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**CRAFT AND DESIGN:
THE HANDCRAFTED IMAGE IN DESIGN.**

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The Handcrafted Image in Design

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INTRODUCTION

For most of this century craft and ^{industrial} design have travelled down quite separate paths. They have seldom been integrated as both generally lie at opposite ends of the creative spectrum. Craft representing unique, handmade, artisan creations for an individual; and design creating for society on a mass scale, through the machine, primarily focused on fulfilling functional needs. However, in the 1990s there appears to be a new and steady growth in the influence that craft is having in design. It would seem that design has crossed paths with craft and has taken on board many of its principles.

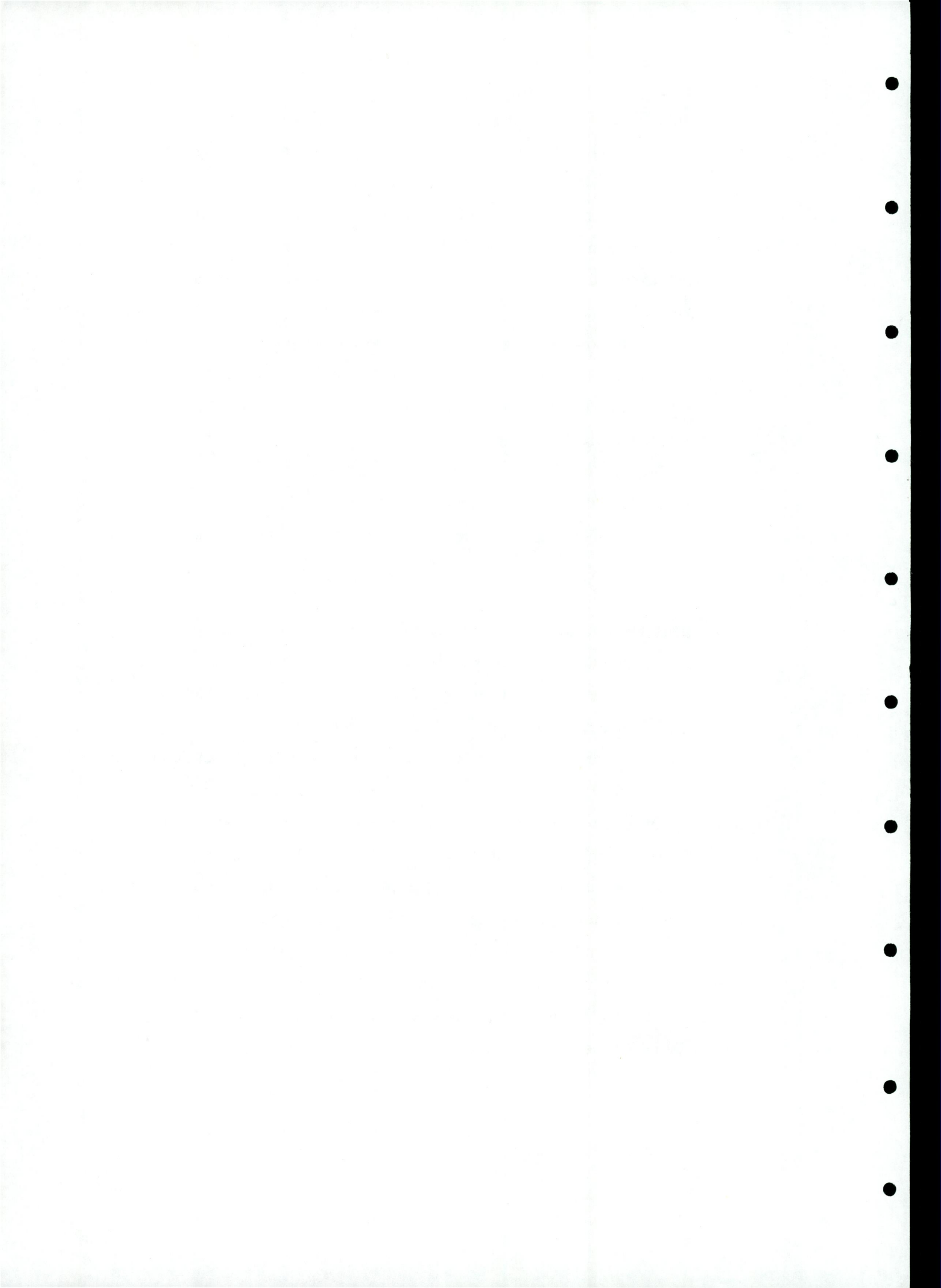
The subject of this thesis is to explore this involvement of craft in design. There are a number of reasons as to what has caused a part of design to move in this direction in the 1990s. Probably the most influential reason is due to the results of the strong Environmentalist Movements of the 1980s. These Movements have called into question the competitive, destructive nature of society; and has sought to replace it with co-operation and the will to protect our fragile planet. A further reason is that the 1990s will bring with it the end of another millennium and this situation has created a reflection back over the many decades and centuries of this age. Such reflection has caused society to realise the need to preserve its past and to learn from it. Furthermore, the 1990s has instilled a new sense of romanticism back into human society as many historic conflicts have come to an end. For the first time in many decades there is an aura of relative global peace around the world. The coming together of nations and breaking down of barriers has however, drawn to attention the importance of retaining individual cultures and traditions. If they are lost or swallowed up, it only deprives the world of a piece of its richness and diversity after all is an essential part of life. Another reason is that through all this, the 1990s are witnessing a birth of a new consciousness in society. It is a consciousness that embodies the need for collective responsibility, but also it is one that create desires for cultural integrity as national identities are sought to be preserved. Society demands that the previous philosophies of quantity are now replaced with a more energy conscious quality that will ensure long-life.

In design, all of these events and issues that are now shaping the 1990s have been able to be express through the use of craft imagery. Craft takes its inspiration from the natural environment, it is a symbol of minority cultures and past traditions, it creates romanticism, and stands for individualism and quality. It is playing such an influential role in design in the 1990s, because it is an image that is best able to represent and embody these issues. The purpose of this thesis is to consider in more depth the participation that craft is playing in design in the 1990s.

It aims to do this by examining the handcrafted image that is used in the styling of design in the 1990s. The thesis will set out to achieve the following;

- * To explain what the handcrafted image used in design actually is, how it is defined, and where it has originated from.
- * To explore why there is this image in design in the 1990s.
- * To discuss how this image is achieved in design.
- * To discover what effects this image will have on design in general, both now and in its future.

This thesis intends to look at these different aspects by examining a range of products that have this particular handcrafted look in their design. These products are mainly from the fields of industrial design, or furniture design. However, the handcrafted image in relation to fashion, interior design, and architecture will occasionally be consulted. This thesis will focus on the context of Milan throughout the various chapters. However, this is only to use it as a test ground in examining this image in design within the 1990s. The context of Milan is being used because, this is where the subject of this thesis was initially realized, and also it is where the research was carried out. The objects referred to in this thesis were all found in Milan, though it must be made clear that they are not necessarily exclusively of Italian origin. Some were created by international designers who are based in Milan, and some were manufactured in other countries. However, all these examples were on sale in Milan, and were all products that were available to be bought by its Milanese consumers.



Various books, articles and interviews were used to collect information in relation to the topic of this thesis.

Penny Sparke in her book An Introduction to Design and Culture (1986) gives a clear insight into Italian design culture. John Haycraft in Italian Labyrinth, Italy in the 1980s (1985) discusses the history of Milan's economy, its design industries, and the culture of its people. He indicates the role that craft has played in Milan's design past. The first and last chapters in Jocelyn de Noblet's edited Industrial Design, Reflections of a Century (1993) document the most influential trends that are shaping this decade such as environment issues, changing roles of designers and new advances in technology. Nigel Whitely in Design for Society (1993) discusses the new aspirations of the 1990s consumer, their desire for more lifestyle products and gives a detailed account of the strong role that environmental issues play in 1990s design. Only the books published in recent years however, indicate a new relationship between craft and design. This is to be expected as it is only since the 1990s that it has occurred. The books published in the 1990s do show how the principles of craft are becoming much more important in the design world, but fail to explore this relationship to any greater extent. Only Nigel Whiteley, when talking about the new "green" consumer discusses how apparent handmade objects are being used as a means to represent green objects.

Magazine articles in Domus, I.D. Magazine and Abitare from 1992 all depict strong visual evidence of the steady progression in the popularity of the handcrafted look in design, but only a few articles go further to offer explanations as to why this is so.

Only the interviews of the fashion designers, such as Ally Capellino, and the Professors of Architecture from the Politecnico di Milano, provide clear evidence as to explain the new relationship between craft and design.

There is however, a definite realisation from all the sources consulted within the 1990s that the handcrafted image is playing a vital part in the development of design. Since there is no specific documentation exploring the new involvement of craft in design for this decade, it is from this angle that the thesis is based on.

CHAPTER 1

DEFINING THE HANDCRAFTED IMAGE AND ITS ORIGINS IN DESIGN

Before this thesis explains what the handcrafted image in design is, and where its origins lie, it will place this image in its historical context.

It is important to realise that the use of the handcrafted aesthetic in design is not purely a 1990s phenomenon or concept. The handcrafted image has been used many times throughout the history of design. The last most significant period that this look was revived in design was in the mid 1960s. Two primary examples that demonstrated this previous use of the crafted image were the style conscious Habitat stores which first arrived in Britain in 1964, and the opening of IKEA in Scandinavia during the same period. Habitat designed and sold items such as French Farmhouse kitchen utensils and bentwood furniture, all of which had a distinctive handcrafted appeal to them. In the 1960s, IKEA started designing and manufacturing completely wooden laminated furniture, which was in strong contrast to the tubular steel furniture that was most popular during this time. This image in design has in part been revived occasionally since the 1960s. However, it was not until the 1990s that design has once again revived this look to the same extent as its prior popularity.

The 1990s is seeing this rebirth of a strong handcrafted image in many of its designed objects. This leads to the question of what this handcrafted image actually is and how is it defined?

