a "useful quality" (Brusatin, 2007), which is enjoyed by art. Such quality includes the power of large-scale dissemination of aesthetic values and at also the permeability of daily life. Under the guise of this attractive light, different artists have also found expression in the field of fashion, primarily drawn by its processes but also by a more profound deliberation of the *medium* itself that it uses. We can trace back the final work of the Californian artist Sterling Ruby to the first category. Ruby was proclaimed by the art critic of the *New York Times* as being one of the most interesting artists of the 21st century. On the occasion of the runway show Pitti Immagine Uomo 96 in Florence this June, he presented his first *ready-to-wear* clothing collection: the S.R.STUDIO.LA.CA. In describing his collection, he declared:

I've always been interested in the behavioral power that comes with clothing. For years I have been privately exploring garments as a medium, as something that impacts the way one can think, feel, and move. (Cascone, 2019)

Ruby speaks about the attire in his collection as if they were works produced by him. This clothing was created and not decontextualized but rather introduced to the real world after being subject to precise logic. Due to his experience and artistic procedure, Sterling Ruby's entry in the fashion world was unremarkable. On the one hand, the

artist has always liberally extended into different *mediums* and visual cultures. On the other hand, for years he has boasted different collaborations with Raf Simons. In contrast and in quite a different manner, there have been the "Soundsuits" clothes of the artist Nick Cave. They involve wearable sonorous sculptures which originate from the assembly of different objects and materials with the intent to recreate, by way of use of the mask, a collective and universal experience of eliminating differences in race, class and gender. They are characterized by a different significance such that they move to the functional level. They are indeed clothes, designed to enter or take part not in a cycle associated with consumer goods but rather in a performative setting. A good portion of Maria Lai's work belongs to the second category, which is concerned with bringing forth a reflection on the *medium* used by fashion. The artist leverages her weaving as her symbol and her word but the artist's fabrics don't have the aesthetic equilibrium to appease to the taste of the masses. They are destined to be the poetic memory of the new spaces that the artist delves in. In this sense, Maria Lai's art sees fashion in terms more principal than the means and the material which is also utilized as an expressive narrative instrument. Maria Lai confirms:

For me, the fabric is a very important tactile element. I feel the differences of the grains, the material, the velvets, the canvases, the silks. Creating an emotion is putting all these different tactilities together. Touching the fabrics would undoubtedly be important, but even just looking at them - there are tactilities in a glance - is like touching them. (Pietromarchi & Lonardelli, 2019)

In 2003, together with fashion designer Antonio Marras, she effectuated the exhibition "Llenzos de Aigua", almost as if to validate his relationship with fashion and the designer. About the relationship with the artist, Marras remembers:

She taught me that mountains are not so terrible. There are precipices, there are wolves, she used to say that she's was a goat, but there are also clouds. She will continue to play as if she were a little fairy. She used to say that the *janes* taught us to weave. She taught us how to weave dreams. (Marras, 2015)

Aesthetic Communion

Lidewij Edelkoort's "Anti-Fashion Manifesto" provocatively proclaims the death of fashion. According to the *trend forecaster*, fashion today is positioning itself more and more towards the exterior of society, not knowing anymore how to encourage and result in what people want and desire (2014). Danto, equally for the arts, had already declared in his essay "The End of Art", the death of art at the end of the great narrations (1998).

This ungluing of reality, in the production of *fashion*, has numerous causes which are analyzed through all aspects which characterize the system, from education to marketing and from designer to consumer. In essence, a dematerialization of fashion

is occurring; attention does not revolve around the substance of the product but instead around all of the more ephemeral aspects which constitute it. This dematerialization is very close to the results that art attains through its means and it recalls by way of its products.

Both seem to have realized that the product, aesthetic clothing, can offer them tools and methods to use in a communion so that they can slip away into their respective disappearance. Baudrillard also speaks of disappearance, and attributes it to the proportionally inverse development of a production of culture in the market (1992). This logic of production of aesthetic value corresponds to a ground zero of art, its vanishing point and its absolute simulation. The work of the Chinese artist Liu Bolin is exemplary in this regard. Recently involved in collaborations with various fashion houses, he produced photographs that portray him concealing himself in the surroundings. Thanks to the technique of *body painting*, the artist acts on attire that disappears, allowing him to blend into the surrounding area. His personal denouncing poetry gives rise to philosophical and anthropological consideration of man-nature-culture in the context of an exorbitant capitalist desire to be in the limelight, contemporaneously shared by the fashion system.

Having been made aware of this crisis and precisely at this end, fashion and art seem to have found common ground for the development of new language, which they can both accept in order to reflect on and investigate their own activities. This territory has been repeatedly frequented by Maria Grazia Chiuri, who with her work for Dior, is marking a road in which art and fashion begin a new discourse and a new manner of relationship. Convinced that there is plenty of room to say and do many things and that it is necessary to share it (Casadio, 2019), for her collection Autumn/Winter 2020, the designer has called for collaboration with the *Maison*, the artist Tomaso Binga, also known as Bianca Pucciarelli. The runway show space becomes a container for works of the artist and an environment in which they exhibit their own performance. That which simply used to be a receptacle for the putting on display one's own collection has become a drama of an event capable of transmitting significance in its meticulous slice of space-time. The runway show is no longer a simple expository event of product but rather a performative artistic deed. The metaphysical setting is a collective one, in which attire and artistic works have equal importance. This communion is made evident in various forms, including in the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei's work *Children of the Comme* (2014). The work contains a series of photographs for *Dover Street Market*, in which the artist has involved fourteen young designers in an equal number of performances. Weiwei captures the models at the moment in which dry pieces of paint fall on their heads; thus, the pieces join the aesthetic gaze of the photograph, immortalizing the young designers while intervening with the attire at random. The heads are so personalized by the pictorial action that it renders them unique, and as the artist confirms, solemnly dialogues with the forms of the attire.

The panoramas highlighted previously seem to look in a single direction that goes beyond disciplinary limits. The merely expository value of the attire now seems to

have been overtaken, and a dialogue among the disciplines appears instead. This dialogue constitutes their vigor and meaning; it would be difficult to attain if they had worked autonomously. Today, this communion turns up as the most sophisticated way to treat the design relationships between fashion and artistic (Frisa, 2015), in which we can see their points of contact, which don't place either of the two before the other. In this way a framework is outlined, in which it's no longer important to ask what is art and what is fashion, instead of asking what is their capacity for bringing back to the contemporary meaning removed from the market's "aesthetic plus-value" (Baudrillard, 1992).

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Co-design of public spaces through design and art

Using a comparison of applied research experiences of the POLIMI DESIS Lab (PDL) research group (Design For Social Innovation and Sustainability) of the Politecnico di Milano, this article explores possible collaborations between designers and professional artists for the redesign of portions of public spaces – or those that are open to the public – via co-planning actions and the involvement of educational activities in the design of spaces and services. The research model used is the virtuous circle that is generated between the academy (researchers, students), local communities or external actors (active citizens, artists), and public institutions or private partners (a municipality or company) (Fassi, 2017). This model is compared to a grassroots initiative of a creative community. The three cases presented differ in terms of relationships between the subjects involved and the impact of the result obtained: *Arnold-Art and design in Nolo District* (2017) in Milan; *The Garden of Daniel Spoerri* (2018) in Seggiano (GR); and *Trentami in Verde* (2019) in Milan. These cases present component systems that interact with each other to produce results that can improve a public space, or be used by an audience, in a temporary and experimental way to create scenarios for their use in the long term. The process and the results presented in the article discuss the role of the designer and that of the artist in the elaboration of the results implemented on the territory through the analysis of the activities performed, the tools used and the legacy of the actions in the territories concerned.

[public space, urban art, co-design]

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The research and project context

Urban areas that in the past housed the production of cultural assets and concentrated virtuously restricted relationships between studios, housing and meeting places (i.e. *Bar Giamaiica* in Milan, the galleries circuit), have now been replaced by districts connected with economic development and are often identified by iconic references: *Tate Gallery* - London, *Fondazione Prada* in Milan, *High Line* - New York. These contribute to the characterization of these spaces: local administrators, creatives, urban planners, residents and city users bringing ideas and needs into processes of regenerative transformation of the public space that have shown symptoms of environmental, social and/or economic decline (Evans & Shaw, 2004). Design contributes to this with proactive solutions (Venturi & Ferriolo, 2009); but art also responds to the new needs of an urban community which, due to its integration and well-being, needs to reconfigure its spaces and their destinations (Florida, 2005; Borrup & McNulty, 2006). The origins of these processes date back to the '60s and '70s in an era of intensely critical and militant commitment, which swept away traditional public monuments and revolutionized the relationships between the shared space, crossed by an involuntary user, and artistic intervention, which was not necessarily sculptural, but linked to performative process derived from the American happenings and from Fluxus). Campo Urbano in Como, Volterra '73, Operation Arcevia, and the Festival of the Nouveau Réaliste - 1970 in Milan, are just some of the most famous initiatives that experimented with the street as a point of contact with adverse involuntary and public co-creators (Pioselli, 2015). Peripheral areas were involved (Acocella, 2016), where it was easier to involve administrators and the broader community. It was the beginning of a method, where the tools of artistic design had to interact with social and environmental changes, and aim to verify urban quality through an interdisciplinary introduction opening to the various aspects of society: environment, health, economy. Today "territorial co-planning generates community networks that can become the places of education of young people with the aim of producing new ways of thinking about the city". This starts from the analysis of today's meaning of "common good", which is an increasingly complexity, linked to the transformation of communities and territories (Pioselli, 2015, p. 167) and the object of cultural planning strategies that implement project contributions with merging objectives of the artists. Thus, the creative making becomes the engine of urban and territorial networks on a national scale, as demonstrated by the widespread documentary survey proposed in the exhibition *La terra è bassa* by Wurmkos (in Sesto San Giovanni - MI - 2019).

Design, art and public space: application cases

The three projects presented in this article differ in the interactions (processes, tools, roles, times) between the subjects involved and the impact of the result obtained. They are solutions for public spaces, or those that are open to the public, to create scenarios for their use in the long term in a temporary and experimental way, which show a strong relationship between the worlds of design and art.

Arnold – Art and design in the Nolo District

This is an applied research project in the area north of Piazzale Loreto in Milan conducted by the PDL in 2016, involving six researchers, 55 students, 22 artists, the Municipality of Milan and the local community of the *Nolo Social District*, who staged 22 exhibitions across the territory in unconventional places for art. From 2016, the phenomenon of urban transformation of the area began to emerge, such as the redevelopment of disused spaces transformed into places of innovative services, and the spontaneous coming together of the inhabitants around different online and offline realities. Social activities in progress, which are spontaneous and voluntary, generate good practices and a sense of community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986) preserving the local character that the area had before it was called Nolo. There are receptive places for micro-planning solutions that host services, actions, and functions in support of: tactical urbanism solutions (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010); adaptive reuse (Camocini, 2016); temporary urban solutions (Fassi, 2012), for an improvement in the quality of spaces (public and otherwise); and more active social interaction (Zhang & Lawson, 2009).

Arnold had an interdisciplinary (space and service design) opportunity-centred approach (Bertola, Ceri & Vacca, 2016), exploiting the existing proactivity of the neighbourhood community and the widespread presence of artists. From the search for needs to the identification of opportunities, from the planning to the execution, from the identification of the main actors to their involvement in prototyping activities, the various actors involved had a constant relationship of comparison through processes of co-design carried out in the field. This project has a design and earlier origin from across the Alps, especially in northern Europe. There are multiple experiences of urban districts reactivated by artistic projects such as the *Isola art centre* in Milan - the spontaneous experience of urban and artistic transformation shared in an anti-liberal perspective (in a certain sense Utopian and opposed to *Arnold's* reactivation) which ended after 12 years and was animated by the Belgian, Bert Theis (1952-2016). If the work of Theis and others (for example the collective Oreste, Stalker, Alterazioni Video) stands as successor to the situationists with the assumption of political responsibilities (Fight-Specific Isola, 2013), experiences as *Urban 2* in Turin curated by a *titolo*, a collective of female curators, assigns urban redevelopment to artistic planning and the fostering of a new economy (Detheridge, 2012).

“Trentami in Verde” (TiV)

Today, the “Milan Model” (Andreotti, 2019) identifies the ability of city governance to understand social pressures and emerging needs, offering structured and systemic solutions that trigger virtuous processes. A dense network of associations, above all those of a social nature, makes Milan a city with a number of volunteers far above the national average (Biorcio & Vitale, 2016) and this civic activism translates into proposals for the improvement of the city: a series of actions where

the institution’s *top-down* incorporates the *bottom-up* of the population and from them creates a system.

TiV is an experimental intervention, again in Nolo, of a living street (Gehl, 2013) in Via Rovereto and the entrance to Trotter Park. It emerged in this context through *Mobi*, a proposal for the *2017 Milan Participatory Budget* presented by the “Nolo Social District”. Although it did not obtain any funding, it was of interest to the Municipality of Milan which created a working table with other associations also sensitive to the topic. The table developed one of six components of a system of interventions for the calming of traffic and the safety of cyclists and pedestrians through light and reversible interventions that could give rise, after a sufficient period of experimentation, to definitive solutions in the long term (Lydon & Garcia, 2015).

The two areas involved (Via Rovereto and Parco Trotter entrance) were the subjects of a street-art intervention that saw the spontaneous collaboration between the inhabitants of the neighbourhood (creative community), a professional and an amateur artist. The project acts mutually with social and cultural realities, such as the various current artistic practices mentioned above.

The Garden of Daniel Spoerri

This was born about twenty years ago from the wishes of Daniel Spoerri: a park with his and other artists’ works on the slopes of Mount Amiata (Seggiano, Grosseto). The works are integrated with nature, sometimes camouflaged others emerge from the profiles of the landscape and remotely recall the visitor’s attention to the 17 hectares of hills through Spoerri’s poetics and an immersive journey into the artistic culture of the twentieth century. The visit is free and personal, although it takes at least three hours to have even a partial understanding of the work. The PDL project intervention focused on rest areas offering a short break sheltered from the sun. Previously, the artist turned his greatest attention to the artistic path and aimed to bring the visitor back to the village where the services are located (ticket office, bar, picnic area) and the restaurant “Not only eat art ...” which is part of Spoerri’s work, as initiator of Eat Art. In the reduction of the path and the diffusion of interventions in almost all points of the 17 hectares, the need was recognized to offer staging points to make the visit more comfortable, and therefore also to think about the well-being of the visitor and not only to his/her involvement. Services have never been considered a priority in garden management although they constitute a necessary presence in museum studies. In this case, the designer places himself “at the service” of a particular client and works towards a space in which his own non-artistic intervention cannot be confused. The artist’s ideal client makes the project a unique experience that led the researchers who worked there to carefully consider the needs and voice of the interlocutor in an unusual relationship, almost like that of a “teacher (maestro)/pupil (disciple)”.

The comparison between the three case studies

Designer-artist relationship

Small group / single. In *Arnold*, the process involved small groups of students placed the two artists in a separate and distinct way to co-design together an installation of a selection of their works to be situated in two unconventional art places. A secondary role was played by the location managers of the planned installations whose role was limited to technical input. The co-planning and co-creation process benefited from the selection of participants in the activities.

Large group / single. *TiV* involved about 100 inhabitants from the neighbourhood carrying out two street-art works on asphalt: a collective work from an idea by the artist Maria Mesh and a drawing by Sabrina Baroncini for street games. The people involved in the process were not selected but freely responded to a “call for action” advertised on local social media and who dedicated their time and expertise depending on individual availability.

Single / Single. In the *Garden of Daniel Spoerri*, the relationship between designer and artist was one-to-one. Three young designers collaborated on the works of the artist Daniel Spoerri to absorb the language, the *modus operandi*, the experience and the expectations towards the garden that constitute his works.

Time / Impact

Long time/Replicability

Arnold had a journey of one year divided into three phases: the first saw researchers working in a close relationship in the field with the *Nolo Social District* which took on the role of “entrance gate” to the varied local artistic reality, allowing the creation of the network of 22 artists to be involved; the second led to the realization of the project concept and its development through the involvement of students and artists; the third allowed the first results to be prototyped and then put into practice in two popular events open to the local people. The length of time allowed a process of “osmosis” between the students and the artists that blended having the mutual language of design communication (technical-artistic, instinctive-procedural, artisan-digital). From a system of actions taken in 2019 *Arnold* has activated the first occurrence of the *BienNolo* a two-week artistic event.

Short time/Experimentation

In *TiV* the relationship between *artists/creators* and *inhabitants/makers* was limited to two weeks of construction work for the experimentation. Its brevity and finite nature did not allow for a high degree of spreading cultural, procedural and competences) but facilitated the realization of the proposed output thanks to the very practical approach by the artists. The design on the ground, the choice of colours and the construction technique were inputs for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood with a margin of personalization of the result. In terms of impact, *TiV* had a strong character of temporary experimentation (three months), which

was prolonged, given its success, by an additional three months during which the final intervention project was developed.

Average time/scenery

In the *Garden of Daniel Spoerri*, the development of research activities in the field and then in the project (four months) allowed the young designers to first come into contact with the reality of the park and its surroundings with investigative visits, to deepen their knowledge of the garden’s founder, and to acquire direct data about its use. In terms of impact, the resulting projects have had a strong scenic connotation, including a series of elements useful for the future development of the area concerned: the installation of panoramic points, rest areas, horizontal and vertical signs, improvement of the catering service, and the connection with the surrounding area.

Role of the artist and the designer

Design artist/activator designer

In *Arnold*, the artists participated in the co-planning sessions and co-creation of the exhibition idea, and also acted as active and proactive interlocutors in the preparation phase. The researchers in the first phase positioned themselves as activators of the system (Manzini, 2019), which was created later among artists, places in the neighbourhood, students and inhabitants. The activation was successful thanks to the various actions in the field: knowing the territory, contact with key local actors; visits to the ateliers; single meetings with the artists; and construction of the network. Students had the role of designers together with the artist in a user-centred design path (IDEO.org, 2015) which led to a mutual knowledge of the primary tools and methods (especially related to co-planning), development of ideas, and finally of their realization through prototyping

“Widespread” artist/designer

In *TiV*, despite the artists’ involvement in the development of the idea, the local residents viewed the two works as opportunities to improve the conditions of the areas of public space concerned (Madanipour, 1999) and actively participated in their realization. The community of inhabitants has now placed itself here as a creative community (Meroni, 2007). In fact, at the time of the co-realization of the work, their degree of customization was free and some contributions were given to the initial work modifying it in part.

Artist Maestro/designer developer

In the *Garden of Daniel Spoerri* the artist’s learned experience was transferred to the designers through interviews without the construction of a participatory planning event but by the designers to develop a high degree of empathy with the interlocutor (Koupric & Visser, 2009). The interaction in this case did not exist except in the

facilitation, through direct dialogue with the artist, of the understanding of his work and entry of designers into the artistic world. In this case the designer's goal was to capture the poetics of the place and of the author, and to develop as much as possible an idea in harmony with light and non-invasive elements.

Conclusions

The three cases analyzed had, as their main actors, designers (students and researchers), artists and local communities, coming together in activities of transformation of public spaces, or spaces open to the public, with instruments of dialogue that took place on different levels.

