

**Co-Design of Designers and Artisans, Valorisation and Communication of the Partnership
- a reflection for Sustainable Fashion Design**

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Abstract

The article proposes a reflection on the partnership between designers and artisans in the development of the fashion product, considering that in most cases the role of the artisan in the works of co-design is perceived as secondary in relation to the designer. Therefore, the objective of this work is to promote the valorisation of the artisan's work, in a meritocratic way, exposing the problem of co-authorship of design products and how these can be communicated in a transparent and fair way. For this, the methodology of case study was used to present examples of co-design partnerships in the creation of design products, in which the artisan has the same protagonism of the designer in the co-authorship of the product.

Keywords: Designer, Artisan, Partnership, Co-design, Fashion, Sustainability.

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1. Introduction

The fashion industry has been criticized over the last few years for performing unsustainable practices, supported by a business models geared to the mass market, cost reduction and stimulus to exacerbated consumption, based on a fast fashion thinking or disposable fashion mentality (Freire and Araújo, 2016).

Contrary to this movement, the slow fashion has been growing, stimulating the quality, creativity, ethics, valorisation of the product and the impact on the environment. Additionally, this movement values the pleasure of variety and cultural importance, as well as the positive impact generated for society (Carvalho, 2016).

With this new way of thinking, some designers have been using craftwork to create fashion goods in small series or even exclusive ones. These products are made based on local traditions and as a form of cultural manifestation. The craftwork have been increasingly valued and used in fashion products, contributing to promote the social responsibility and valuing the community.

However, there is a relevant reflection about the partnership between designers and artisans in the development of the fashion product. Most of the time the artisan is seen as a mere executer of the pieces, losing any protagonism, and sometimes becoming completely invisible, even when his work is truly co-design.

This issue becomes important because craft fashion is considered a practice in consonance with concepts of the slow fashion movement and sustainability. It is a way of thinking focused on the commitment to the environment, with greater awareness of the future of the planet, but also must consider increasingly the social and cultural partnership. The reflection on the recognition of both professionals in an equitable way becomes necessary for this partnership to be fair and lasting.

In this article, the case study methodology was used to approach examples of design partnerships (co-design) in the creation of product, in which the signature of the artisan is also evident in the processor or brand.

The purpose of this article is to propose a reflection on the exposed cases (Alvaro Catalan de Ocón and Martín Azúa) to promote the valorisation of the artisan work and to give his due recognition, discussing the problems of co-authorship of design products and how to achieve the transparent and fair communication.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Sustainability

In the sixties, the first reflections on environmental crisis arose as disasters and ecosystem imbalances began to occur. Discussions that reflected the theme showed relevant and were reported at the first environmental conference, the United Nations Conference on the Environment in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972. Passed more than ten years of this conference, the concept of sustainable development was delimited, although complex and questionable. The term includes aspects related to non-consonance between the patterns of industrial production and consumption, the unavailability of natural resources for use by the next generations, and the reduction, if not eradication of misery in the world. The concept of sustainability was defined based on a new form of relationship between man and the environment, from a perspective that includes the economic question (Berlim, 2012).

Despite the concept broadly defined about what sustainability means, the term has multiple dimensions, it is not intended in this article to explore the wide variety of meanings attributed to the term. But it should be mentioned the Sachs concept revealed by Berlin (2012), which relates sustainability with eight dimensions: social, cultural, environmental, territorial, economic, political-national and political-international, with the primary objective of the rational and ecologically sustainable use of nature.

Gradually, the concern with the environment has initiated a process of ecologically correct development and a socially fair production, allowing the generation of new transforming tendencies that can promote the re-signification of the logic of consumption, in several sectors of the economy.

Regarding the fashion industry, it is understood that new forms to make fashion, manufacture, and educate become preponderant, having as central axis practices in line with the theme "environmental, social and cultural sustainability".

2.2 Slow Fashion Movement (concept)

As already mentioned, there is an association between fashion and the slow fashion movement. This movement emerged in opposition to fast fashion, predominant in the current scenario of the fashion industry, characterized by hyper-consumption, accelerated production, high competition and the search for low cost of production (Irokawa *et al*, 2017).