Defining the Handcrafted Image in Design:

The handcrafted image is an aesthetic that is associated with the appearance

of handmade objects. However, because this thesis is referring to the crafted image of designed objects, such objects cannot be handmade since design automatically indicates machine or mass production. The handcrafted image in design is, therefore, a look which only imitates craft manufacture. Designed objects that have this handcrafted image could best be defined as being pseudo craft.

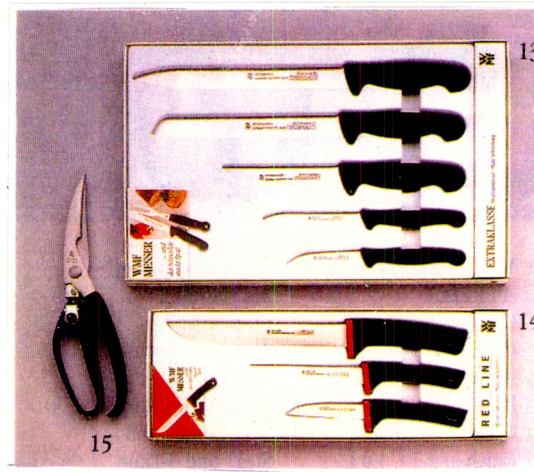
This section will define in more depth what the handcrafted image in design is. It will do this by demonstrating how this image is an aesthetic that denounces the Modernist industrial look. To do this, the thesis will compare and contrast two sets of knives on display at the "Hi-Tech" Showrooms, on Via Venticinque Aprile, Milan. By comparing and contrasting these two sets of knives, it will be possible to define the particular characteristics that give designed objects this handcrafted look. The first, designed in the 1990s, is a set of six steak knives presented in a wooden box.



Illus.1. WMF Steak-knives from the "Hi-Tech" showroom on Via Venticinque Aprile. (handcrafted aesthetic).



The second, designed in the 1980s, is a set of kitchen knives presented in a card tray with a transparent plastic lid.



Illus.2. An example of earlier 1980s design for kitchen knives from WMF. (machine aesthetic).

The first set has a particular handcrafted look, while the second has a Modernist industrial one. It should be noted that though both sets are actually manufactured in Germany by WMF, they were for sale in this popular Milanese design showroom.

The handcrafted image of the first set, the steak knives, denounce the Modernist Image of the kitchen knives under the following headings; Graphics, Colour, Materials, Ergonomics, Technology, Form, and Durability.

The graphics on the lid of the wooden box are applied by using traditional wood dyes, printing directly onto the wood in block a print technique, and using a minimum of two basic colours. The graphical content is kept to a minimum, using standard and unadorned typography. The graphics are applied and designed in a manner that appears to be within the capability of a craftsman using traditional printing techniques. In comparison to this, the other box uses printed paper stickers on its lid, and has a plastic covering associated with modern day packaging. The kitchen knife set packaging uses coloured photo images of the knives in their kitchen environment, and the knives themselves have text laser printed on their blades. Such graphical content would only be possible using highly sophisticated



Illus.3. WMF steak-knives are not embellished with complex contours.

electronic printing equipment. The first set reflects an admiration for the printing skills of a crafts person, while the second demonstrates the capability of modern day hi-tech machinery.

Apart from the graphics, the colours used in the steak knife set are essentially natural based. This is in direct opposition to the colours used in the kitchen knife set, which are strong, glossy colours associated with typical 1980s kitchenware. It should be noted that white coloured packaging, or the so called "white box", have always been considered the perfect colour for kitchen products by Modernists. Marcel Breuer, the designer of such Modernist classics as the B33 chair, wrote "I consider white a very versatile and beautiful colour" (WHITELEY, 1993, p.10).

The handcrafted image of the steak knives denounce the synthetic plastic materials, the vacuum formed tray and manufactured card of the kitchen set by using natural wood, and a traditional silver finish on their knives.

"Modernism has been founded on the principles of ergonomic requirements and technological progress" (WHITELEY, 1993, p.9). These are very strong themes in the kitchen set designed in the 1980s. These knife handles are ergonomically shaped, and each knife fits into its own plastic moulded pocket. The kitchen set is an example of supreme technical excellence in the manufacturing of precision tools. On the other hand, the crafted looking 1990s steak knife set rejects the dominant use of ergonomics. It does this by not allowing ergonomics to interrupt the more traditional forms that knives normally take, and by using traditional based technologies like woodwork and metal casting. The forms in the steak knife set are very smooth and straightforward, while the other consists of more elaborate and complex machined shapes. The steak knives, though industrially produced, are not embellished with decorative flower motifs or complex contours inlaid with gold plating that are best achieved under industrial processes.

The WMF steak knife set looks like a product that would be expected to last a lifetime, and also, the general appearance is that of a more expensive up-market

product. In contrast to this, the box used in the kitchen knife set looks cheaper and less durable, and though the plastic handles are heat resistant, they are more prone to wear and to damage.

Overall, the handcrafted image in design can be defined as a look that is anti-Modernist, or a look that rejects the modern machine aesthetic. This image is, however, fitting of the 1990s as we are now living in a Post-Industrial or Post-Modernist era. It is a new era where functionality is not the solo purpose expected of designed products.

For a design to have this handcrafted image, it should embody the majority of the following characteristics:

1. The design should look handmade. The design should appear to use a type of localized craft aesthetic as opposed to a more international look.
2. The graphical content should be minimal, looking as if it is applied by basic printing techniques, as opposed to sophisticated modern hi-tech equipment.
3. The principle colours along with the main materials should stem directly from nature as opposed to other synthetic processes.
4. Its shape should not be formed primarily on 20th century ergonomic principles, but should be more artisan based.
5. The processes used in its manufacture should appear to be low-tech as opposed to hi-tech.
6. The product should seem to have a particular personal or individual touch to it.
7. It has an image that gives the expectation of long life and durability.

Ultimately, for a designed product to have a crafted look it must somehow show many handmade qualities, without exceeding the limits of what a craftsman would be expected to accomplish. However, it must also try to deliberately avoid using materials, processes, or imagery associated with mass-production while still remaining viable and achievable under mass-production.

The 1990s has seen many highly industrial based companies, such as WMF, use this crafted look once again on their products in order to sell them. The crafted look used on industrial manufactured objects has become a very powerful tool in the marketing of their products, and it is a tool that many companies are now extremely aware of in the 1990s.

The Origins of The Handcrafted Image:

When exploring where the handcrafted image has come from, it is obvious that its origins must lie with craft itself. The handcrafted image is a direct reflection of craft as has been indicated previously. When continuing to examine the origins of the handcrafted image on designed objects in more depth, it is important to investigate where this look has originated from, within the history of design. By tracing design right back to before the industrial age, it can be revealed that design actually stemmed out of craft. "The origins of design stem out of manufacturing in the craft or mechanized sense" (SPARKE, 1989, p.xx).

The Origins of the Handcrafted Aesthetic in Milan:

This thesis is concerned, not so much with the origins of the handcrafted aesthetic in general, but more with the origins of this look on designed objects within Milan.

The origin of this look in Milan is based on a strong tradition of craft from which its Design Industry was born. Also, since so much of Milan's Design Industry was, and remains craft orientated, it has followed that a certain degree of the craft aesthetic has remained desirable and has appeared to adorn its designed products. The reason for the handcrafted image in many of Milan's designed products is so to suit its manufacturing processes.

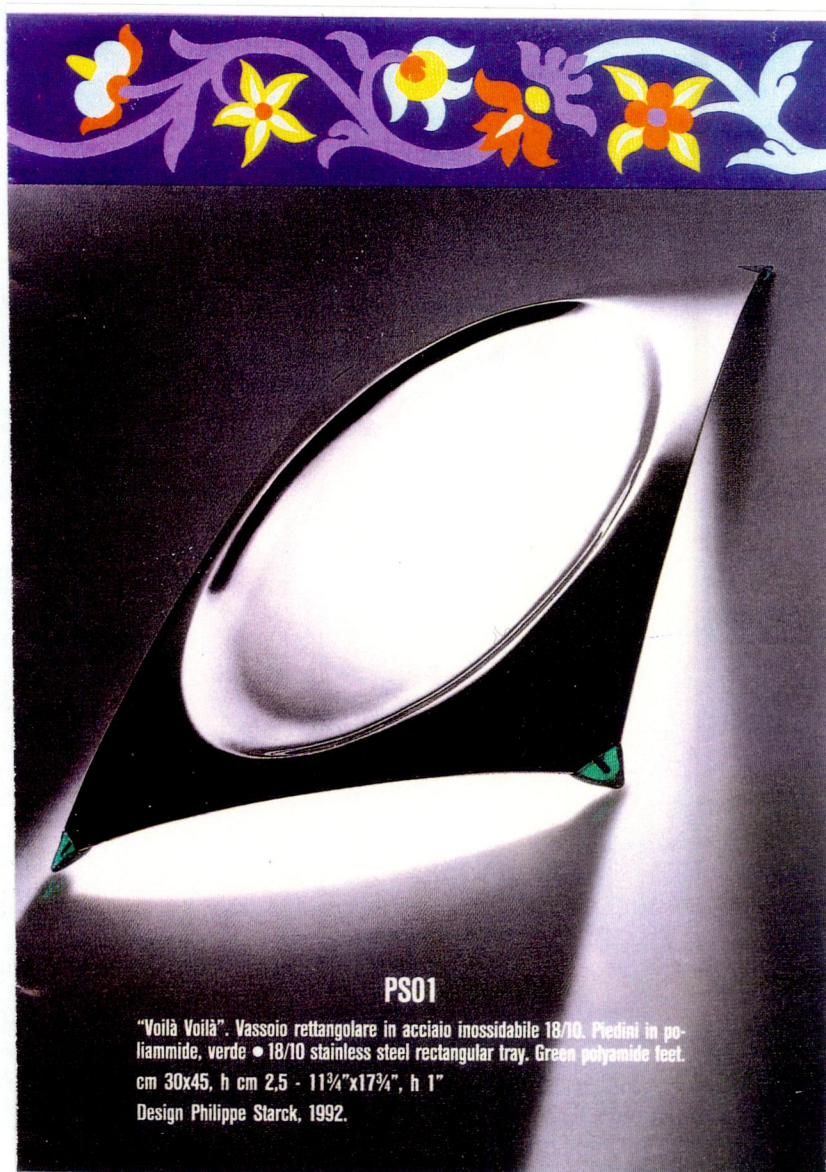
Craft and craftsmanship has always been an essential part in Milan's Design Industry, and it is an industry that has been actually founded by peasant craftsmen.