The two projects related to the Nolo district reported results regarding social innovation processes in a complex system – an urban territory under development – that have constituted a social practice in themselves. The analysis and the interaction with the context have in fact allowed the staging of new opportunities for use and new forms of action and interaction (Selloni, 2017; Manzini, 2015; Branzi, 2006) that took place thanks to the active role of designers, artists and the local community. In the case of Daniel Spoerri's garden-related activity, this interaction led to innovative scenarios of the space concerned.

Through a co-design of spatial solutions, we investigated how human actions are strongly influenced by the relationship that people establish with their own context (*milieu*), which can enable or inhibit forms of action and interaction (Meroni, 2007). While, on the one hand, the collaboration between artists and designers has led to the prototyping of the use of unconventional spaces for art as vehicles of cultural transmission (*Arnold*), on the other, it has acted to implement social situations through the equipping of areas of rest in an artistic garden (*Il Giardino by Daniel Spoerri*) and finally generated a project activism with a strong connotation of demonstration (Thorpe, 2008) and as a practice of disruptive aesthetics (Markussen, 2013)

The area of exploration between the roles, interactions, impacts and times associated with the three groups of actors involved has shown that some dynamics have emerged that are linked to the specificities of individual projects. The verification of these dynamics in other contexts could lead the research group to experiment with new areas of application, in order to model the interventions.

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Art and design: Toni Zuccheri at VeArt

The meeting between an artist-architect-designer, who preferred to define himself as an artisan, and a Venetian company, VeArt, born after the economic boom of the Sixties, oriented towards industrializing the manufacturing processes of the “artistic” glass (as the name suggests), also through the employment of semi-automatic technologies adopted in the glassblowing procedure, turns out to be emblematic not exclusively with regards to the formal outcomes achieved in the production sector, but also to the possibilities and the potentiality of enhancement the two disciplines – art and design – can have together. For Toni Zuccheri, as a matter of fact, there was no distinction between the roles he could manage and the skills he was able to show, as each one of them was protagonist of an unpredictable success that characterized his recognizable pieces.

Already successfully active in the manufacturing of animal-themed unique pieces and small series for Venini, Zuccheri, tireless and talented innovator with a rare artistic sensitivity, was called by VeArt to lead the company technical trials, acquiring the role of designer, guiding the innovative processes and creating new equipment for the realization of original objects, without leaving his innate artistic calling behind.

The sequence of events between VeArt and Zuccheri, over the course of twenty years of cooperation, shows the interesting outcomes of an important effort in using new technologies for artistic purposes, and shows at the same time how art and design have found and can continue to find a fertile ground of exchange in the experimentation practice.

[Toni Zuccheri, glass, VeArt, Venini]

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Art and design: Toni Zuccheri at VeArt

From the 70's till the late 90's, the meeting and the long-lasting cooperation between a company and an artist-designer and architect, Toni Zuccheri, turns out to be emblematic not exclusively concerning the achieved formal outcomes, but also the possibilities and the potentiality of enhancement the two disciplines – art and design – can have together. Oriented towards industrializing the manufacturing processes of the “artistic” glass, also through the employment of semi-automatic technologies adopted in the glassblowing procedure, Ve Art chooses a tireless innovator, an artist, a nature and materials enthusiast, entrusting him as designer, and above all as investigation and innovation manager.

Born in Friuli region, Toni Zuccheri, who defines himself as an artisan, studied at Iuav Institute in Venice learning with distinguished lecturers as Franco Albini, Ignazio Gardella, Ludovico di Belgiojoso, Alberto Samonà, Egle Trincanato, where he graduated in 1968 with Nani Valle and Giorgio Bellavitis. His childhood in San Vito al Tagliamento (1936) allows him to be close to the world of agriculture and to get interested in the observation of nature and especially animals, affected by his father's –the painter Luigi Zuccheri– knowledge. More in general, he was also absorbed in a stimulating cultural environment when his family moved to Venice, enlivened by assiduous frequentation of artists as Giorgio de Chirico, Carlo Scarpa, Giorgio Bassani, Elio Zorzi, Mario Soldati, Vanni Scheiwiller, beside his uncle Giacomo Noventa. Toni Zuccheri has expressed, since his first professional cooperation with Venini company in 1961, - to which he was introduced by his friend Tobia Scarpa - his inclination for experimentation linked to the hybridization of materials, to the creation of original tones (Hammacher, 1965, pp. 54-55) and to the plastic flexibility of matter. Beside his historical and continuous cooperation with Venini, between the 80's and the 90's a lot of companies in Murano decide not to take advantage of Zuccheri's expertise. Zuccheri's approach to the project is always complex and homogeneous, competent in combining his artistic sensitivity with the spontaneous creative, through productions and processes that sometimes are considered as purely industrial.

From 1982 until 1984, Toni Zuccheri started a short cooperation with the well-known company Barovier & Toso (Murano) as creative director: the reconsideration of the decorative objects repertoire flows into a production that, despite Zuccheri's personal amount being affected, preserves a recognizable loyalty to the company tradition, especially in keeping some historical details such as the black-contrast creasings on stained glass. In May 1988 and until 1990 Zuccheri was flanked in De Majo company with the former cooperators Fulvio Bianconi and Ohira, in charge of the project *Bosco di notte*, a tale with a great poetic and expressive value that evokes the magic of the wood and of the *undergrowth*, and the unexhausted magic of creating glass.

Thought has been with Giò Caroli, a company from Valenza founded in 1970 by Carlo Ciarli and Giovanni Illario, that Zuccheri could express his sculptural artistic streak, employing it in jewels and precious accessories made of bronze, gold-plated silver and of a combination of these materials with poorer ones, it will only be thanks

to his experience with Buton that he could manage to get closer and closer with the design branch, through the bottle and the external packaging of Vecchia Romagna brandy redesign.

The meeting with Venini and VeArt

Back to Zuccheri's manufacturing most enduring and significant cooperation, among the most important first works for Venini were his *Bestiary* animals (Forme, 1979, pp. 34-39)^[1], and two series of objects that summarize the first experimentations of metal inclusion in the glass: the series *Grovigli*^[2], bowls and vases of great thickness in blown and handmade glass, characterized by silverwires inclusions, substituted by copper wires in the manufacturing process to avoid the typical yellowish coloring on glass caused by the fast burn of silver and, in the same 1964, the series *Giade*, covered vases and bottles made in different shapes, realized with copper inclusions on opaque-colored base coats. The meeting with Gio Ponti (Domus, 1966, pp. 21-25), in the same year, and the successful partnership on the *Vetrata Grosse* proves on one hand Toni Zuccheri's technical ability in mastering his trials results between different materials and glass, but also his promptness and expertise in communicating during the project plan with Gio Ponti^[3], surely one of the skills derived from the rigorous educational background. The *Vetrata Grosse* defined by Ponti on *Domus* «huge and broken glass, with large air bubbles, made of murrhine and reeds and other materials surrounded by the depth of the “frozen” glass» (Domus, 1966, pp. 21-25), were given to Padova Savings Bank headquarters, to the Chapel of the new hospital San Carlo in Milan (1964-1966) signed by Ponti-Fornaroli-Rosselli Studio Associate, while abroad they were employed for the front of Bijenkorf Mall in Netherlands (1967-1968), in Eindhoven and in some buildings in Iran. The *Vetrata Grosse* were made of glass plaques with a thickness of 3 cm of varying dimensions and weight (15 x 30 x 20 x 30 cm approx, from 2 up to 4 Kg) whose peculiarity was being always different, made with *cotissi* inclusions, industrial processed scrap metal, straw hats, wax, wood and colors that conferred a “marbled” effect to the plaques. The resulting compositions from the juxtaposition of individual plaques in a system of vertical steel guidelines that substituted the traditional stained glass window lead binding system, followed a formal process, guided by chromatic affinities or searching for a pattern never drawn before, but that was exclusively up to the artist/designer.

In these initial projects a “hybrid” methodological approach is already present, surely due to the fact that Zuccheri has never separated his cultural inspirations, influenced by both art and architecture,^[4] mixing together innovative tools and techniques, one freer and highly imaginative, the other rigorous and precise; but it is only through the cooperation with VeArt company that this uniqueness is made clear and reaches its growth through the manufacturing of vases and items in series, long way from the inspired animals and one-of-a-kind pieces.

V-Linea Vetrerie Veneziane, new glass-making company, was founded in 1967 by Sergio Biliotti and Ludovico Diaz de Santillana, who was managing the historical

Venini company at that time, to create a blown glass items mass production, that despite remaining faithful to home-made dictates, differed from the Muranese artistic manufacturing, not only from a formal aspect, but also in its less elitist commercial nature (Chiesa, 2016).

The following year in Scorzé, between Padova and Treviso, also VeArt was created: a new industrial plant based on a strong tendency towards investigation and on the will to contaminate the artistic glass tradition with the incorporation of “mechanical working techniques”, that VeArt creates and also markets lamps and furniture using the components produced by its “parent company” V-Linea.

Semi-automatic technologies offer the chance to test: «an industrial manufacturing that, although using modern machinery, continues to see “the engine” not only as a viable alternative to craftsmanship, but also as a creation of new ways of expression» (Forme, 1977, pp. 32-37). And maybe this is the aspect Toni approaches the most. It is for the technical experimentation of glass and for the industrial process (Forme, 1977, p. 36) that Toni begins his cooperation with the young company.

The cooperation between Toni Zuccheri and VeArt was among the most long lasting and stable throughout the years, from the early 70's up to the 90's, when their professional relationship was alternated with Zuccheri's commitment at Venini's, and with his professional cooperation with other important Muranese (and not) companies, as Barovier & Toso, De Majo and Giò Caroli from Valenza.

The period between 1973 and 1978, the “early” manufacturing cooperation stage between Toni Zuccheri and VeArt is for sure the most productive and is characterized by an important effort in using new technologies for artistic purposes: unique plastic variations, deformations, depressions and various illusory and playful effects to create furniture and objects, but above all lighting fittings.

So it was an artistic manufacturing produced by industrial assets that could make a lower sale price of products and an easier access to the market, while maintaining the quality of the final product high.

Within the company, Zuccheri plays a key role as both designer, under an industrial point of view, and as a means of communication between the entrepreneur Sergio Biliotti and the technical staff directed by the engineer for manufacturing processes (from the composition of minerals up to the heated and cold glass processing).

The creations that can be defined as “freehand blown glass with mechanical structuring” (Biliotti, 2019), that use the idea of developing an artistic manufacturing with industrial machinery to lower the final sale price of high quality products, are typical of this phase and were possible thanks to Zuccheri's interventions. Some “traditional” glass-blowing procedures, as in *Otri* or *Vulcano*, relied on shaped and pointed bases that, by gravity, gave the glowing glass a unique shape of the base, while other blown vases, as *Talea*, were made thanks to the mechanical intervention of two hallmarks that, passing through the glowing glass, created a depression within the vase perimeter, and receding quickly, brought the external vase perimeter back to its original shape, leaving it crossed by peculiar glass blades, glassy “membranes”. Unique formal outcomes still based on the use of

membranes, entirely machine made that divide the objects into inner portions, differentiate the container of the series *Mettifiori* and *Zinnia* and *Nuphar* lamps.

As noticeable from the technical drawing full of notes,^[5] Zuccheri designed both the finished piece and the process for its creation, creating specific moulds, often convertible and partially open, or conceiving adjustments for mechanical parts, thus working both on the formal innovation and on the mechanical realization at the same time.

Another peculiar aspect, edited and innovated by Zuccheri, concerns the composition of glass and the chromatic effects obtainable through chemical interventions on the formula; in particular the blurred effect called “autumn” is a special procedure developed by Toni Zuccheri and his technical staff, to get blurred effects from the yellow to the orange, going through brown nuances that evoke the typical colors of autumn.

In the series of large vases as *Golia*, *Polifemo*,^[6] *Nuvola* and many others, and in lamps as *Tunica*, *Cartoccio* and *Sagoma*, characterized by variable and bizarre shapes, the procedure provided the combination of natural intervention (glass-blowing) with a mechanical one: specific moulds indeed “forced” only some portions of the glowing mass, leaving some margins for plastic variation obtained thanks to glass-blowing naturalness.

The trial on furniture, lamps and objects in the production company first period, is expressed also through the adoption of a technique which was strongly supported by Toni Zuccheri and introduced in Germany by Sergio Biliotti, centrifugation, a great success due to collections signed by the Milanese designer Luigi Massoni in later years. The molten glass cast into the machinery was mechanically shaped thanks to the centrifugal force, assumed several configurations and generous sizes, (together with large thicknesses) always more predictable compared to the mould-design trials, because of the technical constraints of the centrifugation technique.

From the half of the 80’s, after a break in which he was mainly committed to Venini company, Zuccheri goes back to VeArt, that in the meantime acquired a certain autonomy from the Muranese company.

A return to themes of the traditional repertoire, for example animals, and a style which was very different from the previous production, distinguish the second period of cooperation between Zuccheri and VeArt, more oriented towards the commercialization of objects rather than lighting fittings, but above all abandoned the unusual elements, typical of the strong experimentation of the first years.

Seagulls in ground glass as the *Anatre dal collare*, made in submerged gold and transparent green and ground black multilayer glass, suggest an alignment with the traditional approach, while shapes are simplified in vases as *Tuareg*, *Masai* and *Watussi*, in doubled opal glass, crossed by a contrast colored wire. The implement of a gradient color, black and pink, black and light blue, as for the series *Aurora* and for the vase *Vertigine*, green and pink gradient, maintains a strong link with the technical skills of the first phase instead. A greater tendency to the *décor* characterizes

the catalog of those years, as evidenced also by the rich vase *Intreccio*, in opal black glass, enclosed by an ornament in transparent red glass that serves as a prototype, appearing slightly modified in the mid-80’s manufacturing.

Zuccheri has cooperated with VeArt at least until the 90’s, constantly following a process of simplification concerned to the piece design and to its creation technology, then he has returned to cooperate with success with Venini company since 1985, in the meantime passed and acquired by Raul Gardini.

What Zuccheri called natural drawing winded up being the main feature of his production, both artistic and industrial: there was no distinction between Toni Zuccheri’s roles and skills, because all of them were part of his recognizable successful works. If his inspiration from nature gave birth to many of Toni Zuccheri’s ways of expression through natural models, for example animals, reproducing accurately their spirit, or taking inspiration from nature, as in *Bosco di Notte*, abstracting the elements and transforming them into glass plastic sculptures, it is his artistic sensitivity that expresses itself in a more filtered and abstracted way, for instance in his experimentation of gradient colors with VeArt.

If with VeArt he is able to freely experiment new formal possibilities, he does not renounce to the meticulous study of the process, that allowed him to patent some special machinery.^[7]

With Venini, as happens tirelessly in his personal research, he creates experimental sculptures, three-dimensional mosaics as the popular hoopoes, and incredibly realistic vibrant animals such as the magpies, the owls and the parrots, that demonstrate a unique artistic vocation oriented towards the one-of-a-kind (Hammacher, 1965). Versatile and complex, Toni Zuccheri shows how art and design are not on different sides, on the contrary they always find a common ground of fertile exchange thanks to the experimentation, to the interest for techniques innovation and *mediums* through which he can express from time to time different contents, which is exactly what happens in his works. Art and design, just like in the past, build new ways of expression, of original languages for the design and the “visual” fields, while looking for new transversal cooperations (Agudio, 2013).

[1] Some animals such as the “Hoopoe”, the “Turkey” and the “Duck” were presented at the 32nd Art Exposition in Venice, 1964.

[2] The series “Grovigli”, is produced again in 2007 with some modifications compared to the previous ones, for example the cuts on the mouths above the vases.

[3] Crf. Gio Ponti’s letter to Toni Zuccheri, 1968, Zuccheri Archive: “Dear Toni Zuccheri, de Santillana told me you can take charge of his important stained glass window after graduation. And that scared me, because now a days we do not know when this will be possible. [...] This is the most important presentation of the stained glass windows that bears Venini’s, your and my name, and whose beauty depends principally on your intervention. [...] Write to me! Do not worry about the graduation, because you are an artist, and everyone gets easily one; but participating in these good things is your destiny as an artist, sincerely. Your GioPonti”.

[4] As well highlighted in Bulegato and Dellapiana’s book (2014), the skills derived from their architectural background made the access of different designers into this world possible during the post-war period, marking the transition from the artisanal dimension to the specific industrial one.

[5] The drawings derived from the cooperation between Toni Zuccheri and VeArt are part of a Private Archive kept by the heirs.

[6] “Polifemo” vase was exposed during the XV Triennale in 1973.

[7] The paper dated to 1979 is the proof of Zuccheri’s interventions in the process and of his will of creating new original procedures and machinery: “I am registering in Italy a demand for a patent concerning an industrial invention with the title: procedure and machinery for the production of metal decorative objects through melting and centrifugation”, Zuccheri Archive.

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Make gallery

Symbiotic short circuits

The following image gallery casts light on a fact that is as taken for granted (because it has been so widely investigated and discussed) as it is irrefutable: the boundary between art and design is now often blurred, and not always easy to find. If we consider the industrial product as a set of rules and as an indication that the production chain must respect in order to yield a theoretically unlimited series of the same items, we may say that design makes no room for personal interpretations, and has the simple purpose of creating objects that work, and that sell.

However, to paraphrase Dorfles's words in an interview for *Venice Design Week* (2011), in the art world, the work by the painter or sculptor has no intention of selling – even if does sell – but is the expression of a personal thought that responds to no briefing by or commission from a company. It responds simply to a need to express an idea, a concept.

The works and installations presented here, however, seek to retrace certain episodes in which the disciplines of art and design coexist or are entwined, mutually feeding one another's value.

The following images illustrate artistic operations in which the "industrial coefficient" can only be taken into consideration for making and expressing the work, and cases where the industrial products are conceived for an exhibition space typical of art, or in which the object's main function is reflection, the statement of an idea, and the creation of a debate on contemporary social issues. In the shown examples, design takes technical and emotional specifications from the art world. The products taken into consideration aim to emphasize the degree to which art and design in the contemporary world are capable of exploiting one another's circuits, thus generating a sort of "symbiotic short circuit".

Antonello Garaguso

[art/industry, short circuit, symbiosis,
exhibition spaces, hybrid objects]



01



The synonym of functionality

> If we remove the term "performance" from the artistic context, it becomes the term by which we can describe objects that have functionality. Objects often involve an interaction between the user and the object, that is typical of art. Without performance, the object does not perform its function.



02



03

01 *Small table*, *FurNature* collection, *Sovrappensiero* studio, 2016. The user is asked to add a natural element of his or her own territory to make it functional.

02 *Lassù*, *Alessandro Mendini*, performance for the cover of *Casabella* no. 391, 1974.

03 *Plopp stool*, *Oskar Zieta* for *Hay*, 2009.

04 *Do Hit chair*, *Marijn van der Poll*, 2000.