In dissolution to this perspective still prevailing, it is emerging the new sustainable line of thinking in the market, so called slow fashion, which proposes reflections on current production and consumption, encouraging more ethical attitudes, consumer awareness and, above all, consumer

choices. Thus, the knowledge of the production process, the perception of the quality and the durability of the goods begin to be considered in the consumption of a fashion product with this new way of thinking (Irokawa *et al*, 2017).

According to the author (above mentioned), the term slow fashion was created by Kate Fletcher, (a consultant and professor of sustainable design of Centre for Sustainable Fashion), in 2007, with the concepts derived from the slow food movement, designed by the Italian journalist Carlos Petrini, in 1986.

The principles were established as an opposed movement to the fast fashion. The slow fashion movement seeks diversity in opposition to mass production, values global-locality in detriment of globalization, self-awareness in the place of image, symbiosis in substitution of parasitism, confection and maintenance for a long-life cycle in negation to constant novelty, the real price adding social and ecological costs as opposed to cost based on labour (cheap) and materials. In addition, it searches to strengthen social capital and valorisation appreciation the territory and not to weaken social capital, it believes in small- and medium-scale production as opposed to large scale, and finally it thinks about what is sustainable rather than unsustainable (Irokawa *et al*, 2017).

From this still current scenario in the fashion system, based on extreme speed, repetition, “massification” and “deterritorialization”, it begin to realize a containment movement that can be effective in proposing new temporality of consumption, from the valorisation appreciation of cultures and the use of local artisanal work (Gonçalves, 2015).

2.3 Craft Fashion

Fashion design considered as a form of cultural manifestation reflects the lifestyle of society and how it thinks, besides to acting on it. Therefore, it is understood that fashion design can provide cultural innovation, either through new forms of consumption, or through new ways of relating to artefacts. This new form of consumption can come from a logic of slower consumption, in which new designers can use craft techniques, valuing local cultures and possible new consumption stages (Gonçalves 2015).

According to Gonçalves (2015) and, from the thinking of Lipovetsky (2004), even if hyper-consumption is the preponderant form of consumption in contemporary society, there are signs of new forms of production that show concern for the environment and with the valorisation of local cultures, that is, new forms of production that consider the concepts of sustainable development and ethical and social issues.

From the point of view of Lipovetsky (apud Gonçalves 2015), there is a perception that individuals are seeking for the consumption of what is more durable, replacing the one that characterizes ephemerally, strengthening the choice to produce more sustainable artefacts by the designers, contributing for the change, for a slower consumption and that preserving more the environment.

The fashion products characterized by this new logic of production and consumption are developed through the valorisation of local cultures with craft artefacts or through the use of low environmental impact raw materials (Gonçalves 2015).

According to the Gonçalves (2015) the creation of a craft product uses techniques developed in the past, sometimes doomed to forgetfulness and also values local cultures through typical ways of doing it is produced. The production is done manually, and this implies a close relationship between those who conceive the idea with the production process (more or less craftworks). Thus, these products carry with them a little of each artisan, from their histories, feelings, emotions, re-characterizing the objects and making them impregnated with affection. Fashion and culture walk side by side, since both involve habits, culture and history. The craft product has personality, with the association of aspects related to tradition and to what is contemporary.

An important aspect when it refers to developing a craft product is that communication between tradition and innovation, identified respectively with craftwork and design, must be well established, since the utilization of its capabilities are preponderant for future results (Ferreira *et al*, 2012).

In the development of a craft product, the artisans take his culture and his experiences, characterizing the object as unique. Culture is manifested through the social reality in which one lives, knowledge, ideas and beliefs of a people. Thus, craftwork is a way of expression of popular culture and is related to the forms of everyday expression, which are manifested in the object Gonçalves (2015).

Gonçalves (2015) also mentions that craftwork is a form of artistic expression and is developed through the aesthetic sense of the one who creates. This practice allows the artisan to materialize the object subjectively, creating pieces with exclusivity. The artisan is inspired by beliefs, values, traditions, lifestyle and the representation of his daily experiences. The artisan seeks to present, in some way, a history behind the products that transmits cultural and social aspects, proving the consumer a possibility to qualify and contemplate it.

2.4 The Role of the Designer and Artisan

The craft fashion product is often developed by working in partnership between a designer and an artisan. For the subject discussed in this work, it is important to understand the role of each professional, since it refers to the matter related to partnership between both. The understanding of the role of each one makes possible the identification of its valences, which can be perceived as different, complementary or similar in some way.