Italy's industries (the Design Industry in Milan being one) were founded by people who came off the land and had therefore, a tradition of hard work and the patient perfectionism of the peasant who was also a craftsman (HAYCRAFT, 1985, p.103).

Also, many of today's principle design orientated industries in Milan originated from small craft based businesses. "Industries like Olivetti and Alessi all started off as small craft based family run firms" (HAYCRAFT, 1985, p.112).

However, the influence of craft has gone further than simply being the basic origins of Milan's design industry. This strong Milanese tradition of craft has actually continued to be maintained in its design industry, and has therefore caused the handcrafted look on designed objects to remain. It is possible to explain how this tradition of craft has been maintained in Milan's design industry if the design manufacturing company "Alessi" is examined.

This company still use a system of production that is fundamentally craft based. The business culture of this company has remained focused on small scale or batch production methods rather than mass-production ones. This is typical of Milan's design production industry in the 1990s, as "many Milanese manufacturing companies are still craft based and therefore relatively small" (SPARKE, 1986, p.147). The design production factory of Alessi in Milan is a "factory that could more accurately be described as a mechanised craft workshop" (HANCOCK, 1990, p.53). The present owner of this company, Alberto Alessi, has himself said that; "I want Alessi (the company) to be more open to influence from craft" (SCHEININ, 1991, p.40). He has kept the skilled craftsman and basic mechanical machinery in this factory where others have replaced them with highly specialised machinery only capable for mass-production purposes. In Milan many Design manufacturers, like Alessi, create products that express and embody the craft based production element of their company. This is because their companies can best achieve the quality of craft in the designs that they produce. The result of this is that many of their



Illus.4. "Voila Voila", a rectangular serving tray by
Philippe Starck designed for Alessi in 1992.

products are left with a particular handcrafted image.

By examining the stainless triangular tray called "Voila Voila" designed for Alessi by Philippe Starck in 1992, it is possible to show how the element of craft in Alessi's factory has resulted in a crafted look in this design. Philippe Starck has achieved a crafted look for Alessi primarily by the intriguing form of this object. The tray has an unusual curved organic form that is more normally associated with that of a crafted object than that of an object produced by a machine. The tray seems to move more towards having a certain crafted look to it than a strong machine aesthetic. Such three dimensional slopes and curves from a regular flat piece of rectangular stainless steel appear to go against the horizontal geometric forms of the straight machine aesthetic. More importantly, the four translucent little green polyamide feet add a more peculiar and personal touch connected with the involvement of a craftsman than that of a machine because they resemble small cast glasslike features. These green translucent feet, in particular, add a crafted warmth to the product that so many cold, anonymous, mass-produced objects have failed to achieve.

To sum up, the origins of the handcrafted image in many of Milan's designed objects in the 1990s has emerged from its craft history within its Design Industry. Also it is predominantly due to the maintaining of crafted production methods by its design manufacturers.

CHAPTER 2

WHY IS THERE A HANDCRAFTED IMAGE IN DESIGN IN THE 1990s?

This chapter explores some of the principle reasons as to why the handcrafted image has found its way back into design once again in the 1990s in Milan. It will show what has caused this image to be revived, and why it has happened in this particular decade. There are many reasons as to why there is this image in the 1990s, however, this chapter will only examine the most influential of these. The handcrafted image in design has been revived in Milan in the 1990s for the following reasons:

1. **Milanese consumer desires and expectations.** The handcrafted look in the 1990s fulfils the desires and expectations of the Milanese consumer.
2. **The environment and "green" issues.** In Milan, environmentally friendly or "green" products have become essential in design in the 1990s. The handcrafted look has been one of the best ways of portraying this issue through designed objects.
3. **The 90s Retro Look.** This Look is an overall theme that defines collectively, all the various images from fashion and design in the 1990s. It is called a retro look because it is focused mainly on the concept of reflecting on designs past. The handcrafted image has been revived in design because it is an image that is part of this wider 90s Retro Look.
4. **The effects of the World Recession in Milan.** The handcrafted image came about as a result of the World Recession in Milan's Design Industry, during the initial years of this decade. Also, this image has offered part of the solution to helping Milan's Design Industry recover from the economic crisis, caused by this recession.
5. **Many designers based in Milan now work with methodologies and philosophies that resemble that of traditional craftsmen** as opposed to that of traditional designers. This has led them to creating designs with a handcrafted image.

Milanese Consumer Desires and Expectations:

The handcrafted image has been revived in Milan in the 1990s because it fulfils the desires and expectations of what its consumers now look for in designed objects.

In the past, consumer society was often simply regarded as being an open mouthed monster that would consume anything it had thrown at it. However in the 1990s "after many years of unbridled consumption it appears that an ethic of consumerism has finally emerged" (BOUTIN, 1993, p.419).

This ethic is evident for example by the recent vogue for individual long-lived and multi-functional products. This has been the consequence of the economic crisis and concern over the limits of the earth's natural resources. In the 1990s consumer now expect much more from design.

Penny Sparke has suggested that for the Milanese consumer of design, "products must now fulfil the requirements of taste, practicality, social, and economic needs" (SPARKE, 1986, p.xxiii). By the consumer's taste, it may mean that it should have particular attributes that make it pleasing to the owner. For example, its emotional aspects and its individuality as a design. By practicality, it means it should be functional. By social requirements, it may mean it is fashionable and environmentally friendly. And by economic needs, it suggests that it will be financially affordable and offer good life expectancy. The handcrafted image of designed objects in Milan in 1990s appears to meet all these expectations.

There are few cities in the world where the public consumer of designed objects are so in tune with fashion, industrial design and architecture as the Milanese. This has made them people of extreme good taste. Design consumers in Milan desire products that have much more than purely functional aspects. To satisfy their high taste products must have very strong emotional and unique individual qualities to them. The handcrafted image of designed products give emotional aspects to them because it creates a more personal and expressive appeal.



Illus.5. A tailor doing alterations to designer clothes
in "10 Corso Como" showroom.

By having a handcrafted look these products reflect the perfectionist quality associated with craftsmanship. Craft for the Milanese has always indicated quality. It is surprising to note the popularity, and the sheer amount of private practising tailors who still today make full suites for people in this city. The Milanese expect these high emotional and individual quality features as the norm in designed objects, because they know their city's reputation in the world of design and the role that craft has played in its design tradition.

Milan's Design consumers expect designed objects to be practical. The practicality of a design should centre mainly on how functional or rather multi-functional it is. For the Milanese functionalism is almost as important as good taste. Somehow it seems to be quite a paradox that Italians, even Milanese, could desire functionalism considering that they are so laid back. A famous Italian writer, Rossini, in the last century wrote, "thank God for the Spaniards, if there were no Spaniards, the Italians would be the last people in Europe" (HAYCRAFT, 1985, p.298). The reason for this is because, "they (including the Milanese) have now adapted the qualities of their peasant culture to contemporary life" (HAYCRAFT, 1985, p.298). However, the functionalism that they so much expect is very often of a traditional nature. There is a perfect example of this functionalism in the "10 Corso Como" showroom near Stazione Garibaldi. This shop sold a mix of designer products from clothes to furniture. However, in the corner of the shop there is a tailor who will do alterations to designer clothes for customers, as they wait. It reflects the crafted image that the shop sets out to create, but also shows the functionality that its customers expect to receive.

Another expectation of the Milanese consumer of designed objects is that it should be socially acceptable. In the 1990s, this means not only being fashionable, but also expressing a regard for the environment.

The Milanese are undoubtedly the best dressed people in Europe and pride themselves in being extremely fashion conscious. In Milan appearance is as essential as life itself. In this city not only the designer "but also the consumer focuses mainly on the aesthetic of the product" (SPARKE, 1986, p.xxiii). If a handcrafted

image is fashionable, then it is for this reason the Milanese consumer now desire it. The woven basket attached to the back of this scooter, illustrates the extent that the Milanese will sometimes go to demonstrate how in tuned they are with styling trends of design in the 1990s.



Illus.6. A scooter with a woven basket on Via Crispi.

This handcrafted woven basket also reflects the owner's awareness of the importance of "green" products in the role of design and how they can even be adapted to suit modern living in the 1990s.

The woven basket has offered a very affordable, yet stylish solution as a carrier for a scooter and is also a product that they be easy to maintain and repair.



The Environment and "Green" Issues:

A further reason as to why there is a handcrafted image in many of Milan's designed objects from the 1990s is because of the strong growing concern for the earth and its natural environment. Consumers are now opting for products that are friendlier to the environment. Since objects that have a handcrafted look are more often made from natural based materials as opposed to more synthetic ones, they generally involve less hazardous production processes, they create less harmful waste, and they cause less damage when disposed of. Also, because designed objects that have a crafted look focus on being more durable, creating longer product life, they don't waste resources in the same manner as disposable products do.

The ecology of the earth and its natural environment have become very powerful issues in the 1990s in the conscience of its people. Ever since the social upheavals of the late 1960s across Europe and the United States there has been a slowly emerging mass of people gravely concerned about the earth's ecological welfare. Such recent global disasters as the burning of the oil fields in Kuwait during the Gulf War and the discovery of global warming due to ozone depletion has woken people to the fact that what happens in one area of the world can have catastrophic effects for the whole of the earth. These environmental disasters along with deforestation and industrial pollution has caused people to make a stand against this. The people of Milan, like so many others around the world, have begun to focus on the fragile nature of the earth and are now demanding that society learns to protect it. The rapid growth in "Green Consumers" and supposed "green" designed products in this decade has showed that consumers are expressing their decisive force through their purchasing power.

