
Aspects Of The Arts And Crafts Movement, And The Changes That Occurred In Production

In this essay we will look at the industrial revolution and the great exhibition and the effect they had on past and current designs. As a result of industrialization, quality of products decreased while amount of products increased. Many objects just made fast and cheap without any thought of aesthetics as households were rushed to be filled with products that were being created. The arts and crafts movement emphasized the designer as the craftsman, calling to an end of mass production and industrial style labour.

The Arts and Crafts movement arose in Britain, from design reform, in mid 19th century. As machine production took over, perceived quality decreased. The Great Exhibition of 1851, increased these feelings as objects on display were considered to be excessively ornate, artificial and ignorant of the qualities of the materials used. A rejection of badly designed, and poorly crafted objects as these felt emotionless and had no aesthetic impact in the household. People desired products and furniture that looked like they added visual value instead of just serving a function.

As products were made by artisans, the division of labour, an idea taken from industrialization began to be implemented increasing production speed of hand crafted goods as each part was mastered by one individual, mimicking the industrial production line. Each artisan worked on a stage of production line, allowing for areas to also be better organised as only certain parts were required for a different stage. Additionally, less training would be required for the entire object as only a small part would be needed to learn. The British and American arts and crafts movements shared these ideals and many craftsmen proficient with wood, metal, textiles and ceramics.

As the industrial revolution brought with it technological updates to manufacturing, Designed textiles, ceramics, furniture and other accessories became additional sources of inspiration for decoration. More boundaries about the sole function of the product were re-established. The arts and crafts movement reminds us of the renaissance which happened between the 14th to 16th centuries, where arts and literature, changed, and became much more accepted as impactful to individuals. The aesthetics of a home, or general area in which individuals spent any length of time, became more important. Meaning as the arts were created and literature written, it found place in areas where there may have been life. This had a trickle-down effect as they would put these arts onto items used in everyday life, changing it from a product, to something that can be looked at and appreciated as an object. The ideas of simplicity and

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craftsmanship were taught and soon began to manifest in decorative work produced. All manufacturing went through a change, the development of the power loom changed how textiles were produced forever. This resulted in plain and patterned weaves could be produced faster and much cheaper. This allowed many more people access to a wider variety of textiles at a much cheaper rate.

High quality copper plate blocks, were used and preferred as a method for printing high quality large prints. Showing a tendency to quality images. Dyes changed as synthetic dyes began to be produced. Printing was the method favoured by late textile artists. The ease of translating a concept to a finished product made it an obvious choice. As powered printing practises progressed, the types of fabrics that could hold a print increased, and textured fabrics became much more popular. There was also experimentation with materials. Where the material was left to look as itself, wood, left unpainted, metal left, just polished. A new avenue for the artisans, such as furniture makers, cabinet makers, steel workers, glass blowers and stainers, as well as designers for these cabinets. This made it easier for the division of labour, and more industrialised the production of products. The arts and crafts movement moved past capitalism and monopolies, as it encouraged smaller craft guilds to form allowing for smaller groups of people to sell products instead of large corporations with the larger production facilities. It also extended through social classes proving how deep design can connect things and have an impact on social change and the way we see the world

The Backgammon Players

This early piece of the Arts and Crafts Movement demonstrates how William Morris tried to improve design standards. Morris believed industrialization to be evil and felt a change back to medieval crafting would help combat this. This cabinet, is an attempt to blur the distinction between the fine and the applied arts. Although the cabinet is described as having a "medieval style, " It showed how an original style could be achieved by looking at older designs. Philip Webb's straightforward design, which boldly displays the casework skeleton on the exterior, expected the prominence on structural features that would modernise the design reform that began to follow.

Nguni Cube Bench

The cube bench designed by John Vogel. This is a handmade bench, using the wood as a decorative element within the design. This has a very simplistic weave pattern made from a plastic cord, following modern use of modern materials. The colours that are used are also unobtrusive and the natural wood reminds us of the arts and crafts movement, using the material for what it is and allowing the natural look of it to be a design element. Similar to how

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the arts and craft movement modernised designs for that time, this design follows with the times, keeping a very simplistic design that does not take up too much space but is still pleasing to look at.

Washstand

Young Charles Rennie mackintosh created this washstand. This reminds us of the design reform to create products that are not just there to serve a function. The carpentry work is of a high quality showing skilled labour from a skilled woodworker. The tile work follows a pattern and the blue tile was requested as it was meant to fit into the style of the room, again reminding us of how the arts and crafts movement caused designers to think more about how the product would fit in its environment, creating an appreciated object as it serves a function as a piece of art as well as a wash stand.

Ouga

The last image of the product ouga. A reclaimed oil barrel, cut and reshaped then welded to create the cabinet. This is a reminder of both the great exhibit and the arts and craft movement. By using the barrel for something else, maintaining the metal for what it is, shows us that the metal is being appreciated for what it is. The colours also add an appeal that follows a more modern look that would fit in a certain style of a more rugged feel. All this being said, we can say however, the barrel could have been cleaned completely and they edged of the cuts changed, or decorated to show what is able to be made from the metal. This is an aspect that was looked at in design reform, which was not followed here as much as it could be, in other words, using the material to its fullest was forgotten even though it was an important design reform. We can see some general similarities to how materials were experimented with It is also shows in the quality of the products developed today as unconventional materials were combined and experimented with. All products have a level of hand crafted quality that looks as if time and care was taken to make the items. This is what happened with the arts and crafts movement as the carefully designed product were chosen due to the care taken to make becoming evident in the final result.

In conclusion we can see that the great exhibition and the arts and crafts movement was closely linked. As the exhibition resulted in a design reform with the arts and craft movement being a modernisation of what society was beginning to expect from product that were being designed. We can also see that both these events have had a lasting effect on product that are produced now with the arts and craft movement being everlasting as consumers are almost always looking for a quality purchase that will provide them with what they were wanting and more.

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