According to Ferreira et al (2012), both the works of the artisan and the designer is associated with the production of objects, however they have diverse singularities. The authors mention that according to Maldonado (2009), the artisan has the role of idealizer and executor, and that the designer in the execution of pure design, taking the place of idealizer and projector. These also add that, according to Moraes (2008), until the industrial revolution the artisans had the function of developing and executing all the activities related to the development and manufacturing process of a product, but also consider that the designer does not have only the exercise of designing the product.

It is understood that the artisan as master of his art, accumulates the activities related to designing, producing, idealizing and performing, participating in all stages of production. Thus, in the craftsmanship, the entire production is under the control of the artisan, since he is the only author of the product. About the designer, the functions do not overlap the same, since he projects, idealizes and prescribes to others to produce (Ferreira et al 2012). In relation to the work methods, the professionals define themselves differently, since the designer, through the formal knowledge, appropriates the necessary techniques for the execution of his work and in the case of the artisan, the knowledge comes from his experience and the act of designing comes with the methodology acquired during the whole of his working time (Ferreira et al 2012).

Therefore, it is perceived that there is something that delimits the role of each professional, in terms of his functions. However, according to Ferreira et al (2012), there is an importance in the interaction of several modes of practices for the development and creation of products.

2.5 Co-design (Concept)

Considering that the present article highlights the co-design issue, it is relevant to conceptualize the term as a way of promoting a better understanding of the problematic in question.

According to Sanders (Sanders & Stappers (2008), in the in the framework of the Participatory Design, it arises the notion of co-design (or codesign) and co-creation (or cocreation), which are often perceived as synonyms, despite some divergences as to the near sense expressed by words.

Many authors define co-creation as the act of collective creativity or the creativity shared by two or more people. However, these authors understand that the term co-creation is broad in its applications, , since it varies from the physical to the metaphysical and from the material to the spiritual. In relation to co-design, they understand it as a specific example of co-creation, defined by collective creativity applied throughout the design process. It should be noted that for some times, the co-design refers to the collective creativity work between designers, but in the understanding of these authors, the term also refers to the creative work done jointly between designer and another person, (not necessarily formed in design), in the design development process.

The practice of co-design is manifested in different ways, depending on the experience and mentality of the involved people. In addition, it requires those involved in the design development process to explore and jointly expose creativity (Sanders & Stappers, 2008).

3. Methodology

This article starts by exploring the co-design relationship between designers and artisans and the communication of this partnership, promoting reflection on the theme. Initially, in a theoretical approach, concepts related to themes such as sustainability, slow fashion, craft fashion, the role of the designer and the artisan, and finally the co-design concepts were analysed. In the empirical work, the methodology of “case study” was used to present examples of co-design partnerships in the development of a product, whether in fashion area or not (using, however, practices or expertise related to textiles and fashion), in that the artisan, like the designer, signs the piece, whether in the process or the brand. These examples show the valorisation of the artisan's work and its due recognition.

As for the cases under study, there was already an interest and motorization of the work of the designers, Alvaro Catalán de Ocón and Martín Azua with artisans (by the authors of this article), since they seek in some way in their work practices to insert artisans as co - authors of the creation of their products.

Thus, the research was conducted through a case study, exploring the progress and the work of these professionals. Interviews, workshops, speeches were researched and there were informal conversations with designers at conferences, in order to understand the motivation of these professionals to value the work of artisan in the co-design partnership. The analysis was based on the identification of aspects that involve this way of working, and all interpretation of the facts, made through the vision of the researchers of this paper.

4. Results presentation

The process of the presentation of the results occur with a brief report on elements that identify the designers, their works and the aspects related to the work of co-design with the artisan, focused on the good practices of valorisation the co-authorship for the artisan in the creation of the products design and communication of such co-authorship in the products, process or brand.

4.1 Designer Alvaro Catalan de Ocón

The information about the designer Alvaro Catalan de Ocón and his work has as its main source in his website and from the presentation made by the designer in the 7th Meeting "bid_2017" in Madrid. The designer originally from Madrid, Spain, is considered a designer with "accurate perception for what makes a object special". His work is identified as "clean design" and with the use of few elements, but rich in associations and experiences. In his own view, he does not consider himself a formalist designer, since it is not the product image that motivates him. By his words "his relation to a project is developed through the process of producing the material, in which the mechanical solution is what makes the piece become ornamented" (bid_2017). Moreover, the creation of a product results from the way in which it interacts with the piece and the memories of that experience, passing through the field of memory and narrative, transcending the object itself.