In Milan, in the 1990s a "regard for the environment in how products are manufactured and produced is now an essential element in the purchasing of goods" (DUCOTE, 1994, p.188). The crafted look has reflected this conservation side of nature because it suggests that these products use craft processes or techniques in their creation that are more focused on being environmentally friendly. That is to

say not producing dangerous waste or damaging byproducts that effect our fragile environment.

These important environmental issues have been taken on board in the handcrafted image of many of the designed objects sold in Milan in the 1990s. Many objects, by legislation, in the 1990s must now be biodegradable and recyclable. In October 1993 Philippe Starck launched his new "Jim Nature" television for Saba, in Milan.



Illus.7. "Jim Nature" television by Philippe Starck, launched in Milan in October 1993.

The television has a strong handcrafted appeal to it, because of its organic shape, the materials and nature colours it uses, how it is assembled, its packaging and its creators signature. The body of the television is made from biodegradable plastic



and plywood. Each section is assembled together not with hidden clips, but by hexagonal allen bolts. There is a strap handle built into the roof of the television shell. The designers name is scribed in writing on the side panel. In many ways it reflects an apparent low-tech solution for a hi-tech product.

This "Jim Nature" television is, also "an object lesson in ecology , it is ingeniously made from recycled castings of sawdust bonded with formalin-free adhesive, and its all-card-board packaging is printed with water-based ink" (ABITARE, 1993, p.41). This television shows how "green" products are often represented by having a handcrafted aesthetic.

The relationship between being environmentally friendly, and using a handcrafted image in design can also be shown by examining a piece of architecture from the suburb of San Donato in Milan. This building is called "il Quinto" and was designed by Roberto Gabetti and Aimaro Isola. It the head-quarters of the Agrip Corporation, one of the largest oil and petroleum companies in Italy.



Illus.8. "il Quinto" building at San Donato, Agrip Corporation Headquarters.

The exterior of the building uses, glass, stonework and a tubular metal frame in its design. Also, there are planted gardens on every roof level. The building is



designed as a piece of "green" architecture. However, when examining how the construction of the building creates this environmental look we can see that the handcrafted image plays an important part in it.



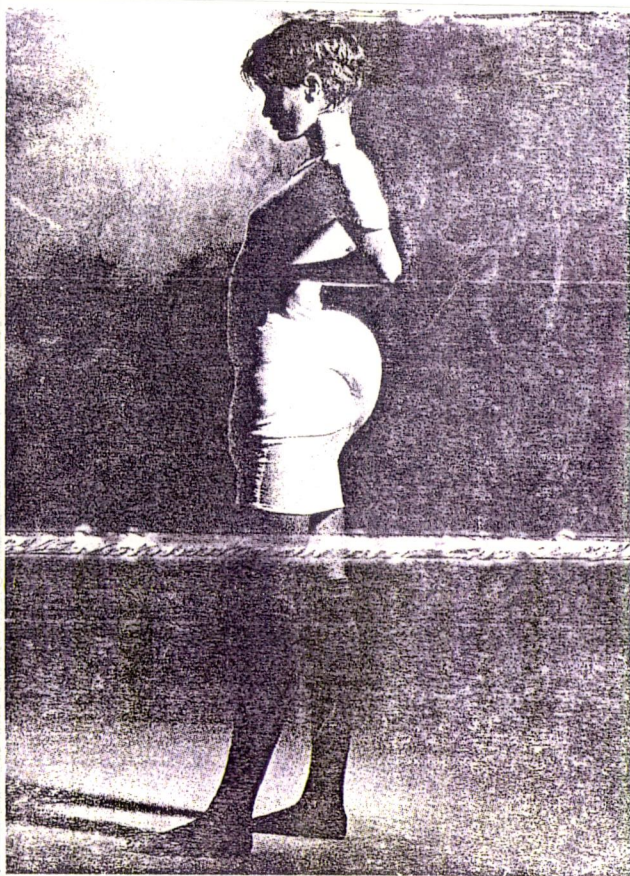
Illus.9. Craftsmanship of stone masons work at "il Quinto.

All the stonework used in its construction represents the crafted skills of a stonemason. This example shows how "green" design uses and relates the handcrafted image with being environmentally friendly.

The 90s Retro Look:

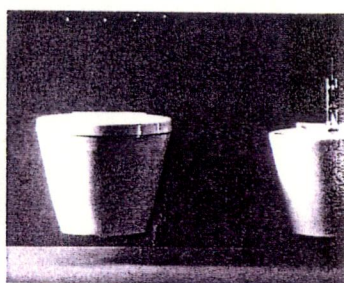
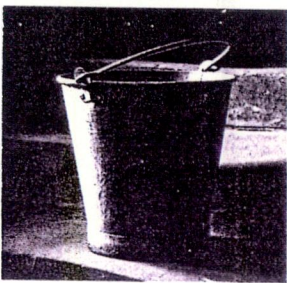
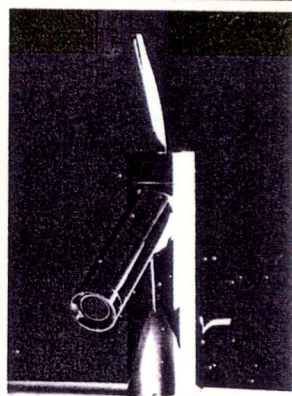
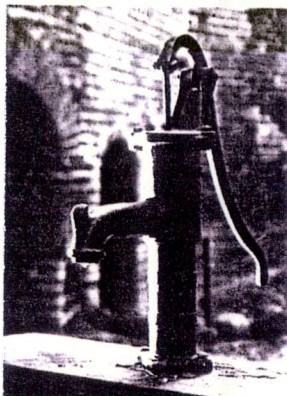
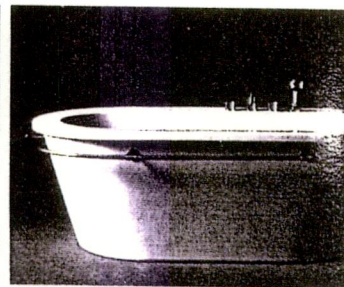
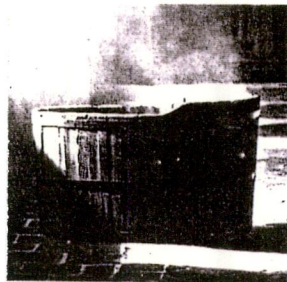
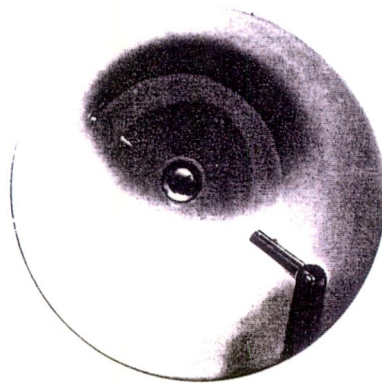
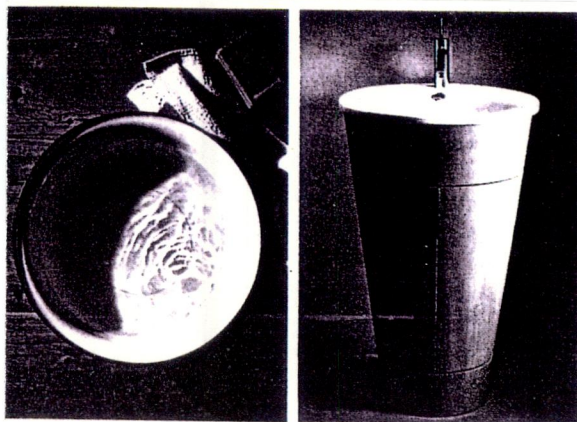
The handcrafted image in design is part of a greater 90s Retro Look. In effect, it has been revived in Milan in the 1990s because it fits in with this wider style.

To demonstrate this a brief explanation as to what the 90s Retro Look is, must first be given. This Look is an overall style that defines collectively all the



Illus.10. Vivienne Westwoods
latest Victorian look in her
1994 Autumn/Winter collection,
using rear padding.

Illus.11. "il Bagno"
by Philippe Starck, 1994.



various images from fashion and design in the 1990s, as stated previously. This style is centred around themes of Revivalism, Nostalgia, Rediscovery, a Return to Nature, and Humanization. In short, it is a style that focuses mainly on the concept of Reflection. Three examples that show this Retro Look in the 1990s Design World in general, are as follows:

1. In fashion, Vivienne Westwood has revived the Victorian Look using rear padded garments inspired from 19th century dress, in her 1994 Autumn/Winter collection called "On Liberty".
2. In Industrial Design, Philippe Starck has based his latest bathroom design called "il Bagno" on nostalgic imagery from washing; an old zinc tub, a balance pump, and a traditional metal bucket as inspiration for its styling. When designing this bathroom, Philippe Starck was noted to have said " There's nothing left to be invented, but there is plenty to rediscover" (DOMUS, 1994, p.65).
3. The newly launched Nike Air Ida, dubbed the "potato shoe" have embodied a return to a more natural look of footwear. It has also caused there to be a greater



Illus.12. Nike Air Ida by Tory Orzeck and Steve McDonald, 1994.



OXBLOOD IRISH LINEN STRIPE DRESS,
 £250 BY ALLY CAPELLINO AT
 DIFFUSION, CLONTARF ROAD, DUBLIN;
 WHITE SHAWL (IN BASKET) BY SAIIZA
 FROM A SELECTION AT RICHARD ALAN,
 GRAFTON STREET, DUBLIN.

Illus.13. Oxblood linen
 stripe dress by
 Ally Capellino, 1994.

focus on the human side of design as these shoes resemble handmade Navaho indian moccasins.