04

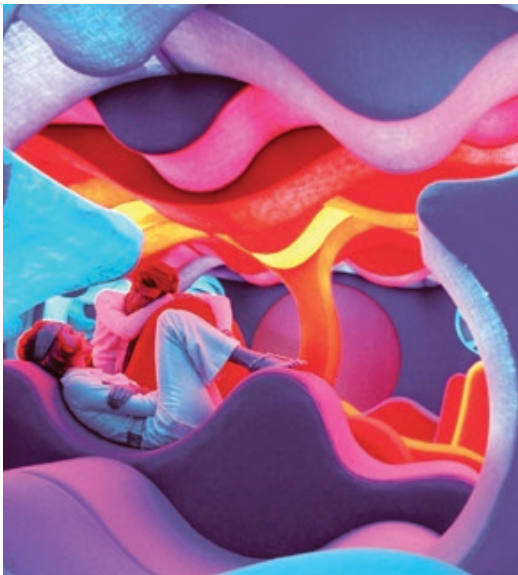




01

Displayed Visions

> Design shows are not always seen positively, due to the decontextualization of the products deprived of any link with the market and with the use and consumption circuits. On the other hand, many designs require art exhibition spaces in order to recount a design process or a series, a whole. Without the exhibition space for which they have been conceived, these designs would lose meaning.



02



03

01 *Designs for an Overpopulated Planet: Foragers*, Dunne & Raby, Protofarm 2050 for the ICSID World Design Congress, 2009.

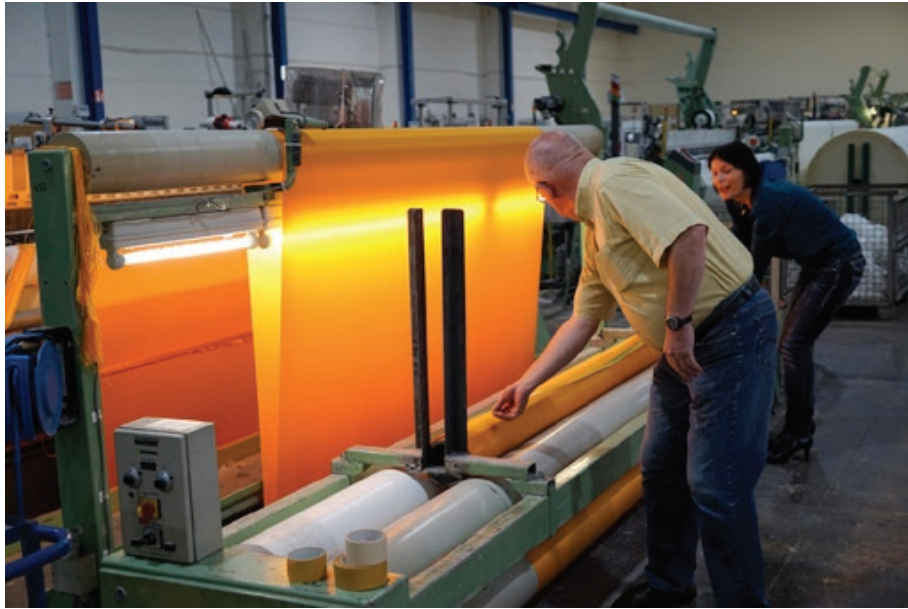
02 *Phantasy Landscape, Visiona 2*, Panton Design, IMM Cologne Furniture Fair, 1970.

03 *Wall elements* (1969, produced by Harlacher), Visiona 2, Panton Design, IMM Cologne Furniture Fair, 1970.

04 *100 Chairs in 100 Days*, Martino Gamper, Triennale Design Museum 2009.

04





01

Producing for art

> We may define Christo's operation on Lake Iseo between Sulzano, Montisola and the isle of San Paolo as a non-permanent urban infrastructure. Although its ephemeral, performance side places it among the great designs of contemporary art, its fabrication clearly presents a process typical of modular design.



03



02

01 *The Floating Piers*, Christo & Jeanne-Claude, 2016. Production of the lining of the work in polyamide nylon, Setex, 2015

02 03 *The Floating Piers*, Christo & Jeanne-Claude, 2016. Blocks made with polyethylene using the moulding process, 2015.

04 *The Floating Piers*, Christo & Jeanne-Claude, 2016.



04



01

Home/Museum

> In Apartment no. 50 of Le Corbusier's *Unité d'Habitation* in Marseille, Pierre Charpin is summoned for a one-man show opening during the summer of 2014. This project is part of a series of temporary installations in which numerous designs have taken part, such as Kostantin Grcic, the Bouroullec brothers, and Jasper Morrison. The designer decides to leave some pieces already on display earlier, and to re-design some of his textures and insert them into the framework of the *Modulor*, living there while the owners are away for a few days. The difference between home and museum is a tenuous one.



03



02

01 *Torno Subito*, Pierre Charpin & Galerie Kreo, 1998-2001.

02 03 04 In the series of images, we can see the designer's works produced by Venini, Galerie Kreo, Ligne Roset, and others, contextualized in the exhibition space, Pierre Charpin, 2014.



04



01

Art in daily life

> We may speak here of hybrid objects that, while having different interpretation keys, have in common the role that production plays within design paths. These are objects in support of an installation or of artistic projects, that could not take concrete shape without full-blown industrial production.



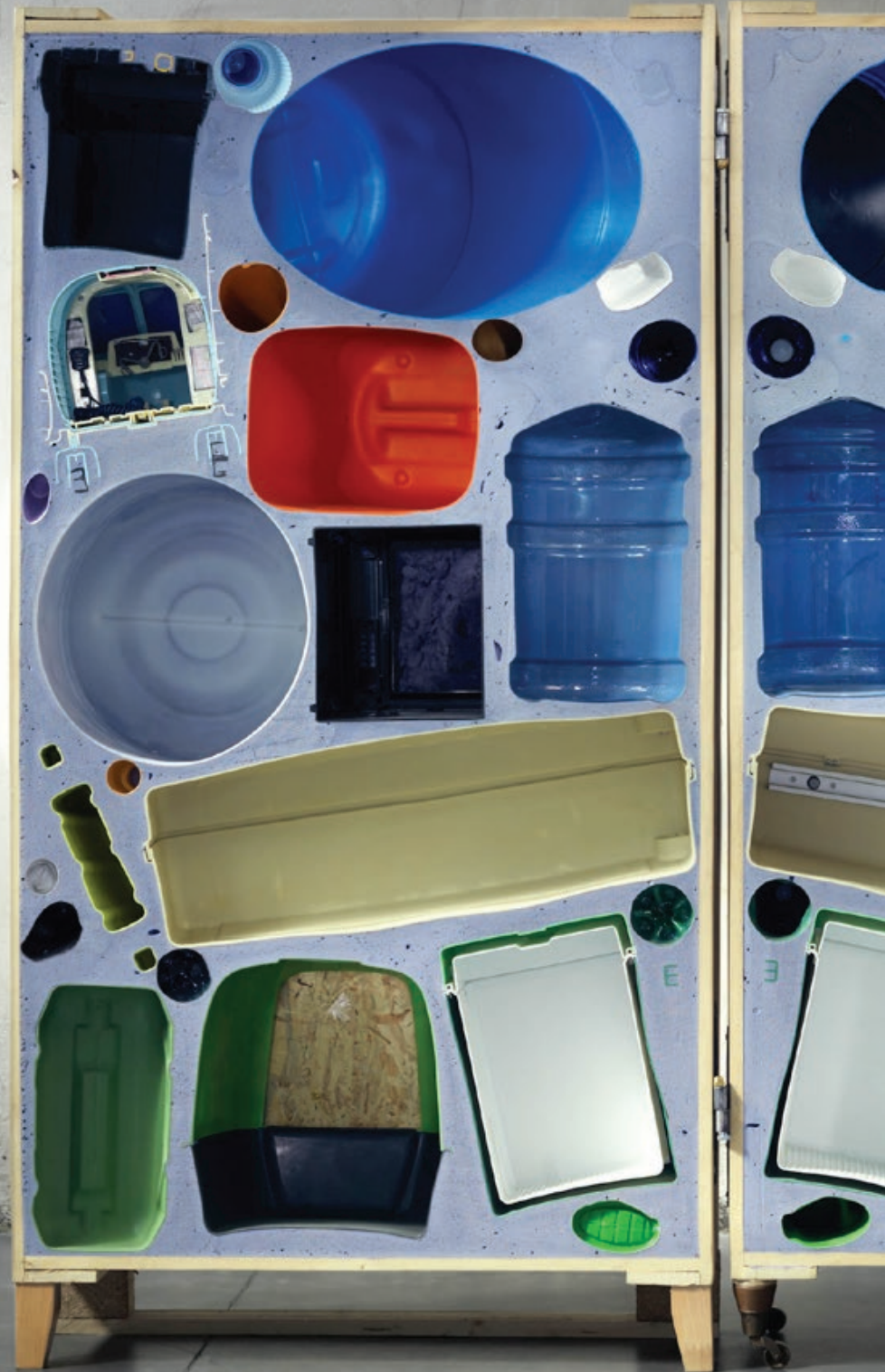
02



03

- 01 *Saving/Space/Vase*, Joe Velluto, PLUST collection, 2009.
- 02 *Moor vase*, Moulding Tradition, Formafantasma, 2010.
- 03 *Cloned in China*, Odoardo Fioravanti, Opos, 2005.
- 04 *Fossile Moderno wardrobe*, Massimiliano Adami, 2006.

04



Focus



Art and Design: from objects with an aesthetic function to Interaction Design

[Rosa Maria Giusto](#)

Redesigning maps, amid art and design

[Luca Guerrini, Raffaella Trocchianesi](#)

Design and Art in the connective imagination

[Gianpiero Alfarano](#)

Arianna's wire: Valeria Scuteri between art and design

[Claudia Bottini, Rossella Mana](#)

Art and Design: from objects with an aesthetic function to Interaction Design

One of the main aspects of contemporary art is the search for interactive inclusion of the viewer within the space generated by the work. The more the work tends to disappear, the more the viewer becomes part of the perceived space, becoming a *user*, fully involved in the processes of recognition and perception of the work itself (Marras & Mecacci, II, 2014, p. 159). This approach, inaugurated by Minimal Art, can be considered a precursor of *Interaction Design* where the progressive dematerialization and disappearance of the object-product in favour of an increasingly elaborate and refined interface system, «transforms the interaction (and/or the *Usability*) in an aesthetic experience, in *engagement* and emotional participation». (Marras & Mecacci, II, 2014, p. 160)

The use of *Human Computer Interaction* (HCI) from a purely cognitive to a tangible, experiential and aesthetic level, marks the change of horizon of these years. From the objects traditionally intended and from the artefacts, we have passed to a system of fruition of the objects, including those with an “aesthetic function”, which sees design becoming more and more a fundamental tool in the policies of exploitation and innovative use of cultural and museum heritage.

In this sense, neuro-aesthetics and, in general, neuroscience applied to design can constitute a further ground for comparing and exchanging art and design, transferring consolidated cognitive and strategic approaches to design and providing the opportunity to positively influence people's lives through solutions that allow designing the interaction with the “world of things”, stimulating cognitive and emotional aspects.

Starting from the age-old Art vs. Design debate, the essay reflects on some fundamental thematic nodes of the relationships between art and design to trace critically the epochal changes and the meaning that the design discipline is going through at this time.

[seriality of images/objects, Human Computer Interaction (HCI), Interaction Design, enhancement/fruition of cultural heritage]

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Bruno Munari, in his fundamental essay *Artist and designer*, emphasized the inescapable internal coherence of the design project with respect to the expressive freedom of the work of art, reporting the anecdote – reported by Loos – of a saddler who, spurred on by a “professor artist” to create modern saddles according to the principles of artistic craftsmanship then in vogue, created one identical to those he himself previously produced, the only possible synthesis of knowledge of the material, purpose of use and production process: all aspects that, only if ignored, would have allowed him to exercise «a similar fantasy» (Munari, 1997⁸, p. 130) to that of the professor and his numerous pupils.

In the human world-environment, objects are conceived mainly as daily use objects: «hammer, pincers, needle, refer [...] to what they are made of, that is steel, iron, bronze, stones, [...]. [Their] objectivity [...] can be perceived [...] only [...] within a [...] possible daily use (Bodei, 2011, pp. 226-227).

To the same extent of a work of art, even if with less power and implications, [...] [objects, become things], trigger in those who use or contemplate them, a succession of references [...]. In the form of technological objects, consumer goods, personal effects, furnishings and elements of the house, the street and the city, or in the most ambiguous form of artistic objects, they widely proliferate in every part of our lives. Being them produced, exchanged or consumed, objects become an integral part of the identity of individuals and communities, (Bodei, 2011, pp. 231, 242-244) to the point of wondering if there has ever been a life “without” objects or even if only one could be imagined.

Objects, in their multiple appearance of tools (use value), of goods (exchange and economic value), of things (emotional and both cultural and traditional values), works of art (all the aforementioned values including an “emotional” personal and subjective, universal and “cathartic” use value) are the first, more frequent ground for confrontation - and collision - between art and design.

Objects that are banalised because they are ubiquitous and persistent, symbolizing a mass production that characterizes our past and our present; from Roman sarcophagi (Bodei) to commodity-objects, from objects as *status symbols* to the ephemeral plastic embodied in disposable products, to the proliferation of the superfluous, to their aestheticization as works of art that has definitively consecrated them as “nuove iconi” of consumer civilization,^[1] initiating a particularly lively and fruitful debate between art and industry.

Testimony of the mutual relations between consumer goods, art and society, Pop Art has represented an effective means of advertising and dissemination of that system of objects-products.

The shift on the art plane of the theme of mass production and the repetitiveness of the mechanical work underlying it, besides having contributed to keeping alive the debate around the consumer society, has invested the question of replicas, until then exclusive prerogative of industrial products (the work of art is by definition a *unicum*, a substantial difference that distinguishes it from design products). *Vice versa*, the replicability of artistic processes, rendered in particular by Andy Warhol,

has shown how even the artwork can be subjected to replicas and re-productions while maintaining its intrinsic originality due, rather, to the uniqueness of the look and to the particularity of the ideational-creative processes involved, the result of the contamination between multiple genres – painting, photography, *ready made* – which ended up characterizing each work with respect to the others (whether it be the serigraphs by Marilyn Monroe and Mao Tse-Tung or the jars of Campbell soup), combining the theme of the seriality of images in works of art with that of the seriality of objects in design in the age of their technical reproducibility. Both of them – seriality of images and seriality of objects – find today their natural correspondence in the «diffusion of images from virtual reality» and in the proliferation of cult objects “replicants indistinguishable from an original that does not exist”, (Bodei, p. 331) very different from the “objects with an aesthetic function” of which Munari spoke (p. 7).

Works of art and design objects

Once the theme of the uniqueness of art has fallen or in some respects been overcome, at least for the moment, the other decisive issue of the “intention” or “purpose” of design (very different from the value) remains firmly in place, compared to the claim to art a-functionality.

While the “products” of art are known with the term of *work of art*, not the same happens for design where it is customary to speak of design “objects”, of design “products”, or at most of “artefacts”. Probably going back to the etymology of words can explain a seemingly marginal question. While the Italian form – *opera d’arte* – of the term *work of art*, in its etymological root (from the Latin *opus*) contains (in the sense of holding together) ideational and executive work, the word object (from the Latin *objectum*) has been lucidly explained by Remo Bodei also in relation to its desired migration in “thing”:

Object is [...] a term [...] which [...] seems to trace [...] the Greek *problem* [...] understood [...] as an obstacle [...] which, by interposing itself and obstructing the road, blocks the path and causes an arrest. In Latin, more precisely, *obicere* means to throw against, to put forward. The idea of *objectum* [...] therefore implies a challenge, a contrast with what prohibits the subject from his immediate affirmation, with what, in fact, “objects” to his claims of domination. It presupposes a confrontation that ends with a definitive oppression of the object, which, after this agon, is made available to the *possession* and manipulation by the subject.

[Otherwise] The thing is not the object, the indeterminate obstacle that I have before me and that I have to break down or circumvent, but a knot of relationships in which I feel and I know myself involved and of which I do not want to have the exclusive control. No [...] [of] the expressions – *pragma*, *res*, *causa* or *Sache* – [explanatory of “thing”] refers to objects in a specific and exclusive manner, while each refers to logic, research, praxis or human relationships. (Bodei, pp. 97-98)

Thus, while the intellectual and material work is emphasized in the work of art, “l’opra d’ingegno e d’esercizio” (Michelangelo Buonarroti), the object emphasizes its being a ground of challenge and manipulation by the subject, without any reference to the ideational process.

A particularly interesting phenomenon in terms of the relationship between art and design is that of *DesignArt*,^[2] a term coined in 2001 to indicate a creative hybridization between art and design that makes “you look at an armchair as you look at a sculpture” (Munari, p. 8) and to conceive a work of art as a furnishing object: an “artistic design”, precisely, that Bruno Munari would not have hesitated to define “antidesign” (Munari, p. 8).

If on one hand, art, which takes seriality, and its pervasive approach to human life, from design and from the poetics of the object-product, becoming the product itself – the “everyday objects made with a lot of imagination and no technique” as Bruno Munari called them – from another, the design object, which becomes a work of art certainly not as a *unicum*, but inasmuch as it is destined for an *élite*, expensive, valuable, numbered, just like the pieces of a collection from a museum (*One off* is the title of a famous work by Ron Arad, leading exponent of *Designart*), to the point of inducing us to consider the museum exhibition as the true dividing line between everyday objects and works of art. (Danto, 2010)

In a famous interview that appeared in the pages of *Domus* of the nineties of the last century, Gaetano Pesce, who joined the *cult* artists of *DesignArt*, explained the progressive approach of art and design and the metamorphoses to which the work of art it was first submitted. The equation provided by Pesce was roughly the following: if art is a document of reality and reality is made of seriality and mass production, the work of art can no longer be “simply” the picture exposed on the wall but must «deal with production», (Branzi, 1996, p. 474) must translate into its languages the «content of our world», to the point that, if we feel «the need for a message of content», the object will provide us with one and if you need «poetic performance” the object will be ready to bestow them. «This means expanding the communication possibilities of the object up to the expression of existential contents. It also means talking about the *utility of art*». (Branzi, 1996, p. 474)

Thus the second distinctive bulwark between art and design also falls: art can also be useful, in the sense of having its own purpose of use.

In the same way, for the object or the design product, one can speak of “varied series production” by introducing, in the seriality of industrial production, the principle of difference and even that of flaw, as a counterpart to the «spontaneity of a unique piece», (Branzi, 1996, pp. 474-475) typical of art.

From objects to the culture of the immaterial

Once the function of the object has been transferred from the original technical dimension, linked to the satisfaction of a practical need, to the sign dimension – the “system of objects” mentioned by Baudrillard – the need to deal with its symbolic

dimension has emerged, namely to say of the relationship between subject and object that has led to the progressive «disappearance of the object» (Marras & Mecacci, I, pp. 144-145) and the advance of the so-called immaterial culture.