His academic career began with a degree in management, followed by a product design course at the European Institute of Design in Milan, which ended at Central Saint Martins in London. Alvaro mentions in the presentation of the 7th Meeting "bid_2017", that the course of designer in Italy "is more focused on the match of business/designer and the one of Saint Martin, in London, focuses on the enterprising designer."

About the beginning of his career, the designer adds in an interview: "I emerged from the crisis, so I had to innovate, to invent methods of producing and creating products, and to put a product on the market, I started to work with self-production" (Alvaro, "bid_2017") .

In 2004, in the final project of his course, the designer created Glow Brick, a resin-encapsulated photo-luminescent lamp, which became very successful, was manufactured and distributed by the Suck Company (UK), with more than 200,000 units sold. That same year, Alvaro opened his workspace in Barcelona and developed the La Flaca Lamp, which awarded him with a prize of the Design Plus Award in Frankfurt.

In 2009, he moved his studio to Madrid, to a space to make his own productions, working the material directly and in the prototype. Although Alvaro has always had a partnership with the

industry, since he considers that this allows the project to reach a higher level of quality and a larger market, he also idealizes his pieces, even if with higher costs or with greater complexity, without thinking of the industry as the sales channel.

In 2010, Alvaro and his friend and designer Francesco Fachin won the Satellite award from the International Furniture Trade Show of Milan for emerging designers, an event that he had been participating in since 2007.

In 2011, the designer was invited to participate in an awareness project about the disposal of plastic bottles in the Colombian Amazon, which involved the community and the government. According to Alvaro (bid_2017), "there were some ecologists in Colombia bringing together a group of artists, architects, landscapers and designers who could create awareness about plastic waste in the country. They wanted to use the craftwork, which really is differentiated in the country and very rich. They began to work with a group of artisans who were at social risk. "

The designer developed this project of co-design with the artisans, inserting in his work a strong social, ecological and cultural component. The work consisted in the reuse of the bottles, but also in the application of textile techniques practiced by the local communities.

The development of the idea came from the perception of the technical characteristics and structural shapes of the bottle, which has a narrow and resistant neck, a body that allows extensive area, and the transparency of the material. This led to the idea of creating a lamp. The inspiration for the how to make the lamp came from a bamboo object used in Japanese tea ceremonies (Figure 1). The designer used the technique of cutting and weaving wires that is used to produce the Japanese object. From this abstraction the designer idealized to transfer the technique to the bottle, with a weave and web in plastic and natural fibers. With this, Alvaro combined a global object like PET bottle with a craftwork like weaving, bringing together design and craftwork in a useful way. The designer needed to project a working method to turn a PET bottle into a lamp. The way of doing it had to be easily understood by any artisan and so that he did not need complex tools to execute. The Figure 1 shows illustrations of how to make the lamp.

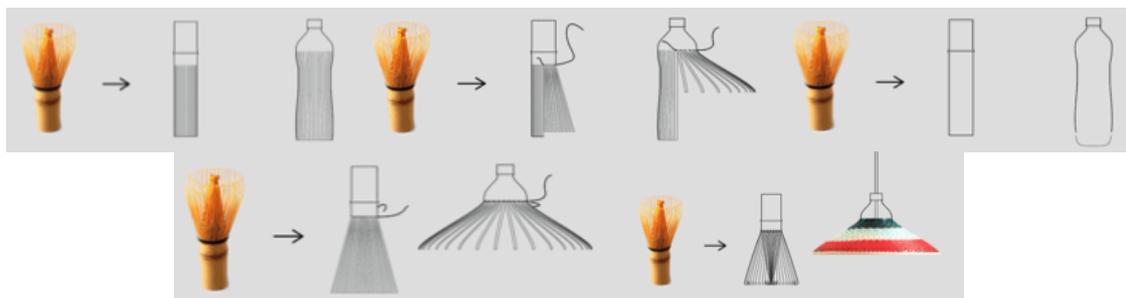


Figure 1: How to make the PET Lamp

Source: <http://catalandeocon.com/product/pet-lamp/>

In the testimony of the designer ("bid_2017"), the “culture shock is a huge asset.” It is understood that craftsmanship combined with design can become a product idea with great value in the market.