However, this Retro Look is not just a style that appears to reflect over imagery from the past. This Retro Look is also about reinterpreting this past so that a new direction for design can be found for its future. Ally Capellino, when interviewed about the Retro Look of fashion, at the 1994 British Fashion Awards has said;

Fashion sometimes either continues on or does a big jump back. People wonder why it does this, but it is just because fashion can't go any further in that direction. When fashion returns to something previous it never returns in the same way. Initially it starts off with the same cliches, but slowly it reinterprets these looks differently, in a new way, and then continues in this new direction (Interview, CAPELLINO, 3/11/1994).

The 90s Retro Look in Design has sought to take a step back in order to move forward. Porcelli has said when asked to comment on the Nike Air Ida, "we have a design that is looking backward and forward at the same time - the perfect combination for life in the 1990s" (PORCELLI, 1994, p.65).

Overall, this new 90s Retro Look is a look that reflects revived styles from the past. It is a look that may be nostalgic, embody nature, or have a more human element to it. However, it is a new image that rediscovers or reinterprets the past in a new and more innovative way.

In Milan, the handcrafted image in design can be shown to fulfil this broader 90s Retro Look by examining two pieces of furniture design found in the showroom of Magazzini Cappellini, on Via Montenapoleone.

The first, are a set of what appears to be traditional cottage chairs. The chairs reflect a much stronger individual handcrafted look than a manufactured industrial one. Though they may look handmade they are indeed industrially



Illus.14. Rustic cottage chairs at Magazzini Capellini showroom, 1994.

produced, if even on a small industrial manufacturing scale. Both the foot-rests around the legs and the supports for the arm rests are made using modern industrial machinery. These produce the perfectly standardised pieces, all of even shape and size. The arm-rests are formed from moulds in industrial wood steamers, and the seat base and back are made from wooden slabs machine pledged and cut to length. These pieces are not individually hand carved by craftsmen as their appearance may suggest. However, it is important to realise that Milan's design industry, and particularly its furniture design industry, the boundaries between craft and industrial machine production are small. Its industry is semi-craft based and still values the craftsman as much as the machine, as mentioned earlier with Alessi. Therefore, these chairs would still have a relatively high degree of human involvement during production. The machinery used is more mechanised being human controlled as opposed to being automated, and these chairs are more than likely assembled by hand.

These chairs fulfil the criteria of the 90s Retro Look by their handcrafted appearance, because they are a revival of how chairs used to be made long before the modern machinery of today. They reflect this Retro look by being assembled primarily in an old mortise and tenon joint method rather than being fastened by metal bolts or studs, as with contemporary furniture. The chairs reflect an image of past objects that could only be produced by the skill and patience of a dedicated craftsman. They embody a nostalgic sense that reflects back to a time, in the minds of today's people, when life was more simple and far from the complexities of modern living. They fulfil the return of nature through their handcrafted look, because they are made entirely from raw, almost branchlike wood. All the commonly found knots, and cracks in the natural wood has been left untampered. These chairs have not only rediscovered old methods of assembly, but fulfil the new 90s Retro Look by reinterpreting these methods in an innovative way. If the technique of how each chair is put together is studied, it can be seen how the legs are folded around the seat in order to hold it in position, and this also helps to give smooth round edges immediately to the corners. The chairs have added a production conscious assemble feature to these apparently handcrafted objects.



Illus.15. Wicker work stool at the
Magazzini Capellini showroom, 1994.

The second piece of furniture design is a stool made from a welded tubular iron frame and a wicker worked seat. It has a handcrafted aesthetic, because of organic curves in the frame and the use of wicker work in creating the seat covering.

The handcrafted image of this stool fits in with the overall 90s Retro Look, because it reflects the revived traditional skills and specialised patterns associated with wicker work. Note the cris-cross patterns at the ends of the seat. It is nostalgic of basket making and the long-life qualities of wicker worked objects. The stool has a natural look, because wicker work is made using dried sally rods, raw material directly from nature. Also, the wicker seat covering has a shape that almost resembles that of a leaf. The wicker work indicates a direct human involvement, a skilled craftsman must weave the wicker to create the seat, and this formulates a strong image of humanization in the design. Lastly, it has rediscovered and reinterpreted the way one can sit and position oneself on a high-stool. The shape of the seat is such that it allows the user to manoeuvre themselves into position using the ends as handles or arm-supports. Because most stools have small round seats, it would not normally be possible to do this.

These pieces of furniture design are part of the latest design collection exhibited in Cappellini. They have been designed to give a handcrafted appearance, because this fulfils the criteria of the broader 90s Look, which its consumers now look for.

The Effects of the World Recession in Milan:

The handcrafted image came about in Milan, as a result of the economic problems in its Design Industry, caused by the World Recession. This image was revived during the early 1990s, because it represented a traditional, conformists, and more acceptable look as opposed to radically new one, at a time when the design market was at a standstill.

In Abitare's January/February '94 edition Barbara Ducoté stated, in an annual

round-up of design from Milan;

Europe's industrial recession had not spared the Italian Design Industry in Milan, where investment had dropped significantly. Even in 1993, it was a beat-the-recession year in manufacturing and production. 1993s traditional, conformist designs and general lack of newness could be described as 'reactionary'. And market stagnation had encouraged reflection and awareness (DUCOTE, 1994, p.118).

This reflection and awareness was what the handcrafted image embodied.

Furthermore, this image represented part of the solution to solve Milan's economic recession in design, because it created a safer, cost efficient or more saleable look at could aid in recovering its design market. "People have opted for safety rather than irony and experiment" (DUCOTE, 1994, p.140).

The handcrafted image offered safeness in design, because it was not loud and overstated, like previous glossy 1980s design had been. It should be stressed, however, that this handcrafted image was not the sole solution that helped re-stabilise Milan's Design economy, but it was an influential one. Barbara Ducote ended her round-up by saying that, "the design market is now only showing signs of recovery in 1994. One such sign is the introduction of the concept of dressing in old-fashioned design aesthetics in which warmth is an important built in element" (DUCOTE, 1994, p.144). The handcrafted image was an old-fashioned design aesthetic that had been slowly evolving in the 90s Design World and which has blossomed in design in Milan in 1994.

In order to show how the crafted look offered a solution in Milan's design economy we will first take a brief look at the relationship between its economy and its design. "The framework of industrial capitalism which created design (and therefore industrial design) is characterized by a dual alliance with both mass-production and mass consumption" (SPARKE, 1986, p.xix). The economy is firmly connected with design because the economy demands constant consumption to exist in a stable manner and one of the main principles of design is to encourage continual and sustainable sells on a profitable basis under mass or machine production. Part of the economy therefore depends on design for its existence. In

Milan this economic dependence on design is even greater. For example, Alessi made a turnover of 30 million dollars in 1991 from his design company, and being a home company this is put back into the economy. Likewise, it is true to say that if the economy is bad, people spend less and therefore industries such as design are effected.

To explain in more detail how the handcrafted image in design has offered a part of the solution to Milan's economic crisis of the early 1990s, a piece of furniture design, from the "Hi-Tech" showroom on Via Venticinque Aprile will be examined.



Illus.16. White linen couch at "Hi-Tech" showroom, 1994.

This couch has a handcrafted look, because the linen material from which it is made has a very creased appearance making, the stitched seams vary continuously from their normally uniformed shape. Such variation is associated with the characteristics of crafted goods, because if they were mass-produced these features would only be regards as flaws. These features actually increase the desirability of the furniture as it represents the appeal of objects made by hand. "There is an appeal, in the



endless variations to be found in things made by hand. What we think as flaws in mass-production may be view as desirable if made by a craftsman" (WOLK, 1992, p.9). By using a handcrafted image in design products no longer need to be of a high flawless quality. This means that money can be saved in production costs.

This product also, introduces a very safe solution for the design of a couch, with regards to what a consumer would look for. It has a classical look which gives it a timeless quality. This makes it a more marketable product, because it ensures that it will not go out of fashion in its appearance. Being a dull creamy white, it is a neutral colour, that would suit the tastes of a greater amount of people. It uses a neutral colour that would blend in with the interior of most homes.

It is cost effective, because the material used is only natural heavy linen fibres. "The 90s has shown leather furniture being replaced by fabric" (DUCOTE, 1994, p.148). Being a linen fabric and not leather or some highly patterned or decorative material, this would reduce the cost of making the couch, and therefore the price to the consumer. Also, because the linen is not dyed, being left as its raw natural creamy white colour, this reduces the cost further.

Furthermore, the couch is possibly more saleable because the covers are all removable and washable adding a very functional element to the couch. Such a feature would cause the consumers to feel that they are buying a piece of furniture that will be very durable and that they would get a long life out of .

These factors along with the fact that the couch is designed so to look extremely comfortable, soft, relaxing and inviting create an overall image that adds greatly to the marketing of this product to a much wide audience.

The key to Milan's financial stability and economic improvement during the recession in its Design Industry was sales. If designed products created more sales then its Design economy would improve. The handcrafted image used in many of Milan's designed objects helped re-establish these sales in the 1990s and therefore strengthened Milan's Design economy.

Also, in many ways the effects of the economic crisis of the Recession has aided Milan's Design Industry, because it has caused it to look back at what the

consumer actually wants, and not what the Design Industries and Designers think they should have.

Working Methodologies and Philosophies of Milan Based Designers:

Lastly, there is a handcrafted image in design in the 1990s, because of the new way that Milan based designers now work and think. This image has been revived, because these designers, now work in a method that is like traditional artists or craftsmen, and have brought art and craft philosophies into their design solutions.

The working methodologies of today's Milan based designers presently centre around those of traditional artists or craftsmen. These designers now realise the importance of working in isolation with more independence, just like traditional artists or craftsmen.