It is the universe of the non-thing (*Unding*) in which we witness the definitive mutation of the object in interface [...] [which determined in design] the shifting of the aim of design from the object to the experience [of the object] [...] with the disappearance of the material envelope [...] increasingly miniaturized to the point of becoming a biotechnological extension of the body [...] assuming, exactly like human organs, an absolutely transparent form. (Marras & Mecacci, I, p. 144-145)

The increasingly close relationship that has arisen, since the 1980s, between computer technology and perception sciences in design has led to the opening up of the discipline to cognitive sciences as a consequence of mass computerization, the development of techno-science and of the *New Economy*, with the gradual appearance of *Mixtangibles* objects, material and digital at the same time, (Thomsen, 2005) capable of redefining the same everyday experience. (Marras & Mecacci, I, p. 147) But, is there a relationship of contiguity or complementarity between the perceptive processes of art and those of design capable of uniting experiences and sensations through cognitive neuroscience?^[3] In other words, can the principles of neuro-aesthetics – the discipline that studies art in the light of neuroscience – also apply to design?

The attention paid to understanding the “biological” factors linked to the processes of artistic perception dates back to the late nineties. Thanks to new technologies borrowed from diagnostic tools hitherto used in other scientific fields, it was possible to visualize the areas of the brain involved in cognitive activities linked to the perception of a work of art or an artistic object, monitoring its physical and emotional effects.

Similarly to the diagnostic technique of *Quantitative Magnetic Colour Imaging* (QMCI) of the brain or other organs, it would be nice [as Bodei hoped in 2011] to be able to ideally have virtual maps for each individual capable of detecting aspects of reality that, from time to time, are the most interesting for him/her. The areas of greater cognitive and emotional involvement could be drawn in red, while those with less or no importance could be rendered in different shades and streaks of grey. The result would be some sort of extended identity cards and one could watch the process that transforms objects into sounding boards of our ideas, activities, passions and fantasies. (Bodei, pp. 110-111)

The theme, which emerged on several levels and became the subject of scientific studies by Nobel laureates and experts in the field, (Kendel, 2017; Avital, 2017) concerns, first of all, the possibility of interfacing art and design as language systems, able to have a positive impact on people's lives through solutions that are not limited

to displaying objects – *information visualization design* and *augmented reality* – but that allow the interaction to be planned by directly intervening and manipulating the object through the use of *augmented cognition*, stimulating cognitive and emotional aspects. «*Interaction* and *manipulation* do not indicate the same thing and/or experience, because they modify the experience of use and, therefore, the logic of design» (Marras & Mecacci, II, pp. 155-156). Just the *augmented cognition* «through the direct and tangible manipulation of the displayed graphic elements [...] makes the difference increasingly blurred» (Marras & Mecacci, II, pp. 155-156) between *Interaction design* and *graphic design*, on the one hand, and *graphic user interface design*, on the other. In this way, the object of design, or of everyday use, can become more and more intelligent and *smart* «because digital and interactive, pleasant and experiential, [...] funny [...] and accessible because beautiful», (Marras & Mecacci, II, pp. 155-156) expression, the last, translatable also in the criterion of *affordance*, that is a beauty which is given, even before its practicality (*usability*), by its pleasantness of use, by its *pleasurability*, become real “aesthetic categories” necessary to define the achievement of a *Good Design*.

One of the methodological acquisitions of interactive design of the nineties is the discovery that the dogma of the priority of the *ease to use* can be broken. In fact, *simple/easy* does not necessarily mean [...] better, [...] indeed an *easy*, but *boring* product, [could] [...] preclude the achievement of *usefulness* and *goodness*, that is the optimal interactive experience: the simplicity of form is not necessarily the simplicity of experience. (Marras & Mecacci, II, p. 160)

In other words, Marras and Mecacci observe, the category of *usability* (and its *effectiveness*, *efficiency* and *satisfaction* components) increasingly tends to become interaction experience and *interactive design* (through the processes of the HTC), where *interaction design* and *industrial design* end up coinciding. The very theme of *Human Computer Interaction* has so conditioned industrial design that it caused its rapid disciplinary evolution as *Interaction Design*, tracing a path that goes from aesthetic perception to digital fruition.

To have a clear awareness of the metamorphoses of design and its exchange or proximity with the territories of art, it is enough to observe the recent applications of design to the sector of museum fruition.

It is not just a matter of analysing the works of art traditionally understood – figurative art, abstract art etc. – but to consider that today «visiting a museum is an artistic experience, whatever the nature of what is therein preserved», (Ovadia, p. 25) as the *Invisible Archaeology* exhibition, set up in these days at the Egyptian Museum of Turin and result of interdisciplinary research activities, effectively demonstrates. «From everyday tools [...] to mummies, the exhibition allows [...] to know the modifications that have transformed a common object [...] into an artistic object, which the visitor perceives as such, able to evoke as well as generate new curiosity and knowl-

edge»(Ovadia, p. 25). The objects on display, scanned and prototyped, are offered to scholars and visitors, favouring the advancement of scientific knowledge on material culture at the time of the pyramids, while facilitating the accessibility and creation of a *database* of the findings studied and of their state of preservation.

Precisely in reference to the recognition of value attributed by visitors to objects as memory of things, the experts in neuroscience applied to the field of art and aesthetics have tried to investigate what are the «constitutive aspects of what we subjectively call artistic or aesthetic experience» (Ovadia, p. 25) to understand the role played by the rational component – the history of the object and its author – and the emotional component – the sensations aroused by a beautiful, strange or precious object – in the final perception, if, that is, artistic preferences depend on a subjective experience or are governed by universal laws and principles. (Ovadia, pp. 25-26)

Through the study of perception, it was intended to go back to the biological and cognitive mechanisms that activate the “sense of beauty” and the positive effects it has on a psychological and emotional level. Studying the effects of perception, it was understood that the *tout-court* aesthetic experience – both of works of art and objects with an aesthetic function – represents one of the «highest forms of cognitive integration, a sort of model for the functioning of consciousness», (Ovadia, p. 27) fundamental instrument of social and cognitive inclusion.

Thus, «If the “old” *Interaction Design* [...] was centred [only] on the cognitive aspects, and that of the nineties had rediscovered the value of emotions for a more effective and satisfying *Usability*, the developments of the neurosciences have [...] show[n] designers the inextricable correlation between cognition and emotion». (Marras & Mecacci, II, pp. 165-166)

The neuroscience approach applied to design allows us to investigate the cerebral and emotional mechanisms involved both in the process of creating an artefact on the part of designers, and in the user/consumer’s use of the object; in this sense it has become increasingly important to be able to calibrate and design the emotional dimension of objects (and interfaces), linking the *marketing* of the artefacts produced to the possibility of generating well-being in the end users, including visitors to exhibitions and museum collections. The entry of new audiences into the culture and beauty market is one of the fundamental aspects from which to guide the creation of increasingly inclusive objects and contents and *mixtangibles*.

What is perceived as «a growing demand – Ezio Manzini observed in advance – is a design that invests [...] different territories “beyond the object” [...] like the design of *performances*, the design of interfaces and virtual spaces, the design of materials, the design of environmental qualities», (Manzini, p. 23) the design of emotions, (Norman, 2004), the design for the fruition and enhancement of cultural heritage, greatly expanding the field and the tools used but maintaining unchanged those cognitive, fruitive and emotional functions that unite them to the territories of art with which they share the same ability to prefigure a qualitative and desirable vision of the world

^[1] Cf. Dorflès, G. (1964). Le «Nuove Iconi» e la «civiltà del consumo». *Op. cit.*, (1), 7-12.

^[2] Cf. Russo, D. (2014). Oggetto d’arte quotidiana. *Aisthesis*, VII (1), 109-117. Retrieved from <http://www.fupress.net/>; Di Stefano, E. (2016). DesignArt. Ibridazioni creative tra arte e oggetti d’uso. *Rivista di estetica*, (61), 65-76. Retrieved from <https://journals.openedition.org/estetica/>.

^[3] Cf. Malafouris, L. (2013). *How the Things Shape the Mind: A Theory of Material Engagement*. Cambridge: MIT Press; Malafouris, L., Renfrew, C. (Eds.) (2010). *The Cognitive Life of the Things*. Cambridge: McDonald Institute Monographs; Avital, T. (1992). The Complementarity of Art and Design. In G.C., Cupchik, and J., Laszlo (Eds.). (2017). *Emerging Visions: Contemporary Approaches to the Aesthetic Process* (pp. 64-83). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Brandt, A., Eagleman, D. (2019). *La specie creativa*. Bologna: Codice edition.

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Redesigning maps, amid art and design

The disciplines of art and design are going through a period of substantial transformation. In 2014, a doctoral research programme was launched with the aim of redesigning the map of their interrelations. The text re-reads the study's contents and proposes a reflection on the initial results achieved.

If the increasing complexity of contextual conditions pushes design towards new fields of research and action, then reflection and production in the field of art appear equally varied. The research traces many trajectories for renewed dialogue between the two disciplines: that of the contamination carried out by the media on art, which makes it substantially indistinguishable from the products; that of the mirroring of the "production" processes, between art as a project and product as art; that which explores social behaviour in the direction of "relational aesthetics"; that which investigates the expressive potential of digital technologies; that which confronts the inter- and trans-cultural dimension in the processes of globalization.

Once the areas and themes of discussion have been outlined, the study concentrates on the question of the manners and operational tools around which to create new synergies. Through a series of specific in-depth analyses, it focuses on, in particular, the last three trajectories highlighted by the map, wherever they intercept the discipline of design in collaborative practices and in the promotion of "social innovation", in the conception and creation of immersive and interactive spaces and in the enhancement of local cultures and artisan traditions.

The overall picture outlines a vast and reticular system, now articulated on several levels, each of which describes previously unknown correspondences: not territories, rather journeys that nevertheless seem to converge towards an idea of innovation as a social and civil commitment.

[art, design, doctoral research, design theory, critical thinking]

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This text describes the contents of doctoral research that began in 2014 with the aim of verifying the contribution of visual and performing arts to the culture and practice of contemporary design. The initiative was promoted by the authors as part of the Design Doctorate research programmes at the Politecnico di Milano. A re-reading of the work carried out so far enables us to map the initial results achieved and outline the next action to be taken.

The link between design and the arts is consolidated in the European cultural debate between the 19th and 20th centuries and is ratified by many theoretical contributions and teaching experiences. Within this framework, the creative practices are aimed at the production of physical artefacts. The artist and the designer work in distinct fields, yet share ideation processes, means of representation and construction techniques. In the Italian tradition, this commonality is expressed by masters such as Joe Colombo, Enzo Mari, Bruno Munari: "artists *and* designers" who operate in both fields, in the knowledge that what is "useful" is a disjunctive criterion between them (Munari, 1971). In recent decades, this approach meets a faulty point determined by the increasing complexity of products, construction processes and promotion and distribution strategies. New knowledge and skills are introduced in design practice to respond to the processes of "de-materialisation" that characterize the universe of goods. Consequently, there's a proliferation of design action areas which, specifically in doctoral research, is expressed in the «multiverse design» concept (Bertola & Manzini, 2004); while a more systematic attempt to draw the disciplinary boundaries of design, the *Theory of the four orders* by Richard Buchanan, engages the author in many revisions and additions (Buchanan, 1992, 2004, 2015). Not even the limit of the «artificial» (Simon, 1969) seems to resist when design is increasingly confronted with the "natural" – or at least with the "biological".

On the other hand, even the art product moves away from the traditional interpretation: in the object/conceptual pair the second term is strengthened, while the craftsmanship and the constructive/execution competence lose importance with respect to the intellectual content and the practice of artistic research moves progressively closer to design research. Not only is art «made with everything» (Vettese, 2010), breaking down the limits of art-specific materials and techniques, yet it is also "everywhere": it is art-environment, art-action, art-service. We can thus speak of «art as design» (Brusatin, 2007), in a sort of overturning of destinies, which suggests – or perhaps imposes – a verification.

The research *Rethinking the role of the arts in contemporary design culture* begins in this scenario, as a thematic proposal within the Doctoral programme of design at the Politecnico di Milano. The study originates from the awareness that the disciplinary field, on both sides, goes through a substantial transformation that redesigns mutual relations. On the other hand, it recognizes the vocation of both art and design, to verify and overcome their disciplinary boundaries, in search of relationships and comparisons with other areas. This vocation demonstrates how innovation actually resides in the contiguous territories: where skills mix, margins fade and paths intertwine,

research finds fertile ground for development. Furthermore, the theme is placed in a more general framework regarding the relationship between design and the humanities that characterizes the European, and especially Italian, design culture (Bürdek, 2005; Branzi, 1999; Manzini, 2016). Finally, the research can contribute to the discussion concerning design education while identifying contents suitable for innovative teaching experiences, both in single courses and within new training *curricula*.

In this context, the study aims to explore three main issues:

- What are the areas in which art and design can still collaborate in generating visions, environments, objects and services?
- What are the themes that this renewed collaboration can address, in light of the changed social and market conditions?
- What are the methods and tools for this interaction in design research and practice?

Providing answers to these questions sets an ambitious goal. First of all, it is necessary to draw a map of the reciprocal new relations between art and design, starting with identifying a series of specific in-depth studies, each of which can motivate an entire doctoral research. To this effect, the research proposes a long-term programme, divided into phases, with the contribution of several researchers.

A reconnaissance of the contemporary art production and the literature that examines and comments on its contents allows us to identify many trajectories along which the «multiverse» dialogue with the discipline of design can find new argumentations.

A first trajectory embraces the Germano Celant (2008) interpretation, according to which the statutes of the arts are now subject to a systematic contamination by the media, which makes them substantially indistinguishable from products. In this new condition «the radical nature of artistic thought and its historical reason to exist as a critical response, [...] risk a complete and definitive annulment and enter the spiral of markets». Art thus becomes “functional” «for reasons of symbolic and commercial use, so as to make it subordinated to the demands of consumers» (Celant, 2008, p. 5). In this sense, however, rather than a comparison between art and design, we should be speaking of a dissolution of the first into the second, whereby we mean the latter in the pejorative connotation of a mere instrument at the service of the consumption system.

A second trajectory regards the evolution of the “production” process of the artistic artefact. Starting from the Conceptual Art stream, in fact, many artists have interpreted the practice of art as “direction” of the various stages of production, entrusting the realization to others and thus giving the work a clear “design matrix”. This strategy is evident in masters such as Donald Judd, Richard Serra or Vito Acconci and in contemporary artists such as Simon Heijdens and Rachel Whiteread. In contrast, there is a sort of mirroring in the field of design, when the design of industrial products reveals an explicit artistic contamination. In this case, the strategies are quite diversified due to the interpretation of art that each author makes. Worth considering, for example, is the production of designers such as Denis Santachiara, Ingo Maurer, Ron Arad, the Campana Brothers, Marcel Wanders. A new design landscape is outlined that denies – in a certain way – Celant’s interpretation: the mutual contamination

between art and design generates works/artefacts/products that propose a significant critical re-reading (at times provocative and visionary) of the objects we use as well as the spaces we live in.

A third trajectory that the research has identified is that of the «relational aesthetics» suggested by Nicolas Bourriaud (2002). This category includes «*process-related* or behavioural [products]» – events, rather than works of art – which «have to do with interactive, user-friendly and [precisely] relational concepts» (Bourriaud, 2002, pp. 7-8). According to the French author, «the space of current relations is [...] the space most severely affected by general reification»: channelled into the “communication super-highways” – especially through electronic media – «the social bond has turned into a standardised artefact» (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 9). In this context, the «relational» work of art takes on the form of an *interstice*: «a space in human relations which fits more or less harmoniously and openly into the overall system, but suggests other trading possibilities than those in effect within this system» (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 16). It is not difficult to recognize, in this research, an artistic parallel of the experiences of *design activism* (Markussen, 2013) and more generally of the strategies experimented by the «design for social innovation» (Manzini, 2015). And it is based on this analogy that doctoral research can create new areas of exchange, both with regard to methods and to content. Further common ground is traced by the use of digital technologies. A space, in a certain sense, opposite to the previous one, where the linguistic and aesthetic potential of the technique are tested instead of being questioned. This field of research is frequented by hybrid personalities, between artistic commitment (video-art, happening, conceptual) and digital skills (IT, electronics, *data science*). Stemming from the interweaving of these experiences and knowledge, works are created that insist on active involvement by the public. They are «interactive», «collaborative», «dynamic» and «customizable» (Paul, 2015, pp. 67-68), often created in virtual/augmented reality or with the use of immersive spaces, digital installations and sound landscapes. In light of these researches, the culture of design can find a particularly fruitful terrain of exchange, experimenting in objects, environments and services, qualities that are similar to those characterizing digital art products.

Finally, referring to the intellectual guidance of Bourriaud (2009) again, research identifies a further trajectory. It concerns the artistic researches dealing, in various ways, with the processes of globalization, with the notions of inter- and trans-culturality and with the problems of de-colonization. In order to describe this trend in the field of art, Bourriaud uses the «radicant» metaphor – in botany, the radicant is a substance which favours the growth of roots. «To be radicant – writes Bourriaud – means setting one’s roots in motion, staging them in heterogeneous contexts and formats, [...] translating ideas, transcoding images, transplanting behaviours, exchanging rather than imposing» (Bourriaud, 2009, p. 22). In order for this attitude to emerge from «differences» and from «singularity», we must move on «to a state of cooperation among cultures that are equally critical of their own identity – that is to say, we must reach the stage of translation» (Bourriaud, 2009, pp. 27-28). In other words, in order to counter

the «rampant standardization of cultures and languages», it is necessary not only to “transpose” one’s «roots», but also “transplant” them into a globally shared conversation. These questions are reflected in design when it recognizes, in the diversification of traditions, in the sedimentation of cultures, in the accumulation of artisan knowledge, just as many sources for enhancing territories (Fagnoni, Gambaro & Vannicola, 2004; Parente & Sadini, 2019). Integrating the notion of «radicant», these approaches can enhance and find new connections around the value of local cultures in a critically explored global context.

The trajectories that have been outlined so far identify areas and themes around which to build new synergies between art and design, while a series of specific in-depth analyses deal with the question of operating methods and tools. From this perspective, the research work carried out so far focuses on three trajectories highlighted in the map of contemporary art production; that is to say, those relating to the «relational» dimension, to the technological dimension and to the inter- and trans-cultural dimension. These trajectories stand out as a result of their ability to intercept areas of theoretical thinking and applied research favoured by the Politecnico di Milano design community.

An initial line of research (Devecchi, 2018) analyses the concept of *empathy* – the cornerstone of the aesthetic experience at the beginning of the 20th century (Theodor Lipps, Wilhelm Worringer) – in light of the growing importance of collaborative approaches in design. The phenomenological interpretation (Stein, 1989; Boella, 2018) considers empathy as an interpersonal experience that enables us to recognize the value of the diversity of others. In this sense it becomes the foundation of every dialogic and cooperative relationship (Sennett, 2012). The analysis of art practices – immersive, collaborative and/or participatory – attributable to the «relational» dimension, allows for the recognition of recurrent elements, defined as *enablers*, which are identified, codified and validated through workshops and action research projects. In this way, the research develops a transdisciplinary approach, at the crossroads between philosophy, art and design. This approach allows to translate the empathic experience of otherness, which «relational aesthetics» experiments on an emotional/bodily level, into a tool useful to prepare and support collaborative design processes (Devecchi & Guerrini, 2017).

The second line of research delves into the field of digital technologies (Soriero, 2019). The work refers to, in particular, the immersive spaces; that is to say, those environments in which physical and virtual reality mix, enabling a sensory and cognitive experience of otherwise only imaginable places. The study identifies, analyses and classifies these spaces starting from the high number of cases produced by digital artists. The centrality of the natural element in the most recent experiments emerges from this preliminary investigation and suggests a new interpretative category considered as *Immersive Techno-natural Space*. With this interpretation in mind, the interactive environment becomes a place where to mature a new, intimate awareness of the relationship between artificial and natural, rather than an opportunity of encounter between the “imaginative” and the “extra-ordinary”. As a result, a possible area of intersection between art experience, design and scientific experimentation is delineated, which the

research carefully checks via projects and digital installations. This interdisciplinary contamination between design and art and between the culture of space and the science of perception suggests critical readings and interpretations in which the artistic component transitions from authorial expression and becomes a “matter” of the project (Trocchianesi & Pirola, 2017).

The inter- and trans-cultural dimension of contemporary art production is the subject of two further lines of research. An initial study (Decker, 2018) starts with the recognition of Batik as an intangible heritage of humanity (UNESCO) in order to identify new relationships between *design for cultural heritage* and *art production in the textile sector*. In some interpretations of this traditional technique and in the related processes of *cross-fertilization* between artisanal and industrial production, the research recognizes a “territory” of cross-cultural enhancement that unites Design and Art. Many works of artists and designers who use Batik to experiment with new languages and applications validate this interpretation. Within this framework, the research fine-tunes a thematic tool in the form of a digital meta-archive, with two objectives: on the one hand, finding data on colours, patterns, techniques and applications in order to increase the knowledge of the object of study; on the other hand, to stimulate designers and curators towards new concepts and cross-cultural contaminations in museum and/or territorial contexts. In this manner, the research proposes a «translation» mechanism of this ancient artisanal tradition which helps to preserve and nourish the «differences» between cultures.

The second research project (Franceschini, 2019) problematizes the concept of *critical pedagogy* as a possible direction of an innovative design education. The idea of «ecology of knowledges» (De Sousa Santos, 2014) and the work on learning and community practices (Freire, 1970; Illich, 1970), constitute the epistemological basis of reflection. The study then focuses on pedagogical experiments carried out at the intersection between art, design and architecture in various geographical and historical contexts, such as: Global Tools, Campus in Camps (Franceschini & Guerrini, 2017) and the practices by artists Adelita Husni-Bey, Ahmet Öğüt, and by the non-profit organization Beta-Local. These experiences experiment performative actions, self-ethnographic narratives and intersubjective exchanges aimed at the cultural emancipation of the participants. The study highlights how these experiences question the dominant disciplinary systems, through an educational programme centred on “epistemic disobedience”: a strategy that imagines the pedagogical institutions, and therefore social life and knowledge, in alternative forms as opposed to the processes of global homologation.

The results achieved so far by the research describe a vast and reticular system of comparison between art and design: not territories, rather journeys. It is thus not a question of reconstructing a unitary interpretative model, but of accepting and probing a multiplicity of directions. A fruitful dialogue is renewed, now articulated on several levels, on each of which new correspondences can be found. What’s more, these first promising results encourage the progress of exploration, particularly where they trace alternative paths to certain design subjected to the logic of economy and marketing

or to the models of the digital world, towards an idea of innovation as a social and civil commitment. If the aesthetic perspective concerns the «life of forms», then these multiple trajectories preserve unsurpassed traits: they orient the analysis, the critical thinking and above all the concrete experimentation of ideas regarding the condition of living for all of us.

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Design and Art in the connective imagination

Art and Design have been accomplices throughout the twentieth century in building one desire with pre-existing visions of the future of what the other has then tried to achieve and put into circulation, in the disposal of the masses. It will be Dadaism with the widespread use of the idea of “interpretation”, as a meaning of the work of art, to completely change the weight of the importance of “contamination”. If everything is contaminated and if total contamination is a systemic fact, it is no longer important to force the search for the origins, but to relocate the phenomena according to the development of their “combinations”. The emergence on the world stage of the need to question about the *Webness* raises new awareness. The widespread possibility of access to new technologies leads “collective intelligence” to become “connective”, the difference is that now not only humans are connecting with each other or with machines, but also machines are interconnected. The speed and enormous capacity of data processing systematically leads to the exploration of new combinations. Algorithms are able to process unthinkable amounts of data and therefore act autonomously to configure completely new and uncontrollable images and forms. In artistic practices and design, there is an ever-increasing need for “meta-projects”, i.e. a reflexive and above all critical design of the systems with which it is designed. If it’s true that the model is more calculated rather than designed, overall all the aspects of the design methodology must be questioned. A paradigmatic shift of attention from the “final product” to the “process to obtain it”. The design process acquires sensitive variations with the “generative programming”, where a series of events produce a result that is never completely foreseen, but that needs to preserve in the final result the principle that generated them. New awareness of the technological potential.

[interpretation, contamination, combination,
connectivity, metaproject]

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Design, understood as the movement of thought through objects, has certainly for some time exchanged with art the principles capable of creating a bond between ideas and objects, between ways of living and ways of seeing the world, between forms of communication and the images they manage to produce. That we now live under the aegis of “total contamination” is all too obvious. For design, this is more physiological than for other disciplines. It now operates in a stable way with actions of encroachment and with heterogeneity absorbs and relaunches heterogeneous contributions especially in undertaking new languages. Art, on the other hand, which has as its vocation the capacity to contaminate, itself suffers the instrumentalizing invasions of the market. Creative languages, in whatever form they may be, are proclaimed to evolve into hybrid, symbiotic forms that merge and confuse categories and expressive phenomena. There are countless exchanges between languages and they are all too well known stories. The twentieth century was studded with this, so much so as to elevate its excellent bastardisms to *status*. Duchamp *docet*. When in 1913 Duchamp, six years before Gropius, invented industrial aesthetics, with *Roue de Bicyclette* he led Dadaism to mass produce a new imaginary, a new need never before expressed: “contagious indignation”. No one can remain indifferent to the displacement of making an object of daily use a work of art, but from that moment everything becomes art just by imposing the use of “interpretation”. Therefore, each field must expect to be contaminated by the new vision and each field can contaminate without interruption. Since the 1990s, on the long wave of all the isms of the 20th century, total contamination has taken on its own systematic nature. Once its expansion has been eliminated, it is no longer the origin of the contamination that is relevant, but the possibilities of declining its “combinations”. The contemporary is identified with the reverberation of the combinations that grow within the proliferation of communication achievable with new technologies. In the production of creative thought, for the most of the 20th century, the warning identified as social conscience by Walter Benjamin had been adopted, even if tacitly. In fact, Benjamin argued that: “the author, whatever it is, must produce technical innovation and not only his aesthetic representation”. But despite the dizzying growth of techno-culture, as diagnosed by Benjamin, conquering contemporaneity and giving technological development its inevitable prevarication, aestheticization as a critical component, an elitist tool of the avant-garde, became a hypertrophic manifestation of the representation of social living. And so the essential exchanges at every level, especially in the practices of creative thought, references, quotations on quotations up to real looting of identity, proliferate. Today they require a mature research that no longer considers contamination as an expressive phenomenon, but rather considers its consequences in terms of combinability. This is where to start, in order to introduce oneself into an unprecedented exploration of the current condition of the relationship between design and art. Considering the contaminations, after all, means searching for their origin, the origin of which in many cases is difficult to identify the initial spark also because, instead of being elusive, the primordial beginning is itself already a melting pot of influences. The combinatorial possibilities

do not look to the past, but hypothesize the future. Assume in a test tube what it can give us the next tomorrow. It is the combinations that vary and widen the field of potentiality. We can read it today with the development of algorithmic elaborations, but it has already been eloquent evidence for a while. In the synergistic path between design and art, something has already happened for some time now, even by markedly orienting its development vector. In this, the works of Pop Art still smell of intuition. Just as contaminations proliferated dispersing values and meanings, American Pop artists, Warhol, Rauschenberg, Linchstein, Oldenburg and others, germinated an unusual concentration precisely on the combinatorial possibilities of languages (Mecacci, 2008). Combination as the ability to express knowledge, acknowledgement of reality, rather than following, by linguistic contagion, the spirit of the time. This is the first time that the variety of combinations has broadly focused the interest of communication for the masses to the point of becoming its precept. Whether it is communication to produce incentives to the imagination to then unleash choral enthusiasm in prefiguring a collective vision, it becomes a widespread and generally perceived factor. The images refer to the identification of meanings and it is the meanings that produce sense and value within the system of goods, endowing the users with a common heritage (Greimas, 2000; Celaschi, 2016). Popular, widespread goods with a shared meaning. The process was so triggered that it makes the structural distinction between art and design lose consistency. Through the production of disorienting meanings, the common sense of vision feeds the imagination that allows to manipulate ideas that refer to other ideas until they condense into formal concepts, into objects of use (Rastany, 1989). Again Benjamin, in his ever-present fundamental, *L'Opera d'arte nell'epoca della sua riproducibilità tecnica* (1936), speaks of the distance between the idea and its realization, well identifying how much in this distance the desire for novelty counts if compared to the satisfaction of the same thanks to new technological processes. Benjamin writes: «One of the main tasks of art has always been to generate a need for which full satisfaction has not yet come». And then it was again Umberto Eco in 1962 who felt the need to reaffirm the concept. In the preface to the catalogue of the exhibition *Programmed Art, Kinetic Art* (1962) he writes: "I don't really know how he did it, but it was always the art, first of all, that changed our way of thinking, of seeing, of feeling, even before, sometimes a hundred years before, that we could understand what we needed". The Warhol Factory can narrow it down. Warhol's reproducibility suddenly exceeds Benjamin's (1936) "hour of destiny". The transformation of consumer goods into artistic consumption, from an industrial product to an artistic one, not only testifies to reciprocity, but also shortens, in a short circuit, the desire for imagination and contingent satisfaction. This creative work does more. It opens to the thought of others, different and different from the author and confirms the inevitability of a new destiny. Reproducible objects reproduced in reproducible icons. Hyperbolic mutation of points of view. The "multifocality" that Picasso had consecrated in Cubism becomes common practice in the daily way of perceiving reality. Warhol does not focus on or reproduce what already exists, but "shows" the cynicism

of the combinations. It's a continuous experimentation in an instinctive transfer of mixtures, plundering any form of art. Warholian incursions into publishing also testify to this. Experimentation and restlessness are mixed in a continuity of rebounds. Impossible combinations, disguises and the disorientation of denial of use for other purposes build the strategy of Melting Pop.

«*Andy Warhol's Index (Book)* of 1967 is more an elaborate pastiche multimedia than a real book. Labeled as "book collage", "not book" is [...] a mixture» (Mecacci, 2008, p. 133).

The continuous meaning rebounds multiply modifying the obviousness of the real. Producing communication appears simple in providing an immediate perception of the message and yet hides behind the icon deep references that are interested in being manipulated in the combination rather than sticking to the contamination drift. The simplest objects of a normal day become universal fetishes. Pop culture from the United States, by immediate contagion, brings to Italy the willingness to question the existing aesthetic apparatus. A philosophy and an attitude that has moved the culture of design toward a problematic dimensions not only as a linguistic question, but as "radical" criticism of the foundations of Modernity. It is no coincidence that Germano Celant defined "Radicals" the avant-garde groups of young Italian designers such as Archizoom, Superstudio, UFO, 9999 and Zziggurat. These youth movements from Italy, in the wake of the Pop model of criticism of consumption and the paradoxes of the nascent civilization of well-being, triggered the urgency of renewing the vision and production in all industrial societies. Irony and anarchy led to the claim of differentiated autonomy in the scale of the project. Between urban design, architecture and design, in the face of the incurable conflict underway, the need arose to claim operational autonomy for everyone (Branzi, 2007). The Radicals not only claim disciplinary differentiation, but also build a critical work capable of going far beyond it. The crisis of the certainties of rationalist Modernity and the evaporation of the myth of the unity of the project are faced with the defeat of standardization and with new visionary morphologies; they urge new behaviours that could influence the social imagination in satisfying needs. The modularity of furniture systems is repositioned in the flexibility of use of the same, available in various combinations to make unexplored exploratory experiences by the user. The Superonda sofa by Archizoom affirms, almost as a manifesto, the complete autonomy of the furnishing product from architecture and ratifies its formal revolution thanks to its combinatorial modularity in various positions. From the Dadaist transgression, to the anarchic irony of the Radicals, design proposes itself with respect to art as the actuator of a thought and artistic methodologies capable of simplifying creative languages to make them available to anyone. Observe Mario Perniola:

Today's art suffers a double simplification, which is a consequence of the general process of demythization and secularization that involves all symbolic activities: on the one hand it is crushed on the works, leaving aside all that is a condition of the

existence of an artwork; on the other hand it is crushed on reality, regardless of the thickness and complexity of reality. (2000, p. 3)

In Italy at the beginning of the 70s Dino Gavina transforms the act of repositioning art into social into a flag, through a new design concept.

In 1971 he produced *Ultramobile*. In the presentation of the collection Gavina writes:

Each piece is a work of art, a multiple of unlimited. Ultramobile is therefore a true artistic operation designed with the aim of making a poetic presence more easily, even for the children, for the future, for the guests, for the environment, even in normal homes. (1971, p. 80)

If, until the 1960s, those who mixed or pillaged languages represented avant-garde and transgression, from that moment on it grew, an area that thinks in terms of “aesthetic processes” as a condition of values in the socio-cultural implications (Arnheim, 1969). In this way, the emancipatory vocation of the exchangeable relationship between design and art is irreversibly affirmed, with the complicity of a completely irreversible predominance: the global affirmation of techno-science. One to satisfy what the other urges to expect. For both is question of answering to the growing demand for aesthetic needs by making massive use of the availability facilitated by widespread access to new technologies. The statements of Lucio Fontana’s *Manifestos* (Sanna, 2015) call for and envisage the incorporation of artistic theorization into the culture of design thought, thanks to the productive availability of new technologies. These new assumptions lead to the reconfiguration not only of material artifices, but of the gaze, to the way of observing and presenting the world according to new cultural and political responsibilities. Just as the Bauhaus claim introduces the right to beauty in the design of objects of use, the emancipation of the culture of the project affirms the conceptualization of the object as a vehicle of education to taste, to the substantiality of beauty through the practical assumption recognizable in new technological capabilities. It means to operate to the activations of components that solicit to the participation collectivity of the idea, of the sense production. So we come to the society of links. Nodes on which converge numerous references available in the infinite ramification of the web. The common sense of things that embodies the value of use, through the value of exchange fleetingly. From now on, the value of “interpretation” as a value of exchange between communities will be sanctioned with respect to the individual participation that each user can make of the work of art as a commodity artifact. Rather than the abstract as an interpretative cipher of reality and as the crystallization of a language that can be interpreted out of all proportion to be applied in every condition of creative work, already widely practiced by De Stijl with Mondrian and Rietveld (De Fusco, 1985), “interaction” presents itself today as a new linguistic materiality to be manipulated. Interactivity is the new fascination based on the pervasiveness of techno-aesthetics. The definition of interactivity lies in the

vocabulary for the exchange of actions, but also for the exchange of reactive factors, as happens for example in chemical processes. The interactive faculties that today are introduced in the works of genius or art are in fact used both in the exchange with or through the device that allows it, and as an emotional “energetic” flow of solicitation to the reaction. If the aim of the techno-arts is to map the physical-emotional reactions to make them tangible, design explores their potential applications to give new relational relationships between the human and the artifacts (Taiuti, 2001). Over the last few years, the interweaving of computer-based experiments in both art and utilitarian design has created artifacts with a vastly expanded load of communicative performance. The objects we use today are no longer a private fact, but a participatory one. We need to relate to them more and more consciously and have more knowledge of them to interact with. More than objects, today we can speak of peripheral terminals whose contents are produced and preserved elsewhere. They belong to a network of relationships that allow the connection to resources that constantly change their appearance and meaning. They are constantly changing. With IoT technology, they are in continuous dialogue with each other and help or even “impose” on the choices to be made because they know how to evaluate more quickly than humans the conveniences and the best opportunities to optimize the action to be taken. The criterion of the choices and the facilitation to make them highlights the attention to understand the regime of influences and the degrees of freedom available. The web is certainly one of the parties involved in this point of discussion: (Formenti, 2000) whether it is the net that constitutes the liberalization of every expressivity or whether it is the hyperconnection that deforms the awareness of the contents. In the meantime, the conviction is spreading that if everything is attainable, acquireable, it does not matter whether to know it fully, it is enough to know availability in a feasible way (Rifkin, 2000). Contradictions and paradoxes to require a neologism that Derrik De Kerkchove (1997) coined in Webness to indicate a feeling to move new awareness. De Kerkchove himself proposes the overcoming of the idea of “collective intelligence” in the conversion into “connective intelligence”. He writes: «Suppose in your mind there are fixed forms of thoughts put by other people with your consent. They would be objective / subjective internal thoughts [...] but instead of being internal, they are external». From here it is all too obvious that it is the collective imagination that undergoes new trajectories. What if it is no longer collective awareness but a computer that imagines? All the previous references jump. We are faced with the possibility that the Artificial Intelligence creates works of art and generative algorithms that model forms entirely produced by computer processing. The connective intelligence De Kerkchove talks about is now in the domain of machines. The speed of computation and the enormous capacity of data processing brings with it the frenzy of exploring combinations. This enormously changes the design programs. Will it be pure curiosity to try the combinations of the combinatorial calculation of the Artificial Intelligence by being prey to the Artificial Excitement or will it be the start of a new process of cultural innovation to be confronted from

now on? Speaking of possible combinations, says the artist, the greatest expert in the field, Mario Klingemann (2017): «the AI systems they are tireless, they produce an endless stream of images, the hard part is figuring out what to do with them». In the meantime, in 2018, he had his *Portrait of Edmond Belamy* auctioned at Christie's for \$432,500. Is this just a start? It's going to be like this! But in the meantime it is essential that Design and Art will need more mutual complicity to give new awareness of the connective imagination to the human community. It will still be the dialectic dynamics between the two that will free the new from the dissolution of the formal in the essential and from the entropy of the combinations.

The object of discussion between design and art

The relationship that design takes today in dealing with contemporary artistic demands has been put into practice with the design research work carried out by the Design Campus students of the University of Florence. A “meta-design” exercise with a methodology of critical verification obtainable with variants of possible combinations materialized through the creation of unique pieces modeled by hand after having programmed them in digital code^[1]. The topic addressed has placed in direct relation the design and digital modeling with the manual execution. The infinite reproducibility of the digital model with the unique work realized as unrepeatable in the execution. The spread of wearable devices on the market has pushed research to design provocatively the forms of hypothetical new technological accessories, which had a high physical presence in morphology, in addition of serving high technological performance. It has been experimented to materialize the immaterial. Prosthetic accessories wanted too cumbersome in antithesis to the dematerialization and miniaturization of technological equipment increasingly pervasive to the point of making it “the subject of discussion” in the debate on current technology and the future of bodies with biological or artificial intelligence. The morphological apparatus was inspired by the works of Yves Klein, of whom he completely absorbed the chromatic symbolism of blue: the search for an intimate correspondence with human measure. *The most perfect expression of blue* as he called it. This is how the FAAT were born: Future Access Anatomic Tools. Anatomical prostheses with high interactive technology that allow, wearing them, to exchange with real and virtual environments visions, perceptions, compositions, measurements, comparisons, information amplifying, communicating, enhancing, involving, exploring in an immersive dimension multisensory experiences.

^[1] The FAATs were performed at LMD - Laboratorio Modelli Design del (DIDA) University of Florence. Director - Scientific Manager prof. arch. Gianpiero Alfarano. Responsible technician Dr. Alessandro Spennato.

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Arianna's wire: Valeria Scuteri between art and design

This work intends to examine, through the discipline's tools tied to the study of design and art history, the works of one of the most important Fiber Art movement artists, Valeria Scuteri. The artist's work, who moved to Piedmonte many years ago, moves across the employment of innovative materials and manufacturing techniques, some of which are very antique. This way, the artist connects two worlds: the world of art and the world of artisanship, and two historical times: past and present. By using non-conventional materials, she sees fashion and design objects that constitute themselves outside their daily use. That is the case of potentially wearable gowns and accessories that openly summon mass-consume objects, but that are conceived outside their usual employment value. Valeria Scuteri's Fiber Art inserts itself in that dichotomy between design objects and art work that has crossed the entire history of consumption and art of the past century radicalizing their positions and showing its aporiae. The work of the artist finds place within a long Italian tradition tied to yarn-made products, a very ancient tradition that Scuteri revolutionizes by creating real design objects that keep trace of their manual production as well. The analysis will therefore lead to recognize in the artist's work the making of particular performing objects that symbolically live with the bodies and the actions they carry out.^[1]

[Valeria Scuteri, fiber art, wearable objects,
wearable art, performing objects]

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Position: between art and design

In 1964, Arthur C. Danto published the famous paper *The Artworld* (Danto, 1964) after going at an Andy Warhol's exhibit. The theoretical problem expressed in it could probably be the most pressing for the aesthetic, historical and artistic disciplines tied to design, at least starting from the famous Duchamp's ready-made. The essential problem for Danto's interpretation is the greater difficulty distinguishing the work of art from the object. It is well known that for the American philosopher the relationship between art and object, between artistic object and everyday object, ended with the aid of a theoretical equipment that shows how the artistic object transmitted the idea by making it its own, although with ease, the Hegelian principle that art is «the sensitive appearance of the idea» (Hegel, 1967). It is interesting to notice how, during the same period meanwhile in the United States, theatre and art trends give life to a new fundamental caesura: «in the western culture of the beginning of the sixties a turning point affirmed itself unequivocally that didn't only lead to a performing thrust in individual arts, but also in the foundation of a new artistic genre: the *performance art* [...]. The boundaries between different arts became fluctuating, they tended always more often to create events instead of art pieces and realizing themselves into shows» (Fisher-Lichte, 2014, p. 33). Those two problems, almost in conjunction with each other and that intertwine with the birth of *Fiber Art* (Pompas, 2017; Love, 2010), are central in Valeria Scuteri's work. In fact, on one hand, it is fully integrated within that dichotomy between a work of art and a daily object, showing its farrows, its paradoxes and its frictions and on the other, it builds its own fortune around real performances that become part of the objects until they are carved into the imaginary. The matter of the dichotomy between artistic and every day object is examined in Scuteri's works who tried a different path from the one taken by Danto (Danto, 2008, 2010); for the American philosopher the focus of the artwork lies in the transfiguration that is carried out in everyday objects, while Valeria Scuteri manufactures everyday objects already transfigured that cannot be profaned (Agamben, 2005), that is, that are already maimed at birth as they cannot be «returned to use» to quote a Giorgio Agamben happy expression. That is how, her gowns and accessories with wire are potentially wearable but they work well beyond the reduction of the object to its use. In Valeria Scuteri's work, it is not possible to differentiate the pure artist from the pure designer (Munari, 1971), it is made of intersections, crossings, of ancient techniques such as spinning and materials that are always new such as the use of iron wire or the use of *avant-garde* techniques and ancient materials to which new shape is given. Such shape is never fortuitous, it never leaves from a type of pure inspiration, but it always takes form within the shapes of mass culture (Abruzzese, 1973), in fact, the chosen shapes are always those of everyday usage, easily recognizable objects: gloves, clothes, shoes, accessories that have specific functions in daily life and that are changed in sign (Antonucci, 2016). Such change, however, does not make objects simply works of art, as the case of Warhol's brillo boxes analyzed

by Danto (Danto, 2010a), since it makes them ambiguous products, median objects, familiar and alienating at the same time.

The second important point is linked to the object's performative dimension because they always acquire meaning starting from real fashion shows conceived and set up as stage settings, in which the object is related to the space and with the actor/model that wears and performs it, and even when it lies helpless in the space, it is essential part of that space that becomes a stage standing by for life (Amendola & Del Gaudio, 2018). Another decisive performative component of Valeria Scuteri's objects is inherent in their shape, a shape that is never settled, always opened to alterations, and that carries within itself the signs of its manufacturing production. After all Scuteri's objects, being ambiguous objects that can only be considered potentially within the logic of their utilization functions, fully embody the purpose that the Czech philosopher Vilem Flusser had traced in the concept of design: «it makes us aware that the whole culture is a scam, that we are cheated cheaters, and that any interest in culture is equivalent to self-deception» (Flusser, 2003, p. 9), and, at the same time, gathering the shapes of mass culture, they embody both the intentional and ideological function of design (Flusser, 2003, p. 10). Making the objects basically useless, or usable with extreme difficulty, the artist's work embodies the critical function typical of art (Barilli, 1998; Dal Lago & Giordano, 2014). Two paths must therefore be taken to analyze the productive and meaningful strategies put in place by Valeria Scuteri, on the one hand analyzing her works with the tools of art history and on the other, analyzing them as craft products through the tools of typical design analysis; this is because they are always both: objects and works of art, spaces for the production of meaning and for artisanal reproduction.

Valeria Scuteri's Fiber Art

Fiber Art is an artistic form that since the Sixties uses materials or techniques of the *material culture*, a relationship that, reconsidered only recently by some academics, otherwise considered degrading or binding, assigning a principle's priority to the material culture, that is nothing but the technology adopted by a specific time period (Barilli, 2011).

The starting point of the Fiber Art is a very ancient craft practice, that later becomes prerogative of the feminine sphere: weaving, going beyond the concept of usefulness, also thanks to the important role carried out by the weavers of the Bauhaus' Textile Laboratory and to the heritage that they have handed out. It was the United States that hosted most of those revolutionary weavers (who escaped from Europe after the institution of the Nazi regime); and always in the United States during the Seventies that the term Fiber Art was coined, to indicate the production of new generations of artists that, moved by the desire to combine manual skills typically artisanal with contemporary shapes and styles, started investigating the expressive potential of several materials, developing innovative and original techniques, expanding the boundaries of the textile towards other artistic disciplines, overcoming the bi-dimensional sphere.

The sensitivity, the knowledge of the materials, the harmony of the artist's and the artisan's ability bring Scuteri's artistic production to the same intuition that distinguished the Bauhaus artists. German Gunta Stölzl wrote in 1926 that: «weaving is an aesthetic whole, a composition of form, color and matter in a sole unit. While at the beginning of the Bauhaus it started from figurative principles [...] today we know that the fabric is an object of use and it is a surface that has in itself static, dynamic, plastic, functional, constructive and spatial elements» (Stölzl, 1926).

Linked to historical avant-gardes, *Wearable Art* refers to a series of creations, especially gowns, accessories and jewelry, specifically made to be *potentially* worn. It finds its initial expression between Surrealism, Futurism and Dadaism, when artists, opposing the tradition of classic materials, begin the search for new styles, finding the textile medium. On the chance that experimental methods, of fiber waiving and various materials were to be engaged in the making of such wearable artworks, Art Wear could be traced back within the more extended field of the Fiber Art (Bottini, 2015). Fall back in this sphere the heeled shoes, the book bags and the red gloves that Valeria Scuteri creates waiving with a loom made with a wooden frame, handling wool and other materials with the crochet hook, gathering the old traditions, but using within the artistic field iron wire and steel wire, industrial materials isolated from their functional context and re-functionalized through the sole act of selection of the artist to work of art. Such objects are to all intents and purposes to be interpreted as a second skin because they dialogue, through the substance of their materials, with the body until they come to reach it and become an integral part of it, as in the case of the bras where «lace becomes flesh» (Scuteri, 2018). It is, therefore, evident that the artistic activity of Valeria Scuteri, started in the mid-Seventies in Turin, emigrated from Calabria, has absorbed the artistic spirit of the poor and conceptual art (Pompas, 2017), preferring a poor matter, like metallic iron, she gives life to poetic and heavenly sculptures, despite the strength of the materials of which they are made of «[...] that only the power of strong scissors, fire or time flowing will destroy» (Migliorati, 2016, p. 34). Scuteri creates installations within which entering, between textures and inventions, lyricism and refined techniques. She transforms space by combining brightness and darkness, void with substance, until creating a dynamic tension. In her hands, the basic structure of weave and warp expresses the tension of the opposites and acquires a dimension that goes beyond the simple concept of fabric (Bottini, 2015). During the long, patient working process, through the loom and hand manipulation of poor materials, anti-artistic like copper wire, sometimes she creates fragments of words that repeat themselves in the installations and intersect with shapes, there is the will to highlight the energy, the magical sphere of creation, she works on the symbols, on the presence and the absence of the matter. Modern demiurge she creates artwork where weaving is alive and packed of significance, where all is possible in order to create a new visual and tactile impact.

After September 11 2001, the urge of tree-dimensionality arises, of materializing the pictorial sign, to rebuild the world destroyed by violence (Mantovani, 2004, p. 10).

She chooses the loom, pure weaving into free space, the artist's transforming action field. The solution will be then to use a live material that transmits energy, metal and copper. Valeria Scuteri becomes a Fiber Artist and, as Silvana Nota writes, curator of many of her exhibits, «the textile *medium* does not represent a mean at the service of the idea, but it is in the *medium* itself loaded with meanings», it is «in the conceptual choice of dexterity that part of the poetic process is identified» (Nota, 2015, p. 42).

Other pioneers of the art of fiber weaving in Italy, have been weaving with copper and brass wire since the Eighties, like Silvana Levi who made the first metallic tapestry on a vertical frame, *Aquilonearaldico*, (*Heraldic kyte*) back in 1985. Two-dimensional works where for changing the gradation of copper intervenes with the flame or with acids, creating «surfaces that are lit or silent» (Pompas, 2017, p. 132). Or Gina Morandini, creator of the Valcellina Prize, an international competition for Contemporary Textile Art to promote Fiber Art among the younger generations, who in the early Nineties worked “off loom” works made by weaving industrial steel strips through which wool is passed, elegant and monumental are her doors, her arches created for the installation *Quale è la mia... (What is mine...)* on the subject of the threshold in 2003. What differentiates Valeria Scuteri is her color palette, the variety of threads of different colors and consistency, trying to combine color-line and light. Her sculpture dresses come to life in the slow artistic process. Once the work is finished, the work takes shape thanks to her hands that create the volumes. Almost like armor, they are formed by a network of overlapping chromatic structures that reinvent space, a texture composed of lines of color. Suspended from the ground, each of her creations is charged with its own light and its own shadow, they are like brushstrokes that draw a flight, the elongated shadow on the wall is the trace of their passage. Works that live solitary in the light and in the shadow, unique and unrepeatable bodies.

It deals with the most profound issues of existence, the art of Valeria Scuteri acts on the sensitivity of people and it is capable of promoting a renewal in them, acting simultaneously on the level of ethics as well as on the level of aesthetics (Bottini, 2015). *Umana condizione (The condition of Humanity)*, to cite the title of one of her installations of 2013, remains suspended between good and evil between body and spirit between reality and dreams between ambition and generosity perpetually in search of balance. Her language, her works all reflect her great spiritual depth. It is true, “the work of art is the artist” and everything is a trace of its essence.

Performing objects

The principle of the potential wearing of clothes and accessories by Valeria Scuteri is based on the fact that their usefulness remains only at first, that is they, although are actually wearable, usable, are not worn, used if not in a performative key. Another fundamental prerogative of the artist's work is that of playing with transparencies: the materials are woven together in order not to cover or uncover parts of the body but to become a sort of second skin often made of wire and other metallic materials. The

body of the models becomes for all effects a cyborg body (Caronia, 2008) therefore the dress becomes an extended body (Nikolais & Louis, 2005) that is, a real extension of the body. In these terms the models that strut become real performers, because her shows are conceived as performative actions, and objects themselves become performative objects, that is they act together with the bodies, they are an integral part of those bodies. The body object dialectic is at the center of the performative show/action that took place on the May 9th, 2018 at the Albertina Fine Arts Academy in Turin. The action, entitled *Arte da indossare. Tra mitologia e logos (Wearable Art. Between mythology and logos)*, opened an exhibition of potentially wearable clothes of the same artist and designer entitled *Tramandail filo trapassato e futuro (Tramanda the thread between past and future)*. The performance is articulated in three moments: during the first moment, we find ourselves in front of a real fashion show in which the model/performer wears the potentially wearable dress and performs some actions during and at the end of the press conference of presentation of the exhibition. During the second moment the model enters the Academy's Sala Azzurra and climbs onto a stand. In this second moment the performer herself becomes an object like the dress, she becomes a sort of statue, a sculpture among the sculptures.

Clearly, this reference implies the fact that the dress and the body no longer have any difference, they are not opposed to each other, in the eyes of the artist they are one. In the third moment, the artist takes the performer off the dress to hang it like a sculpture. However, the sculpture has in itself trace of the body that performed it, referring to the hands that spun it through the crochet technique; those same hands that during the second moment of the performance, when the model became a statue, gave the final touches to the dress, as if we were in a post-human atelier (Braidotti, 2014; Grusin, 2015) in which it is the crocheted iron that makes the performer's skin. The wearable art of Valeria Scuteri is an important proof of the close relationship between art, fashion and design, of cross communication of distinct expressive categories. In the same way, in the ninth edition of the Triennale Design Museum, *W. Women in Italian Design*, where the culture of design in Italy is addressed through the question of gender, Scuteri's works are characterized through the use of a less observational design, less authoritative and therefore more spontaneous (Annichiarico 2016). The two works exhibited are paradigmatic of the artist's work between design and art, between mass consumption and recovery of the manual skill of the artisan tradition. Both *Quantid'artista (Artit's gloves)* of the series *Sognitra le mani (Dreams in the Hands)* of 2004 and *Reggiseno (Bra)* of 2012, made of hand-woven red wire with the crochet technique, emphasize the sensuality of the woman and are specifically created to be “potentially” worn; these objects are «emptied of all vanity, they lie fascinated among the colors of life» (Scuteri, 2018a).

That is, they represent a sort of counterpart to those same objects (gloves, shoes, etc.) that are produced within the disposable fashion system by no longer concentrating on them any vanity. For Scuteri, fashion, art and design not only dialogue with each other but clash to continually redefine their borders. Once again the artist moves

between tradition and innovation, between space of form and malleability of materials, between thread and form, between potential wearing and artistic gesture. Her clothes and accessories, where the concept of transparency is predominant, are in fact modified, deformed from time to time by the wearer leaving traces more or less lasting, openly recalling the performativity of the processes of production and use of objects that, far from being reified and unarmed, adapt themselves to the bodies, as fashion objects, but leave traces of such adaptation clearly visible. In other words they are body-objects:

The gloves, as well as the shoes, I think are the most significant accessories of this TALE.

The first because they tell the MAKING, the second the PATH.

The making, I repeat, is FUNDAMENTAL to me.

Everyone, small or big, MUST DO HIS PART.

He cannot and must not delegate.

Like bras already, they are OBJECTS/HANDS

OBJECTS/BREAST (Scuteri 2019).

Finally, if in 1971 Bruno Munari evoked that “the designer was to be a real designer and not an artist that made applied art” (Munari, 1971, p. 10), Scuteri’s work in an opposite way moves by trying to push applied art, the artisanal tradition, within the arts system (Menna, 1975) to show the fractures and the sutures between the two worlds.

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This contribution, the abstract and the first paragraph were written by the authors while the second paragraph by Claudia Bottini and the third paragraph by Rossella Mana.



Focus gallery

Between tradition and exploration

"Some of the most significant artistic developments in recent years have occurred outside the art world, often involving figures that, in the first place, did not see themselves as artists but as researchers, scientists and activists" (Jon Ippolito and Joline Blais, 2006).

Contemporary operators work in a world that is contaminated by different cultures, apparently distant disciplines and advanced technologies. The result of their products is a dynamic combination of subjects, concepts, materials and methods that change continuously and, while a large number of artists and designers work with traditional methods, others explore new ways of knowledge, collaboration and communication.

We can therefore notice a division between operators who are prosecutors of ancient traditions and researchers of new techniques; this is definitely the focus on which the iconographic story focuses its attention, that is, the creation processes adopted in the production of an artefact.

The images that make up the gallery below, try to investigate some of the practices that the

current scenario offers. Divided into two main strands, we intend to investigate the traditional and the technological doing by showing in the first part the enhancement practices of ancient techniques of artisan production, the new methods and processes of material experimentation and the reuse of waste material and in the second part the selection of processes in which a strong desire to collaborate with automated machines emerges, in order to establish a continuous compositional feeling.

In the last part of the gallery, some of the disciplinary experiences straddling art, design, music, interaction, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are shown, which suggest a scenario that is in total evolution.

The selected projects aim to stimulate the reader to make a critical reflection on the progression of today's creation and production processes and on how the split between traditional and technological is constantly reinforced.

Mariangela Francesca Balsamo

[processes, creation, traditions of the past, material experiments, collaborating machines, algorithmic art]



01

Rediscovered traditions

> In the past, technological innovations, with economic and social implications, have contributed to a certain lack of interest in artisan production. Nowadays, artists and designers enhance the value of manual manufacturing, promoting the continuity of traditions, culture, civilisation and art.



02



03

- 01** *Urushi shelf*, Max Lamb, 2018. The shelf was made of cypress wood and painted with the Waijima-Nuri Urushi lacquer extracted from the resinous sap from the "*toxicondron vernicifluum*" tree.
- 02** *W1 Tables*, Moss & Lam, 2015. Each table is handmade with the ancient scagliola technique, using plaster, pigments and binders.
- 03** *Bouquet*, Ines Schertel, 2018. Wool processing with manual felting techniques of the South American tradition.
- 04** *Urushi stool*, Max Lamb 2018. Detail.

04





01



02

In the balance between design and autonomous art

> Creating objects with different methods of material experimentation or capturing the most expressive elements from the classical reality with the use of silicone molds, are both operations that cross the border between design, art and craftsmanship. Each work is a unique object and always different from the others.



03

- 01 *Elements of Time*, Nynke Koster, 2014. Architectural fragments of time transformed into soft furnishings.
- 02 *Well Proven Chair*, Marjan van Aubel & James Shaw, 2012. Their "well-tested chair" is made of a modeling material consisting of wood waste and bio-resin.
- 03 Table lamp model "*Woodmetalplastic*", James Shaw, 2019. Walnut, polished aluminum, HDPE extruded with a self-produced gun.
- 04 Nynke Koster creates rubber casts of existing objects and architectural fragments, capturing the ornamentation, details and history of the places.

04





01



02

Man-Machine synergies

> The distance between human creation and technical artifice seems to be getting smaller and smaller. On the one hand, the cohesion of the compositional dialogue of the work between mechanical *routines* and human gestures is highlighted, and on the other we find the will to deepen the use of artificial intelligence in the creation process.



03

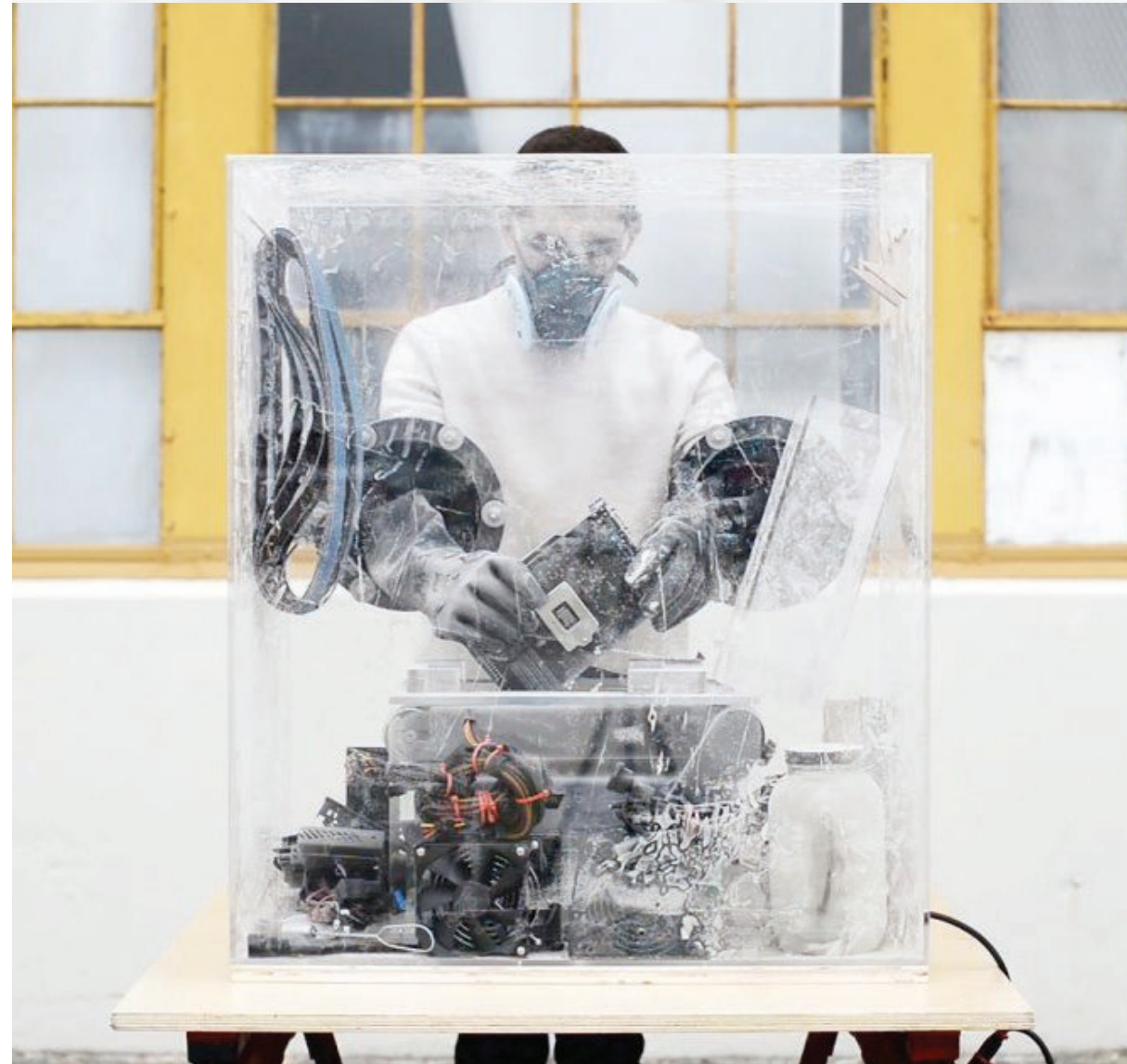
01 Sougwen Chung, Canadian artist and researcher, has been collaborating with robots since 2015. The "Drawing Operations" project, born in 2015, explores the collaboration between man and robot (*Drawing Operations Unit Generation*), with the aim of creating drawings using mimicry.

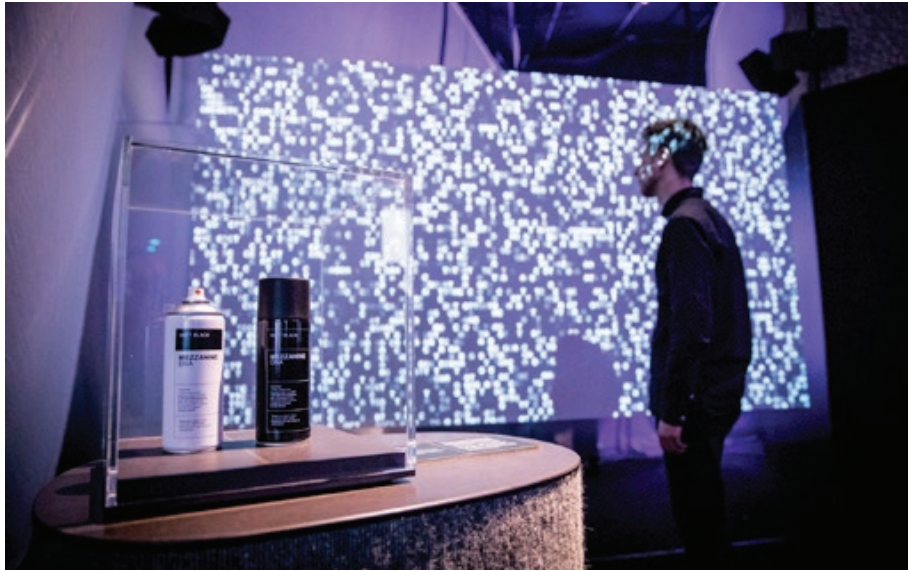
02 *Ikebana Rock'n'Roll* is an art collection born from the encounter between the artist Andrea Salvatori with a Delta Wasp 40100 Clay 3D printer.

03 *Artifact* as a result of the synchrony of movement between the artist and the machine, Sougwen Chung, 2015.

04 *God*, Ben Snell, computer, resin, 2018. Not only was it imagined by the intelligence of the computer, but it is physically made by the same computer that dreamed it.

04





01

Algorithmic art

> The algorithm is the work of art itself and the artist is the creator of the algorithm. These are works created independently by artificial intelligence through *Machine Learning* algorithms. In this case, the machines learn through the inputs entered to generate new works.



02



03

01 "AI: more than nature", Barbican Center in London, 2019. On this occasion, the first spray cans containing the DNA of the album *Mazzanine* of the band "Massive Attack" were sold.

02 *Portrait of Edmond de Belamy*, Obvious, 2018. The author is an algorithm used in an artificial intelligence project created by the Parisian collective Obvious, using a regenerative antagonist network (*Generative Adversarial Network*).

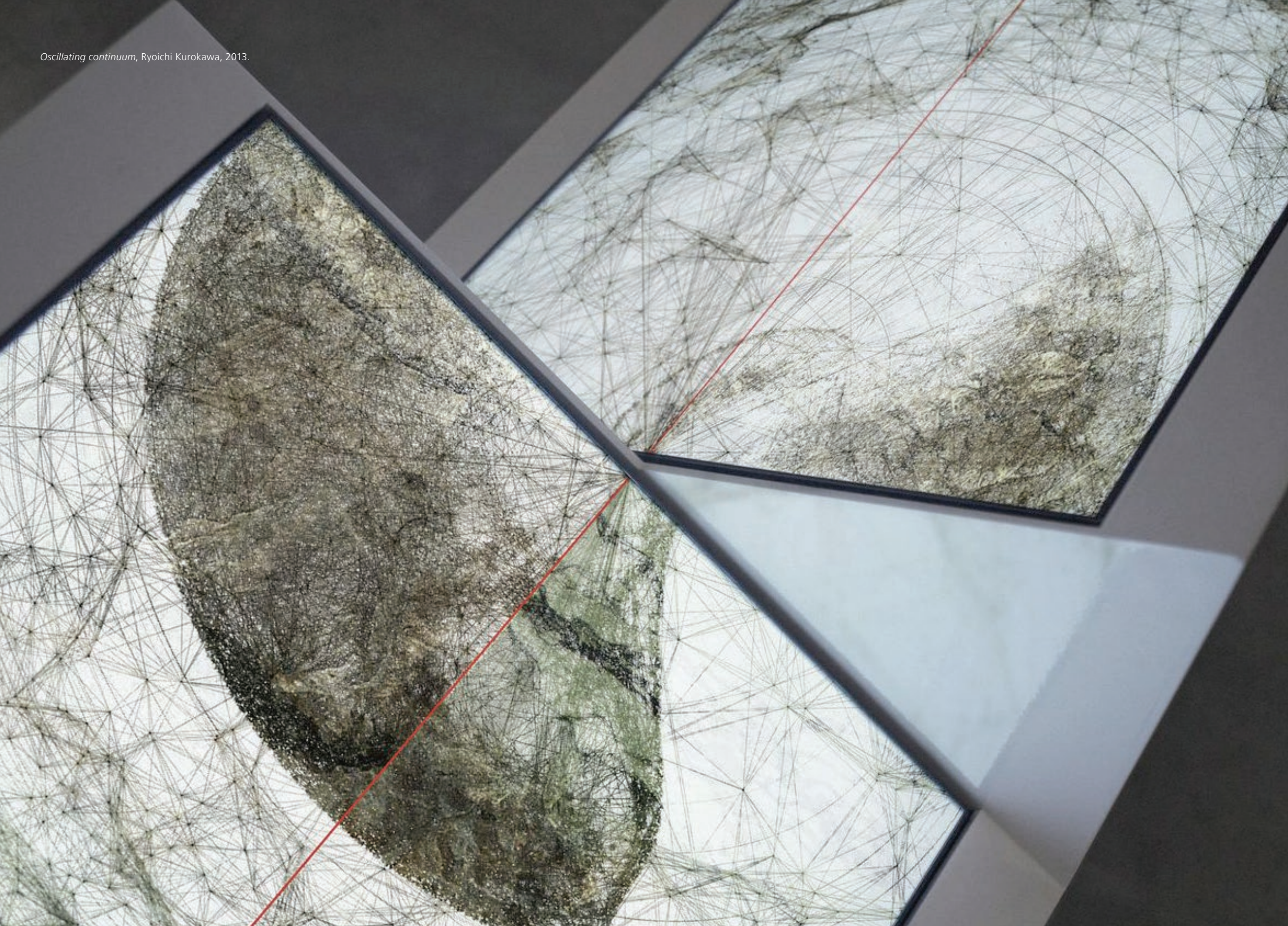
03 *Bird Language*, Helena Nikonole, 2018. Song generated by artificial intelligence. The project explores the possibilities of AI in the context of bio-semiotics.

04 "Memories of Passerby I", Mario Klingemann, 2018. Each portrait generated is unique and original, even if it is destined to appear only for a few moments.

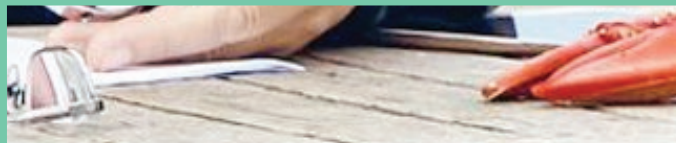
04



Oscillating continuum, Ryoichi Kurokawa, 2013.

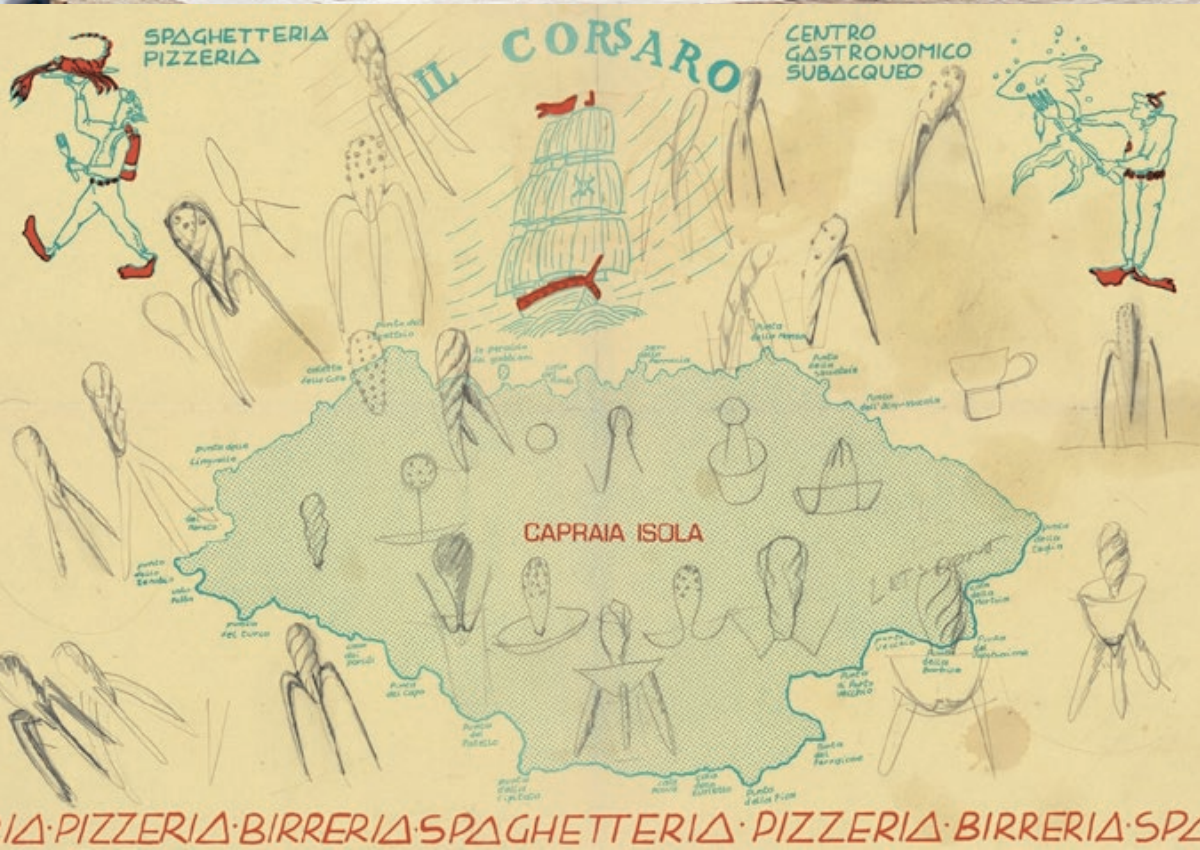


Maestri



Philippe Starck and Riccardo Dalisi
Tonino Paris

Maestri gallery > p.162/p.167 - p.172/p.175



Philippe Starck and Riccardo Dalisi

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During the 2019 Frame Awards, 20 February 2019, in Amsterdam.

Philippe Starck received a Lifetime Achievement Award honouring his contributions to the sector of design and architecture. With multifaceted inventiveness, Philippe Starck is always focused on the essential, the materialization of his vision. Whatever form it takes, it must improve the lives of as many people as possible. This philosophy has made him one of the pioneers and central figures of the concept of “democratic design”.

Philippe Starck has made the journey from the 20th into the 21st centuries by grasping all their social transformations, moral tensions, the modern and the Postmodern, while influencing various generations of designers with his projects. Given the articulation and specific nature of his poetic and operative thought, his mad games, his voluble karmic temperament, we deem it useful to tell his story by allowing Philippe Starck to explain himself on his own, through citations of the definitions he has given to his designs and his work. These present a fair and balanced portrait of the man once memorably described by *The Sydney Morning Herald* as [...] “the designer of furniture, nightclubs, yachts and France’s most fashionable pasta”. The word “design” does not exist. It is the English word for drawing, deprived of all meaning”.

He states:

«[...] There are those who think that it is a matter of making things more beautiful in order to sell them. The great designer Raymond Loewy, for example. There’s truth in this. Others like me believe it’s a little more ‘more complicated’: that there is a semiological task that relies on a teaching instrument to try to improve peoples’ lives, and consequently the quality of their thoughts. This is extremely pretentious, but if it weren’t, it would otherwise make no sense to do it [...]». (Ph.S. Excerpt from a conversation in April 1996 with Pierre Doze, Moscow. Reprinted in Starck Benedikt Taschen verlag, Cologne, 1996)

«[...] I remember that, in my younger days, I saved up to buy my first Wassily chair. When I was finally able to make the purchase, I brought it home, bursting with pride – there it was, real proof that I finally made it as a designer. But I discovered I couldn’t sit in it, and that it was absolutely impossible to live with it. I still have it, but I think it’s in the garden, now. The problem was that it simply spoke the language of design, while I think that as designers we have the duty to speak other languages as well [...]». (Ph.S. *The International Design Yearbook Volume 3*, Abbeville Press, New York, NY 1987)

«[...] I am not inspired by anything except myself and my own madness. No one has ever inspired me – not God the master, not man, not woman, not animal, not culture, not cinema. Nothing. [...]». (Ph.S. Alison Culliford, “Profilo stile: Philippe Starck”, Eurostar Metropolitan Magazine Giugno 2013 <http://www.ink-live.com/emagazines/eurostar-me-tropolitan/1378/june-2013/#23/z> Accessed on 17 January 2014)

«[...] I’m not a designer. I’m not an architect. I’m not a specialist [...]. I’m not specialized in anything, which means I’m specialized in everything. I’ve designed hotels, toothbrushes, lamps, chairs, tables, every type of object. But the product, in and of itself, means nothing. As far as I’m concerned, it’s only an excuse to be involved in something else, in what might be life, for example [...]. Summing it up, I consider myself a political agitator who uses design and architecture ... This is my true occupation [...]». (Ph.S. M di Forti’s Interview with Philippe Starck in *Il Messaggero* of 04 June 1993 in Franco Bertoni, *L’architettura di Philippe Starck*, Academy Editions 1994)

«[...] This obviously means freeing oneself of recycling, which is only a marketing gimmick [...]. Recycling was invented by ecologists, but in the end all it does is allow us to keep on producing and consuming waste. A good product is a product that lasts [...] I’m not against recycling. I’m against its use as a universal panacea. Recycling is a Band Aid, a way to repair an error, but nothing more. [...]». (Ph.S. Excerpt from a conversation with Elisabeth Laville (in August 1998), originally published in a special issue of *La Lettre d’Utopies / “Responsible Design”* reprinted in Starck Benedikt Taschen verlag, Cologne, 2000)

«[...] As far as I’m concerned, I must clarify that my cultural background is not exactly French. It’s a product of a childhood colonized by dreams of America. Even my father was subject to the same influences: he spent his life designing airplanes and was Americanized enough to wear a Stetson. And it is perhaps that American influence that shaped my work, in the degree to which I proceed instinctively and, above all, quickly. [...]». (Ph.S. *The International Design Yearbook Volume 3*, Abbeville Press, New York, NY 1987)

«[...] In other words, to put it simply, I am not interested in design. The reason for this is that when we speak of a design, we speak of objects. I’m bored by the hell of chairs – my own, too. Another chair, another lamp – what’s the interest in this? [...] We’ve gone from traditional design – Bauhaus, Lowey, people fascinated by the object itself, which brought about very nice results – to the explosion, like the flash of a light bulb before it burns out, over the last 15 years, of a narcissistic design done by designers for other designers, a masturbatory show of their know-how, of their liveliness [...]». (Ph.S. *Il mondo / pace secondo Starck* Excerpt from a conversation in April 1996 with Pierre Doze, Moscow. Reprinted in Starck Benedikt Taschen verlag, Cologne, 1996)

«[...] For me, creativity is not an end unto itself. This is why I lack imagination, and it doesn’t interest me. I’m far more interested in the everyday, in the things that regard all of us – underwear, washing, protection from the rain – and I confer to these things a fifth dimension, a depth that allows normal objects of everyday use to be more than themselves. I try to give a little brilliance to everyday routine, to show that our urban reality can also be sinful and interesting. [...]». (Ph.S. Conway Lloyd Morgan *Philippe Starck* bangert verlag Schopfhein 1999)

«[...] My father had developed the idea that searching in all fields is almost a duty in life, a sort of obligation. We must invent – it’s our place, our mission. Culture, the notion of taste, was subordinated to this search. The same also goes for committing a creative error rather than be enclosed in a state of stagnation of good taste. This in part influenced me; it is part of my inheritance, to wish always to create. to be creative [...]». (Ph.S. Christine Colin Starck Ernst Wasmuth Verlag, Tubinga 1989)

«[...] My work regards the transformation of “obligations” into something else; it is an addition of soul. What I’m saying is that when I am forced to consume, to expiate this consumption, I inject it with soul, until the object becomes something else, or becomes a small, poetic part. This is characterized by my work on the toothbrush. It’s true: we have to brush our teeth, and so we’re forced to keep a toothbrush in our bathroom – we cannot contest this – but, with a little effort, we note that suddenly, there we are! It becomes something else: a flame, a beam of light, an object [...]. (Ph.S. *L’architettura di Philippe Starck*, Academy Editions 1994)

«[...] In the 1950s, one of the fathers of design, Raymond Loewy, came up with a slogan that was responsible both for his own success and, in part, for that of the design movement: “ugliness doesn’t sell. At the time, he may have been right. But I fear this formula was already structurally imperfect. We must escape from this defect. We must slay the father’s word [...] We must understand that “ugliness doesn’t sell” means that design is simply slave to industry and production, that its role is to help things sell. Structurally, it is no longer what we do. Today, the problem is not to produce more so as to be able to sell more. The fundamental question is that of the product’s right to exist. And it is in the first place a duty, and the designer’s duty, to question the product’s legitimacy, and it is for this reason that the designer exists, too. [...]». (Ph.S. Excerpt from a conversation with Elisabeth Laville (in August 1998) originally published in a special issue of *La Lettre d’Utopies / “Responsible Design”* reprinted in Starck Benedikt Taschen verlag, Cologne, 2000)

«[...] The first thing we must remember is that creativity has the duty to engage in political action. Now we have forgotten this, and young designers think only about being stars and making money. They forget their debt to society. Everything you

do must be in relation to your civilization, to your society, to yourself, to your life: without the objects you make being just objects. This is why I try to wake people up a little bit, and to say that everything you do is a political vote [...]». (Ph.S. Julie Taraska “Philippe Starck’s Politique” www.metropolismag.com/December-1969/Philippe-Starck-rsquo-Politique/ Accessed on 17 January 2014)

[...] I have no taste... Really, I have no taste: I have no taste. Really, I have no taste [...]”. (Ph.S. “Gli stili favolosi dell’uomo senza gusto” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Thursday, 16 October 1986 Style Section)

But in reality, Philippe Starck gave sense to his design with the ideas constituting its real wealth, and that from time to time is as if they were setting out for us his permanent state of grace, both when sublimating them in new products, and when using them to reinterpret consolidated types.

Aphorisms

Ph. Starck has often accompanied his designs with brief, conceptual descriptions that are effective aphorisms for framing his thought:

ARTISTIC MANAGEMENT_ “Design is first and foremost a tool that, at best, tries to help people improve their lives”. Ph.S

AUTOMOBILE_ Ph.S “Today’s automobile must respond to the quest for the minimum: a vehicle with four wheels and a steering wheel, all powered by electricity”. Ph.S

BATHROOMS_ “A bathroom is a cloud without gravity, without orthogonality, without limits”. Ph.S

BEDS_ “The most important in a home is first love, then a fire that represent the center of the home and then a good bed with a good mattress, and if possible a nice view”. Ph.S

BIKES_ “The bike is one of man’s most powerful accessories by offering almost endless possibilities with a minimum of materiality. The bicycle is on the path of dematerialization, which is a symptom of our civilization”. Ph.S

BOATS_ “When you design a boat for somebody, it’s not aluminum, glass, or engine, it’s just building a dream and trying to give the best dream possible”.

BODY_ “The idea of honesty in design is fundamental. I have observed that the closer we get to the body, the more we have to be honest because at some point the body

does not lie, it either it works or it doesn’t. That’s why I try to create things that will directly benefit the human, the body”. Ph.S

DECORATION_ “To work well you have to be in your best place the best place and in the right position to contribute something new to society”. Ph.S

DESIGN_ “Design is first and foremost a tool that, at best, tries to help people improve their lives”. Ph.S

GOOD GOODS_ “With the *Buone Merci* (Good Goods) catalogue, I tried to find, collect, correct or create honest, sustainable and respectful objects. Objects that are good before being beautiful, in a catalogue that I like to call a ‘catalogue of non-products for non-consumers of the future moral market”. Ph.S

HIGH TECH_ “Technology is one of the best symptoms of human intelligence. It grants endless possibilities for creativity”. Ph.S

INDUSTRIAL DESIGN_ “Design is not a matter of country but of cultural tribes. And these different tribes exist in all countries. Design is first of all a tool to help people improve their lives and it is expressed differently, depending on the tribe”. Ph.S

LIGHTING_ “In the Middles Ages, Kings covered themselves with diamonds to capture every glimmer of candle light, the only light in their dark castles. The Navajo Indians knew that the only way to exist was to live in the path of light. Quantum mechanic scientists discovered that everything exists at the same, but that we only experience what we can see. Nothing exists without light... Light is everything”. Ph.S

LUGGAGE_ “Travel creates experience. The most inspiring journey is the one of humanity through the millennia”. Ph.S

SOFAS_ “The sofa invites you to sit comfortably and at the same time to stay in touch with one another. It meets the challenge of adapting to the needs and habits of an ever-changing world”. Ph.S



01



02

Irreverent explorer

> In the relationship between solid and void, the product's skin and geometry can become the interpreter and instrument for narrating this dualism, through lively alternations or by generating forms characterized by perfect equilibrium.



03

01 Kartell sofa trasparente.

02 Axiom Sapce, boutique hotel for space.

03 Poltrona Alessi.

04 05 A minimal tower as a pedestal for a traditional eighteenth-century Alsatian villa, the provocative design for hotel in Hyères, France, done in 2018 for Maison Heller.

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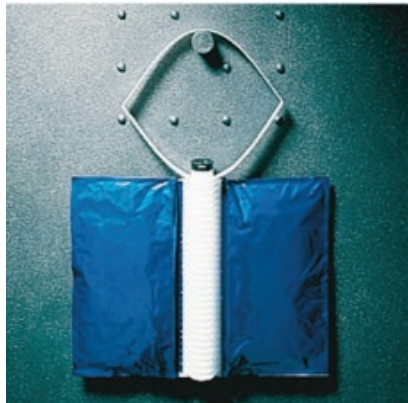
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Evocative poetics

> The evocative capacity of design is the stylistic hallmark of this design superstar. Anthropomorphic elements, symbolic shapes and encoded icons are the notes of his compositions, in which their decontextualization in a Duchampian key creates semantic short circuits.



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01 Essentiality and evocative capacity, the *Walter Wayle II* clock, designed for Alessi in 1990, is one of the items that best explains Starck's artistic vision.

02 A concept developed for a competition called by Vittel in 1986: this bold design upsets the classic shape of the water bottle, highlighting the material's plastic potentials.

03 *Bonze* means raising the stool to becoming a domestic sculpture, able to furnish a space with its Baroque and surrealist influence, XO Design, 2005.

04 The *Axor Starck V* faucet uses subtraction and transparency to enhance the water vortex coming out of the mixer faucet, Hansgrohe, 2014.

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Connections

> "The tip, an organic metaphor, conjunction between nature and artifice, a gathering point for a new beginning".



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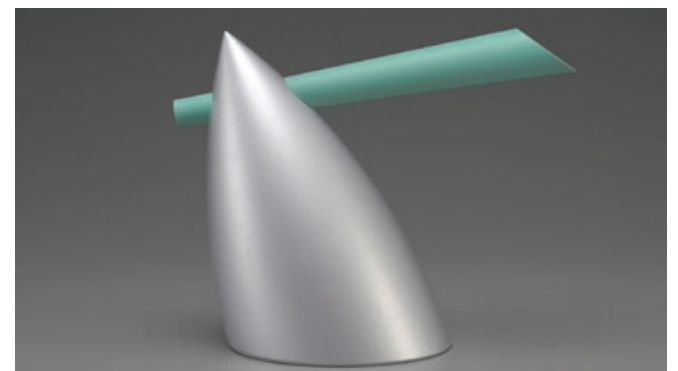
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- 01 *Sede ASAHI*, Tokyo; beer stein.
- 02 *Ara*, Flos. Lamp.
- 03 *Max Le Chinois*, Alessi. Vegetable strainer.
- 04 *Bubu*. Container stool.
- 05 *L'économe*. Flatware.
- 06 *Dédé*. Iconic doorstop.
- 07 *Kettle*.



Even today, Riccardo Dalisi explains himself and expounds the theory that sees the dimension of design as a pulsation of very rich geometric rules, that can be accumulated, with their own confirmations in modern urban reality. Every situation can generate other, different ones.

In Naples, he went to Rione Traiano, and with his students began that work on creative participation that resulted in the writings for his book *Architettura d'animazione* in 1975. Going to the neighbourhood constituted in itself an ongoing stimulus that spurred the children to creative production. Springing onto centre stage was the intense interaction and the breakage of a mental scheme, which is to say of a clear-cut distinction between popular and refined culture.

With Mendini, Branzi, Sottsass, and others, he was among the founders of Global Tools, a counter-school of architecture and design that brought together, within a single research programme, all the groups and persons that, in Italy, covered the most advanced area of what was termed "Radical architecture". The many energies of the avant-garde, already vacillating towards an uncertain maturation, were collected, and channelled beyond the years of the great creative compression of 1968. Without getting sucked in by Postmodernism, he exalted the role of handmade craftsmanship in design experimentation. In his designs, he modelled spaces upon living forms and upon the idea of transformation. He told us of Collodi, of Pinocchio in toyland. He applied his guiding idea to the open architecture of schools and homes, as in the design of furniture and everyday objects. His name was immediately associated with the poetic invention of objects and furnishings re-evoking childhood, the poetics of the everyday, the free expression of art. His experience began from the original and interesting idea of carrying out works with local labour and with materials already defined as poor, transforming and illuminating Rúa Catalana. The experience had the objective of bringing out the road as a living monument, comparable to the commitment of Italian avant-garde groups, the radicals, who had a great impact even outside of Italy, down to our own days. Everything takes place in the pursuit of an experimental laboratory that aims to bring out the great theme of the aesthetic plan as the outcome of imaginative force; to renew, keep alive, and develop manual, productive activity, craftsmanship, that has a great deal of importance in our economy, and in the south in particular. Given this activity, carried out with the participation of architecture students, the entire initiative was referred to as the "street university": "Università di Strada". Dalisi's social commitment continues to this day, with the same spirit, at Rione Sanità and Ospedale dell'Annunziata in the heart of the Forcella area of Naples, earning him Compasso d'Oro honours for his career.

The following are thoughts of and about Riccardo Dalisi

On his work, among other things, he said:

«[...] One may easily speak of architecture, of design, of art, of decoration and – why not? – of poetry, starting from what we call "technique", which is nothing but a salient aspect, a fundamental moment, of every human activity [...]. R.Dalisi

«[...] The idea of a compass design comes from an experimental game that has been gradually shown to be fertile because it corresponds to the need to take new roads on the theoretical and experimental level. Different moments split the object's compactness into a bipolarity, in a fully visible dialectical pair that enriches its effect, its formal outcome. The idea of structures that live, that express themselves through the dynamics of two interacting components, places the emphasis on generative life forces in endless series of events [...]». R.Dalisi

[...] The design and administration of architecture thus meet upon a single communication system that is like a highly articulated "switching table", upon which messages and demands, theoretical and critical attainments, are forwarded; in which specific competences are in fact switched, "common/bad", and in a condition of knowledge from technique to politics, and mutually [...]». R.Dalisi

[...] At its core, art is perhaps a matter of granting oneself possibilities we are unable to see now – a progression towards a happy future [...]». R.Dalisi

[...] Architecture and urban planning cannot resolve political problems, but a certain type of "conducting" of architecture from analysis to design (transforming it into an expanded tool of knowledge) opens another question [...]». R.Dalisi

[...] At its core, art is perhaps a matter of granting oneself possibilities we are unable to see now – a progression towards a happy future [...]». R.Dalisi

[...] Launching the Neapolitan coffee maker into the firmament of design is a complex and delicate enterprise. It is like tearing it from one world to transport it into different circuits of sensitivity. To be sure, it's a little strange to talk about a ritual of patience and calm to prepare a beverage that today appears conceived in order to go faster and in greater haste ... Coffee is taken in several circumstances, but for Neapolitans, the ritual is concentrated and typed with regard to two highly important moments: along with others, and in this case in various instants of preparation and waiting, the signals, the observation, the salient moments, and attention serve to "socialize", to bring people together, to induce calm (so dangerously unexpected nowadays), to foster conversation: to articulate with its phases, if we wish, a whole part of being together, until the culminating act of sipping it together [...] The coffee does not burn, does not boil over if we are away from the coffee maker for too long, does not burst, sometimes with extreme force, if the fire's too high [...] And then there's the essential, miniaturized ritual, "in which quite a few adults indulge, and of which children are made aware – it is a sign that we are dealing with a popular event [...]». R.Dalisi

[...] The Compasso d'oro was awarded, unwittingly, not to the research but to the yearning that is within a rite; now it has become a story, an adventure of Pulcinella.

It is perhaps in this divergence that the problem can be solved. In our city, everything is enriched with an account that may degenerate into uncertainty. Here lies the dispersion that the city produces in every field, but hidden here is the import, the unique contribution that Naples can provide. I see a research design as a rock thrown into a pond: circles of experimentation immediately ripple forth, which serve to assay the vitality and strength of what is being looked for. I have the impression that we need to broaden our gaze: design is not a packaged box; as things stand, it is ready to travel other roads. We have to lead it down other roads – those we have learned to know, in order not to lose ourselves in the end [...]».

Others have said about Dalisi:

[...] Riccardo Dalisi, like a magician with his tricks, brings barbed wire and mesh together to build chicken coops, iron and copper, brass. These materials, when appropriately worked, bring to artistic life the Players and the Kings, the Centaurs and the Sphinx, figures of the Devotion, Christ and the Madonna, Warriors. These humble materials are "processed" by the artist with age-old techniques and a shrewd memory, underscoring the deviation between their poverty and the persistence and vitality of an unrenounceable inheritance [...]». (Angelo Trimarco, 1997., *Riccardo Dalisi Sculture*, Electa)

[...] In urban places where alterations of institutional requirements for use – that is disorder – are found, there are often two kinds of breaking and entering: the one that derives from a rejection of the prescription in terms of external contradiction, and the one that derives from overtaking the prescription in terms of internal contradiction. The first is positive and generates active disorder, material for contestation, creative alternatives; the second is negative, and generates passive disorder, subjugation, cruelty protected by institutional armour [...]». (Giancarlo De Carlo, 1970, Lettera del 15 aprile 1970, *Architettura dell'imprevedibilità*, Argalia, Urbino)

[...] Riccardo Dalisi's work can be certainly inscribed in an area we can define as the "architecture of behaviour" [...] He has made the crossing of cultured architecture, landing in a field in which the demands and thrusts are an inextricable knot, in which creativity always crosses paths with the struggle for survival, in which the architectural work loses its splendid impersonality to take on the subjective strength of the cast, of the artisanal work [...]». (Achille Bonito Oliva, 1977, *La sensibilità armata*, in *Riccardo Dalisi, Personali di architetti*, In-arch, Centro Di, Firenze)



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Creative acts, participation, anti-design

> These are words that find a new echo in the theme of "Degrowth" already dealt with by authors like Serge Latouche. But as Gillo Dorfles authoritatively states: "it is Riccardo who invented arte povera long before it became an official current".



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01 *Coffee maker and Pulcinella*. From the continuous prototypes invented in the everyday relationship with the tin and copper smiths on Rua Catalana in Naples, new uses and functions of his coffee maker, an icon of an opera buffa of design, are born.

02 *Cavaliere* (knight), 2003. Riccardo Dalisi's artistic creations speak in a theatrical manner about man and his reality.

03 *Fiabe italiane* (Italian fables). In 1991, he designed and made the *Animated coffee makers*: of these, first there was *Totò*, followed by a *Neapolitan Pinocchio*, a *Totocchio* coffee maker, whose adventures were narrated in a book and an exhibition in 1994.

04 *Mariposa*, Zanotta

05 *Pavone*. Chair.

06 *The Iron way*.

07 *Hibridizations*.



01

Artisanal skills

> Riccardo Dalisi assembled poor and recycled materials – like tin, paper, copper, iron, steel plate, ceramics, glass, wood and cloth – transforming them into true works of art. For decades, he has been crossing, with extreme agility, between architecture, sculpture, drawing, painting, experimenting with materials, design and many other worlds.



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01 *Architecture model*, 1997-2000. One of the works on display on the occasion of the exhibition *Idee in Volo*, curated by Cintya Concari and Roberto Marcatti, held at Museo Storico di Lecce-MUST in 2006.
02 *Arciere*, 2007. Dalisi intimately fused art and design, in which his whole world as an artist expressed itself in sculptures: knights in the style of Arisoto, with their horses, archers and samurai, drunkards and couples of spouses.
03 *Acrylic on wrapping paper*, 2004.
04 *"Casetta" chair*, 1980.



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Published by

LISt Lab
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listlab.eu

**Art Director & Production**

Blacklist Creative, BCN
blacklist-creative.com

**Printed and bound
in the European Union**

2019

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