

Essay on the shifting identity of modern objects paper

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Introduction

We have always seen how the concept of art, crafts, and designs could be so dynamic. They radically adapt to the changes in society and sometimes, they adapt for good and sometimes they do not. This is by far the most basic explanation of the presence of the various art movements in the past. Of course there are still traces of these art movements that exist to date but they surely are not as ubiquitous as they once were. The objective of this paper was to examine the different discovered and if possible, undiscovered intersections between art, crafts, and design, focusing on areas such as material processes, modes of production and technologies which could explain how a commodity can be considered as an art. This paper will also focus on various art and reform movements such as the Arts and Crafts Movement, Dada, the Studio Glass Movement.

How can a commodity object be or become an art object

A commodity on the other hand is basically anything that is within a political economy. A house can be a commodity; a basket can be a commodity; foods and other perishable goods can be a commodity; ideas can be a commodity; electronic devices can be a commodity; and in the modern ages of society, practically everything can be coined as a commodity.

Commodity is technically anything that is an outcome or product of human labor. These items are more often than not sold as a product for sale in the market. However, the most important operational meaning we are looking for is the one which describes artworks and natural resources as a commodity. Well, they are commodities indeed, at least during the time

when Marxism ideologies were widespread across continental Europe and even Asia.

Digging deeper, a commodity should have a value which more often than not represents the quantity and complexity of the human labor required to produce a certain commodity, a use for that value (e. g. social use value, an exchange value, and a price.

The Arts and Crafts Movement

Decorative arts used to flourish during the middle to late medieval ages, perhaps because people during that time had a strong perception and belief of the value of arts. Decorative arts is the term used to describe the discipline of designing and manufacturing a wide variety of objects that are usually commodities which we all know would be eventually sold in the general market for a certain price. Basically any type of commodity can be intertwined with decorative arts. A platter can have thousands of designs and the process of designing that platter basically but perfectly defines the field of decorative arts.

Unfortunately, it fell short during the early to late 1800s due to a diverse set of factors which probably has something to do with the highly volatile supply and demand scheme of economics. It could be that the demand for decorative commodities at the time became so low that the field of decorative art was considered as a dying art. The Arts and Crafts movement was the answer to the problem. Of course, it offered more contemporary design options with regards to commodities and the process and other factors involved in designing them.

It highly appraised the value of traditional craftsmanship and incorporated simpler design elements usually touching medieval, folk, and romantic styles of decorating. The presence of these art ideologies or rather concepts vividly shows us the type of relationship that used to and still continues to exist between art and a commodity. They could be one, especially when artistic qualities will be incorporated in the designing and manufacturing process of a particular commodity.

The Arts and Crafts movement advocated a variety of pro-art ideologies including an anti-industrial mindset. Factories employing both human laborers and machineries used to be more popular back then because of the mass-producing ability they render to people. However, artistic design qualities were often neglected because of the uniformity and the limited and narrow artistic options available. The Arts and Crafts movement was indeed a great response to the deteriorating relationship between arts and commodities. It metaphorically sealed the gap caused by the industrial revolution between arts and commodities.

References

Marx, K. (n. d.). *Outlines of the Critique of Political Capital*. *Collected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*.

Dada

Dada was an art movement formed somewhere during the first quarter of the 20th century as a response to the horror and terror that the world witnessed during the World War I (Richter, 1965). The branches of art that were primarily involved in this art movement include but are not limited to

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visual arts, literature, art manifestoes, poetry, theatre, graphic designs and various art theories. The focus of the dada movement was the incorporation of anti-war politics and ideologies on the cultural and art works. We have mentioned before that anything, even ideas and other intangible things can be a commodity as long as it has value and can be sold and demanded by people. Well, the Dada art movement clearly shows that even after the Arts and Crafts movement, the concept of arts and commodity could once again be one. We could perhaps imagine that Dada art movement advocates used anti-war designs and concepts on their literatures and poems or in the staging of theatrical plays, or in the designing and manufacturing process of tangible commodities.

References

Richter, Hans. (1965). *Dada: Art and Anti-Art*. Oxford University Press

Novero, C. (2010). *Antidiets of the Avant-Garde: From Futurist Cooking to Eat Art*. University of Minnesota Press.

The Studio Glass Movement

The Studio Glass Movement's history is somewhat similar, in concept, to that of the Arts and Crafts Movement's. According to the Toledo Museum's official website (2012), " the Studio Glass Movement was born in a garage on the Museum grounds. Harvey Littleton, a pottery instructor, received the support of then-director Otto Wittmann to conduct a workshop to explore ways artists might create works from molten glass in their own studios, rather than in factories."

It somehow mimics the type of reaction that people had that marked the start of the Arts and Crafts movement. Industrial technology remained to

flourish because of the increase in demands in almost every type of commodities which in turn may be attributed to the population boom. People got less concerned with the arts; they were kind of forced to focus on their needs rather than their wants. In an effort to reverse the thinking that art would always be a want and never be a need, the Studio Glass Movement was initiated.

Studio Glass, even though it is made in factories, studio glass offers great flexibility when it comes to decorative designs. In fact, that is what using this glass as the main material for various commodities is intended for—to serve as a decorative as well as a functional medium for construction. Studio Glass commodities that were first made at the peak of this movement displayed a sculptural, functional, and decorative statement, telling to people that the belief that a commodity inspired by art can never be functional is entirely false because artistic commodities during the Studio Glass Movement have proved to the people that artworks could double as a want and a need, and also be functional all at the same time. Overall, this studio glass movement further justifies the fact that commodities can become an art object.

References

Toledo Museum. (2012). The Studio Glass Movement. Toledo Museum.

Conclusion

Art is abstract. But even though it only stays in the mind, it can be easily expressed and we could actually see art everywhere. We can see art in buildings, and most importantly, in commodities, which is the topic of this paper. Art is like a spirit. As long as a commodity has been embedded with any form of artistic spirit, it can be or become an art object.