Normally, like many designers from outside Italy, they would have worked on a team, sometimes only for one company at a time. This team, consisting of designers or possibly engineers and sales people would work together, make decisions together, and try to create a common goal. This position, for the designer, would have tended to cause him to work in a very specialised way, focusing on the teams rigid ideas. This method of work has often left many designers' ideas conformist and stale because they ended up being the compromise of the majority.

However, today's Milan based Designers have tried to avoid this type of working methodology in the 1990s. Many of their leading designers in Milan like, Philippe Starck, Ron Arad, and Michele De Lucchi now work in a manner that is more that of a traditional artist or craftsman than a traditional designer. Michele De Lucchi, for example, found that, when he worked with the Memphis Group in the 1980s, the traditional designer method of working was not the best and most

successful way of designing. Today he claims that his most creative work is achieved in isolation. "Designing is a mental condition he could only best achieve by working like a traditional artist or craftsman, working in isolation" (ALBERA, 1991, p.23).

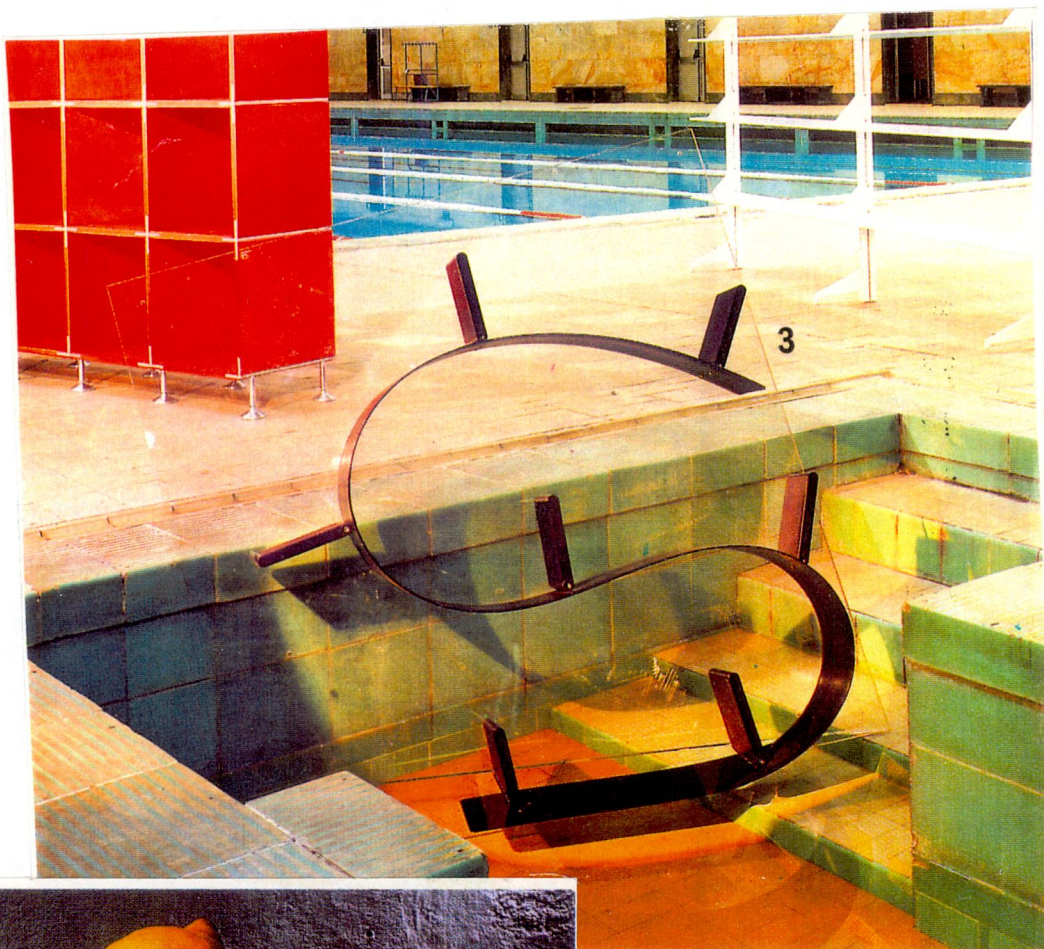
Other designers working in Milan, like Philippe Starck, have come to realise the importance of their Cultural Independence by retaining their ability to work as freelance designers. Being freelance has given designers like Philippe Starck Intellectual Elasticity. When Philippe Starck recently designed his bathroom, "il Bagno", he had the advantage of being able to draw from his more differing field of creation, through the many projects he worked on in the past.

Working like traditional craftsmen or artists for Milan's Designers, will probably continue further into the 1990s, as it seems to have created a great deal of success for them.

It should be noted, however, that this method of working in isolation has only been made possible, in this decade, through the huge progress made in the world of computer technology. Many of these designers, both in Milan and around the world, now work in isolation at home. Never before had designers the ability to do this. It is probably this isolation that has brought them closer to craft and has caused them to have a more crafted or artisan approach to design. Since they now work like craftsmen it is not surprising that they should begin to think like them.

Designers in Milan have taken on board philosophies more strongly associated with craftsmen or artists than traditional designers.

In the 1990s, designers like Philippe Starck and Ron Arad, both of whom are based in Milan, appear to have concentrated much more on philosophies of designing that focus on the individual as opposed to the masses and that offer their own personalised solutions rather than the standardised conventional ones. Like traditional craftsmen, they concentrate on the particular needs or desires of one person and give their own solutions to what they think is the answer. The designer's task normally has been to design with society in the forefront of his mind, however, Ron Arad's



Illus.17.

"Bookworm" shelving
by Ron Arad for
Kartell, 1994.



Illus.18.

"Juicy Salif" lemon
squeezer by Philippe
Starck for Alessi, 1991.

"Bookworm" shelving does not seem to fulfil this. The shelf may fulfil the requirements of a particular individual, but it neglects the requirements of society as a whole. The shelf does not allow for holding ornaments or household electrical goods like televisions or music systems as normal shelving will. Also, for the amount of books that it does hold, the average user would not think it was very space efficient. One of the primary functions of conventional shelving is that it is space-saving. Likewise, Philippe Starck's "Juicy Salif" lemon squeezer, which is strongly sculptural based, would be quite a potentially dangerous object to have in a normal home kitchen, especially a home with children. Also, compared to the existing modern plastic squeezers its shape and mere size would make it very cumbersome to use and store away.

In many ways, both designers have become more involved with their own self-expression of what they think these objects should be. The "Juicy Salif" lemon squeezer and the "Book-worm" shelving express these concepts only through the eyes of their creators, and do not represent how society, as a whole, would expect them to be. However, this has resulted in an individualistic approach, like that of a craftsman, and have caused Milan's Designers to turn many mundane household products and furnishings into objects of visual attention, interest, and entertainment, giving more life to them and to the places they are put.

Simply because many Milan based Designers in the 1990s are now thinking and working like traditional craftsmen it has followed that their work has begun to take on a certain crafted look about it.

In the 1990s, since these designers in Milan have worked in the traditional way of the craftsman and have embodied some of his philosophies in their work, they have achieved a kind of crafted quality in their designing. This has caused them to evaluate the role of craft in design and what craft can give design. Traditionally, Designers in Milan think much more deeply about the psychological and emotional issues of design and don't stop after the physical and functional issues. Working and thinking like craftsmen seems to have given much of their

designs more psychological and emotional qualities. Their work feels much more individual, personalised, entertaining, visually attractive, and very alive. This renewed interest in craft in the 1990s has caused Milan's Designers to revive a crafted look somewhat on many of their designed objects so to encourage and achieve these qualities. The Radical Italian Designer, Ettore Sottsass, said that he "placed the final responsibility on the shoulders of designers whose task it is, he claims, to work towards humanitarian ends" (SPARKE, 1986, p.200).

It would appear that in the 1990s Milan's Designers have realised this and are putting a more human element back into design through being more craft conscious and applying a crafted look on objects.

CHAPTER 3

HOW THE HANDCRAFTED IMAGE IS ACHIEVED IN DESIGN

This thesis has shown some of the main reasons as to why there is a hand-crafted image in design in the 1990s. It will now continue however by discussing how such an image is achieved in design. The hand-crafted image is achieved in design through the use of natural materials and using imagery that is associated with nature. Also it is achieved by using old technology, in the form of old craft based techniques of manufacture along with new advances in modern technology.

This chapter will examine how the role of nature and the influences of technology make the handcrafted image possible to achieve in design. It will demonstrate this by examining a pair of espadrilles from the Department Store "COIN" in Piazza Loreto, a Pop Swatch Special called "leaf" which was launched at the Swatch Shop on Via Montenapoleone in July, 1994 and a new perfume design called "Monsoon" brought unto the market in Milan in May 1994.

The Role of Nature in the Handcrafted Image:

The handcrafted image is achieved in these three designs from Milan, by using nature as their primary influence.

In the past, it should be noted that craft and nature have always been strongly linked together. Since craft would have originally indicated localized small scale production, generally of one individual, the materials used in crafted objects were largely those found locally, and which occurred naturally. Traditionally, the carpenter lived near his source of wood, and the potter near his source of clay. Craftsmen were limited to raw natural materials, or to materials that evolved from simple processes like weaving, or firing. Also, they had the capability to produce

materials that were made from such basic chemical processes as smelting down silver ore to make silver. This connection between craft and nature is the main reason as to why nature and natural imagery are used as influences in designed objects when tried to create a handcrafted image.

In Milan, this crafted aesthetic is achieved in the chosen objects because they have adapted nature into their designs.

This pair of espadrilles made by a shoe manufacturer just outside Milan, are made almost entirely from natural materials. "The base of each shoe is made from jute, a cultivated plant of a tough fibre from India and Spain" (Interview, SHAW, 11/12/1994).



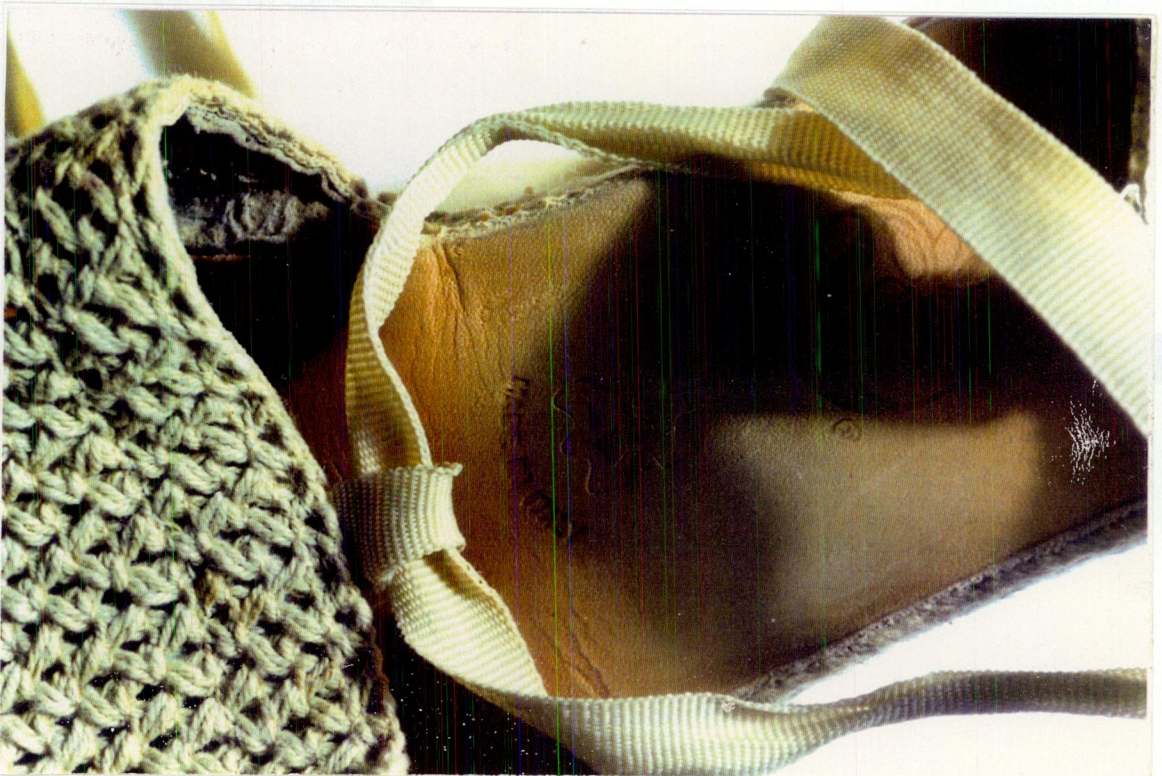
Illus.19. Espadrilles from COIN department stores, Milano, 1994.

The jute is made into a roped sole which is embedded in natural rubber resin. The foot beds are made from tanned leather and the shoe uppers are made from a mix of woven cotton and linen. The only visual synthetic part of the shoes are the ankle straps which are made from woven nylon, but even this material appears natural because it is dyed a soft creamy earthy colour.





Illus.20. Roped sole of espadrilles.



Illus.21. Tanned leather foot bed. Linen and cotton upper and nylon ankle straps.

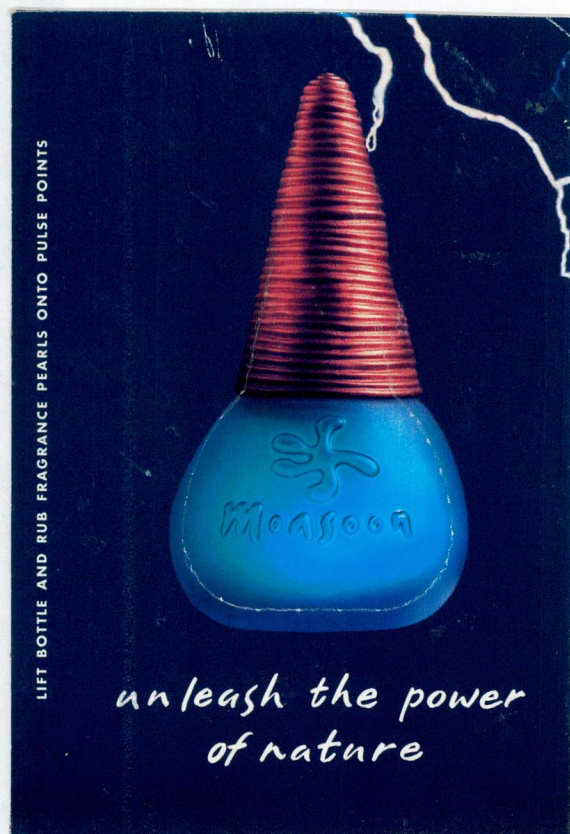
The influence of nature in achieving the crafted look of these shoes, is not, however, solely about the materials being naturally based. The colours and textures that are used are of vital importance also. The colours of the materials are quite



Illus.22.

Pop Swatch Special,
the window display
for the release of
the "leaf" watch in
July 1994, on Via
Montenapoleone.

Illus.23. "Monsoon"
perfume by Monsoon, 1994.



Monsoon
by
Monsoon



A celebration of passion portrayed
by the beauty, tension and excitement
of a tropical rainstorm.

THE MONSOON FRAGRANCE
COLLECTION:

30ML, 50ML EAU DE TOILETTE SPRAY
15ML PARFUM STILL
100ML PERFUMED MIST
200ML BODY LOTION
200ML BATH & SHOWER GEL

MONSOON IS AVAILABLE FROM MAJOR
DEPARTMENT STORES, BOOTS, MONSOON STORES
AND OTHER LEADING FRAGRANCE OUTLETS.

pale overall, and most are deliberately left undyed so as to create the idea of the untampered natural look. It is this lack of strong colours that cause the textures of these materials to be amplified. The natural textures of each material are what best achieve the handcrafted look of these shoes. Highly textured natural fibres have become very popular in the clothes industry in the 1990s.

The Pop Swatch Special called "leaf" is another designed object with a handcrafted image. The influence of nature in this watch is apparent as its name "leaf" suggests. This industrially manufactured watch not only uses natural based materials in part of its design, but also it uses imagery taken from nature. The straps are made from woven cotton dyed in a fawn wheat-like colour. Also, the graphics on the face of the watch include number markers that resemble little ears of wheat and watch hands are made to imitate full stems of the natural wheat plant.

The handcrafted image and the role that nature plays in it is again seen in this new perfume design called "Monsoon". This perfume bottle has a handcrafted look because it reflects the work of a craftsman, with its apparent crafted spiral copper wire cap and hand blown blue glass container. However, though this design has a strong crafted aesthetic, it does not use any natural materials. The perfume bottle is entirely made from blow-moulded plastic components. In this case, the handcrafted image of the bottle is achieved entirely through various imagery associated with natural materials and the natural elements. The plastic cap of the perfume bottle is moulded to resemble the natural material of copper, by having its colour and using a wire texture that it is commonly associated with. The container creates a transparent water-like effect, and as the name on the bottle suggests "Monsoon" is a strong torrential tropical rainstorm. Even the caption with the perfume which reads "unleash the power of nature", creates a strong association with imagery from the elements of nature.

Overall, any designed objects that have a handcrafted image, accomplish this look through the real or apparent use of natural materials, colours, and textures, or through reflecting on typical elements that are commonly related to nature.

The Influence of Technology in the Handcrafted Image:

The handcrafted image is also achieved in these designed objects from Milan by the influence of technology. This technological influence has, however, two quite different approaches to it. Firstly, the handcrafted image is achieved by the use of old technologies that have come from old craft production techniques and that have been revived back into these designed objects in the 1990s. Secondly, since design by its nature means machine production, the handcrafted image has only been made possible in these designed objects in the 1990s by new advances in both material and production technology.

The best example to explain how the handcrafted look has been achieved by using old technologies, or rather old techniques are the Italian made espadrilles. By examining these Italian made espadrilles once again, it is possible to see that they have been produced by using old technologies that have stemmed out of traditional handcrafted footwear from Spain.



Illus.24. Espadrilles revived from traditional Basque sandals.



Illus.25. Espadrilles based on rope making skills.

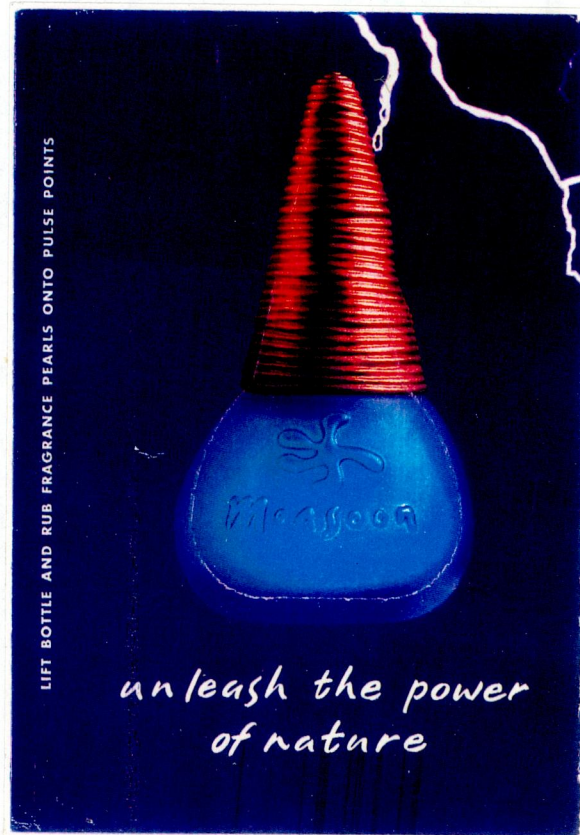


Illus.26. Espadrilles using traditional fishing net making skills.

Espadrilles derive from traditional Basque footwear. Basques were a particular cultural community that live near the Western Pyrenees in Spain. By tradition they were generally fishermen or peasants. "They derived a handmade sandal or shoe made from rope-soles that was very functional. It kept their feet cool in the summer heat and was good for their feet massaging them as they walked" (Interview, GELDOFF, 20/10/1994). They used traditional local materials along with old craft based techniques or technologies in making them. "The jute and flax grew naturally in these areas and being Spanish leather and leather-work had always been an important material that was part of their traditional culture" (Interview, GELDOFF, 20/10/1994). Being in very strong fishing based community they adapted much of their primitive but reliable fishing technology into the design of their footwear, their rope making techniques and net making skills. If one studies the soles of these espadrilles it is possible to see their rope weaving and binding techniques. Likewise, in the shoe upper, one can see the connection of net making with the intertwining underlying stitching in the pattern.

In the 90s the shoe industry has become a huge multinational industry. It would not normally be economically feasible to make large quantities of such shoes on a purely handcrafted basis. However, these companies have managed to recreate this crafted look on espadrilles in a very cost efficient way. Being multinational they can manage to import or manufacture huge quantities of correctly shaped handwoven uppers and rolls of bound rope from low paid Third World countries like Malaysia in the Far East. They then imitate this crafted traditional Basque footwear by gluing the pieces together around a rubber body and moulding extra straps of rope onto the sole. The method of production does suggest a falseness about imitating craft in design, but it does allow the public to buy such shoes at an affordable price.

This leads us on to the second approach of technology in achieving the handcrafted image of designed objects. The perfume "Monsoon", is referred to once again. This bottle has a handcrafted look based on images from nature and its natural materials. Ten years ago, however, to create this handcrafted image in mass-



Illus.27. The perfume bottle design of "Monsoon" is only made possible because of the new advances in materials and technology in the 1990s.

produced design would have been almost impossible. Previously designed perfume bottles, for example, Chanel No. 5 from the 1980s, would have only ever been able to use hard plastic and glass materials. All of which were confined to having strong simple blocky geometrical designs. "In the 1980s manufacturing technology was simply not capable of producing objects encased in complex geometric forms, as opposed to simple rectangular shapes at a price affordable on the global high street" (JONES, 1993, p.396). This has been because of the limits of production technology and the lack of technologically advanced materials. At this time, Alessi has suggested that;

The 80s has only been a time of technological research into better processes and more advanced material, while the 90s has seen the interpretation of this technological research more comfortably into design (SCHEININ, 1991, p.40).

In the 90s the most important technological advance is the introduction of computer aided design, and production techniques. The huge advances made in the computer industry have been adapted into computer aided design machinery. This technology has allowed for never before handcrafted precision in design production. It has now become possible to simulate all the contours and defects of a coiled piece of copper wire like that of the bottle cap of "Monsoon" and make a perfect plastic moulded copy of it. Likewise, the advances made in new materials, like that which allows alcohol based perfume to not corrode soft plastics, has allowed "Monsoon" to be designed using a blue moulded plastic container with its name and symbolic splash of water embossed on it.

In many ways the crafted look with all its variations and discrepancies has actually encouraged technology to advance and discover new ways of reproducing designs with better materials and processes. Also, maybe the crafted look found on designed objects has become the medium to allow this advanced production technology to be understood and brought to the public.

CHAPTER 4

THE EFFECTS THAT THE HANDCRAFTED IMAGE WAS ON DESIGN

This chapter will analyze the effects that this 1990s handcrafted image has on design, both now and for its future. It will examine the effects of this image on the design consumer, the designer and the manufacturers. Also, it will examine the effects of this image on Design in a general sense.

The Negative Effects for Design:

Initially, the effects of this handcrafted image could be viewed as being negative for design.

For the consumer of these designed objects from Milan, this image appears to be bad, as it creates misleading interpretations of the products. The "Monsoon" perfume bottle is not a handmade copper and glass container, but a plastic mass-produced imitation of one. The steak knife set is not the work of a small craft based business but a huge industrialised ones. The consumer may also be led to believe that the espadrilles are the exports of footwear from their cultural origins in North East Spain, when in reality they are the exploits of shoe companies in underdeveloped countries. And lastly, the consumer may believe that all these apparent crafted products are friendly to the environment. The "Jim Nature" television, though using recycled materials, has been proven to be more wasteful of materials and energy, and has resulted in it costing more to produce than the existing plastic models.

The handcrafted image appears to be negative towards design consumers, because part of it seems to be only propaganda.

For the designer, using this image has created some negative effects. Sometimes, it has caused failures in his work. This image is suitable for many products, but does not work for all. Philippe Starck's "Jim Nature" television,

though it may look desirable, has been accepted as a produce failure because it does not meet the correct safety regulations required for consumer electrical applications.

For the manufacturer, like Alessi for example, having to create this handcrafted image in design would seem to initially stagger the development process of production. It would appear to be a step back instead of moving forward. By having to achieve this look in design it would require much more hands on skills. Creating this image would seem to hold the manufacturer to using systems that are from the past; dated systems, and ones that are based on expensive labour in the form of skilled craftsmen as opposed to automated machinery.

At first the overall effect of using this image in Design seems to indicate that in the 1990s, it is moving towards and identity that is false, untrustworthy, and hypocritical. Instead of continuing to try to embody a sense of industry, the machine, speed, efficiency, and cast effective mass production (the very founding principles of Design), it appears to be trying to forsake it.

The Positive Effects for Design:

Initially, this handcrafted image in the 1990s would seem to have some quite negative effects on the progress of Design. However, on a greater scale, the results of using this image has shown to be extremely beneficial for Design and for Designs future. This image appears to be creating a much stronger positive effect.

In Milan, in the 1990s this image has a much greater positive effect on its design consumers. It has helped create a more appreciative feeling towards design, and has also given its consumers a higher sense of improved lifestyle.

In the past, consumers have often been left to feel that design had simply narrowed their needs and desires down to purely functional requirements. Many of these previous designed objects, especially those of the domestic environment, only conveyed an anonymous, dull, cold, and lifeless sensation. This was primarily due

to the fact that these objects were based on a machine aesthetic.

However, in this decade, the handcrafted image in design has rectified this downfall in design. The stainless steel tray and the "Monsoon" perfume bottle go much further to create a better feeling about the products for its consumers. The rustic cottage chairs do not stop after fulfilling functional requirements but continue by instilling emotional feelings into its design. For the owner, such chairs embody a sense of safeness, nostalgia, warmth, and familiarity. In a domestic environment these chairs would add character to a home and a sense of life. This handcrafted image has created an appreciation towards Design, because now the consumer feels these other important values they desire have been finally addressed. Also, this image in design has helped the consumer to feel that they can somehow improve their lifestyle by owning and surrounding themselves with these products. This is probably because such objects are associated with real craft and even sculptural art, objects that demonstrate creativity, quality and more importantly sophistication. For the ordinary people crafted objects or sculptural art is something that they relate to people of wealth and taste. Buying designed objects, like the WMF steak-knives have helped give Milanese consumers a sense of upward mobility. For the consumer, they too feel they can also buy a small work of art or a piece of craft through these designed objects and at a price they can afford.

The most positive effect of using this image in design for the consumer is, however, that it now develops and educates their taste for good design. It is important to realise that;

Taste is formed by what people are offered and if they do not have the chance to observe, feel, own, and use well designed products, how on earth can they discover whether they would like them? (CONRAN, 1993, p.9).

For the designer, using this image in design has been generally very positive because it has caused him to explore new ways forward for design. Though this image may not be successful for all products, it is good to explore its effects on design. This is especially so on static designed objects, because it can break their fixed, stagnant models and thus move them forward. Even the "Jim Nature"

television, though it may be considered a product failure, it should be regarded as a design success because it is forward looking and it could create a whole new direction for other mundane electrical products.

For the manufacturer this image in design, as mentioned earlier, has actually caused him to develop new materials and technology, and to research into new methods of production processes, using the latest in computer aided techniques. Having to create and recreate this new image in design has not staggered advances in the production process, but has actually boosted advances in research and development.

For design, as a whole, and especially for its future, this image has had a very positive effect, because it has caused design to re-question its approach and the direction it is moving in.

It would appear that, up to now, design was on a path that only fulfilled the physical and functional requirements of its end user, and had somehow neglected or lost their emotional requirements.

The handcrafted image has caused the re-evaluation of designs past, and this has been a positive step because what was correct for design in the past may not be so for its future. Design must create a new future, because it is a fluid and ever evolving entity. By its very nature "it implies continuity and renewal" (BOUTIN, 1993, p.419). Using this handcrafted image has caused this. This image has caused Design to go back to rediscover its very origin and find the human element it had left behind. This has enabled Design to now move forward in a new direction, on a better path, one that now places people and their environment ahead for industrial progress and the machine.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored what the handcrafted image in design is. It has established how this image represents the qualities associated with craft and hence such designed objects can be described as pseudo craft. It has traced the origins of this look in Milan and has indicated how craft and craftsmanship has always been a fundamental part of its design history. This study has examined the various issues that have caused the craft revival in Milan's designed objects in the 1990s, such as changing consumer demands, the environment, the overall 90s style, the economy and designers' new focus of attention on craft based working methods and philosophies. The thesis has explained how this image is achieved through using nature and old technologies, and how it has only been made possible in design because of new advances made in computer and materials technology during this decade. It has considered the various effects that this has had on design consumers, designers and design manufacturers. It has shown that, even though it may be an image that is built on falseness, it has created very positive effects for design because it now represents a new and better direction : a direction that puts the human element back into design, which it had previously forsaken.

In 1991, Victor Papanek wrote;

Design will play an even more important role in the future, if it can assume its identity, if it accepts fully its human and cultural responsibility, as well as its prospective dimension (BOUTIN, 1993, p.419).

It appears that in the 1990s, this future role for design has finally been reached through using the handcrafted image.

In the 1990s, this image has caused a rediscovery of an essential part of design, which had been lost in its history - that of craft. And this new role of craft in design can now at last fulfil its human and cultural responsibility that it has neglected for so long.

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