The designer on the first impression in the project points that: "In Colombia we had the first experience more enriching, in which we work with a lot of freedom. We wanted the lamp to be as much a part of us as of the artisans "(Alvaro at the presentation of" bid_2017 "). The wealth of co-design work between Alvaro and the artisan was found in the synergy of this partnership and, this was perceived by the designer himself.

In 2012, with the sponsorship of Coca-Cola and the cooperation of the Artesanía de Colombia, Alvaro held a workshop with the artisan community of Cauca to elaborate the idea of the project, based on recycling and transformation. The artisans could freely interpret the idea taken by the designer to use their techniques of craftsmanship, besides the patterns and colours that used to do their works. Figure 2 illustrate some of the works done with the Colombian artisans.



Figure 2: Colombian artisans developing their co-design work on the project.

Source: <http://catalandeocon.com/product/pet-lamp/>

In this co-design work with the community of artisans of Cauca, each created object is singular, even being made by a systematic process that involves a chain of production and complex distribution. The semi-finished products developed by the artisans are sent to Alvaro's office, where they are added the light source, the electric cabling and the weights to stabilize the diffuser. From the office they are exported to several countries, marketed via web, in some galleries and shops (figure 3). However, the lamps can also be sold and distributed by the local community or organizations in Colombia.



Figure 3: Lamps developed in the Lamp PET Project with Colombian artisans
Source: <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/design-interiors/article/2131401/designer-behind-pet-lamp-giving-plastic>

Lamps are designed according to the rules of copy-left (free copy right), a way of using copyright legislation, not preventing the use, diffusion and modification of the creative work.

The designer emphasizes in his talk at the "bid_2017" meeting that "the client takes a lamp knowing that there is no other equal in the market. We always present the lamps with their artisans, that is, each artisan presents his own lamp, with pride and satisfaction in his face, since they do most of the creative process. The artisans put their form of expression on the pieces". It is understood that the customer when he receives the product, receives along a photo of the artisan who made the good and information regarding their origins and culture, it is a way of giving due recognition to the artisan's work.

In two years, 4000 different pieces of the collection were sold and distributed in several countries of the world. It is worth mentioning that the local demand cannot absorb a large amount of these products, since the popular craftwork is not much purchased by in the communities, so Alvaro believes that he has the role of presenting the pieces in other design media.

The designer also adds that "changing context is also very important for craftsmanship, for this particular product, that is, decontextualizing it and transporting it to the world of design, and make it known to the specialized press in design.

On the perception of the object by the buyers, Alvaro clarifies, "at first moment they do not realize that the lamp is made of PET bottle and, only then they can see the bottle inside. With this, they have an insight about the history of this creation that goes from the perception of the global industrial object to later the understanding of the material and expressive ability behind the textile craftwork developed by the local artisans" (talk at the "bid_2017").

In 2013, the first results of the project were exhibited at the Galleria Rossana Orlandi in Milan, achieving progressive success, which allowed him to create the PET Lamp Studio Society, in order to progress with the project on other fronts. In addition, this project was nominated for the

London Design Museum as the best product of the year, for CODESPA for the best PYME (SME), for the Delta Award 2014, for the German Award 2015 and, the AD award for the best Design Studio Emergent.

Alvaro's co-design work with the artisans of Cauca has a strong social and cultural character and economic benefit provided to local communities. With the successful repercussion of the project, it has been replicated in other countries. Thus, the PET Lamp project started as a form of awareness, directly related to the reuse of PET bottles and with its success became an anthropological study of different cultural traditions of weaving, evidencing the artisan knowledge in the function of promoting local culture and emphasizing the preservation and tradition of craftwork.

For replication of the project in a community of other nationalities, Alvaro and his collaborators explained the process and the artisans showed their techniques, so the inspiration was provided, but the instructions came from the artisans.

The designer at the "bid_2017" presentation declared: "It amazes me how different cultures respond to a similar materials (fibbers) in the same way, creating similar transformation techniques, respecting the material that is used."

Following the success of Colombia, Chile was the second country to have the project implemented in co-design with artisans who used wicker in the creation of large and lightweight pieces. