

DESIGN & DESIGN-
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MADE IN:
CRAFTS—DESIGN
NARRATIVES

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**DESIGN &
CRAFTS IN
DIALOGUE
CRITICAL READER**



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INTRODUCTION

READING BETWEEN TWO LINES

by Relja Bobić

Exploring the subtle and ever-elusive cross-pollinations between crafts and design, a group of organizations, partners, experts, designers and craftspeople immersed themselves into a collaborative journey into the worlds framed by the two disciplines - across Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia and Austria.

MADE IN, the platform sculpted around pilot projects of Studio OAZA from Zagreb, brought together five more organizations from the four countries in an attempt to map out their local crafts eco-systems, and explore the existing, possible and speculative dialogues between the two fields, which often seem to act as two sides of the same coin. Searching for and inventing the space in between, MADE IN brought the *forgotten* to surface, and enabled the *new* to emerge: new understandings, new reflections, new collaborations, new relations, ideas, projects and dialogues.

Besides such activities as month-long residencies for acclaimed international designers and their collaborations and co-productions with local craftspeople, as well as workshops with emerging design talent, the project curators, participants and guest experts have all the while nurtured a critical and reflective approach towards our global 'state of production', involving inputs and contributions from authors, academics, practitioners and

activists eager to bring to surface the numerous crossovers between crafts and design, perpetually going back to questions about the borderlines and relationships between the two fields. And more importantly, between the people professionally or otherwise involved in these practices, which are for many of them inseparable from their everyday existence or family histories.

A kick off conference and two additional seminars focused on various aspects of curating, producing, nurturing, exhibiting and marketing that which emerges at the crossroads of crafts and design. A unique space for dialogue and interaction was established, shifting between different countries, environments and constellations of curious and dedicated individuals, contemplating about and trying out different modes of production relationships, and different personal approaches.

Before you is a selection of dialogues, exposes and reflections about the relationship which is at the core of the MADE IN project, involving numerous contributors, participants and affiliates of the project, all experienced designers, curators and craftspeople in their own right. With this publication as a whole, we hope to make a valuable contribution to the critical discussion and reflection about crafts and design and the much-needed, continuous and endless dialogue between them.

FOREWORD

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

by project partners

MADE IN is a research, design and heritage platform that proposes new collaborative practices and knowledge exchange between the traditional craftspeople and contemporary designers. It engages craftspeople, designers, researchers, curators and theoreticians on a quest to pose relevant questions about the topics of heritage and production in today's society through research and archiving of local crafts, conducting workshops and residencies and promoting ideas through a travelling exhibition.

MADE IN was conceived in 2014 by Croatian Art and Design Collective OAZA as a social design project *Made in Ilica / Old School Ilica*—a reaction to the process of the disappearance of small crafts and manufacturing workshops from the City Centre of Zagreb, and was firstly showcased within a larger topic of *nanotourism*¹ during BIO 50 exhibition in Ljubljana, organised by the Museum of Architecture and Design. This and other intersections around the topics of mapping and archiving the local crafts and the position and relationship between design and crafts in contemporary society, led towards partnership between six organisations and institutions that belong to the similar geographical, historical, cultural and social context (Austria, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia) and eventually towards the formation of a regional

platform, whose first iteration and a two year long research and outputs are presented in this publication. Partnering institutions vary in size and in their core social functions. The Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb is one of the largest Croatian museums dedicated to preserving the local craft, art and design heritage.

The Slovene national Museum of Architecture and Design is one of the oldest museums for architecture and design in Europe, established in 1972. The museum collects, stores, studies, objects and presents exhibitions in the fields of architecture and design, organises Biennial of Design—an international platform for new approaches in design and is also leading the Centre for Creativity, an interdisciplinary platform that connects, promotes and supports the activities and development of Slovenia's cultural and creative sector. Werkraum Bregenzwald is a craft and trade association established in 1999, uniting craftspeople of different guilds, pro-

¹Nanotourism is a new, constructed term describing a creative critique to the current environmental, social and economic downsides of conventional tourism, as a participatory, locally oriented, bottom-up alternative. Nanotourism was one of the themes within a curated BIO50 exhibition, formulated and mentored by architect Tina Gregorič and Aljoša Dekleva.

moting cooperation and exchange of ideas. Today, it consists of around 100 members representing different crafts and trades such as carpentry, cabinet making, metal work, plumbing, electrical engineering, upholstery, construction, clothing, shoemaking, goldsmithing and other service sectors. Nova Iskra and Mikser from Belgrade both function as platforms dedicated to connecting designers and manufacturers and craftspeople and are promoters of young talents and organizers of festivals and other cultural and educational events; and independent Art and Design Collective OAZA from Zagreb, is characterised by self-initiated multidisciplinary projects in the domain of critical and social design practices.

WHY MADE IN?

In spite of the various functions and purposes within the cultural fields, all of the actors are linked by projects that are from different positions approaching the matter of production within the field of design, which is further explained in the introduction to this publication. The MADE IN syntagma in the title carries a reference to anonymous and to some extent non-human production of today, which is taking place in the countries of the Far East. It emphasizes the position of design within the current market oriented neo-liberal capitalist paradigm, with a reference to its source — craftsmanship and making, from which the discipline was inseparable up until the advent of industrialization. Today, on the brink of a technological revolution there seems to be a need to pose the questions about our physical and virtual space again: WHERE is it made? WHO is it made by? WHAT is it made of? FOR whom is it made? WHERE does it come from? And so on.

CRAFTS ARCHIVE

In order to understand the values that crafts carry for the future, but also to problematize the fact that most of the traditional crafts knowledge and skills, especially those referring to the embodied knowledge transferred from the master to the apprentice, are disappearing, the *Crafts Archive* presented in the second part of this publication brings a selection of 40 knowledge holders and their traditional crafts from Croatia, Slovenia, Austria

and Serbia, documented through texts based on unstructured interviews and photography, explaining their background, history, materials, tools, techniques, processes and key products. This starting selection of craftspeople — ten per each country — although small, serves as a showcase for status of local crafts in four countries. The participating craftspeople were selected by several criteria. They were chosen for their superior craft knowledge, the level of endangerment of their craft, their representativeness for the area, but also for their geographical position. Thus, the research area varied from state-wide to regional, as covered in Slovenia and Austria, to smaller distribution throughout city quarters in cases of Serbia and Croatia. Texts by experts precede each specific chapter, giving insights into the local specificities and context.

The MADE IN syntagma in the title carries a reference to anonymous and to some extent non-human production of today.

The eight chapters form a basis for the travelling exhibition which is going to be presented in each of the four partnering countries, but also tends to grow in size.

Thus, the curatorial concept is built upon the idea of expanding the MADE IN platform through future exhibitions. The potential hosts are encouraged to contribute to the Crafts Archive by mapping locally specific crafts and conducting new craft — design collaborations.

You can browse the detailed descriptions and documentation of all of the realized collaborations within the project on the MADE IN platform website:

madeinplatform.com

CRAFTS - DESIGN NARRATIVES

Crafts - Design Narratives refers to eight specific projects that emerged through a two-year process, carried by each country separately, addressing issues specific to the local production context. The narratives are results of the workshops and residencies conducted through collaborations of design professionals and craftspeople, mediated, co-mentored and curated by individuals from the involved partnering organisations, and are presented through different formats and media.

CAN SOCIAL DESIGN STIMULATE LOCAL PRODUCTION IN ORDER TO BUILD A STRONGER COMMUNITY?

conducted by Italian designer Andrea de Chirico (SUPERLOCAL) and Art and Design Collective OAZA from Zagreb opens the topic of production in an attempt to mobilize remaining local crafts community in the City of Zagreb to engage with young designers and new technologies, and thus contribute to the debate on the need for establishing new models of collaboration that address the reactivation of production in the urban zones.

HOW CAN DESIGN AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES CHANGE OUR RELATIONSHIP TOWARDS PRESERVATION OF CRAFTS?

is manifested through a short film by Studio Unfold and Alexandre Humbert *A Combmaker's Tale*, in "which we follow the story of two passionate makers: Antun Penezić (82), Croatian last living comb maker who will retire this year without a successor, and Franka, a brand new robot, dedicated to follow in his footsteps and learn as much as it can from Antun in order to preserve this age old craft from disappearing".

HOW CAN RESEARCH INTO LOCALLY SOURCED MATERIALS ADDRESS WIDE SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS?

focuses on the issue of raw materials, particularly earth, from sourcing, legislation, production to social and financial networks behind its cycles of research and use. The workshop *Crafting Data* led by designer Lu-

kas Wegwerth resulted in two interconnected parts: the sourcing of raw material and experiments conducted by workshop participants and craftsman Urban Magušar and the research film by artist Giulia Bruno.

CAN DESIGN RECONNECT WITH RAW MATERIALS THROUGH CRAFT?

questions the sourcing, processing and exploitation of metals from metal ores and their use in our everyday life. Designers *mischer'traxler* together with stonemason Beno Ogrin created a series of objects that work as communication tools revealing tangible data about stones and their hidden metallic mineral components.

WHAT CAN DESIGNERS LEARN FROM THE PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE OF CRAFTSPEOPLE AND THEIR LONG-LASTING RELATIONS TO OBJECTS?

explores repairing and maintaining of crafted objects, which adds layers of patina and creates long lasting relationships between objects and subjects. The workshop *Crafting, Cleaning & Caring* by Dutch designer Rianne Makkink explored the materiality and immateriality of such relationships and looked into methodologies of doing things informed by the practical knowledge and the daily work routine of craftspeople. In collaboration with local craftspeople, producers and makers, the participants worked with and experimented with traditional techniques.

HOW CAN DESIGNERS REINTERPRET TRADITIONAL CRAFTS BY USING NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES OF THE REGION?

is based on extensive research by design studio *chmara.rosinke* that sought to include specific traits of the Bregenzerwald in their design process from the perspective of reinterpretation. Together with a group of craftspeople, they designed a formal kitchen setting that showcases the characteristics of the region's landscape and its architectural language.

WHAT MAKES AN EQUAL AND INVESTIGATIVE DESIGN — CRAFT RELATIONSHIP?

puts the topic of human touch and empathy at the center of collaborative interaction. In the workshop named *Design<by>Doing*, which was mentored by Serbian designer Tamara Panić, design students and Belgrade craftspeople left their individual presuppositions aside and opened the space for genuine understanding of “the other

CAN OBJECTS CAPTURE THE ESSENCE OF DESIGN — CRAFT COLLABORATIONS?

focuses on the position of design in the context of increasingly problematic mass production in contemporary society and the need to remodel the designers’ aspirations towards meaningful and socially aware design processes through diverse collaborations with master craftspeople.

The topic is illustrated by perfume *The Ghost*, made through collaboration of Swedish designer Jenny Nordberg and Belgrade perfumery Sava.

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

CRAFTSMANSHIP BEYOND THE PITFALLS

By Louise Schouwenberg

Louise Schouwenberg studied psychology at the Radboud University Nijmegen, sculpture at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam, and philosophy at the University of Amsterdam. She worked as a visual artist from 1985–2003. Since then her primary focus has been on art and design theory. Schouwenberg is head of the Masters programme Contextual Design at Design Academy Eindhoven, and mentor of a Masters programme at the Royal Academy of Arts in The Hague. Schouwenberg has curated exhibitions on the cutting edge of art and design and has worked as adviser for many organisations. She regularly writes for international art and design magazines and has contributed to a range of books. In 2013, she participated in the re-design of the Delegates' Lounge of the United Nations Headquarters, as part of a Dutch team, which also consisted of Hella Jongerius, Rem Koolhaas, Irma Boom and Gabriel Lester.

In 2015, Hella Jongerius and Schouwenberg wrote 'Beyond the New', a manifesto about the degradation of the design industry through the singular focus on profit margins, which launched at the 2015 Salone del Mobile in Milan. The manifesto derided contemporary design's obsession with the new at the expense of creating true, cultural innovation. Subsequently, Jongerius and Schouwenberg were invited to create a site-specific installation on the same topic for Die Neue Sammlung - The Design Museum in Munich; the exhibition, also titled 'Beyond the New', opened in the museum's renowned Paternoster Hall in November 2017.

In the vanguards of the art and design worlds, there's a remarkable interest for traditional techniques that, due to many reasons, lost their appeal at the start of the 20th century. Some proponents of ceramics, glassblowing, weaving, and other age-old crafts, emphasize the presumed higher quality of objects made with slow production methods, in contrast to the standardised results of fast industrial production. Some are primarily concerned with the social implications of production and stress the rewarding labour of craftspeople, which is based on tacit knowledge and age-old skills inherited from past generations, and contrast it with the mind-numbing work of industrial workers. And then there are those practitioners who embrace the local and historical characteristics of the crafts, and the multi-layered references they invariably represent, as these offer many possibilities for meaningful narratives. The renewed interest is remarkable, as the crafts had largely turned obsolete since the industrial revolution. Moreover, where craftsmanship was still cherished, low wage countries provided cheaper alternatives. In spite of very interesting cultural experiments to win the battle, the fierce competition has caused a closure of many European craft industries in these last decades.

A nice example is the oldest earthenware factory Royal Tichelaar, located in the small village Makkum in the north of The Netherlands, which has produced high quality handiwork since the 16th century. Their primary convention of working with locally dug clay and special glazing techniques, has brought them fame beyond the Dutch borders. Throughout the ages, to meet the changing demands of the times, there were many innovations within the company, one of the latest being a marriage between old crafts and modern design and art practices. Alongside the continued production of traditional earthenware, the manufacturer became a true pioneer in creating innovative collaborations between its own craftspeople and designers such as Jurgen Bey, Dick van Hoff, Studio Job, and Hella Jongerius. Iconic projects are for instance the *Minutes Service* by Jurgen Bey, the *300 Coloured Vases* by Hella Jongerius, and the *Pyramids of Makkum*, a range of contemporary

flower vases that referred to the restored 17th century flower pyramid of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Invariably, the projects celebrate the special nature and high quality of handicraft and celebrate the company's conventional ways of working. It seemed to work for a while. Royal Tichelaar became the exemplary company that succeeded in fusing the old with the new. However, in spite of its success in the media and museum exhibitions, the new strategy could not prevent a continued decline of commissions. The company had to end almost all adventurous experiments. Today, the company is no longer owned by the Tichelaar family, and production has become an 'on demand' endeavour, mainly focussed on supplying special glazes for a niche of the architectural market.

Does the *Royal Tichelaar* example demonstrate that we either need to accept that age-old crafts are relics of a past that will never return, or does it demonstrate that the competition with low wage countries cannot be won, as these can also provide high quality products, but can do so for less money? Or should we view the *Royal Tichelaar* example differently, and consider it a call for new clever efforts to rescue what a growing group of artists and designers want to rescue, which is an intense awareness of the importance of a rich material culture.

Let's turn to some projects that testify of craft's indispensable role within the vast field of contemporary cultural production. Most of them are probably known, as they were vastly published, but their innovative power was not always recognized. The practitioners mentioned below have fused innovative thinking with age-old craftsmanship, either because they had the skills themselves, or because they collaborated with highly skilled craftspeople.

Minutes Service, created in 2002 by designer Jurgen Bey, stresses the time-consuming and thus economic aspect of craftsmanship in the field of design. The above-mentioned ceramic company *Royal Tichelaar* asked him to explore the traditional technique of tin-glazed earthenware (faience). Bey soon noticed that the decorations, which were painted by hand,

took most time. After the painters had placed the contour lines of the decorations on the pieces, Bey set a time limit for painting the colours within the lines, a time limit that was too short for them to paint the entire decorations and long enough to offer glimpses of what the completed ones might have looked like. The unfinished pieces were then fired and the prices, and the titles, were determined by the time spent on them. The pieces thus carry names such as *55 minutes cup and saucer* or *134 minutes sugar bowl*. The economic value of crockery is literally translated into the time that the craftsmen devoted to colouring the decorations by hand. In this manner Bey created a service of which each piece reveals craft's refined value to an audience that has become familiar with the ease of throwing away mass produced cheap items. Now one could object that Bey's pieces would only be available for the rich, and would thus ignore the benefits of the industrial revolution, by which things became attainable for many people. On the other hand, one might claim that Bey's comment on the efficiency of the industry has come with a price, which one better consider when carefully choosing the items of daily life.

In line with Bey, but also contrasting his focus, designer Hella Jongerius used the characteristics, conventions and inherent meanings of ceramic production, to make a plea for combining the best of two worlds, the industry and craft production. In 1997 she created a range of plates, cups, and bowls, which showed individual differences in spite of being produced as series in the same moulds. She accomplished the 'misfits' because she fired the pieces on a too high temperature. By then, she knew she did something craft experts would loath, she knew that porcelain only preserves its shape when fired at the proven 'right' temperature, and she knew that all excellent porcelain works remain on the right side of the borderline of production: fired as hot as possible, to create the finest grained texture as possible, but never beyond the line where mistakes, and thus imperfections, are bound to happen. She decided to celebrate the mistakes, the imperfections, the misfits. By firing the pieces of B-Set at a slightly too high temperature, all items became individu-

ally deformed, to such a degree that they became unique pieces within a family range of similar designs. The title B-Set points to the usual assumption that mistakes turn things into a quality below A-level. The service was the start of a series of projects, in which Jongerius thematised the notion of individuality within serial production, the concept that a combination of industrial production and craft production would bring out the best of two worlds: the benefits of serial production and the benefits of craft production. Important in this context, in which we deal with the value of old crafts for contemporary culture, is the fact that novel insights on craftsmanship came from a non-expert, from a designer, who freely experimented with the materials and techniques. Whereas craftspeople will usually strive for perfection, she claimed that the advantage of craftsmanship nowadays resides in imperfection. After all, the industry can produce perfectly identical pieces; why would craftspeople focus on something they can never win. Moreover, in the course of the 20th century we had started to see the downside of cheap mass production, leading to indifference and a throwaway culture, with all its negative consequences for the environment. Jongerius thus attacked the industry at the right moment in time, and she formulated a novel conception for the crafts.

An artist who has reversed the outdated image of craftsmanship that still prevailed in the artworld at the start of the 21st century, is Grayson Perry. When he won the prestigious Turner Prize in 2003, it changed the reputation of the applied arts and showed a magnificent new potential. Like Bey and Jongerius, Perry uses the characteristics of items that are obviously made by way of traditional craftsmanship, including the inherent references to the past and the conventional settings in which pristine ceramics and weavings usually find their home. He confronts the familiar expectations they evoke with subjects that belong to today's culture. Perry was trained as a ceramist, but instead of staying within the confines of the applied arts field, he started to play with the expectations and meanings of traditional handwork, and used them as canvas for depictions of sexually and politically loaded subjects that seem to con-

trast the refinement of the colours and execution of the works. Playing with content that is at odds with the aesthetic appeal of the used materials, offers Perry many possibilities to analyse, and make fun of, British society and the contemporary arts scene and its conventions and prejudices.

Studio Formafantasma, consisting of designers Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin, did something similar. They used well crafted items, which refer to tradition, as canvas for a narrative on the inherent contradictions of culture, a narrative on immigration and notions of national identity, as canvas to question the tendency of mindlessly perpetuating the past for the sake of the past. In 2009, the two graduated from the MA department of Design Academy Eindhoven (Contextual Design programme), with the project *Moulding Tradition*. The title refers to the local Sicilian craft tradition to depict black people on popular vases, the so-called *Teste di Moro* vases. In the 17th century Arab-African people conquered Sicily, introducing majolica to Europe. It inspired the typical vases that are still produced for the tourist market in Sicily. In recent times, history seems to repeat itself, the designers say. While craftsmen create vases with African and Arab features referring to Sicilian history, people with similar features are returning, this time not as conquerors, but as immigrants. A majority of the Italians consider these fugitives a danger for Italian culture — an ironic twist of history. “Our project is a statement on the ephemeral concept of tradition and shows the contradictions of a decadent culture: if as Italians (and Europeans) we are able to represent our culture with a ‘Moor Vase’, at the same time we must be able to go beyond prejudice and fear, and let our culture change in the course of time.” The project consists of a collection of refined ceramic vessels garlanded with portraits of an émigré, buoy-like discs engraved with the percentage of refugees who immigrate per year, and ribbons printed with news reports on immigration.

Finally, I would like to mention the Belgian design studio Unfold, consisting of Dries Verbruggen and Claire Warnier. Their work explores new ways of creating, manufacturing,

financing and distributing in a fast-changing world, in which elements of pre-industrial craft economy merge with high tech industrial production and digital communication networks. They aim at creating a shift of power, from industrial producers and their regulating infrastructures to the individual designer and the consumer. While industry and craftsmanship are positioned as polar opposites, they claim, they would be more accurately represented as volatile points in a matrix of manual, mechanical, and electrical forces. Wheel-thrown pottery, for example, though now considered an artisanal skill, developed as a partial automation of coil pottery by the third millennium BC, making the production of small clay vessels more efficient. If industry is characterized by the displacement of advanced operations from hands to machines, then handicraft is defined by its retention of fine motor skills mastered over years of practice. Their project *l'Artisan Électronique* is an intersection between craft, industry, and digital making, avoiding easy categorisation and creating novel takes on what craft production can be. Spectators of the project are invited to move their hands in front of sensors, indicating the details of a vase. The computer programme collects all data and sends them to the 3D clay printer, which subsequently creates the object. Handwork? Digital fabrication? The worlds of production merge and fuse, which indicates a clear future.

A renewed attention for age-old crafts can be explained and legitimized by the obvious assets, the high quality, the attention given to each item, the importance of being aware of history, and the conviction that the crafts enrich the vast landscape of production. However, the renewed interest cannot simply mean that we should ignore contemporary times, ignore technical innovations, and it cannot simply mean that it suffices to go back in time and employ the old means as if nothing happened in the meantime. Paradoxically, the most timeless items started as excellent time-based items. Timelessness can only be gained by embracing the here and now, as well as staying aware of the past. Whereas one may rightfully have reservations when a theorist waves a moralistic finger, standing at the side-line of creation, I would still like to

make a plea for a critical approach of the renewed interest in craftsmanship. And here we touch upon some of the dangers. What craft practitioners rarely do, is acknowledging the pitfalls of their trade, such as the nostalgic, and in many ways (politically) regressive sentiments that are evoked by traditional conventions. Holding on to tradition for the sake of tradition, does not acknowledge that culture is only vital when it allows for constant changes. Another pitfall of craft production is a phenomenon that one can easily experience at exhibitions in which well crafted projects are displayed: a tendency to revel in virtuosity for the sake of virtuosity and neglect the narrative one intends to transfer.

The complexity of craft techniques, and the skills they require to master the process, often leads to a show-off of excellency, which might offer the spectator a sense of inaptitude and inferiority, whereas one might claim that important artworks and designs empower the spectator, and entice energy instead of fatigue. All of the above-mentioned practitioners, and many many more, exemplify how craftsmanship can be employed to produce innovative, energizing narratives.

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

THE CASE FOR MATERIAL INTELLIGENCE*

by Glenn Adamson

Glenn Adamson is a curator and writer who works at the intersection of craft, design history and contemporary art. Currently Senior Scholar at the Yale Center for British Art, he has previously been Director of the Museum of Arts and Design; Head of Research at the V&A; and Curator at the Chipstone Foundation in Milwaukee.

Adamson's publications include 'Art in the Making' (2016, co-authored with Julia Bryan-Wilson); 'The Invention of Craft' (2013); 'Postmodernism: Style and Subversion' (2011); 'The Craft Reader' (2010); and 'Thinking Through Craft' (2007). He contributes regularly to Art in America, Crafts, Disegno, frieze, The Magazine Antiques, and other publications.

Adamson was the co-curator of 'Voukos: The Breakthrough Years' at MAD (2016); 'Beazley Designs of the Year 2017', at the Design Museum, London; and 'Things of Beauty Growing: British Studio Pottery', at the Yale Center for British Art (2017). He recently completed a biographical study of the artist Lenore Tawney, included in the John Michael Kohler Art Center's exhibition catalogue 'Mirror of the Universe'. His book 'Fewer Better Things: The Hidden Wisdom of Objects' was published by Bloomsbury in August 2018.

*This essay was originally published in [Aeon](#) in November 2018. Republished with kind permission from the author and the publisher.

Are you sitting comfortably? If so, how much do you know about the chair that's holding you off the ground – what it's made from, and what processes were involved? Where it was made, and by whom? What materials are present in the chair, and how were they extracted from the planet? If you are like most people, you will have difficulty answering these questions, even though they seem pretty basic. This object is cradling your body right now. Yet in many ways, it is mysterious to you.

Quite probably, you are surrounded by many other things right now that are similarly enigmatic – among them, the device on which you are reading these words. These days, sad to say, most of us live in a state of general ignorance about our physical surroundings. It's not our fault, exactly; centuries of technological sophistication and global commerce have created the situation, and we just live in it. But our pervasive separation from material things is a serious problem, and one we urgently need to address.

It is a problem of relatively recent vintage. Until about a century ago, most people knew a great deal about the way their immediate environment was made. If they didn't, they probably had a good idea of who they could ask. That is still true in some places in the world today, but fewer and fewer, as commodities circulate with ever greater speed. Because of the sheer complexity of contemporary production, even those people who do have professional responsibility for making things – the engineers and factory workers and chemists among us – tend to be specialists. Knowledge has deepened, but also narrowed. Increasingly, the general view is relegated to algorithms: algorithms which are themselves driven by algorithms, in a cascade of interconnected calculation, all in the service of efficiency. This powerful logic is dispersed along the extended production chains through which materials, tools, components, and packaging are sourced today. Nobody – not an assembly line worker, not a CEO – has a comprehensive vantage point. The stores may be doing great, but there's no one minding them.

In effect, we are living in a state of perpetual remote control. As Carl Miller argues in his new book *The Death of the Gods*, the rise of automated decision-making has resulted in a crisis of accountability. If no one understands what is really happening, how can anyone be held responsible? This gives rise to a range of ethical dilemmas, chief among them our collective inability to address climate change, which is due in part to our psychological separation from the processes of extraction, manufacture, and disposal. For the same reasons, companies take little responsibility for their outsourced workers. And consumers are implicated too: if you don't know the people who were responsible for making the things in your life (and indeed, cannot imagine what their own lives might be like), it is difficult to find common cause with them. This gap in awareness is also a crack in the social fabric, where weeds of distrust and hatred can grow. Like any tool, technology in itself is not a bad thing. But the more we trust it to be the binding agent for our society, the more fragmented we seem to become.

So what should we do about it? I have a modest proposal: let's all try to cultivate our material intelligence. By this, I mean literacy in the physical world: the ability to understand it, just as someone who reads English can understand this sentence. If we can anchor ourselves in this way, attending closely to the objects near to us, we might just be able to regain our bearings, despite the complicated flux of 21st century life.

Though one does not need to be a maker to have material intelligence, it certainly helps. Knowledge of one craft or trade can inform an understanding of many others. And if you're not particularly handy (I am not, myself) the next best thing is to watch someone who is. Experiencing a craftsman at work, ideally in person, gives an immediate appreciation of the intimate choreography that skill involves. The key thing is to cultivate curiosity about the material world: to get in the habit of wondering how things were made, and by whom. This can help, in turn, to develop a healthy appreciation for just how much human ingenuity can be embedded within even an apparently simple thing.

Material intelligence may feel elusive, not only because of our practical detachment from our environment, but also because it is difficult to measure. When trying to describe this dimension of our awareness, people often use the phrase “tacit knowledge” – there is no way to put workmanship fully into words. In this sense, it is quite different from other, better recognized forms of intelligence. If you have ever taken an IQ test, you will remember that the questions are language-based, geometrical and mathematical puzzles, such as: “Mary, who is sixteen years old, is four times as old as her brother. How old will Mary be when she is twice as old as her brother?” (That’s right: 24.) You may also have heard of emotional intelligence quotient, or EQ, which is to feeling what IQ is to analytical thinking. After it was introduced by Daniel Goleman in a 1995 bestseller, emotional intelligence became a favored term in business schools and sociology departments, which developed means to measure it. Researchers made some satisfying discoveries; for example, it turns out that when solving a wide range of puzzles in a team setting, the average EQ of the team is more predictive of success than the average IQ, or the highest IQ score of any individual team member. The experiment seems to prove that we would all benefit if we really could get along.

Other types of intelligence have been proposed, too. In 1983, the Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner enumerated seven different types of mental faculty: musical intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, linguistic intelligence, spatial intelligence, personal intelligence, and kinaesthetic intelligence (the bodily aptitude that a natural athlete might possess). Other scholars have written about visual intelligence, arguing that it has been on the increase in recent decades, thanks to the rapid development of media with complicated and subtle messaging. This growing typology reflects a progressive mindset, a desire to value everyone’s contributions to a diverse society. The implication, usually unstated because it’s so radical, is that all people may be equally smart – just in different ways.

Adding material intelligence to the list is an important next step in extending this egalitarian

world view. The know-how of material trades – farming, car repair, house construction, hairdressing – simply do not have the same standing in our culture as immaterial pursuits like law, insurance or finance. Why? Not only because they can’t be objectively tested. These skills may be hard to set down on paper, or quantified, but proof of material intelligence is easy enough to see. Nor is it because of difficulty level. If a wall street trader and a tailor were to switch places for a day, neither would acquit themselves well; and while MBA programs usually last two years, the traditional period of apprenticeship for a bespoke tailor is seven. Nor is the higher respect paid to white-collar workers based on some fair-minded calculation of benefit to society. If that were true, many corporate executives would be giving away money, not raking it in.

No, the hierarchical arrangement of occupations, with materially-engaged skills gathered down at the bottom, results simply from the exercise of power. This dynamic has deep historical roots, based mainly in class conflict, and also involving prejudices based on gender and ethnicity. IQ tests themselves are a part of the story: they were developed in the nineteenth century, and their presumptive objectivity derives from the same attitudes that gave us the “social hygiene” movement and eugenics. Our tendency to overrate technical and linguistic aptitude and undervalue manual skills – the fact that we apply the word “smart” to phones and appliances more readily than to our fellow humans – is inherited from a discriminatory world view. It’s for the same reason that creative pursuits historically practiced by well-to-do white men, like painting and architecture, are accorded a high cultural status, while those of pretty much everyone else are granted the lower status of craft.

To redress these imbalances, it’s important not just to accord greater respect to material intelligence, but also to see it in very general terms, as an integrated whole. As mentioned above, those professions that do involve high levels of skill are often very specialized, which obscures connections between them. Craft is often contrasted to industry, for ex-

ample. To some extent, this opposition makes sense. Artisan production has often been understood as a remedy for the social ills that first arose during the industrial revolution: the grinding, subdivided labor of British mill towns prompted nostalgia for small country workshops. Yet setting craft against industry in this way can also lead to misperception. Whatever the scale, production always requires an understanding of materials, tools and processes somewhere along the line. The machines that make mass production possible are themselves extraordinary feats of craftsmanship.

Nor should we underestimate the role of material intelligence in science. It is easy enough to caricature artisans as instinctive and lab technicians as analytical. But in fact, craft makers possess extraordinary reserves of technical knowledge, while experimental scientists often talk about the importance of having “good hands.” The same goes for medicine. Caring for the human body demands much more than a knowledge of anatomy and chemistry; it’s a tactile business. Show me a surgeon without material intelligence, and I’ll say: thanks, but I’ll have my operation somewhere else.

Material intelligence also crosses over the conventional divide between production and consumption. Makers and users can equally appreciate the warmth and grain of wood, the cool hardness of metal, the pliability of rubber. Just as a skilled maker anticipates needs and reactions to their work, a really attentive user will be able to imaginatively reconstruct the way something was made. Ideally, an object serves as a bridge between these different perspectives. So material intelligence is indeed shared across many walks of life; it is a continuum of knowledge both wide and deep. Our tendency to chop it up into parts – craft versus industry, art versus science, producer versus consumer – erodes the potential for shared understandings.

Let’s return for a moment to the chair that you are sitting in. It’s as good a point of departure as any for an exploration of the material world. How would you find out about it, if you wanted to? Thoughts turn first to the

internet, of course – just Google it. But, unlike many other types of content (celebrity birthdays, nuanced discussions of long-ago military campaigns, full-length episodes of Scooby Doo), it turns out to be very difficult to get solid online information about a given physical thing. That is partly because manufacturers have no incentive to make their internal workings public. But it is also, counter-intuitively, because of the conceptual depth of material things.

There is an artwork, over fifty years old now, which serves as a good means of thinking this through: Joseph Kosuth’s *One and Three Chairs* (1965). It seems simple at first: just a chair, flanked on one side by a photograph showing the same chair, and on the other, a dictionary definition of the word ‘chair.’ It exemplifies the stance that Kosuth took in his essay “Art After Philosophy,” in which he boldly claimed that language-based thinking was played out, and only art could make further incursions into theoretical understanding, by exploring the “unsayable.” (The tendency in the 20th century, he wrote, was toward the “end of philosophy and the beginning of art.” Needless to say, professional philosophers did not agree.)

As a thought experiment, *One and Three Chairs* can indeed be taken in myriad directions. First, as the work’s title suggests, the arrangement could be seen either as one thing seen three ways, or three utterly dissimilar things, bound together through the complex workings of language and representation. If you have studied a little semiotics, you might notice that the three expressions of chairness conform to a classic tripartite division: we have the referent (the chair itself); an arbitrary sign (the word ‘chair’); and an index (the photo, which mechanically reproduces the chair). One might observe, too, that the evenly weighted triad of one-and-three can easily be broken down into other structures: two flat things and an object; two things that are specific (this particular chair and its photo), and one universal (a definition of chairs in general).

One might also speculate on the cultural content that is inevitably smuggled into the pho-

tograph, which has the deadpan, straight-on composition of a mug shot, and even into the dictionary entry, with its anthropomorphic terminology: a seat with a back, legs, and often arms. You might wonder how capacious the definition is, where its horizons might be. Is a rock a chair if you sit on it? If not, why not? And how do we arrive at a definition in the first place: do numerous examples accumulate into the meaning of a word, like arrivals at a party? Or does the concept precede the exemplars, imposing itself on them and giving them meaning?

In as much as this is Joseph Kosuth's best-known work, and he was one of the key protagonists of Conceptual Art, *One and Three Chairs* has attracted a great deal of discussion along these lines. That was exactly the artist's intention. He was primarily concerned to explore the workings of language and representation. There is a little depth charge, though, in the way that the physical chair literally takes precedence in the work, standing front and center. You might catch yourself referring to the chair in the middle as the "real one," and wondering just what you mean by that.

Consider: which of Kosuth's three chairs would occupy the most memory in a computer's hard drive? The dictionary definition is less than 1k. The photograph, in high resolution, would take up perhaps ten megabytes. But the chair is, in a sense, infinite. How would you capture it? The most exacting digital scan will only map its surface features, and even these only to a certain fidelity. And even if you could somehow translate a chair's atoms into data points, would that get you to the important stuff? The way your body feels as you sit, right now? The subtle messages about style and identity a chair transmits to those who look at it? This one unremarkable, everyday object transcends technology's capabilities to render the world around us into information.

It is comforting that the humblest objects resist the ongoing march of technology into our lives in this way, like still rocks in a swift current. This is part of what makes material intelligence special. Understanding even a

simple chair, truly understanding it, is an experiential matter. Googling it will only get you so far. Material intelligence is not just about compiling information. Treating an object as a point of entry into a production chain might be clarifying, for example; but it will not get you truly in touch with that thing, both literally and figuratively. There is an aesthetic aspect to be considered, and a kinaesthetic one too.

Another example: I have a favorite coffee mug, which is nothing special. It's one of those heavy ones that you get in diners, with a shape like a little nuclear reactor and a satisfyingly chunky C-shaped handle. As it happens, I do know a bit about the origin of this design. It was first popularized following the Second World War by the Victor Company, at a factory previously used to manufacture ceramic insulators for telegraph and power lines. They used the same thick, slip-cast porcelain to make the mug, and an American classic was born. That's a fun fact – but it has little to do with my drinking preferences. When I raise it to my lips each morning, I feel the warmth that's pervaded the clay, the gentle gloss of the glaze, the round roll of the rim as the coffee flows over. It connects in my mind to other ceramics I have known and loved, in museums and in my kitchen cabinets, sometimes made by friends, other times in factories far away. Every time I use it, I'm situating myself within a broad human fabric. The pleasure that an object like this can give is a crucial aspect of material intelligence, and the motivational promise it holds. Very often these days, we are reminded of the divisions that exist in society, particularly across demographic lines. Language gets blocked at those boundaries, even as it helps to articulate and enforce them. But objects cross such barriers effortlessly. They have often been the advance emissaries of exchange, as when Chinese ceramics poured into Europe in the 17th century. In those days, porcelain vessels decorated with blue dragons prompted a range of responses, from awe and curiosity to envy – including the desire to imitate the imports using domestic materials. Eventually, knock-offs of Chinese blue and white were made all over the world, from Turkey to the Netherlands to Philadelphia. Was there economic competition and cultural exoticism at work?

Sure. But fundamentally, this was a positive process, in which cultures encountered and learned about one another.

A similar potential exists today. Just imagine: what if children in our primary schools were trained to identify and manipulate a basic lexicon of materials, to understand their properties and potential uses? What if vocational training were considered equally admirable as an academic education? What if we were all alive to the things around us, and could browse them as easily as we do their Twitter feeds? The embrace of such connoisseurship could have dramatic effects. I titled my recent book *Fewer Better Things*, in hopes of communicating the value of this sort of focus and discernment. This is not the same as encouraging luxury production. “Better” does not mean precious. It does not imply rare substances, or extraordinary expenditures of workmanship. It just means an object that extraordinarily feels right to you, as my \$7 diner mug does to me. Once I found it, I didn’t need to keep buying coffee cups. I was satisfied. I try to look for the same sense of resolution in all the things I own: the curtains in my house, the leather bag I use to carry my laptop, the jeans I wear as I type these words, and yes, the desk chair I’m sitting in, which was made back in 1969 by a fellow called Art Carpenter (his real name). I could not have made any of these things myself. It so happens that I met all the people that did, though, and they are daily reminders of those makers’ skill and enterprise. In their materiality is contained the workings of human creativity, care and commitment.

As a museum curator, I am lucky to have landed in a line of work that brings me into contact with makers, and that constantly reminds me of the beauty and vitality of things. But the feeling that I am trying to describe is open to all. And it is instinctive – even if we’re not all in touch with that instinct these days. Reconnecting with it shouldn’t be hard: it can be simple as picking up a pretty pebble while walking along the beach, in serene solitude or in the company of loved ones, and bringing it home as a reminder of a day well spent. For this purpose, any pebble will do. It takes just a moment to invest it with specialness.

It may sound utopian, but if everyone could extend that same simple attitude to the things in their lives, the benefits would be incalculable. The bad news is that the atomization of our society is getting worse all the time. The good news is that, though it may appear otherwise, we actually are all in it together – together with one another, and with material things, which can give us purchase in an increasingly disorienting world. We live, day by day, in a torrent of negativity. Often it seems unbridgeable. But objects can be our stepping stones. Recognize them for what they are, and we might just get to the other side.

CRAFTS ARCHIVE IN CONTEXT

CRAFTS ARCHIVE IN CONTEXT

At the start of MADE IN, the project partners mapped out as many as 41 active craft enterprises, and offered a sneak peek into their workshops, histories, techniques, family legacies and daily realities - in Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia and Austria.

The mapping covered a different level and scope in each country: in Zagreb it was the level of a neighborhood, in Belgrade the city as a whole, in Austria the example of a region and, finally, in Slovenia the entire country.

The following texts bring some of the conclusions, reflections or new questions opened by the mapping exercises in each of the different contexts, based on workshop visits, interviews and informal dialogues with the protagonists of the local crafts eco-systems.

THE STATE OF CRAFTS IN CROATIA

by Koraljka Vlajo
Museum of Arts and Crafts, Zagreb

The future of traditional crafts in Croatia hangs in fine balance. Right before our eyes small craft shops are, one by one, disappearing from towns and cities. Partially, it is a consequence of historical and political regional circumstances and, in part, it is due to globalisation process and overwhelming quantities of low-cost goods that are pushing out more expensive local products. As elsewhere in Europe, the crafts in Croatia have long history of structured education and established procedures for transfer of knowledge.

The state system of craftsmanship was particularly advanced during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and then further developed in various other regional state associations. The lively artisan scene of the times was further enriched by diverse influences — Western, Oriental, Mediterranean — that have shaped Croatian culture. Unfortunately, the acquired level of craftsmanship seriously deteriorated after the Second World War, while Croatia was a part of socialist Yugoslavia. Yugoslav attitude towards private enterprise was not encouraging further progress of crafts or craftsmanship: the number and the quality of craftspeople drastically decreased as new government strongly favoured investing in development of large-scale industry. Already in precarious position, many of the skilled craft workshops did not survive the transition period of the 1990s and the influx of cheap goods.

Today, Croatian craftspeople are facing numerous, sometimes insurmountable problems. The years of governmental negligence brought them on the brink of survival. Rather than producing their own wares, many of them are simply enduring by undertaking small tasks, fixing and repairing goods.

Thus, they are dependent on pedestrian traffic. At the same time the price of rent is forcing them out of the city centre. The survival of crafts depends on transfer of knowledge from master to apprentice, but there are no apprentices to be had. Many of existing workshops are led by aging and exhausted craftspeople, past their prime and set in their ways, who find it hard to adopt new ideas or to modify long established habits and work processes. Yet, some are stubbornly persisting, carving out their own small market niches, adjusting to new technologies, even training apprentices to continue their work. Naturally, it is mostly younger generation of craftspeople who are finding ways to incorporate their practice into the market and contemporary urban environment. Those are the ones specializing in unique work (like Lebarović Clockmaker's Shop maintaining public clocks), discovering exceptional materials to work with (like *Močvarni Hrast Master Carpentry*) working with fossilized timber), cooperating with architects and designers (like *Lapidarium Jewellery Making & Fine Metalsmithing*),

or experimenting with new technologies (like *Škrgatić Hat Making*).

However, the position of remaining craftspeople remains precarious, their fortunes extremely vulnerable to state of local economy, their future dependant on finding the successors to continue their craft.

COLLABORATION AND HANDICRAFT

by Cvetka Požar

Museum of Architecture & Design, Ljubljana

Nearly two and a half decades, since the mid-1990s, crafts have been making a comeback across Europe, even though they have never completely disappeared, despite the predominantly serial mass production. One of the lesser-known facts, for instance, is that traditional craftsmanship played a crucial role in the shaping of the new aesthetics of Italian design between 1945 and 1960¹, in the period of modernism, which in principle rejected manual production.

With the rise of industrialisation in the 19th century the importance of handicraft gradually started to decline. At the beginning of the 20th century it was Walter Benjamin² who drew attention to this phenomenon; for him, there was a connection between the metaphorical power of old crafts, such as weaving and potting, and storytelling — they were both threatened by industrialisation. But Benjamin was not nostalgic; he found a solution in objects such as Duchamp's readymades, authentic works of art that are a product of invention of an uninhibited mind.

¹ Penny Spark, *The Straw Donkey: Tourist Kitch or Proto-Design?* Craft and Design in Italy, *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 11, Issue 1, 1998, pp. 59 – 69.

² Tanya Harrod, Introduction, *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 11, Issue 1, 1998, pp. 1 – 4; Esther Leslie, Walter Benjamin: Traces of Craft, *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 11, Issue 1, 1998, pp. 5 – 13.

³ Nicholas Coeckelberghs was invited to give a lecture for a MADE IN workshop conducted by designer Lukas Wegwerth in Urban Magušar's pottery workshop in Radovljica between 9 and 13 September 2019.

The *MADE IN: Crafts–Design Narratives* project re-examines the alternatives to handicrafts today, when certain skills are being forgotten and those who have them do not have anyone to pass them on to, while those who persist have a hard time making ends meet with their work, for one reason or another. Architect Nicholas Coeckelberghs from Brussel's BC Architects points out³ that as an architect he wants to be involved in every step of the construction process. BC Architects take already used construction materials or excavated soil from construction sites to make bricks. In doing so, they employ both machine processing and traditional construction techniques. This comprehensive approach offers a solution for a more sustainable lifestyle, which is bound to (and already has) become a necessary component of our lives. BC Architects see a solution for this in a combination of craft and industrialisation. We could find a connection here between Benjamin's reflection on craftsmanship, for which he saw the future in embracing the new, in inventions such as a mass-produced urinal which when put in a new context turns, through the artist's intervention, into a work of art. The present-day analogy is mainly about a change in perspective on something that might facilitate the survival of something which may no longer have a reason to exist, but may at the same time have certain values

important for the future that we do not want to see disappear. But it is also about a change in perspective on that which is disappearing on account of massive changes which call for systemic solutions (lack of natural resources brought about by climate change). We could begin by being open to asking questions in the first place.

OBSERVATIONS ON HANDICRAFT IN SLOVENIA TODAY — THE CASE OF SELECTED TEN CRAFTSPEOPLE

It is not common for the Museum of Architecture and Design to feature handicrafts, but they made their way into our programme in 2014 at the 24th Biennial of Design BIO 50: 3, 2, 1 ... TEST through Hidden Crafts and Nanotourism themes. When looking for the craftspeople for our MADE IN project we started with traditional crafts, but our aim was to select those that either have the potential for the future or are pursued by people seeking new opportunities for developing their craft. In the course of our investigations we detected certain similarities, differences and the problems that define the position of handicrafts in Slovenia. The most prominent commonality shared by the featured craftspeople is their harnessing the skills and knowledge passed on to them by their ancestors or master craftsmen. Some of them stay true to the tradition and create sustainable products, such that we have no need to replace in their lifecycle. Only a few have adapted the traditional approaches to the demands of the market and made a successful breakthrough abroad. The rest continue to work the traditional way, but have to deal with the lack of the natural resources (e.g. husks from non-hybrid corn variety) that are the only materials they can use to make their products. This problem has forced many to look for new materials which they could use.

However, development and progress come with changes in society and these in turn also change needs. Who still uses big, wooden handmade vessels and buckets that people once used to prepare and store food in? They have long been replaced by lighter plastic vessels. Our increasingly consumerist lifestyle

does not support the old ways of food-keeping. Craftspeople who still make such things are few and far between; some have adapted to the consumer-oriented times and revamped their state-of-the-art products into decorative miniatures. The production method has been adapted accordingly, for such products cannot last without glue. In the past, craftsmanship, the production method and the use of materials were often a reflection of one's living in harmony with nature. The skills acquired through practice produced quality and, more often than not, sustainable products. The key was understanding the material, the process itself and last, but not least, the wholeheartedness of it all.

The MADE IN project serves as an opportunity for us to raise a number of questions: What is the purpose of collaboration between craftspeople and designers? Where does it lead to? The future of handicraft and perhaps even its survival in the market? Something more? Perhaps awareness of a more sustainable use of resources, use of local materials, and environmentally-friendly production? The sharing of skills that in the past allowed us to live in harmony with our environment, revitalisation of traditional techniques and exploration of new alternatives to how they are used are some of the ways to new solutions for the future, ones we are bound to explore. This can be achieved if we collaborate, network and, most importantly, embrace new knowledge. New skills and knowledge can pave the way to other creative processes. Collaboration between designers and craftspeople is beneficial for both. The former learn the traditional skills and use them in novel ways, while the latter become acquainted with contemporary work methods and processes that can facilitate their development and even existence. But, one needs to be receptive for such in the first place, or in Alice Rowsthorn's words: "The future of craft may well be determined by its ability to embrace the elasticity of contemporary culture by making tactical incursions into other disciplines, as its old foe design has done so deftly."

⁴ Alice Rowsthorn, *Design as an Attitude*, JRP Ringier, Les presses du réel, Zürich, Dijon 2018, p. 48.

CREATING FUTURE ON THE VALUES OF TRADITION AND CULTURE

by Renate Breuss
Werkraum Bregenzerwald, Andelsbuch

Rolling hills and high mountains, vast pastures and dense forests, picturesque villages, traditional houses and modern architecture, 32.000 inhabitants: that is Bregenzerwald at a first glance. A closer look shows that this cultural landscape has been formed by its human usage and behaviour, shaped by the Crafts Industry, Tourism and Agriculture. Knowledge and skills of the craftspeople are the intangible part of the cultural heritage, consistently developed by innovative and passionate persons, in team work. Today these values are combined with carefully thought-out modern design and sustainable thinking. For 20 years the crafts cooperation of the Werkraum Bregenzerwald, uniting around 100 craftspeople under the splendid roof of the Werkraum House, has been promoting cross-sectorial exchange and developing closer links between creative and crafts industries.

As the interviews with representatives of the regional craftsmanship show close relationship to the material in general and working with wood in particular is essential. In the past as now carpenters, cabinet makers and manufacturers of wooden windows, facades, doors and floors go to great lengths to ensure that the wood is cut at the right sign, and to leave it to dry out slowly in order to then process it in accordance with its true nature. Working with local wood is key to a profound

knowledge, considering all sensual and atmospheric qualities right from the beginning in the production process. Modern architects and designers both take profit of this high level of material culture and work-based research. In many family run businesses future and knowledge transfer is fairly secured, when successors are working hand in hand with the fathers in the first years. Having home and workshop in close proximity, the children become familiar with what their parents do from an early age, “knowing the workshop better than the sandpit”. Coming from a different cultural approach the younger generations follow new ways and methods, building closer links between higher education and vocational training. The recent establishment of the Werkraum School contributes to the objectives of attracting young people and raising awareness for the crafts potentials. Even in a favourable environment recruiting of good professionals is a daily challenge, especially for the small structured businesses in a rural region.

Particularly affected are professions at risk. A woman master tailor who explores and pushes the boundaries of her profession faces several handicaps due to high quality standards in her own work. Weaknesses of the vocational training in the trade school cannot be kept up in the workshop, ordering high quality fabrics in small quantities is getting harder

and harder. The same happens with elementary tools, good scissors, chalk sharpeners or foxgloves are not available anymore, in the quality the craftswoman is used to. Workshops and equipment reflect organization and all steps of a workflow. As business and markets grew so did the company buildings. Workspaces spread over several storeys and places are followed by new and modern buildings uniting showrooms, customer service, planning and administration, works preparation, storage, production and dispatch under one roof. Analogue tools and digital technologies are often used hand in hand, depending on sizes and markets, on personal or online sales. The strong entrepreneurial mindset of a manufacturer of wooden-soled shoes combines a fully automated production line with manual controlled tools smartly. Translating ideas into prototypes and getting them ready for serial production is the passion of a new company founder. To find best solutions for his integrated lighting he pleads for teamwork. Thanks to the Bregenzerwald's strong craft culture, 85 percent of his cooperating partners are locals. This keeps added value in the region, living standards high and the business growing.

Cooperative attitudes and learning from other sectors benefit from decades of experience. Cheese for example has been produced traditionally in small cooperative dairies, "as the one man's cow does not produce a big wheel of cheese". Next to the tradition of being organised in crafts guilds, continued in the contemporary organization of the Werkraum Bregenzerwald, these dairy cooperatives are a source for the vivid sense of community, an essential for the regional identity. Bringing the cattle of different farmers up to the mountain pastures in summer, plays a valuable role for the cultivation and conservation of the landscape of the Bregenzerwald. When it comes to future, this sharing culture counts more than ever.

DOING THINGS WELL

by Relja Bobić
Nova Iskra, Belgrade

For centuries, crafts have been an integral part of the social fabric of Serbia and the greater region of the Balkans. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, specific craft hubs — for example, the town of Pirot largely dedicated to the tradition of handweaving and trading of rugs, kilims and cloths — were recognized across the country as important driving forces of the overall economic development. Carpenters, braziers, potters, book binders, tile makers, perfumers, shoe and hat makers, tailors or candy makers were among the most well-respected members of local communities, and among the most successful entrepreneurs of their times.

The education system recognized and supported these professions, and most craftspeople before the Second World War held a certificate, or *majstorsko pismo*, recognizing the knowledge they gained and their excellence within a given craft. For most of the crafts, education in specialized schools was available across the country. However, two breaking points have changed the livelihood and position of crafts in Serbia forever: one of them a local socio-political change, while the other one was a more global shift on a macro-economic level.

The first one was the post-Second World War nationalization of private property and resources. Any entrepreneurial activity or operation was at that point regarded as bour-

geois, and consequently closed down. Any craftspeople who intended to stay committed to their skill, upon which entire families were depending on, would need to start from scratch. This is a situation we stumbled upon during our mapping for the MADE IN project almost each time we interviewed at a workshop that has been in the family for two or three generations.

The second process is more general, common and recognizable in any part of the world in the second half of 20th century. Increasing industrialization, mass production, automation of production processes and, finally, economic globalization and shift of production to the Far East have diminished the number of craft workshops that are still around today. People prefer to opt for the always available, cheaper and expendable products, and decades had to pass before many of us realized that “we cannot afford the cheap things”.

Of course, the specific situation of former Yugoslavia and the particular fallout that took over the region at the very end of the past century did everything but help the crafts situation in Serbia. Most of the countries that share this traumatic, decade-long experience, are still struggling with the mostly unsuccessful and corrupt transitions from socialism to our current, clumsy neoliberal realities. Still, one would expect that craft workshops are

completely gone, or that the few that are that are left are just a part of a touristic cabinet of curiosities, for those looking for an alternative tourist experience of a city. We would expect that they are desperate, and that we (designers, creative entrepreneurs) need to save them.

However, during the city-wide mapping we undertook across Belgrade, we realized that the few (traditional) craft workshops are still surviving are actually running their mostly family business along the lines that their ancestors laid out, and are in no need of salvation from the contemporary creators. On the contrary, they are usually so busy with their actual work that they do not have the time to invest into interactions that go beyond their daily routines related to the production chain, distribution or sales. The craftspeople who are settled in a peculiar market niche – and/or who approach their work in an honest and dedicated way, who are happy and thankful for what they have and avoid to take bigger risks by scaling their businesses — definitely have dedicated customers and the demand for their products or services is high enough to sustain them going.

The current reality of traditional crafts is what it is, and there is definitely no way back to the romanticism from decades ago, when most of utilities, accessories or products were well-made. However, we should be delighted to discover that crafts are not stranded in the romantic image of an elderly male person sitting in a dusty workshop. Craft is an approach and a way of doing, craft is an inclination to do things well and with dedication, as Richard Sennet has underlined in his seminal work *The Craftsman*. If we move towards this perspective, we should not embrace the grim image of the future of crafts. For those craftspeople understanding their calling in such a way, there will always be customers, there will always be work to be done and there will always be an abundance of warm and valuable human interactions around beautifully created items, objects and products.

EXPOSE

EXPOSE

CURATING CRAFTS

Making, thinking, (re)connecting*

by Evelien Bracke
Design Museum Ghent

Evelien Bracke is a curator and project coordinator. She holds an MA in Art History from Ghent University. From 2010 - 2016 she has worked for Z33, house for contemporary art in Hasselt, where she curated and coordinated several exhibitions, amongst others 'Manufactuur 3.0' (2016-2017), 'Atelier à Habiter' (2013-2014), 'The Wilde Things'. The so contemporary jewellery collection of Mrs. Wilde (2013-2014), 'All the Knives' (Any printed story on request) (2012) and 'Mind the System', 'Find the Gap' (2012).

She was involved in different research projects at Sint Lucas University College of Art and Design Antwerp, worked at Fifty One Fine Art Photography in Antwerp and at Design Academy Eindhoven (Master Social Design). From February 2018 onwards she is working for Design Museum Ghent.

I am very honoured to be here in Zagreb today. I think it is very important to have these kinds of international critical gatherings – in which we can go beyond only ‘good news shows’, and can dive more critically into the difficulties, challenges and opportunities related to the curation and presentation of design and crafts in a contemporary context. Using four case study exhibitions as a starting point, I hope to open up some thoughts and reflections.

Since one year now, I am working as a curator and program coordinator at Design Museum Gent, in Belgium. And like many institutions of this sort, the evolution of its name reflects its shifting and ambiguous position towards crafts and design.

Initially started in 1903 as a ‘models museum’, after the idea of, for example, the V&A or the MAK in Vienna, the museum collected good examples of various crafts (furniture, textile, ceramics, silver, copper, glass...), in order to inspire artists and craftsmen and provide support for their training. Before changing the name to Design Museum Gent in 2002, it was called Museum voor Sierkunst (Museum for Decorative Arts) and Museum voor Sierkunst en Vormgeving (Museum for Decorative Arts and Design) after 1995. So along with the name change, in 2002 the focus switched from the applied arts and crafts to the broader scope of industrial and artistic design. The museum was long seen as a ‘product design’ museum, where craft and craft traditions were highly dismissed in exhibitions.

However, with the exhibition ‘Poème Brut’ I wanted to bring in again the importance and relevance of crafts in this museum, referring also to its own history.

Poème Brut - 30.03.2018 – 04.11.2018

With ‘Poème Brut’ I wanted to focus on the current momentum or ‘craft revival’, that is very much alive the last years. As Alice Rawsthorn notices: These days, designers drop craft references with alacrity, and design graduation shows are replete with investigations into artisanal history. ‘Poème Brut’ highlights this evolution of the design-

er as a maker, craftsman and alchemist. It is intriguing to look at the ways the participating designers of ‘Poème Brut’ define themselves. Roxane Lahidji, reinventing salt as a sustainable design material, sees herself as ‘an alchemist as much as a designer’. Dutch designer Dirk Vander Kooij is ‘a contemporary craftsman who embraces technology and machines’. Studio Furthermore develops work with ‘a craft-centric design method’ informed by culture, science and technology. Brecht Duijf and Lenneke Langenhuisen from BELÉN work ‘in collaboration with the material’.

Curators Siegrid Demyttenaere and atelier lachaert dhanis (a combination of a design expert and a jeweller/gallerist) selected international iconic designers, as well as emerging young talent, but also established makers from craft disciplines, like ceramics and silver smithing. Even though, it is debatable whether there has been the same degree of experimentation within established craft disciplines as there has been among the designers who have ventured their terrain. Craft has also benefited from an injection of new thinking and new techniques. ‘Poème Brut’ highlights designers’ renewed interest in crafts, local techniques and materials. In recent years, their focus has shifted to manufacturing processes and materiality as a counterpoint to globalisation and dematerialisation. A central theme in the exhibition is the outcome of this research into materials and techniques. Some designs use old, forgotten materials and new techniques or technology to process them, while others are the result of an old craft in combination with a new material. All the presented design objects are tactile, with a poetic undercurrent and a largely ‘rough’ and ‘unfinished’ design idiom. The curators highlighted these expressive qualities of craft processes and objects in a series of poetic and intimate object ensembles. They could be seen as ‘still lifes’ embedded within a particular craft aesthetic; displayed as a kind of new ‘models’ to inspire the audience (referring to the models museum it once was).

The exhibition also focused on the maker – object relation, and the processes, techniques and materials that are used. The visitor gets

insight into these aspects on the backside of a series of postcards that correspond with the rooms of the ensembles. Moreover, a wall with videos highlighted the making processes of some of the exhibited pieces in more detail.

The Wilde Things - 13.10.2013 – 19.01.2014

While 'Poème Brut' was an exhibition featuring merely designers, and a smaller amount of craftsmen, the exhibition 'The Wilde Things. The so contemporary jewellery collection of Mrs. Wilde' focussed on jewellery makers and to a smaller extent on designers related to jewellery (some of the designers present in the exhibition were Formafantasma and Irma Foldenyi). An important aim of this exhibition was to encourage young jewellery makers to debate and reflect upon their position in society, something that I acknowledged in the work of designers, but to a lesser extent in the work of jewellery makers trained from a crafts perspective. However, I am convinced that the future of craft may well be determined by its ability to embrace the elasticity of contemporary culture and its forays into dynamic new fields, such as software.

'The Wilde Things' is a show I curated for Z33, House for contemporary art in 2013, in which I tried to define my fascination for contemporary jewellery. I have always found it one of the most exciting forms of contemporary object culture, able to cross between the public and private spheres of everyday life. The intense relationship between subject and object is unique in the visual arts. Jewellery, moreover, is mobile, wearable and semantically variable depending on the context from which it is viewed.

In this exhibition, I wanted to highlight the relationship between jewellery and its wearer (and not so much the relation between maker and object, as in 'Poème Brut'). In contrast to most exhibitions of contemporary jewellery, which mainly focus on the intentions of the maker, 'The Wilde Things' puts forward a different layer of meaning: that of the wearer. The exhibition shows how jewellery can evoke memories and associations; how it is, in this sense, intertwined with life as 'material memories'. In 'The Wilde Things', contemporary jewellery is presented in a context, namely in

the intimate and personal environment of the wearer which is where, in essence, it belongs.

Having as its starting point the relationship between jewellery and its wearer, 'The Wilde Things' was conceived as a narrative exhibition in which a story and a fictional character play the leading role. From the outset, the concept incorporated other disciplines, such as literature and film. Contemporary jewellery can, in this way, establish inspiring relationships beyond the boundaries of its own discipline and enter into dialogue with a different audience. 'Mrs. Wilde' – an elderly lady with a love for contemporary jewellery – was created following conversations with the writer Oscar van den Boogaard. Based on a selection of 25 contemporary jewellery pieces from international makers, Oscar van den Boogaard wrote a story about Mrs. Wilde, her jewellery collection and the personal memories and associations attached to it. Aside from 22 existing creations, three designers were asked to design a new piece for the fictional Mrs. Wilde. Filmmaker Manon de Boer, in turn, created a film that made the relationship between Mrs. Wilde and her jewellery tangible, and translated the story into the dimension of the exhibition space. Together, the story (published in a booklet), the 25 pieces of jewellery and the film formed a whole; a narrative exhibition experience. As a visitor, one literally stepped into the world of Mrs. Wilde. 'The Wilde Things' was an exploration of a new presentation model for contemporary jewellery, in a context and within a narrative framework.

Manufactuur 3.0 - 01.10.2016 – 08.01.2017

In 2016, I curated the exhibition 'Manufactuur 3.0' at Z33. An exhibition focussing on new production models in a fast changing world. Where 'Poème Brut' highlighted the maker – object relation, and the processes, techniques and materials that are used; 'Manufactuur 3.0' deepened this topic of 'making' and 'producing' on a larger, economic level. Moreover, it did not focus on the finished object as end result, but on the production process.

As stated by Kate Franklin and Caroline Till in their book, *Radical Matter*: "We are potentially on the brink of a materials revolution that

could help rebalance our relationship with our planet and reshape society for the better. (...) We need a better, smarter, more cyclical approach, in contrast to our current linear ‘take-make-discard’ relationship with materials. We are beginning to see that alternative systems of production and consumption are possible.” Digital revolutions, ecological awareness and shifts in the fields of work and labour encourage us to rethink the traditional industrial production model. MANUFACTURER 3.0 brought designers and artists together to work around alternative production scenarios. The exhibition functioned as a production platform, continuously in progress.

The combination of digital revolutions and a stronger ecological awareness amongst others, incite change and a rethinking of the principal logic of the production system. In the current economic system, in which commercial interests still come first, products have a limited lifespan, meaning consumers often need to buy new ones. Printers, washing machines and toasters are after a certain period of use in need of replacement, increasing the mountain of waste. That same logic makes long lasting products uninteresting for the producer. Yet there exists a light bulb that has been burning for more than 106 years at a fire station in California. This ‘Centennial Light’ shows that products can indeed be designed to last long(er).

Alternatives to the linear model and the basic logic of the industrial production become apparent in circular models, the digitally inspired Maker Movement (digicraft) and the emergence of local initiatives with emphasis on traditional, local production (handicraft). These phenomena breathe the same zeitgeist, characterized by a transition to new models and systems.

How can designers, architects and artists generate insights in this changing environment, and contribute to the new production models? How can they reveal problems and simultaneously feed the debate on which future is desirable, what society and what types of production to pursue? And what can crafts complement to this? Given the complexity of the subject, various alternatives and propos-

als are put forward. A large part of it places itself within the digitization of the production process, with technological developments, the maker movement and Fab Labs. Digital revolutions have a great impact on our daily lives and create new forms of participation, communication, transparency and peer-to-peer collaborations, which translate into production models. In the past decade, we found ways to invent, to make and to work together, all on the Internet. Now those lessons are being applied onto the real world. Designers and users build machines and look for alternatives to mass production and distribution. On the one hand, there is the search for autarky: making products for personal use. On the other hand, defunct local production force is being regained in the form of thousands of smaller businesses and initiatives aimed at niche markets.

‘Hacking Households’, an ongoing collaboration of independent designers, searches for alternatives to production models of household objects. Electronic devices have a limited durability with a design that is not easily repaired or modified. Producing devices as open hardware, according to the principle of open source software, ensures that products can be shared, modified, repaired and transformed into other objects by its users.

‘AnOtherShoe’ is a long-term research project focused on new ways of producing, consuming and designing shoes. Eugenia Morpurgo and Sophia Guggenberger have developed an experimental open production line for custom-designed shoes. An open online production platform with laser cutting and 3D printing facilities enables the user to download shoe designs and assemble their own designs from separate parts. If a part becomes worn out in use, the shoe owner can ‘print’ a new copy in a local workshop/Fab Lab and so repair the shoe.

Other examples in the exhibition focus on local and artisanal qualities. They invest in re-evaluation and rediscovery of local aspects, local economies and small-scale production models in a world dominated by globalization and top-down perspectives. In the global supply chain, more risk factors favour production

of items closer to the place of use (short chains) and with local raw materials. Moreover, the emergence of the 'craft' movement and the manufacture of craft products on a large scale created a wide demand for such niche products. These exclusive products are made by people and online communities who refuse to conform to the economic demands of mass production.

Photographer Kristof Vrancken, for example, searches for natural methods to develop photos. The anotype procedure makes use of pure and natural ingredients, finding its origins in vegetal dying of fabrics and objects. The plants used for this process have a significant historical value. Far-reaching industrialization declined the use of many of these plants and chemical pigments replaced products such as colorants extracted from plants. The chemical variants are indeed easier and cheaper, but unfortunately with severe negative consequences for the environment. Developing pictures with local vegetable dyes, preferably found at the place where the photo was taken, creates an awareness of time, local resources and development. It forms a critical counterbalance to contemporary snapshot culture.

Dutch Atelier NL makes products that show the richness of the earth and the value of local raw materials. Each material provides a different product and tells a different story. For 'Manufactuur 3.0', Atelier NL mapped the commodities present in Hasselt. Depending on the materials found, it examined how to make clay or glassware (gin glasses) out of local sand.

The exhibition functioned as a new type of manufacture, a production place where during a period of three months, designers, artists and architects created new work based on alternative production scenarios. The focus shifted from presenting products as end result to showing processes. The exhibition took the shape of a methodical and ever-changing whole. The visitor walked into the mental and creative space of designers and artists, and was challenged to look differently – not at a finished product, but into the preceding processes that often remain invisible.

The dialogues and encounters between residents and visitors are elements in an experimental and largely unpredictable course. It required an open mind of everyone involved.

'Manufactuur 3.0' experimented with the total exhibition format: how can we produce alternatives that correspond to a changing society? This is valid also in respect to circularity and sustainability: how can exhibitions be connected? How can we establish lasting collaborations with artists and designers? The model of 'Manufactuur 3.0' is compatible with the fact that designers and artists are constantly on the road and travel from residency to residency. This requires flexibility. Art and design practices are often aimed at other collaboration models and forms of knowledge exchange. They are part of a changing attitude and of a developing landscape of values. In this landscape, we should reconsider which future is desirable, and what society and types of production we want to pursue.

Studio ZZM - 30.06.2017 – 06.05.2018

In both 'Manufactuur 3.0' and 'Studio ZZM', the focus shifted from presenting products as end results - to showing processes. In 'Studio ZZM', which I curated together with Jan Boelen for the Zuiderzeemuseum in Enkhuizen, The Netherlands, design is not shown as a beautiful tangible object, but as system, narrative and relationship. The Zuiderzeemuseum is a Dutch open air museum devoted to preserving the cultural heritage and maritime history from the old Zuiderzee region. It actually has two parts: an open air museum and an indoor museum, which is dedicated partly to design exhibitions.

The open-air museum feels quite artificial, even though it has obsessively tried to maintain the authentic historical image. However, it is frozen in time and not at all dynamic to the seasons, or even the weekly rhythm that these little villages had. This is why we decided to bring in a disruptive element, a pavilion. We tried different forms but, in the end, it is a contemporary building where contemporary practices like education and some Design Academy proposals could be grouped. Instead of spreading out the educational programme of the Studio ZZM around the muse-

um, we decided to group it into that one pavilion. With *Open Structures_ Playstation01* by Thomas Lommé and Christiane Hoegner, a collaborative open ‘meccano’ system was designed for the pavilion. The designers used existing elements from the OS archive, supplemented by new and site-specific components made together with the Zuiderzeemuseum’s craftsmen.

The Zuiderzeemuseum implemented designer collaborations already 10 years ago, and was a pioneer in the field. But now many other museums also started using this concept. What we tried to do was to push them ten steps further, to develop a Zuiderzeemuseum 2.0. We felt the museum was underestimating the potential of working with designers. Previously, designers would simply do something with a material or a craft, which was often not even related to the museum. And they saw the craftsmen merely as fabricators of their ideas. But we noticed the potential of the designers working with the craftsmen and learning from each other in a dialogue.

The designers role as a connector was a guiding principle in this exhibition. This idea of ‘connection’ ranged from connection of the past with the present and the future, and connection of objects from the collection of the Zuiderzeemuseum with our recent environment, as well as future objects, all the way to the connection of the different nationalities. Rather than just talking about Europe, we also wanted to bring in the East and how elements of the East came to the West and vice-versa. The Zuiderzeemuseum is in fact a very international, cosmopolitan environment because of the VOC’s trade and spice routes in the 17th century. We wanted to bring back the world to the Zuiderzeemuseum by inviting a culturally different group of designers. We wanted designers to connect the collection, the stories, the narratives and the crafts in one place, and then work, practice and learn around this connection. That was how our concept of the studio came about. We initiated six studios with six different designers. These were Martino Gamper from Italy, Jing He from China, Noam Toran and Marloes ten Bhömer from the UK and the Netherlands, Åbäke from the UK, Alexis Gautier from Bel-

gium, and Studio Brynjar & Veronika from Iceland and Germany. They all chose to work closely together with the craftspeople of the museum to develop their projects. They relied on the empowerment of the craftspeople and introduced them to their potential. By working with the designers, they were introduced to knowledge and ideas that could inspire them to really make a difference. Through ‘Studio ZZM’, the craftspeople talked to each other, exchanged knowledge about projects, and even made a working plan. The face boat of Åbäke was the most effective in this regard. In order for all the craftspeople to build a boat, they had to have discussions and meetings. Whereas normally they might just inform each other about what they are doing, now they had to collaborate. It was fundamental. During the exhibition period the craftsmen still continued working on the boat – it was only finished near the end, and afterwards it travelled as a scale model and embassy of the Zuiderzeemuseum to the Dutch Design Week, and it is now in the collection of the FRAC in Duinkerke, France.

All six designers focused on different aspects and potentials of crafts. Some projects really emphasised collaboration, like the Åbäke’s face boat. Others, like Noam Toran and Marloes ten Bhömer, focused more on the immaterial aspects of craft, such as the social and political dimensions that are just as valuable as the material and technical qualities. We thought it was important for the museum, to see this range of potentialities of crafts.

‘Studio ZZM’ was a very learnful project and I was struck by the power of exhibitions and design projects to challenge and change institutes and organisations. Just by playing with the content, change can be instigated. This is especially true if an organisation is open to trying to understand and has processes in place to assimilate, adapt and evolve from the experience.

DIALOGUES

CRAFTS AND DESIGN WITHIN A REACH OF A BIKE RIDE

Karla Paliska in conversation with
Andrea de Chirico

SUPERLOCAL, 0 miles production is a global network that promotes local manufacturing. It fosters a future vision on crafts and more in general on production. Starting from the fab lab network, it elaborates a further layer, embracing also traditional manufacturing techniques. It is through the mix between new and old manufacturing techniques that every object is made. SUPERLOCAL's final goal is to become a movement of people connecting resources and labour locally but having a global impact. After being implemented in four different locations in Europe, the system develops through a constellation of activities, including local productions, production tours and lectures internationally. In doing so, it helps local economies, promotes local craft traditions and encourages new manufacturing mentality.

Andrea de Chirico was born in Rome and is based in Bolzano (IT). He got a MA in Social Design at Design Academy Eindhoven and BA in Industrial Design at ISIA in Rome. His work focuses on the intersection between convention, traditional and modern making. He designs tools, systems and objects with social and environmental awareness, always linked with a rigorous analysis of the context. His practice is open and accessible, creating a platform to connect with different groups internationally, remodelling everyday products for different contexts.

O Miles production, is all about alternative production scenarios, and shift toward, as you call it constructive capitalism that addresses thick value which is authentic, meaningful and sustainable. How do you define and create thick value?

What I mean is that we cannot continue measuring our success in economic terms just by the efficiency, which in other words is the profit. I think that we should consider also other aspects in order to define the success of a business. I don't mean at all that profit is not important, but there are also other important aspects that we cannot avoid taking into consideration. For example, the social and ecological aspects are two of them. There is no perfect formula that defines how to produce thick value. It depends on a number of factors. The golden rule for me, which I also share with my students, is to avoid binary thinking at all cost. For example, if we speak about materials, there are no good or bad materials. I think it is a matter of having a critical approach towards things in order to understand the whole picture. New technologies, and thus contribute to the debate on the need for establishing new models of collaboration that address the reactivation of production in the urban zones.

Within your design practice you tend to connect traditional crafts and digital manufacturing. The production process happens mostly in local fab labs that can provide 3d printers, lasers, milling machines etc., But as you pointed out, they rarely address local context within their practice. Then again, there are traditional local crafts which dispose specific know-how and skills, yet they have been bypassed by digital manufacturing techniques. How can those two be connected? Has this been addressed within the scope of your project and how?

I look for diversity, to continue with my previous answer. Diversity in terms of contexts, approaches, materials and so on. Fab labs often (not always) don't address their context, and probably that is the downside of digitally based manufacturing. However, each fab lab, even if it embraces a global network, is a story in itself. I visited many of them in various parts of the world, and it really depends.

My impression is that there has been a big hype around new technologies and their potentials (such as 3D printing), but very little creation of meaningful objects through their applications. I think digital and traditional techniques really need to communicate and be interlinked with each other. I want to avoid crafts nostalgia on one side and nerdy all-digital approach on the other. I'm looking for the in-between, where the digital is reinforced by the traditional techniques and vice versa. This is the point in which things start to become interesting.

How flexible is your proposed system with in different contexts—areas with scarce resources or lack of fab labs? Zagreb is an example of the city with a strong decline in traditional crafts, the unwillingness of craftspeople to share knowledge and skills as well as poor fab lab culture. For made in workshop in zagreb we carefully proposed both craftspeople and young designers opened to collaborations. Are there any specificities to the context that you could point out as interesting in comparison to other places you conducted superlocal workshops?

SUPERLOCAL wants to be as flexible as possible concerning the context in which it is operating. Selected craftspeople and organizations in Croatia were great in terms of diversity and talent. Diversity is something we always look for in the projects, both in terms of mixing new and old materials as well as manufacturing techniques. There are many things I find inspiring and interesting about collaborations with the craftspeople we did in Zagreb. For example, Darko from Močvarni Hrast Master Carpentry making bog oak pipes, Mario from Lapidarium Jewellery Making jewellery always seeking for collaborations, Darko Škrđatić with his small but very well-equipped hat making workshop, were all very inspiring, just to name a few. But most importantly, all of them were very passionate about their work, which I believe is very important. Regarding the fab lab culture, it is true that it is not as developed so far, but those kind of changes need time. Therefore, I hope that the SUPERLOCAL initiative will contribute to making a shift towards that kind of mentality.

You describe superlocal as an applied darwinist theory on object production process—where objects occur according to the context and develop through process of natural selection. Can you describe the process of natural selection within this proposed system?

Forms follow context. I strongly believe in this. In my practice the object literally emerges from the context, almost by itself. Of course, there are many decisions to be made on the way, but still there is a lot of room for things just to happen by themselves. If we apply this to the object development, you may say that they are strongly linked to the present situation, to the materials available, and to the suppliers and active craftspeople. If the conditions change, the work will change accordingly, and eventually the object becomes extinct like other species do. This thought changes the way we look at objects. We start to see them as part of a dynamic flux of elements. All of a sudden, they are not as important for what they are, but for what they can become while adapting to an ever fast changing reality. I find this fascinating.

Forms follow context. I strongly believe in this. In my practice the object literally emerges from the context, almost by itself.

It seems that much of the announced fabrication revolution around 3d printing hasn't been realized and the fab lab hype has been steadily declining. What is your perspective on the future of networked, shared and personalized production that digital fabrication induced? And in that respect what is your perspective on the future of crafts in general?

I am sure that in the future, when the repetitive work will be robotized, we are going to rediscover the beauty of making things by hand.

Well, I cannot predict the future. I can say by observing that even if a company starts with very good intentions in terms of keeping the technology as open as possible, eventually it faces the reality of current economic system. Therefore, Ultimaker for instance, which started giving away the files to reproduce 3D prints, is becoming ever more closed in terms of design. 3D printing is a technology with a great potential, not yet at the point where it can really make an impact, as it is not yet that efficient in terms of production timing. Though, I'm pretty confident that we'll get there soon. A key point is the education around such technologies. Having a great tool doesn't necessarily mean that you'll make great stuff out of it. We really need to focus on the education behind these tools, especially with the new generations. On the other hand, the future of crafts is a huge question and I would like to have a clear answer, but that's not the case. I personally like to combine techniques, and search for diversity, as mentioned before. I admire people who have a lifelong focus on one material or technique to fully master them. Instead, I like to connect different techniques and have a more general overview. In any case, I think crafts have a future, and it is something that many people are saying. The contact with the material is inherent to us as humans. I am sure that in the future, when the repetitive work will be robotized, we are going to rediscover the beauty of making things by hand. The Craftsman by Richard Sennett is a great book about this topic, another one is Futuro Artigiano by Stefano Micelli.

Superlocal project is based on production of goods with local resources in close collaboration of local residents and craftspeople. In the scope of the project, you shift from designer as a form giver to designer of systems. Within this shift, is there a space in the project where these two roles meet? As you involve amateurs in the production and design process, how can they, within this process, learn and facilitate traditional knowledge of product design in order to produce ergonomic, as well as functional and useful products?

In the last years, with the occurrence of the open design movement there has been a misconception that everyone can become a maker. In my opinion, to become a maker involves all sort of skills and knowledge that is not easily accessible to just anyone. There is a professionalism connected to being a designer that cannot be ignored. Giving a form to something has many consequences, comes with responsibility and needs preparation and experience, which is probably true for most professions. The design profession has shifted a lot in the last decades and is not so linear anymore. By linear I mean that it is not just about giving form to a mass-produced object. I think the highest role of a designer is to offer alternative systems to the already existing ones, to quote Buckminster Fuller. This brings higher levels of complexity to the equation, but it also makes it more exciting. On the other hand, I love form giving, I'm passionate about it. If you place it within a system it can reinforce the storytelling. So, aesthetics is also another point worth raising, especially in the Greek meaning of aesthetics, where good and beautiful are part of the same concept. While working I am often inspired by Giuseppe Penone, a great Italian artist from Arte Povera, who said that if the aesthetic of an object is linked to the logic of its creation, it can survive time and trends. For instance, every part of a tree follows the radical logic of its existence, and this makes it beautiful. I try to embrace this in my practice as well. That's why for instance the first SUPERLOCAL hair dryer has a glass transparent casing. The production is transparent and therefore the given form follows the logic of its creation. Getting back to your question about dealing with amateurs. Yes, I work with them through

the events I organize, but I don't want to teach them product design. I want to inspire them to think about materials and production in general. I really see the tours as windows or portals towards local production. It is up to them, to get deeper into it.

The proposed production system is based on personalization, active participation of the user in the design and locally based production as sustainability strategies. Besides just designing the object, the designers are now focusing on the process of design as well as production system as those entail ecological and social effects. Yet, for most of the designers working with and within the industry, intervening in the existing structures, as well as proposing new technologies is being mostly discouraged. Can you describe some of the ways in which designers can inform their practice with different strategies and/or address thick values, to make it more susceptible for their clients, production companies, users, investors and so on?

Firstly, I don't think all designers should focus on working on alternative scenarios, weather economic, social or production. Secondly, I don't think that working in that field excludes working with companies. Actually, it's almost the opposite, if you really want to make a change, you need to collaborate with a number of organizations, institutions and also with companies. However, sometimes I get the feeling that you either make business without thick value or you make thick value without business. I'm simplifying now, but I think half way is possible as well. It is not easy but it is possible. Also, for SUPERLOCAL I'm looking for partnerships with companies, like two years ago when we worked with BMW to suggest future scenarios for urban environments in Shanghai. We'll see what comes next. Again, there is no formula, but on the other hand I think that if you want to be a designer in 2019 you need to take into account also the social and environmental aspects of your practice. I take this for granted, otherwise it would mean that you're designing thinking you're living in another planet, which by the way might be the case in a few years.

Do you think personalization by creating a stronger connection between the user and their material surroundings is the key strategy in fighting consumer culture?

Any time in history there was something made in order to fight consumer culture, it was embraced by industry itself. I remember Ettore Sottsass Jr. saying this speaking about the Memphis movement. Personalization is something that industries are already embracing for some years now, like Nike website allowing you to personalize your shoe. Probably the keywords are awareness and education. I think that most of the people are simply not aware of the consequences of their actions. Buying something instead of something else defines who you are as a consumer and maybe sometimes also as a person. In other words, it is a political act. Knowledge and education are the key and the more I think about it the more I'm convinced in that. On the other hand, building connections with your material surroundings speaks about resilience and can offer a different perspective on consumption in general.

Design should be social by definition. Social is not a negotiable aspect of design because it is part of its DNA.

What qualifies a certain design project as social design?

If we have to call a certain kind of design social it means there is a problem with all the rest of the design produced. Victor Papanek wrote in *Design for Society*: "The action of the profession (of design) has been comparable to what would happen if all medical doctors were to forsake general practice and surgery and concentrate exclusively on dermatology, plastic surgery and cosmetics". I think this quote sums up what happened quite well. Design should be social by definition. It is not a

negotiable aspect of design because it is part of its DNA. That is also true for other aspects such as the interdisciplinary for example. Therefore, without the social aspect there is no design basically. It is also true that the word social itself is often overused, especially lately, with social media and so on. I'm against definitions or labels in general. They reduce freedom of expression. I'm not interested in discussions about the difference between art and design, neither the ones about the difference between communication or product design and so on. I'm aware that sometimes you cannot avoid getting a label on what you do, but I never do it when I think about my practice. In this sense I'm a fan of the Dutch Design, which works very little with definitions compared to the Italian one for instance. The less we put things into boxes the more we can push the boundaries of the design discipline into new interesting fields of expression.

CHANGING ROLE OF CRAFTS AND DESIGN IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Ivana Borovnjak in conversation with
Studio Unfold and Alexandre Humbert

Studio Unfold

What is the role of the designer and how is it changing in a time when design and manufacturing become increasingly more digitized? This question is key to understanding the work of design studio Unfold. The studio, founded in 2002 by Claire Warnier and Dries Verbruggen after they graduated from the Design Academy Eindhoven, develops projects that investigate new ways of creating, manufacturing, financing and distributing in a changing context. A context in which we see a merging of aspects of the pre-industrial craft economy with high tech industrial production methods and digital communication networks. A context that has the potential to shift power, from industrial producers and those regulating infrastructure to the individual designer and the consumer. Based in Antwerp, Unfold's works have been presented internationally and are part of the collection of Design Museum Gent (Be), Centre Pompidou Paris (Fr) among others.

Alexandre Humbert

"As designers, we are storytellers, we are not designing chairs but ways of sitting." Alexandre Humbert (1989, FR) is a director and conceptual designer focusing on filmmaking as a design practice. Since graduating from the Design Academy Eindhoven, Alexandre has collaborated with a broad range of designers and cultural institutions to animate things through motion picture. His understanding of the design process guides him to explore the close relationship that exists between humans and objects through installations, fiction and experimental films. Based in Amsterdam, his works have been presented internationally and are part of the collection of Design Museum Gent (Be) and MUDAM Luxembourg (Lu). In parallel with his practice Humbert is a mentor at Design Academy Eindhoven, Head Geneva and HDK Göteborg.

Your work is always preoccupied with questioning different aspects of the design profession. In many of your projects, you have been investigating different modes of production in the digitized world. How and when did your interest in new technologies start and what topics have been in your focus during the last decade?

We started with a project that was about unfolding of very complex shapes. We scanned our bodies, unfolded them digitally to flat patterns and remade them again in different materials. Through this project and over the years we developed an interest in the malleability of the digital medium, but also in the tangibility of materials in contrast to the ephemeral state of the digital content. At the same time, we are not attracted to the screen, instead we are trying to move from it into the realm of the physical world. We are probably best known for 3D printing of ceramics, but why it interests us is because ceramics is almost one of the oldest materials that mankind used to create objects. So, there is a super-rich heritage of making that we tapped into and built on top of that. We are not so much excited about new technology because of the radical new things you can do with it, but instead in how it actually belongs to the history of making and how these new tools are just a continuation of mankind's interest in redeveloping, making and changing new tools. For example, at one point the pottery wheel was also representing automatization of a hand building process, but today we see it as a tool that belongs to the craft potter.

New models of working and new modes of production are inevitably changing the role of crafts in today's society, but also our relations to it. What is the role of craft today and how does craft inform new technologies in your design practice?

We have noticed that craft is struggling for its identity for many years now. Many crafts have difficulties to evolve in changing roles. We became aware of it after we did *l'Artisan Électronique*. In 2009, we bought a 3D printer because we were curious on how to implement this technology into our design practice. We quickly changed this self-built 3D printer to print with clay as a material much more also asked by Z33, an art house in Belgium, to

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make an installation for their exhibition *Design by Performance*. We made a virtual pottery wheel, with which visitors could throw a pot in the digital manner and then on the other side of the installation print it with a 3D printer. The ceramic 3D printing is in a way a continuation of the traditional pottery making—you stack rolls of clay on top of each other to make a shape, and the printer is actually doing the same, only in miniature. So, it is kind of a logical way to make pots. A lot of institutes, and especially schools were struggling how to bring crafts into contemporary practice, and this was one of the projects that really embodied this tendency. The common misconception of our work actually often comes from craftspeople, who perceive it as a sort of gamification of their making skills. We on the other hand were trained as designers. During our studies, we learn how to use 3D modeling tools, and consequently the language of the objects you make with them is usually the same. Our work evolved out of this frustration of not being able to influence the making of the tools we use, like craftspeople do.

Your projects explore methods of manufacturing and distributing design in the digital era. For instance, Stratigraphic Manufactory represents a new model for the distribution and digital manufacturing of porcelain, which includes local small manufacturing units that are globally connected. How is this model functioning in practice?

When we developed the ceramic 3D printer we also decided to share it with the open source network and put all the plans online, so that other people can start building it and make objects on their own. The Stratigraphic Manufactory project was born out of that. The interesting part of digital files is that you can send them to anyone around the world. You don't have to transport them as physical goods from one place to another. So, we asked people that were already using 3D printing with ceramics to print the set we have designed. We also asked them not to change the digital file, but to use their own local clays and materials, which are always different depending on their locality. In that sense you involve the maker or craftsperson in the production of mass-produced items, but you also involve the very specific local material and cultural context in it so that you get this range of all similar but also all different objects. It is interesting that with this approach you can get together lots of different people with the same interest very easily. Today we see a special kind of interest in return.

A lot of things were lost in the transition to the industrial age. For instance, craft is rather holistic — making, financing and client relations are all embodied in one person, while in the industrial age a lot of that was stripped out. However, in the last 20 years, many designers are moving back into those lost territories. They are promoting and making their own work again. For us a lot of that is being made possible by digital tools — like the way the internet has removed the barriers to communicate. You don't need the magazines or trade fairs anymore. You can actually publish, promote, finance and manufacture your own work. This small-scale local manufacturing — taking back the responsibilities and aspects of making and then combining that with high-tech manufacturing tools or new materials, is very interesting.

You have researched and collaborated a lot within different contexts with other designers and craftspeople across the world. What do you find interesting in Zagreb that might be different from what you are accustomed to seeing elsewhere? Have you noticed any local specificities concerning crafts, craftspeople and locality?

Small manufacturing in the city that you see so nicely here in Zagreb is completely lost in most of central and western Europe. We were totally amazed by how many and how tiny the workshops around the Zagreb city centre are in comparison to Belgium for instance. Also, workshops are often still rooted in the places where they started a hundred years ago. We often talk about how with digital manufacturing and 3D printing we will hopefully see the return of manufacturing to the city, but it is always good to see the places where it was never forced out of the city. The problematic part that you always hear then is that there is a tendency, here and in other places like Turkey, to redo the mistakes that places like Belgium and The Netherlands made in the last 50 years, only to discover you want to bring the previous situation back.

Also, in Croatia the craftspeople make very utilitarian quality objects, and then the work they do is also part of their lifestyle, the way they sustain their living and provide for their own needs. This was interesting to see as well. In Belgium, those crafts are usually practiced nowadays as hobbies or in connection to specific art practices.

When we first invited you to collaborate on MADE IN project in Zagreb, you quite quickly, after some research, suggested to work with Antun Penezić, the Croatian last comb maker. What attracted you towards this specific craft?

What attracted us most to Antun was his story. It is quite dramatic in a way. It both tells something very personal, but also something about how we address crafts in general. We noticed that Antun was trained as the master craftsman for three years, learning the craft by doing. Very soon after his training and after only a few years of practicing, the craft disappeared. The ironic part is that then he

started working in the plastic industry which replaced horn as the material, and then after his retirement he started doing the craft again. He is so passionate and happy with it, but at the same time he is not finding someone who wants to take the effort to invest time to learn it and make it into the future.

This contradiction is happening on a larger scale as well. At one point Antun also mentioned this is partly because of the new technologies. On the contrary, in virtual space, there is a big revival of craft today, due to tutorial culture and YouTube, where people document how they do things. So maybe it is hard to find somebody in your neighbourhood who wants to learn something in particular, but much easier on the internet, across the world. It in a way represents this somewhat lost idea of master/apprentice relationship. We wanted to investigate this further.

In the film, we use the robot as a character, an actor. Robotics and digital technology could be used by makers as tools for innovation and experimentation. They could bring the craft in a new era.

Many crafts are being so to say conserved in museums around the world. Antun's collection of combs and his working procedures have been filmed and made their way to the Ethnographic Museum in Zagreb. Also, parts of his workshop and tools HAVE BEEN on display in Old Village Kumrovec FOR SOME YEARS NOW. Despite the fact, we kept wondering what happens with the knowledge, and especially the embodied knowledge that

cannot actually be taught or learned from a museum collection, but rather acquired by contact with the practitioners. This seems to be a starting point for your experimentation with new technologies in the project. What is the relationship between new technologies, specifically the robotic arm that you work with, and Antun's craft, and what role does it play in your proposed scenario?

We were basically trying to replicate Antun's tasks in his little studio, we tried to copy them and let the robot redo them or do the similar tasks. At first, before coming to Zagreb we already did the initial part of the project at the University in Antwerp because they already had a robotic arm that we wanted to use. The software itself was not so difficult to use because of the apps that are already pre-programmed. So, there are a lot of small actions that you can add and put together so that they make a sequence of movements. Actually, that was really nice, because the technology behind the robot we worked with is quite new. Programming is the hardest part, but it is approachable.

Our intrigue however, goes back to the main premise of the project and the fact that there is supposedly a big interest in crafts and handmade products, vs. the mass manufactured ones. So, if Antun can't find an apprentice human to do it, we want to question who can do it and how can we preserve this particular craft. And we think that's kind of the role of the robot in our project. On a bigger scale, we are questioning the motivation of humanity. Why do we want a product, but not the work involved? This is a zone of inquiry that we are trying to wander through and not necessarily give answers, but travel with Antun and audience of the film through this space of questioning.

In the film, we use the robot as a character, an actor. Robotics and digital technology could be used by makers as tools for innovation and experimentation. They could bring the craft in a new era. We see crafts as something nostalgic, something that is stuck in time and that doesn't evolve. But obviously, this is not what craft is about. It is developing, changing and innovating as well. And that's probably the only way for it to survive.

Both Unfold and Alexandre Humbert are using design methods and translating them into various types of media. In the case of the Combmaker's tale it is Alexandre's focus in filmmaking as design practice. What was your point of interest while working together and how did you start this collaboration?

It was rather natural since we know each other for some time now. Alexandre is doing super nice short videos in which he projects different identities, emotions and stories on inanimate objects by using voice overs and other techniques. We thought in this case it's the same. The robot already has some kind of animistic quality, and so we wanted to mix its story with Antun's story and convey it through the film.

AH: "We don't have an object but rather we have the story that we don't know how exactly to tell, but we think the film is a good way to approach it." This is how it began, with an email and a concept I received. Basically, in this project the object is a tool to tell the story but not the one creating the story. And design is in communicating that story. With the film and a specific approach in which we are, for example, using the robotic arm to film from the perspective of the robot, we are creating a feeling of ambiguity of not really knowing who is doing the craft, whether it is Antun or the robot, whether it has already happened or is it happening in the future. We are also posing a question of who is filming. This is something you cannot communicate through a documentary only.

How were Antun and Danica Penezić reacting to your proposals and ways of working?

They were a bit sceptical about how horn as a material could be really picked, mapped, recognized and processed by a robot. On the other hand, we are aware that the technology is not that far yet so that the robot can absolutely replicate the craftman's work. But all in all, Antun and Danica are very keen on seeing a new generation that could revive the craft, and innovate it to make it relevant again.

DIALOGUE #3

LOCALLY-SOURCED MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Maja Vardjan in conversation with
Lukas Wegwerth

Lukas Wegwerth is a Berlin-based designer whose work focuses on the potentials of connection-making in a variety of expressions. Inspired by his background in joinery and the Shaker Movement he seeks to connect a hands-on approach and concept creation. The tension between the coincidental and the controllable as well as the repurposing of natural materials are a core part of his experimentations that expand into a number of contexts — object-related, social and environmental.

In this framework he developed Three+One — a modular connector system that he uses as a platform for exchange and collaboration. Like his other projects, Three+One is built around the idea of creating sustainable material cycles from the very local to the global.

Craft has been experiencing a revival within a design field in recent decades. What are traditional cultures of making bringing to the field of design?

What strikes me most is the relation to locally-sourced materials and resources. In traditional forms of making we see that people build from what their surroundings provides them with. They create sustainable and elaborate cycles around particular materials. This principle is more important than ever. We need to study the intrinsic methods employed in crafts carefully to improve our ways of making.

Crafts are always a logical consequence of their particular environment — the availability of resources and the social framework.

Through your projects you often explore the qualities of craft processes and their role in addressing social, political and environmental issues. In the MADE IN project you cast critical light on the complex world of raw materials, the use of natural resources, social networks and energy consumption. How is this focus related to traditional craft?

Crafts are always a logical consequence of their particular environment — the availability of resources and the social framework. Like other expressions of culture they shape and express local identity. Since resources can be scarce and hard to reclaim, craftspeople seek to make the most of raw materials. The crafted object is not to be wasted or treated carelessly — it will be valued as a precious reification of social affiliation.

You once defined design as finding a solution to a problem, exchanging ideas, learning from failures, making. Could you also relate or apply this definition to the MADE IN workshop?

Through making we gather experience and failure as an essential part in the process of learning.

The craft we focused on in the MADE IN workshop is a very well established one, therefore there is no problem to solve per se. I wanted to set a frame for experimenting with raw material without the expectation of a finished product or object. Through making we gather experience and failure as an essential part in the process of learning. The advantage gained in experimenting in a group is the opportunity to discuss and reflect on successes or failures together, and being able to benefit from each other's knowledge.

How did you organize the creative process that led you to the initial framework for the MADE IN project?

There are values beyond the craft itself that make it more relevant than ever. Crafted objects are made to stay. They are precious expressions of culture and local identity. I am mainly interested in understanding the circumstances and methods of these particular objects and therefore made the backstage the main topic of the workshop.

The workshop at Urban Magušar's workshop in Radovljica was conceived as an open-ended experiment. Such a process differs quite a lot from the conventional idea of design as functional, useful object. How do you interpret the notion of usefulness?

Understanding the characteristics of the material you work with is essential. Learning about the chemical makeup, the energy footprint, the history and origin of a material can be a fundamental step in creating. Knowledge is always useful, and it builds through reflection and experimentation.

In what way did your research and the MADE IN workshop demonstrate any new possibilities afforded by the craft processes?

Firstly, it shifts the view from the learned strategy of sourcing traded materials to looking at our surroundings in a new way: resources in our environment become visible as raw materials. Secondly, it is the strategy of making that constitutes new possibilities: can the knowledge of the values of craft influence our use of modern technology?

Your practice is based on making and skill sharing. Could you describe the process of knowledge sharing during the workshop, the relationship between the position of the amateur and the professional?

In the framework of an experiment the amateur and the professional can work on the same level, sometimes they even change roles. When working, the cross-disciplinary experience is very diverse, and we all benefit from each other's knowledge. I am very happy that we were able to learn from Urban Magušar's rich knowledge of the material and making, and the application of the large-scale practice of BC architects to every participant's individual approach.

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMUNICATED THROUGH OBJECTS

Maja Vardjan in conversation with
mischer'traxler studio

mischer'traxler studio, based in Vienna, develop and design objects, furniture, processes, installations and more, thereby focusing on experiments and conceptual thinking within a given context. Their designs are often playing with uniqueness and some of their projects are poetic records that interact with the viewer and evoke unexpected reactions. By using their outcomes as well as a mean of communication, the studio tries to show that design can be functional, good and beautiful not just in objects, but as well in the ideas they represent.

Katharina Mischer (1982) and Thomas Traxler (1981) completed their BA-degrees in product and furniture Design at the NDC St. Pölten and at Kingston University London and continued with MA for conceptual design in context at the Design Academy Eindhoven. After graduating in June 2008 and several years of collaborating on various projects, Katharina and Thomas founded mischer'traxler studio in 2009.

Projects by mischer'traxler are displayed in exhibitions on contemporary Design and Art in museums such as the Boijmans van Boiningen, the Design Museum London, the Triennale Milano, Cafa Art Museum Beijing, Mudac Lausanne and more, as well as on International festivals and fairs and can be found in the permanent collections of the Art institute Chicago, the Vitra Design Museum and the MAK Vienna, among others.

Generally speaking, people are drawn to protect endangered crafts, and most of the projects related to craft are simply recycling the past, technically and formally. Your way of working is more conceptual. You treat the design process as a means of research and intellectual enquiry. How did you relate to this within MADE IN project?

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Your practice is based on making and skill sharing. Could you describe the process of knowledge sharing during the workshop, the relationship between the position of the amateur and the professional?

The great thing about craft is that it is directly related to a material. The masters know their material—the sources and its value. Thus, craft opens a path to an appreciation of material and production and what it actually takes to turn that material into an object. For us, this is an aspect of transparency and re-valuing things. We have the feeling that people are becoming increasingly disconnected from the facts—about how many resources, production steps and transportation arrangements an object requires before it reaches the end-user. Consequently, we tend to buy objects we don't need, or things that just satisfy certain temporary trends—and then everyone ends up emotionally unengaged. Linking an object to someone who made it, like a craftsman, and connecting it to the material's origin might help develop a proper appreciation for objects in our consumer culture.

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the material's origin might help develop a proper appreciation for objects in our consumer culture.

Where do you see the potential of craft processes today? Is there a space for invention?

There is definitely space for further development. On the one hand, there are surely interesting aspects to linking analogue and digital possibilities. Next to that there is a lot of potential in custom made projects—if paired with good design. Nevertheless, it requires a lot of freedom, space, time and budget for experimentation to push craft processes further, and in order to experiment freely one does need, unfortunately, an economic buffer.

In the MADE IN project you cast critical light on some striking facts related to raw materials, to metal and stone in particular. How is this focus related to nature—which seems one of the key sources of your inspiration, and in some projects like The Idea of a Tree even an explicit element in your work?

When looking at nature, one has to realize that everything is connected and has an effect on something else. In ecosystems, no matter how big or small, everything balances out. It's truly inspiring to see that every detail in nature is well designed, fulfils functions and purposes while also being beautiful at the same time. In nature, everything reacts to its immediate surroundings—records, adapts and changes. Obviously we often try to bring these views on nature into our work. We as humans have to understand our huge impact on our natural surroundings in terms of the way we live and consume. Every piece we make, use and own comes from some natural resource, which is further processed and transported, and therefore the world and nature is continuously transformed by us.

It seems that experimentation, tests and dry runs determine your way of working. How did you organize the process that led you to

the definition of the MADE IN project? Do you have a standard methodology?

For the MADE IN Project we actually made far fewer experiments and trials with the material itself than we did with some of our other projects. Maybe because we trust in the dialogue with Beno (our stonemason), and the flexibility we have in being able to visit him and knowing we still can change things. We think we somehow have a methodology. Usually we first make a conceptual/theoretical framework for the project. This includes what we would like to communicate and achieve with the project. These guidelines make it easier for us to come up with the design, since we can always re-check whether it fulfils our framework. This helps prevent us from getting lost during the process, and to judge the design objectively.

We extended our understanding of the functionality of objects and also believe that the layers of communication are an important aspect of a project.

The translation of data into products is also a recurring topic in your work. Are objects tools for communication?

Yes, definitely. Sometimes we even call ourselves 3-dimensional communication designers. We extended our understanding of the functionality of objects and also believe that the layers of communication are an important aspect of a project. We also think that when data become tangible, it is much easier understood. Then one can grasp the scale of the facts or circumstances, or what effect a number really has in reality and thus start relating to it.

The input of knowledge and data from the experts at the Geological Institute was crucial for the development of the project. It seems the convergence of disciplinary fields has become a necessity in design projects that address social, political and environmental issues. How do you see your practice in relation to multidisciplinary collaborations?

We are very open to collaboration, but to be honest we just start to look for collaborators once we need them or when we are approached directly. We never start a project with the goal of explicitly collaborating. We think that design as a discipline has always been based on collaborations — in the beginning more between craftspeople and industry; now, luckily the field of design has opened up to different types of collaborators, such as scientists and other experts from all kinds of fields.

Could you outline your collaboration with the stonemason Beno Ogrin? Was there something specific in your collaboration or in the local context?

It's really nice, and interesting to see that Beno is not just doing his job. He is very passionate about it and also very curious and open to trying out new things. Because of this approach of his we could also propose working with ores and stones that have certain limitations. He also joined us on the visits to the mines, and we were searching together with him for some stones in the forests. These experiences and the time he dedicated to the project before he actually got working on the stones itself already made it a special collaboration. From a design and production point of view we tried to bring his skills and potentials into the project, and hope he's not depending a lot on other companies or big external machinery, and that he can make as much as possible in his workshop.

What have you found most intriguing in the project so far?

That so many different institutions and people are working together to make this project happen. It shows that everyone thinks that it is an important topic to tackle. And that geology can be seen as very philosophical and poetic when described in the right way.

THE MANUAL SKETCH

Miriam Kathrein in conversation with
Chmara.Rosinke Studio

Ania Rosinke and **Maciej Chmara** were both born in Gdynia, Poland and studied interior architecture, interior and design strategies and architecture in Gdansk, Linz and Vienna. Their designs are remarkable for their simplicity, ecological awareness and a poetic language of forms that traces the objects back to their archetypes. Different sensory aspects are quite consciously linked together in their ideas — haptics, sense of smell, acoustics — and pose the question as to how much simplicity, humour and sensuousness an object needs. It is often only after interaction that their still creations become utility objects and thus a dynamic experience.

The studio projects are always embedded in the differentiated context of design, art and architecture and are formed on the basis of functional as well as socio-cultural aspects. Their focus currently lies on the design of kitchens and its context. Besides their design work they are also engaged in research on kitchens and their future. Delight, design and the social context are the keywords concerning the projects around the kitchen. Their studio is based in Vienna and Berlin.

In your work you focus on the translation of socio-cultural aspects into the objects you are creating. What did you observe during your time as an artist in residence here in the Bregenzerwald that found its way into your design?

The main inspiration for our project is the image of the table set in the kitchen. In this region, the kitchen table serves as a social hotspot. People at this table are coming and going and the door is always open. I find it very interesting that this almost archaic idea of sitting in the kitchen — a meeting space that's always open, the center of the house where we find warmth and food — still plays an important role in contemporary architecture. Here, we find a very linear development from the early days to contemporary versions without the modernist interruption of trying to separate the kitchen from social life and transforming it into an efficient workshop. In form and content we incorporated and mixed shapes and materials that we found in the nature of the Bregenzerwald and in the region's crafts and architecture.

Creating something that is durable and sustainable and functional takes time, it can take years from idea to prototype to final product. Due to this exhibition's very restricted time-frame, we, together with the craftspeople of Werkraum Bregenzerwald, came up with the idea of the manual sketch. Can you describe the meaning of this term and the production process?

Sketching is the most interesting part of the creative process, whether it is in applied or in fine arts. In the history of fine arts it took quite a while until historians and collectors started to appreciate the quality of sketches. In the discipline of design we still have mixed feelings about sketches, especially when they are three dimensional. And I don't mean mockups or the like. I am talking about physical sketches with their very own character, beautiful in their early-stage imperfection. We work like this on a regular basis when an idea comes up. We quickly throw it on paper, then go directly to the workshop and build it the same day. This is also about skipping the process of development and showing the initial idea. Let's say we are talking about a chair: It will likely not be very comfortable or perfect in detail, but

it will always have its very own appeal. Since craftspeople are rather used to repeating techniques until they reach perfection in manufacturing, we tried to show them a bit of how we work sometimes and encouraged them to mix techniques or use them in a different context and be playful. The role of the designer changed a lot in the last two decades, and the role of craftspeople is changing as well and will continue to do so.

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One aspect of your work is to pay special attention to the emotions that objects and spaces conjure up in people. First of all how do you incorporate these moments of emotion?

And which ones did you pay special attention to in the work created here in the Bregenzerwald? We do not perceive objects and spaces only visually. The first impression of a space is perceived by our brain through the acoustic sense. Acoustics are a topic in architecture, but they are always treated secondary, meaning that only very few architects or designers really think of acoustics when designing a space. Instead they try to correct their mistakes at a later stage by, let's say, acoustic panels. We often forget that even the geometry or choice of the finishing of a chair or a table

can influence the acoustics of the space. Obviously, haptics are also very important in furniture design, but one sense we also forget very often when we think about designing a space is the olfactory sense. I am not talking about interior perfumes. I am talking about the smell of the wood, of an untreated table, of oily metal or the the complex smell of an old hut up in the Alps, where you have wood, sometimes clay, a patina created by smoke from the oven... When reading these descriptions of smells, probably most of us will have a very clear olfactory image in their head and many will also remember in a very precise way situations from their past that are connected to these smells, interiors, materials. Taste and smell are the senses with the closest connection to the emotional sector of our brain. We often forgets about these things. We are trying to include these memories and emotional connections when we choose materials and finishes.

You say that aesthetics are an important aspect of sustainability. What do you mean by that and how does this influence your practice as a designer?

People throw away functional and ugly things rather than impractical and beautiful things. Some of the greatest pieces of modernist architecture did not really work; actually, some have even been disastrous for their users. But these buildings survived because they are incredibly beautiful and have consistent design. Don't get me wrong, we need to design functioning things, we have to design ecologically perfect and perfectly working objects. But when it's about function or sustainability, it seems as if designers often forget about the importance of beauty and the function of beauty itself.

Besides being a designer, you are also a trained craftsman. How does that change your approach to the creation of objects of use?

I don't have a real education as a craftsman. I took some metal and wood classes at university. But my father's practice and his business probably had a huge impact on me. He runs a small company that employs craftspeople like metal workers, carpenters, electricians and many more. I was in a very comfortable position that allowed me to go and ask these peo-

ple whenever I had a problem, wanted to learn about crafts or just use the workshop facilities. These options and possibilities changed my design approach very much. I abandoned a strictly formal-driven form of design. You can't truly design things if you don't know exactly how they work or if and how they can be produced. If you look closer you will find that's it's quite common among designers to have some sort of background in crafts.

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The craftspeople here, as members of the Werkraum Bregenzwald, decided 20 years ago to replace competition by collaboration and cooperation. This builds the very core of the association. In this sense, co-creation as an integral part of a cooperative and collaborative approach, plays an important role in creating new objects and innovative products while still keeping up traditional modes of production and craft processes. How does this influence the way you work on the MADE IN project?

I have known the Werkraum Bregenzwald for years now and I have always found the collaborative approach both very logical and impressive. Helping each other, sharing machines, spaces and knowledge is so important in times in which craft processes and production methods, like many other things, are getting more complex. We tried to integrate this idea as far as that no object in the MADE IN exhibition was made by one craftsman alone. We mix materials and finishes in a way craftspeople wouldn't normally do. These objects would look very differently if they were made by one craftsman only, if she or he would have done it on their own. At the same time, things can get quite tricky to coordinate when people from different fields are working on the same object.

EMPATHY AS A PROBLEM-SOLVING TOOL

Relja Bobić in conversation with
Tamara Panić

Tamara Panić is an industrial designer based in Belgrade, Serbia. She is currently working as an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade, at the Department of Industrial Design, where she teaches at Undergraduate and Master studies.

Tamara is also a Ph.D. student at the academic study program Applied Arts and Design, at the same Faculty. From 2008 to 2012, she gained experience in several design studios, at the position of an industrial and graphic designer, working on various projects including graphic communications, visual identities, packaging and product design. In 2013, she co-created Design studio Oblikus, founded with the intention of creating electronic products, everyday objects, furniture, and packaging design. With the studio, she had come a long way from setting up concept designs through the development of functional prototypes to optimization and preparation for serial production.

Some of these projects were awarded the prestigious Red Dot Concept design award: Best of the Best and A Design Award. Studio's projects were exhibited in Italy, Netherlands, Slovenia and Germany. The project Moonlights was part of the exhibition A preview of the Future, as a permanent feature at the newly opened Red Dot Museum in Singapore.

The domain of crafts has been attracting a lot of attention over the past years within the design field. Have you been aware of that process, and what does it tell you?

Of course. In the contemporary approach to design the accent is put on the design as user interface and design as an experience, which is speeded up by the constant development of technology. This has brought us into the smart era, with more and more automatization and less and less manual work. Creatives are craving for tactile, research-based and experiments with the materials, and the craft skills are an immense inspiration in that context.

Do you think it is at all possible to divide the two fields—making/crafting and design? It seems that there is so much in common, but yet so much that is different.

Design and crafts have, in their basis, a common goal—the embodiment of an idea that is supposed to enrich people’s daily lives, in a functional and aesthetical ways, as well as in the user experience itself. It seems that the craftsman is more free in that process and that he/she creates his/her own rules, while in the designers’ process limitations are present at the very start, in order for the product to fulfil the requirements of production and the market.

Creatives are craving for tactile, research-based and experiments with the materials, and the craft skills are an immense inspiration in that context.

What was/is the position of crafts or crafting in your own design output?

Being an industrial designer is an exciting position, among other reasons because each new project brings new rules in working with

a new material, and its proper utilization dictates the level of quality of a given project. In the process of realization of functional prototypes that I was involved in, crafts people played an important role, selflessly sharing their knowledge, in order to help the optimization of the production process. Their skills and tricks made a big difference and enriched the idea, each time.

You are working with students a lot. How are, in your opinion, new generations perceiving the position and role of crafts in the domain of design?

It is absolutely clear that young creatives are fascinated with new technologies, the possibilities of 3D printing and advanced software, with which they can effectively communicate and realize their ideas. It is a reflection of the times that they are living in. But still, in recent years much more focus within the design community is put on the process and how an idea comes into being. There are more and more exciting conversations about behind the scenes aspect of the development of any given product.

Design is increasingly becoming a methodological tool employed in different domains, such as business, management or education. What do you think about this, and is this something that design students are recognizing and embracing?

Industrial design is an economic category and its business component is essential for its sustainability on the market. Students are getting better and better in understanding that a good product needs to strike a balance between the people’s needs, technological and technical feasibility, and eventually market results.

In your opinion, what defines a process of making as a crafting process? Is it the means of production, the perfection (of the results) or the overall approach to a project?

I would say it is the overall approach to a project. Designing and crafting are mental processes that involve thinking, and the path that a creative professional covers on the path from an idea to its realization reflects this metamorphosis of the idea into an act of creation in the best possible way.

How do you see the relationship between design(ers) and crafts (people)? What is the role or empathy in that equation?

That relationship needs to be based on trust, mutual respect and the capability to leave the comfort zone. Empathy plays a key role in this connection, which should in itself have the goal of achieving better problem-solving capabilities, and a bolder approach to a creative challenge.

Which parts of the crafting process you feel are relevant for the process that designers usually go through? And also, the other way around?

Designers should be encouraged to start exploring and testing ideas directly in the material very early on, while crafts people could be inspired by the work methodology that each designer goes through in a typical project development, relying on design thinking and human-centred approaches.

What drew you to get involved with the MADE IN project?

A huge motivation was to, together with the participants, explore the world of crafts, to get to know the individual stories of the craftspeople and what inspires them to achieve excellence in their respective skills. I was sure that it would be a good polygon to learn a lot from them, and above all to get inspired.

What was the starting point and the intention of the workshop you facilitated within the project?

The starting point were meetings with the craftspeople and building of trust; then exploration, listening, understanding, researching... Through these encounters, enthusiasm naturally followed, on whose wings a fantastic working atmosphere came to life.

What was your impression of the craftspeople who were mapped in the initial research done for the project?

It is a fan of phenomenal people who are preserving tradition in a very authentic way, and by nurturing those skills they often add a modern twist, which is all truly refreshing in our era of hyperproduction.

In the end, what would be the lessons learned, aside from the actual project(s) that the workshop resulted in?

Personal contact breeds magic. The meetings of people and exchange of ideas definitely open new roads.

In the absence of support from the side of public institutions, enthusiasm and responsibility are down on the creatives, who need to fight for their values and the social space that belongs to them.

Did the MADE IN experience bring you to any new thoughts about how to nurture the design/crafts crossover in the future, specifically in relation to the situation in Serbia, or the wider region? What is missing (aside from the strategic approach and support from the side of public administration, which usually goes without saying)?

A huge applause for Nova Iskra and all of the project partners for creating this project, which is absolutely necessary in order to raise awareness about the importance of supporting local design communities, the valorisation of craft skills, tradition and creative collaboration. In the absence of support from the side of public institutions, enthusiasm and responsibility are down on the creatives, who need to fight for their values and the social space that belongs to them.

STUDIO-ADAPTED INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES

Relja Bobić in conversation with
Jenny Nordberg

Jenny Nordberg works exploratory and interdisciplinary to expand the contemporary notion of design, and of the designer. Her practice is always driven by a search for alternatives and counter-strategies to irresponsible mass production.

Navigating between art and design, her research and studio work focus on how we produce and consume today, how we have done so historically and how this can be done differently in the future. By exploring questions such as these, Nordberg seeks to transform the preconditions of design and encourage it to take a more engaged position. The research and design studio of Jenny Nordberg mainly works with studio production, small series, limited editions and site or context specific commissions. She is also the initiator of the project S-P-O-K, which mapped the crafts eco-system in the Skåne region of southern Sweden.

Could you tell us something about your motivation to initiate a project like S-P-O-K, and why did you focus on the region of south Sweden — Skåne?

It all started in 2014. There was so much talk in the news how Swedish manufacturing industry is dead because of the movement of production to China, but for me as someone who is involved in production, I knew there were many manufacturing facilities left. Quite a lot, actually, in the southern part of Sweden. I got a bit irritated, as usual, and wanted to show that this is not the truth and that we still have production facilities left. So, the question was how to show this and how to make it available not just for an exclusive crowd.

We set up a web platform, and today we have almost 200 registered workshops and manufacturers. This is also because this area of Sweden is traditionally known for having many production facilities, but also because we got funding from the region. I also wanted to do it in a small geographic area, to show that even in such a context, we can have all these possibilities. I think it is also connected to IKEA and H&M, because they are the ones who moved their production away quite early on. That is the general idea of Swedes about what happened with production in our country.

Maybe being able to make things is more a tool for me than a purpose.

On a personal LEVEL, as an author and designer, what was your relationship to the production process and what were your experiences in those terms?

I always try to work as local as possible, because it goes faster. I also love building relationships with all these very skilled craft persons. I work both with very small, one-person companies, and with the quite big ones that might have 200 or 300 employees. I know I can do almost anything if I have a good relation to those persons, so I try to look for those (good relationships). Not everyone is a nice person, so you have to skip many. But then you

find these amazing people, and now it is like a collection for me. I know that we can solve anything together, so it is definitely about finding and building relationships.

What is, then, the place of the production process in your projects and works? Very often it is the actual work in your case, not the final object that might be eventually exhibited.

I often have an idea that is based on an industrial technique, and I go to some manufacturers and they often say ‘No, we can’t do that’ or ‘No, we don’t want to engage in that type of experimental work’. I then usually go to my studio and do a studio-adapted version of this industrial production item. Then I go back to manufacturers and say ‘Look what I did in my studio, it is possible!’. And then there is a collaboration starting. I see that more and more often. It seems that this is how it needs to be done, as the Swedish production world is not that interested in experimental production. However, the clients and customers that they have are super interested in these experimental production ways.

How would you describe the position of crafts in your professional practice overall?

It’s included somehow in almost everything I do. Projects or objects are either made partly or entirely by myself. My workshop has a lot of possibilities and I can produce almost anything. I have no intention to make things that come across as craft, though. Maybe being able to make things is more a tool for me than a purpose. A lot of the techniques found in my workshop are industrial methods being adapted to my studio, I call it Studio Adapted Industrial Processes.

Would you agree that, generally speaking, the Swedish (product) designers are increasingly creating in a peculiar middle ground that is between art and design, ending up with something between a fine art object and a design object? Or objects that are seemingly utilities get re-contextualized into a more aestheticized item. Where do you think this is coming from?

I think it is something that has grown stronger in the past ten years, and it is connected to politics. A lot of Swedish designers don’t want to

work with these big, global brands. This comes from a sustainable perspective, both socially and environmentally. And then you have this other, design scene, where you don't work with IKEA or H&M, but you do some kind of studio production. You can also make a living from that, and it brings much more freedom. You don't have to be involved in all this capitalistic shit, that a lot of Swedish designers are not interested in anymore. That is one of the reasons, it is quite political, I would say.

Something we recognized while working on the MADE IN project THERE are many gray areas that pop up once you start thinking about what is design, what is craft, where are the overlaps, is the craftspeople also a designer etc. There is a multitude of approaches TO how craftsPEOPLE or designers work. Sometimes it seems that design sees craft purely as a vendor, a point of A SERVICE PROVIDER. Did you stumble upon these gray areas in your work, Especially having in mind that many designers have also turned crafts-PEOPLE, and are producing their own works?

I have been called an industrial designer and a craftspeople. Last year I got an award for the craftspeople of the year. But, you know, I am not a craftspeople. Or I am, I don't know... For me it is not important to make definitions, I am not interested in them. I am interested in what comes out of it. If it is the best welder that we have, or it is the best designer—I really don't care. I know that for some people it is really important to have the correct recognition, but I could not care less.

When someone mentions crafts, most people probably immediately recall a stereotype of an older male in a dusty workshop with some tools. On the other side, craft can be viewed as an approach, whereas a programmer might be a craftspeople, depending on his/her skill and the ways in which he/she is using them. What is your take on that—is it about the approach of doing something, or is it also depending on the profession and the social context?

In Sweden there is also the third definition—craft art—which is often quite contemporary. If I needed to have a definition, I would say that I am a craft artist. Maybe. But I would

prefer to say that even someone working with tech and software might be a crafter, or even a scientist dealing with mathematics. Because it is about some kind of freeness in the brain. But on the other hand, we have some craftspeople who are super skilled in a technique, but not creative at all. And they are also in the craft field. Maybe it is the ability to make, or build, or code something that could unite everyone.

Coming back to S-P-O-K after all that we discussed, how did you structure the research methodology for it? Did you in any way limit what sort of workshops should be covered by IT?

There was only one criterion. The manufacturers, no matter if they were small or large scale, needed to be willing to produce something for someone else. There were no requirements of having a company, or any certain level of turnover or anything like that. Finally, it is a mix of workshops that provide services, but also those that at the same time have their own design production. I just come back to the idea that if you can build a nice relationship with them then it is all that matters.

For me it is not important to make definitions, I am not interested in them. I am interested in what comes out of it.

Do you see craft as something related to the notion of heritage? Do you see any difference between old and new craft, or it is all one continuum that is now going to new horizons?

I would say that there is a strong division between traditional craft persons and the more contemporary ones. And that has to do with heritage. These two groups are not always on same terms, and quite often they are in conflict, which I think is a bit silly. The old school craft persons usually think that the younger ones do not respect the heritage. I think there needs to be development in everything, and

development is not always bad. I think those conflicts and ongoing conversations around them are very interesting.

Sweden has a pretty developed support mechanism for the domain of crafts, when it comes to education and support to production. Knowledge transfer is one of the key points here, and still is part of the Swedish education system.

I would say that it is very established. If you want to learn a specific kind of craft, there is education for it. If I, for example, want to work with copper, there is an education for it. But, of course, I need to know about it myself. I would say that the skilled craft persons in Sweden are really the winners. There are so many designers, and some of them are facing difficulties in finding a job in Sweden. But if you are a very skilled craftsperson — then there is always work. And this is really, really interesting.

There are so many designers, and some of them are facing difficulties in finding a job in Sweden. But if you are a very skilled craftsperson — then there is always work.

Are there any social implications, in the case of Sweden?

If you are a skilled craftsperson then you have high social status. But if you are self-taught, or more hobby enthusiast, then your status is not so high. The ones who make a lot of money today in Sweden are the ones who know a specific craft. I am maybe talking about the wider definition: if you know how to make a steel roof in a more traditional way, then you are so well off. If I would recommend to a young person today which profession to choose, one that they would enjoy and both make money from, it would be traditional handcraft-oriented work.

Are many people going for such professional opportunities?

No. Because they haven't seen that yet. Persons who are 30 to 40 years old are often re-educating themselves for these types of professions now. In a way this could be compared to re-educating yourself to become a programmer through a three-month crash course. The bottom line is that knowing something very specific is very important today. For persons who know everything, like I am a DJ, photographer, fashion designer and..., I would say that it is not so much sought-after nowadays.

The circle is maybe closing again? Some ten years ago, multitasking was praised.

I think that is slowly fading out now, also from a mental perspective. If you work too much, burn out, and the quality of what you deliver is not as good as it could be. If one is working in too many things, doing too much, the brain is overwhelmed. This has been a big problem in Sweden, many people were sick or away from their jobs for years due to burnouts. The effect of that is that people go into much more focused work habits now, and this is also what is sought after. Being a country like Sweden, very privileged and with opportunities, this is maybe the other side of it. Which I think is healthy, like moving out to the countryside.

What has drawn you to come back to Belgrade and work with the local crafts(people)? Did it follow up on some of your previous experience with the city, or it was something entirely new?

Last time I was in Belgrade I visited a few crafts persons. A shoemaker, the brush-making sisters, the perfumer Sava, fashion makers and a stamp maker. I also saw a lot of craft at the markets for example at Bajloni greenmarket. But then also women and men from the outskirts of Belgrade selling their handmade items at the bus station Zeleni Venac.

What was your impression of the situation with crafts in Belgrade, or Serbia? What would be the main differences in terms of understanding the field between Sweden and Serbia?

During my first visit to Belgrade I realized that there is a closeness to craft that is missing where I live. People are still making stuff, either it is a skilled crafts person or simply for your own personal needs. This has gone lost in Sweden but we are now experiencing a re-growth of craft and it's very much up and coming again. Serbia still has it, craft never disappeared — congratulations!

Could you say something about the experience and your learnings from your exchanges with Nenad Jovanov and XYLON workshop?

They are two totally different enterprises but both are built on family heritage. I can't say our collaborations differed much from when working with manufacturers and makers in Sweden. There is still a person you have to get along with, and with some you have an immediate connection, while with others you need to work a little bit more on.

Do you think there could be valuable cross-cultural collaborations between the (western/northern) European context you come from, and the Balkan context in terms of crafts? Is there anything specific that the crafts (people) in this region can offer, that is missing elsewhere?

Oh, yes. Even though much is similar, Serbian craft and manufacturing sometimes have different materials and techniques. I also sensed a different attitude but maybe that was because I had Nova Iskra as door openers, so much was possible. At first, I also thought the prices were low compared to Sweden, but I then realized that that more seemed to be related to old vs. new, city vs. countryside and small vs. big.

On the methodological level, what was your impression of the MADE IN project overall, and would you propose any changes in the approach or the structure of the project?

I think the arrangement was super professional. Very well prepared. When I have done similar projects in Sweden, I have just gathered 25 designers and 25 manufactures who were willing to collaborate, and then matched them together letting them do the rest within each collaboration. Many of these collaborations came out really well but some of them also

failed, much related to the personal chemistry. I had to act as a guide or mentor for some of those miserable teams, and that is what you sort of took care of already from the beginning, being so involved in the process.

DIALOGUE #8

DESIGN & CRAFTS IN DIALOGUE SEMINAR #2

31/01/2019
Zagreb - Croatia

With contributions from:

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Renate Breuss Werkraum Bregenzerwald, Austria
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Mario Nokaj Zlatarna Mario, Croatia
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Maja Kolar: I am really glad that we are covering a very wide range of expertise and experience in the domain of crafts within this group that has gathered on the occasion of the second Design & Crafts in Dialogue seminar, as part of the MADE IN project. We are going to try to address certain issues and topics that we expect to encounter in the process of leading and realizing different activities within this project.

One of the key aspects is definitely the curation and representation of crafts in an exhibition kind of setting, which is planned for the end of this project. But for this session, we might start off by reflecting on some of the practical aspects of what is ahead - establishing collaborations between designers and craftspeople, and how each of the partners involved in facilitating those collaborations can make the most of the process?

Ivana Borovnjak: In this context, the title of the Craft Council Nederland presentation - 'Does craft need design?' - is a sort of a recurring question. This project is conceived from the perspective of designers, and that is why it is great that we have craftspeople present here today as well, so that we can hear another understanding of the relationship.

Maja Kolar: Having said that, I would invite Craft Council Nederland to share some of their experiences from the past five years of activity in this domain.

Marion Poortvliet: Our initiative started seven to eight years ago. At that time, crafts were not an issue, they were not so much in the focus in the Netherlands. Our country is quite famous for design, with 350.000 visitors to Dutch Design Week every year, for example. In some other countries, there are usually craft councils, but that was not the case in the Netherlands. We had one, which was active in the 1980s, but it was related to the economic side of things, and did not turn out to be profitable. When talking about crafts some six or seven years ago, people would have an old-fashioned idea of traditional costumes, for example, and there was not a system of transmitting knowledge about these techniques, no connections between the crafts industry and education or, finally, information on the importance of mak-

ing. We thought that there was a lot missing, and these topics were not on the agenda of the government. This is why we started this initiative. There was also a lot of interest from younger people, but they did not know where to learn. If anyone wanted to become a copper blacksmith, there was no formal education. As computers came into practice, the focus at art universities was more on the concepts than the making. Nowadays, this is changing.

We started with a contemporary digital platform, trying to transmit a new vision of what craft could be. We did, and we still do, a lot of research about where the knowledge and the people who still have the knowledge are. The platform is organized around materials, but it also provides information about museums and where you can get educated, which is mostly in the informal education domain. That is why we started our educational program 'Meet the Master', where you can learn from a crafts master.

The learning session needs to last at least two full days. It is not a workshop lasting a couple of hours, but it is rather about going through frustration and appreciation of how difficult it is to make. We did, for example, a five-day masterclass about knitting, which was related to an exhibition covering this topic. Young participants had many ideas, but did not know how to make them a reality. The fact that the masterclass was happening within the exhibition space helped to completely immerse the participants into the craft, and this is why we love doing these masterclasses at museums or within exhibitions. We are also doing another format in which a designer has a challenge or a problem to solve, and is then matched with a craftsman who can help him/her resolve it. This is very important to connect the designer to the craftsman, and they often receive assignments to produce artworks later on. So, we are opening up both worlds, in a way.

We are working on international craft exchanges, for example with Japan. Four Dutch makers/designers went to Japan and learnt a specific technique from three masters, over the course of four weeks. We initially intended to do those exchanges by bringing the craftspeople to the Netherlands, but we realized that the entire cultural context is as important as the technique itself. For the designers it was a really good experience, with lots of experi-

menting and innovating their own ideas. They also realized how the Japanese masters innovate as well, but in a different way, deeper in the technique. Finally, we are now a partner of the Dutch Design Week and we are present there each year, as well as at other events around Europe. We also organize expert meetings for makers, as they mostly work isolated, on their own, and it is very important for them to meet.

Maja Kolar: Some of the programs that you do are really similar to individual efforts of many of us in the room, on a smaller scale. As the project's final exhibition will also be hosted at different museums, there are many topics to be touched upon today. We proposed and shared with you some of the key questions for the discussion. One of them is definitely the production issue within craft making, as there is a certain gap between the self-run brands doing one-offs, and more serial production that comes close to manufacturing. So, basically the scale of production is what is in question here. What we noticed throughout the mapping process is that the craftspeople are very different in relation to the country they are based in.

Ivana Borovnjak: It might be interesting that Renate briefly tells us about the specific initiative of Werkraum Bregenzwald, which was founded in 1999 with the participation of the public sector, in comparison to Craft Council of Nederland which is a private initiative.

Renate Breuss: We had a better situation from the start, as there were many craftspeople still working. But they were missing the competence of design. They were good technicians, and there were many of them. In 1991, so almost ten years earlier, they initiated a contest called 'Crafts and Form', because we had very good architects in our region and they were looking for good craftspeople. We brought them together with this contest, and it was a very important moment - bringing ideas together and making them applicable to daily work through this contest. Eight years later, we founded Werkraum Bregenzwald and continued on this course.

Thomas Geisler: It is very easy to tell this story, in a way, but it is just one part of it. It is a

very layered story. There was a development that came out of the needs of the craftspeople for design skills or collaboration; and there was the expectation of the creative scene or the architects; and there was the economic element - there was lots of support from the region to establish craft as a regional economic support system. The region of Bregenzwald has a very strong regional development plan which is organized by regional communities. So, there was an economic, political and of course the craft/aesthetic approach to that. I think that the combination of those factors boosted the possibility to establish something like Werkraum, and you also have to mention that there has always been a strong network of craftspeople, which was based on the guilds in the region. The dual education in Austria has a strong educational system in crafts, and it is definitely contributing to the situation. Already outside of the Bregenzwald valley, other guilds do exist but the links are not that strong.

Willemien Ippel: Do you still build in a traditional way?

Renate Breuss: No. Tradition is, I would say, more of an attitude than a technique. Because they are quite open for new techniques, machines and tools. And even design that is influenced by international designers and architects. The attitude of working in a team, exchanging and being aware of quality, not being superficial - that might be a traditional thing. This is all still visible in the landscape, in new buildings and the restoration of buildings.

Maja Kolar: Is the influence of designers visible in the production itself? Initially, it was expressed as a need from the craftspeople, but are they now independent from it? Did they take on a role of designers themselves?

Renate Breuss: Both. All dimensions and aspects are unfolding. Some of them have gained their own competence in designing and prefer to do it themselves, while others gained respect for their knowledge from the side of the designers, which does not happen right away. The respect of the knowledge is still a burden, because it is another world. In the perception of people, designing is on a higher level than the making. But the quality that is embedded in the

making is an important process. We try to be a platform, to support and give a framework for this relationship and consciousness, as they really need to help each other. And they learn from each other. So many of them work with designers today.

Thomas Geisler: We just had a talk within our community the other day, about how much design does craft actually need. We were going through dialogue workshops, and what you can really hear from the craftspeople is that they do not like being patronized by the designers. Because it is very important to have the same eyesight. As Renate said, it is about 25 years now since 1991, it is quite a period. At least 10% of the craftspeople have gained design skills themselves, and they still think through their craft system, which is different from design thinking, but whatever they do it is always design, no matter if it is good or bad. In every craft process there is design. And how they would put it in their simple words is that - craft is design. In a way, just by doing it. But this patronizing aspect is very important, so matchmaking designers and craftspeople is also about chemistry, and it keeps being an uneasy relation. Is it a friendship between craft and design, or is it a paradox? Through the history of these professions, design is rooted in industry, in the separation of steps of making something. That is a new development, that design re-connects with the production in that way. This is maybe the reason why the connection between our craftspeople and architects is still an easier one, I would say, as it comes more naturally through the building process. There is also an economic reason, as there is still no clear system: within industry designers would have royalties, so how can designers make a business in collaborating with craft companies? I think this is also something that makes the relation not that comfortable. At least this is what we have experienced in our work in bringing designers and craftspeople together.

Ivana Borovnjak: Who usually takes over the responsibility of distributing the products? How do they deal with the very practical aspects of sales, scale of a series etc?

Thomas Geisler: That is very blurry, we never

get a straight answer. I suppose there are different kinds of 'deals'. Our competition, which is now on a triennial basis, also provides a pace of producing new stuff that they can adjust to, but it is still a big problem to bring the results of this competition into the real market. They all work on prototypes, and when you try to bring it to the market there are many cost issues, and they get so fed up with this that they eventually do not follow up on it. This is still a problem. Some of them are more professional, especially in the situations when the crafts-person is the designer him or herself, then they usually manage to bring their products to the market. But there is not a straight answer to this, and it is something that needs to be worked on, to have an economic blueprint for this kind of collaboration.

Maja Lalić: I would like to add some more complications to this already complicated conversation. The relationship between design, crafts and industry. I am sorry that we did not manage to have with us representatives of Zanat, a contemporary Bosnian manufacturer which developed from a family woodcarving workshop around the town of Konjic. They work on educating 15 woodcarvers every year amongst the local younger generation, and in terms of distribution they are globally present, but still very locally rooted. They are also 'guilty' for UNESCO listing Konjic woodcarving technique on its list of immaterial heritage. They are also planning to open the museum of woodcarving in Konjic this year. It is, all in all, a very specific form of organization.

What it leads me to think about is whether our premise is that we are 'saving crafts', or that the designers should find a contemporary place of crafts in everyday life, a more active one that goes beyond tradition and souvenir. I mention the example of Zanat because they manage to find new roles within the contemporary language of design for these traditional techniques. It is a legitimate way, but it makes all of these economic relations even more complicated.

Ivana Borovnjak: Andrea, I have been meaning to ask you about this... You have been doing the Superlocal project for a few years now. What are your experiences with putting the actual products on the market, and what are the re-

relationships with the craftsmen that are made in the process?

Andrea de Chirico: A topic to add to the conversation is the technology. Because I think it is true that we have this sort of nostalgic relationship to crafts. I am also based in South Tirol, I believe it is similar to Austria, with the guilds. There is an infrastructure there. But what is happening now is that the technology is getting into the craft topic. The question is how do we define craft? For some people, it is about something that has been made in a certain way for 200 years and it needs to stay that way. But I find very interesting the cross-over between digital and traditional manufacturing. This is happening already - in South Tirol every woodworker has a CNC machine. Or some wooden statues, they might be made with a machine, and then finished off by hand. Not everyone really sees it, but technology is already a big part of the equation.

I think it makes it very interesting. In the past you had manufacturing that was cheap, and materials that were very expensive. Right now, it is kind of the opposite from that. And when you add technology into this sort of situation, it could rebalance this relationship between labour and material. I think that is what we are trying to do with our project. We are also working on the aspect of distribution. It is not about selling a product in a shop, but we organize activities that provide people with insights on crafts and how things are made. So that they do not get only the final result, but can appreciate the value of an object based on what is behind it. If you want to buy an object, you can buy the experience to make it, and it will be cheaper than to buy the object in the store. You make the object yourself, and you get the object itself at the end of the day. That is our vision.

Willemien Ippel: What kind of objects do you make?

Andrea de Chirico: We make different ones. Some are not for tours, because of timing and safety issues, while some are specifically for tours. We mainly make stools, but we also made some lamps, mirrors and some objects that we are not able to make within one day. Either way, I see this as an entry point. You make

something, and it might open a deeper curiosity about handcraft in general.

Maja Kolar: I can see how that changes the perception of the public and the potential consumer, but how does it change the relation between the craftsperson and the designer?

Andrea de Chirico: This always brings us back to the definitions: what is design and what is craft? Each one of us could have his or her own definition of what design is. Design is pretty vague, it does not determine an activity that is true for everyone. It is interesting what Thomas said, that craft is design. But, could we also reverse this and say that design is craft? For example, I do not start with a fixed idea and move onto the material, but working directly in the material is also affecting the design. In my opinion, design and craft are basically the same thing, they co-exist and enforce each other. In working with students, working directly in the material influences their design project.

Relja Bobić: The way you describe your process, I hear it more as a process of a crafts-person. We could look at it through many different entry points, it could be a very extensive conversation. But I am looking for a simpler answer to the question [does craft need design?]. I am not sure if this will sound right, but my impression from the mapping of craft workshops we were doing in Belgrade, and my encounters with different craftspeople, is that the crafts need design far less than it is the case the other way around. The craftspeople we encountered actually feel as designers. If a designer wants to realize their idea in collaboration with them, they will execute it. For example, a Belgrade-based shoe maker. But regardless of that, he is making a certain number of models of shoes completely on his own, by using traditional techniques, and he is not considering this as any sort of exquisite design exercise.

A similar thing occurred when we talked to hat makers, who are doing a lot of props and accessories for cinema sets, but they also run their own little shop in downtown Belgrade for decades. When I asked about a certain design aspect of their work they did not even go into it. They just make these hats. They do not see

themselves as any sort of designers, this is just what they do. And these are exactly those craftspeople who survived for several decades, who are still active and actually pretty busy. My impression was that they do not really need anything. Maybe some support from the state would be good, in an administrative or subsidized sense, while those who are still successful are already beyond those expectations and do not even count on it.

A final point I would add, and which I see as the burning issue, is the knowledge transfer. We could not tackle that issue too, alongside many aspects covered within the MADE IN project, but based on the Serbian experience, this seems to be a key thing. The workshops are still disappearing, and many of them are the last in line, sometimes not just in the context of a city, but on a national level. We felt that developing programs to engage and support young people into receiving the skills and knowledge transfer from the knowledge holders would be of key importance. In a way, it comes before thinking about any distribution or sales, because it might happen that in a number of years half of the remaining craft workshops in Belgrade might be lost forever. But then it is not just the workshops, but the skills.

Nina Bačun: Yes, but it is very individual. Some of them did not choose to be craftspeople, it was in the family and they just continued whatever they learned without questioning it. Some of them are very interested in what they do and, in a way, they do not need the designers. But most of them just continued working in a family business, and they are not really interested in what they are doing. That is the saddest part.

Ivana Borovnjak: Mario, what would be your experience as a craftsperson, could you share it with us?

Mario Nokaj: We started as a family business, and I continued throughout my life. But I am interested in our craft, and I try to involve design. I also studied at the graphic university, but I did not graduate as craft was more important, so I dedicated myself to the family business. I am generally interested in design and creativity, so I combine our own and the design of other people. We invite designers to help us, and

I believe that the designer is of big help in the design domain. If you have money to pay him/her, and if the designer has the time to invest and believes in the project beyond the compensation. The financial part is also important. The designer is paid to create an idea, or improve an idea of the craftsperson. We had experiences when designers helped us to work in a different way, and if I had financial capacity today to repeat the process, I would definitely do it.

Nina Bačun: The interesting point is also the approach of the designer. Sometimes the designer is over protective towards his or her idea. And this is not what you are interested in. The problem is also that the designers do not have enough education and experience in the field of craft.

Mario Nokaj: When we are lucky enough to meet, when we have time and money to do it, it goes well. We always hear a new approach. We do something in a certain way for 20 years, and why change anything? The customer is paying for the product. Another thing is that we are working at our shop every day. I have a customer coming in every 5, 10 or 15 minutes asking for something. I need to find a way to make something and handle the sales at the same time. So, we have "fast design". We do not have the time to wait for one month for the right design. If we get a commission, we usually need to fulfill it within a couple of days. The time is the problem here.

Vesna Lovrić Plantić: A big problem is the education of craftspeople. As you said, it is usually a family business. We do not have a system where craftspeople can have apprentices, as they have too much work to do.

Mario Nokaj: We are cooperating with a crafts school, and we do have some apprentices. Some are interested, some are not. They are around 15 years of age. We are very lucky if we find one who is motivated, and we just employed one of them, the best one from the last five years. He is more technical, and we are super happy with him. But that is pure luck, as maybe only 1% of them will continue to work in the field.

Relja Bobić: I encountered an interesting situation in Belgrade, again with the shoe maker. He has a son, but he is not interested to continue the family business. We also do not have official certificates in the education system, but he organizes trainings on his own and does his own marketing for it. He formatted a seven-day course in which anyone can make their own pair of shoes. You do not become a show maker after that, it is mostly for people with regular jobs. And some of them are setting aside as many as seven days, often coming from abroad, to go through this experience. And for him it is additional income.

Mario Nokaj: When you are based in a shopping street, you need to make the best pieces for the shop window, and dedicated yourself to custom orders. You also need to be fast and high quality. People asked us about workshops, but we do not have the time to do that. There is also the amateur idea that everybody can make anything. But I do not really support that view.

Maja Kolar: In the case of Ribnica, would you say that you are encountering similar problems?

Katja Žagar: We have a problem that the craftspeople are mostly elderly, and they do not think that they need a designer. What they make - that is it. We would like to change this mindset, and we started with crafts courses in wood and ceramics. This has been going on for the last three years, and the mentors are our traditional craftspeople.

Maja Kolar: Is there an interest for this type of products from both sides - the customers and the craftspeople?

Katja Žagar: For the customers these things are usually too expensive. But other craftspeople who do this for a living, they sell big series of products, on the scale of thousands. They have customers from abroad. They are afraid to produce a product with a designer, as they do not know how to sell it. The series is too small for them.

Koraljka Vlajo: Studio Oaza worked extensively with local craftsmen. What was your experience

in the end? You even developed some final products.

Maja Kolar: It really depends on the individual case. It took a long time to establish trust and a friendly relationship, but once the connection was made the prototypes were done through a course format, in a way. Nina did a shoe making course, for example. So, you are following the process in real time. However, in relation to the distribution phase, as the project was also extensively promoted in a gallery setting, we actually started getting orders from the visitors of the exhibition. But this particular maker was not equipped enough to deliver a series of this product, or to develop a sort of a new system with pre-orders, a model that would work for a specific type of workshop. Another challenge is that, in that case, the designer would have to be present to follow the quality control. And we did not even use our own original designs, but made collages of what was already at the workshop, using existing models. Another issue is also that this maker did not have his own clients, so even if he had produced a series, it would sell extremely slow. What we became very aware of is that the collaboration needs to be a mutual investment.

Nina Bačun: Yes. And those shoe makers who changed and updated their models a bit, they still can survive. But those who are making them in the same way as 70 years ago, they are down to fixing shoes only, and they are not really able to sell the shoes that they create. This is super sad, as some of them are really great masters.

Relja Bobić: This is something we also encountered in Serbia. Most of the workshops are on the level of fixing stuff, and the ones producing the entire product are a minority. On the other hand, some of them, like the last standing traditional candy makers in Belgrade, have not changed their production process at all for two generations, or they automated only a small part of the process. Despite that, this particular workshop is so busy that it took several weeks to schedule a one-hour interview.

Nina Bačun: We had this romantic idea that we would be really able to help them. But, that help would need to go much farther than we

were able to go. Some of them need to change too many things in order to be more visible and to re-enter the market.

Ivana Borovnjak: Keep in mind that we are also talking about people who are not high-quality craftspeople. Those who are doing repairs, or smaller parts for other businesses, stuff like that, instead of thinking of making their own collections. A lot of the times, this is all put onto the same pile. As you Matija mentioned, you are dealing with many of them...

Matija Dujić: What is considered as crafts in the Netherlands is not the same as what is considered in Croatia. Crafts is a term within which you operate your business. In a way, anything can be 'craft' in Croatia, from a transport company to building and fishing. All the cafes that you see around the downtown, most of them are crafts. The problem is in finding the definition, and those craftsmen who can fit the definition and be good for the designers to work with. That was our problem from the very beginning. How to find those who have the necessary techniques that could be used in collaboration with designers in developing contemporary craft products.

Willemien Ippel: That is how we established the craft map. That is half the job, in a way. The criterion was which skills they can teach, or which ones they can use in the production. But we do visit them and get to know them, so we actually know if they can teach a good program. Designers also like to discover some really authentic maker. The narratives behind their crafts are very important.

Vesna Lovrić Plantić: Most of us have a generally very old-fashioned projection of a crafts-person. A very old man, 80 years old, who does everything in an old-fashioned way. But then we have Mario who is not that old, uses modern techniques and so on.

Mario Nokaj: This is the public view of the crafts. Long time ago, I told one girl that I am a jewelry designer. She was impressed. Then one time I said I was a goldsmith, and her reaction was 'So, you are a craftsman.' All these roles are different in people's heads. This is something that we need to change.

Relja Bobić: Something similar is happening between 'craft' and 'handwork'. When the S-P-O-K project was presented in Belgrade at our kick off conference, the mapping of craftspeople in southern Sweden, there were plenty of examples there of small factories, working with lots of machines, on very specific materials and processes. But it does not make it non-handcraft, it is still very much far away from an industrial way of producing.

Vesna Lovrić Plantić: This is also the reason why we want to change the name of our museum. Using the term 'applied art' is always perceived in public in a better way than 'crafts'.

Mario Nokaj: For us, the product is the most important, and the customer is most important. We need to teach design from a very early age so that people could perceive it and acknowledge it. There is the art, the craft and the design. When you have everything in one place, then it is a great product.

Marija Đorđević: I also think it is great when you have all three aspects in one situation. Because, for example, in order to choose the designer, the craftsperson needs to have a lot of knowledge in design.

Relja Bobić: Some of them actually might not have knowledge in the domain of design, but they know the market, they know how the customers think, and they can recognize it in the work of a certain designer. Another thing I realized is very characteristic for our wider region is that all these narratives and the social aspect of the crafts is far more important part of the story for the craftspeople themselves, than the actual design. For example, most of the workshops in Serbia went through this post-WWII nationalization of property, and were considered bourgeoisie just for the fact of running and independent, 'private' business. This really became the signifier for many of these families and businesses, as they needed to restart from scratch. Their workshops and tools would be taken away, so if they wanted to start again, they would not get any of their tools back, nor support from the state.

Nina Bačun: Another difference is that in countries such as Austria or the Netherlands,

people do appreciate crafted objects. They would gladly pay for it. We do not have that view. Even if it would be a question of economy and income, those who can afford it, they would go abroad and spend their money on a crafty object.

Matija Dujić: Still, there is a difference between now and five years ago. Now we know that there are some customers who are aware of the story that goes beyond the product, and who are willing to pay for it. We are now trying to find a viable system which would continuously pursue this sort of cooperation. There have been some really successful examples over the recent years.

Maja Kolar: Do you think that there would be a way to do this beyond the individual efforts? Collaborations have been happening, and the trend of designers reaching out to craftspeople is not something we are inventing, it is happening. In Croatia in particular. I am wondering how this project itself - MADE IN - cannot end up as just another exhibition? How to manage to incorporate the project into something that is a trademark, or a new model for other operations and crafts to join in with support that could come from chambers of crafts, for example, a more institutional support.

Matija Dujić: As you are well aware, the most successful examples of these initiatives were the ones that involved some aspect of competition, and which had substantial funds that could finance not only the prototyping, but also distribution and putting the product on the market. I had the luck to have, for two years in a row, the biggest bank in Croatia supporting such a process. When those funds were gone, there have not been too many initiatives, both from the side of designers and the craftspeople. We had a 6-month collaboration with Faculty of Architecture and Design, where young designer worked with craftspeople of their choice, but I do not think that the result was too good. The young designers were not interested in doing the work that had to be done, getting their hands dirty in workshops. Then a significant number of craftspeople who participated in the project wanted quick results, cheap final products with which they could boost their revenue. A really small percent of

them understood the possibilities and values introduced to them by working with designers. So, there was no viable and continuous cooperation, and I found myself in front of a wall. How to force these people to collaborate constantly, and to offer them a system?

Nina Bačun: We [Oaza Studio] were a part of one of these projects. When the money came into the picture, we had really big difficulties. We eventually stopped collaborating, and he started making his own version of the product we developed together, and started selling it. This was not nice at all, to start with. We also have another problem with the production - it is expensive. People do not have money to pay for this sort of product.

Marion Poortvliet: I think we have a nice example in the Netherlands. When we started with the Crafts Council, we met a knitting expert. She was giving classes to amateurs who wanted to learn. We had a wonderful collaboration, and she still gives master classes. The point here is that she is mostly focused on 'selling' her knowledge, and not the products.

Ivana Borovnjak: Is there a strategy for crafts in the Netherlands, or an action on a national, policy level?

Marion Poortvliet: When we started there was no policy, but now we have so many good examples, and we talked to our minister of culture. There is an awareness rising not only within the government, but also the people, the society. There is no top-down policy, but I think that we are now in such a position that this could come from our work, bottom-up.

Willemien Ippel: The previous 'version' of Craft Council from the 1980s was subsidised by the Ministry of Economics, and we are supported by Ministry of Culture. So, the perception of crafts used to come from economics. And we want to see how you can value this process and knowledge, it is not only about the product. It is also about the path to the product, and you can make a business out of that as well.

Matija Dujić: In Croatia, we also have the challenge that many people who were involved in production within their family crafts business-

es are more and more working in the domain of tourism, so it is harder to find those who could collaborate with the designers. I realized that we are dealing with maybe 250-300 craft productions in the entire country. That is really not much, and it is the reality we are facing. It is less and less every year.

Maja Kolar: Working on the MADE IN project activities over the previous months, we have of course already noticed some overlapping issues, and we hope to offer some possible ways forward before the end of the project. This refers to the education models, production models and, finally, business models. Andrea, what would be some of your conclusions of comments?

Andrea de Chirico: I would maybe start by introducing a key word - 'new crafts'. Because all this is also a matter of redefining crafts. And eventually, also design. In case it stays as it is, or as it used to be, then we will not be able to move on. We need to find alternatives to the current systems, which at the same time should be the role of us designers. It is not about better or worse, but there just need to be alternatives, a diversity of perspectives. From a European point of view, craft is a sector where Europe can really make a difference compared to other continents, as we have this knowledge for centuries. Asia, of course, also has a huge craft knowledge, but the specifics of our continent could be turned into something valuable and unique.

Thomas Geisler: I think using this sort of view would be the wrong way, as something that is new is new just for a certain moment, and then it becomes old. Historically, there was also a movement called New Craft in Germany, which grew out of 1960s and 1970s alternative culture, with lots of upcycling actions. I think we should not step into that trap of history, that we continuously do not learn. Because this movement disappeared, and now we want build from scratch again. I think we need to build upon these learnings, especially on the side of design. Craftspeople do not learn this kind of history, but the designers should, and they should integrate it into their current thinking, into alternative developments. Otherwise, it is a repetition of a movement that has

already happened. And that should not happen with MADE IN project.

ABOUT PROJECT PARTNERS

PROJECT PARTNERS

PROJECT PARTNERS & TEAM MEMBERS

MUSEUM OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

Museum of Arts and Crafts (MUO) was established in 1880 and has the largest and richest collection in Croatia of fine and applied art: in total over 100,000 items are cared for by the museum. Crafts, art and design are key focus of the museum. The main museum activities include promotion of local artistic and craft mastery and quality design projects through collection and preservation of items, organisation of exhibitions and various educational and promotional activities. The MUO is one of key design institutions in Croatia, tightly collaborating with professional design/applied artists associations in promotion and research of local design heritage and contemporary design issues. Since 2010, MUO in collaboration with Croatian Designers Association organizes biennial exhibition of Croatian design.

Koraljka Vlajo is the Head of Design Collections in Zagreb Museum of Arts and Crafts (MUO). She is the author of many exhibitions and catalogues, among them: Porcelain Gleam of Socialism (MUO, 2010), on Jugokeramika's design department, Maria's Industry of Beauty on Croatian graphic designer Marija Kalentic (MUO, 2013), Hidden Design on Rade Koncar's design department (CDA — Croatian Designers Association, 2011). She is coauthor of the exhibition Design for the New World at Belgrade Museum of Yugoslav History (2015) Koraljka coauthored following exhibitions at the CDA: Zvonko Beker i poslijeratna ekon-

omska propaganda (2015), Davor Grunwald: Retrorama industrijskog dizajna (2017), Bag-gizmo 2015- / Making of (2018). She is the author of section on Industrial design for the catalogue and the exhibition Sixties in Croatia (MUO, 2018). She has been appointed by the Croatian Ministry of Culture as the curator of exhibition In a Nutshell (2012 — 2020), a touring exhibition on contemporary Croatian design.

www.en.muohr

OAZA

OAZA is Zagreb based Art and Design Collective co-funded in 2013 by six designers (Nina Bačun, Ivana Borovnjak, Roberta Bratović, Tina Ivezić, Maja Kolar and Maša Poljanec. Since then, OAZA had been continuously involved in art and design research based projects mostly in the domain of the independent cultural sector, self-initiated design projects (curatorial practices, social design, strategic and conceptual design, publishing, design education). Some of the more prominent self-initiated projects include: Made in Ilica, Handed Down Collection, aBook publishing, Female Design History in Croatia, which have all been showcased internationally.

Ivana Borovnjak is a researcher, designer, and design curator at OAZA Art and Design Collective. After graduating from the Design Academy Eindhoven in 2007, she has been working on various collaborative projects in

the field of product design and visual communications together with designers, artists and cultural organisations in Zagreb and Amsterdam. From 2013 — 2017 she acted as a president of Croatian Designers Association, where she has been actively involved in creative direction, curation and management of various initiatives, platforms, festivals and educational projects, such as Design Tourism, D-Day, Practicing Design, Balkan Design Network.

Maja Kolar is an independent designer working within the field of research, curation, contextual and social design. She holds an MFA degree from Konstfack University of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm. From 2013 onward she acts as a creative co-director in OAZA Art and Design Collective in Zagreb, whose studio practice can be placed at a cross-over between design research, publishing and education. Some of her larger recent collaborations include Utopian Collective shown at the London Design Biennial, Serendipity Searcher commissioned for 26th Biennial of Design in Ljubljana, Forum for Future Museum speculative design project displayed in Kunsthaus Graz and KUMU in Tallinn and Female Design History, a digital critical historiography project produced for Croatian Designers Association.

www.o-a-z-a.com

MUSEUM OF ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

MAO preserves and archives works from prominent architects and designers of the 20th and 21st centuries, constituting a rich history of creative ideas, vision and production. MAO organizes and shares this source of inspiration and exploration of architecture and design through its compelling exhibitions, publications and diverse programme, which is aimed at a broad circle of visitors. At the same time it is opening itself as a space for everyone who wishes to research, study, and learn more about how we inhabit our living space, how we organize it, change it, design it and make it our own. MAO serves as a dynamic forum for the exchange of ideas, knowledge and dialogue for and among a wide range of

visitors. MAO is also leading the Centre for Crativity (CzK), an interdisciplinary platform that connects, promotes and supports the activities and developments of Slovenia's cultural and creative sector. Since 1963 the museum organizes Biennial of Design (BIO), the oldest European design biennial with a strong international presence and positioning.

Maja Vardjan is a curator at the Museum of Architecture and Design, where she researches Slovenian architectural and design production of the 20th century and contemporary creative practices. She has cooperated in the preparation of numerous exhibitions and publications, among them Under a Common Roof: Modern Public Buildings from the Museum's Collection and Other Archives, Saša J. Mächtig: Systems, Structures, Strategies and Stanko Kristl. Humanity and Space. Since 2013, she has actively cooperated in the development of the new format of the Biennial of Design (BIO). As a co-curator, she conceived BIO 50: 3, 2, 1 ... TEST and BIO 25: Faraway, So Close, for which she received the ICOM Slovenia award.

Cvetka Požar, PhD, is an art historian and curator at the Museum of Architecture and Design. In her work, she studies design, especially visual communications. She is the author of the exhibition and the book The Century of the Poster. Slovenian Poster Design in the 20th Century (2015). She was the curator of To the Polling Booths! The Poster as a Political Medium in Slovenia 1945 — 1999 (2000) and BIO 50: Biennial of (Industrial) Design over 50 Years (2014). She was the co-curator of several exhibitions: Art for Everyday Life: Modernist Glass Design in Slovenia (2017), BIO 50: 3, 2, 1, ... TEST (2014), Iskra: Non-Aligned Design 1946 — 1990 (2009). She has edited and co-edited several books, among them Architectural Epicentres (2008), Sustainable Alternatives in Design (2009) and On Information Design (2016).

Nikola Pongrac graduated in Art History at Faculty of Arts Ljubljana in 2009. Since then he worked as a project coordinator and later became curator for the exhibitions at the Museum of Architecture and Design. He is project manager, among others, of Slove-

nian Pavilion at Venice Architectural Biennale and exhibition of Biennial of Design Ljubljana. In 2019 he co-curated exhibition Living with Water — Southern Fringe of Ljubljana.

www.mao.si

WERKRAUM BREGENZERWALD

Werkraum Bregenzewald is a craft and trade association of currently 90 business members established in 1999, uniting craftsmen of different guilds, promoting cooperation and exchange of ideas. WR strives for sustainable development of crafts and trade of the region through: Economic sustainability by maintaining and creating local jobs and training opportunities; Ecological sustainability by producing long-term goods for daily use; Social sustainability by establishing trusting relationships and personal connections; And cultural sustainability by preserving the quality of crafts and ensuring cultural continuity. WR has established its own venue for exhibitions and events designed by Swiss architect Peter Zumthor. Opened in 2013 in Andelsbuch the “Werkraumhaus” serves as space for exhibitions, workshops, lectures, seminars and symposiums.

Miriam Kathrein is a designer, curator and writer with Austrian/Dutch roots. She is the director of the crafts and trade association Werkraum Bregenzewald, where she curates exhibitions and organizes initiatives which focus on the role of craft in society and craftspeople as agents of change, who are capable of fostering economic innovation, sustainability and societal transformation. Before that, at the creative centre departure at the Vienna Business Agency, she has been responsible for program development, knowledge provision and network activities for design professionals in the fields of architecture, design and fashion. She has been teaching Museum and Curatorial Studies, Typography and Technical Methodology at the department of Contextual Design and Art and Communication at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna. She established her curatorial practice at Kunsthau Bregenz and Witte de With, Center of Contemporary Art, Rotterdam. She also worked as a curator at the Kunst-

verein Hamburg and TBA21 in Vienna. In her work she is interested in post-disciplinary, processual and collaborative practices.

Thomas Geisler is an Austrian design curator and cultural producer who curated international exhibitions for the Vienna Biennale, London Design Biennale, Vitra Design Museum, and many others. He is the director of the Museum of Decorative Arts — Dresden State Art Collections (SKD). Before that he was the director of the Werkraum Bregenzewald — the crafts and trade initiative of the Bregenzewald region — where he was leading exhibitions and other initiatives, overlapping innovative craftsmanship, design and architecture. He was also the curator and head of the Design Collection at the MAK Vienna. He played a pivotal role in establishing the Victor J. Papanek Foundation at the University for Applied Arts Vienna and is a co-founder of Vienna Design Week. He recently curated the BIO 26 — Common Knowledge (26th Biennial of Design, 2019 Ljubljana).

Renate Breuss, art Historian, lives in Rankweil in Vorarlberg, Austria. After studying history of art she gained a doctorate on the topic of measurement in cooking (Das Maß im Kochen, 1999, newly edited 2019, Edition Löwenzahn). Until 2016, she was a managing director of the Werkraum Bregenzewald, where she was involved in initiating and supervising the establishment and programme development of the Werkraumhaus. Since 1999, external lecturer teaching culture, design and perception in the Intermedia Course at the University of Applied Sciences Vorarlberg. She has published books and articles on building culture, craftsmanship and the theory of cooking.

en.werkraum.at

NOVA ISKRA

Nova Iskra is a pioneering creative hub in the Balkans, created with the idea to incite tangible connections between creative industries, technology and the people, with the goal to support critical thinking, nurture ideas, design organizations and develop businesses that are future-proof, while remaining sensible to the ever-changing present. Nova Iskra

creates spaces, initiates collaborations and designs education programs for innovators, entrepreneurs, researchers, activists, students, professionals, organizations and companies who are interested in taking an active role in shaping the way we will live, learn and work in the future. Throughout this process, Nova Iskra collaborates with local and international companies, civil society organizations, stakeholders and other groups or individuals interested in these subjects, or already active in these fields. Nova Iskra is very active in the domain of international cooperation, and has been realizing a number of projects together with organizations from Greece, the UK, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Turkey, France, Sweden, Bosnia and Hercegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro and many others. Hundreds of public, educational and capacity-building programs have been realized so far, as well as numerous international activities and collaborative projects.

Relja Bobić is an independent curator, manager, producer and music promoter, occasionally translator, copywriter, editor and freelance journalist. Since 1999 he was the author and collaborator on numerous projects in Serbia and abroad, from the domains of contemporary music, art education, visual culture and related fields. He was the initiator and artistic director of the festivals “Dis-patch” (2002—2010) and “+++” (2015). Through the activities of his organization and festival “Dis-patch”, he was the curator and producer of several projects that had its world premieres in Belgrade, and in which contemporary authors from various countries collaborated on new artistic productions. He is one of the co-founders of Nova Iskra, where he is focused on the development and management of education programs and international cooperation in the fields of art, design, new technologies, entrepreneurship and creative business. He is also one of the founders and team member of European Creative Hubs Network. He is still active on presenting events, exhibitions and co-productions in the domains of contemporary music and visual arts.

www.novaiskra.com

MIKSER

Mikser Association is a multidisciplinary cultural platform that promotes a sustainable model of urban and cultural development which relies on community involvement and participatory design. Mikser Association organizes exhibitions, conferences, presentations, lectures, screenings, creative workshops, competitions, forums, public discussions and other forms of cultural activities and knowledge exchange. As a relevant factor in building a sustainable and innovative society, Mikser focuses on the development and promotion of new talents in the fields of social innovation, urban design, architecture, product and service design, through transnational mobility of young professionals; enhancing business and entrepreneurial skills of young designers, up-skilling them to cooperate interdisciplinary and internationally, and offering new educational models and exchange programs between young creative players. Mikser is recognized as one of the key promoters of the Balkan sustainable design, creative entrepreneurship and talent, as well as a catalyst for the sustainable urban revitalization of neglected and underused urban areas, fostering social inclusion, cultural exchange and culture of participation of all interested stakeholders.

Maja Lalić is an architect and urban designer, expert in gender equality and climate change, with rich experience in cultural management and environmental dimensions of urban planning. Having graduated from Architecture and Urban Design at Columbia University in New York in 2000, she developed an interdisciplinary regional practice based in Belgrade, focusing on participative architecture and urban design, climate smart urban planning and social inclusion by cultural mediation and cultural management. Described by The New York Times as Belgrade's "most cutting-edge homegrown architect", Lalić is also the founder and creative director of Belgrade's Mikser organization and Mikser Festival dedicated to urban culture and sustainable development. As an urban designer educated at Columbia University in New York, Maja advocates for participatory urban practices and nature-based solutions in cities. She is collab-

orating frequently on international cooperation projects connecting social inclusion with actions against climate change and circular economy. She is the initiator of the regional platform Young Balkan Designers, an activist of the international initiative Blue Green Solutions, a co-founder of Women Architects Association in Serbia and regional Balkan Design Network. Under Maja's leadership, Mikser organization received European Citizenship Award 2016 for Social Campaign of the Year by European Civic Forum, as well as Contribution to Europe Award by European Movement International.

www.mikser.rs

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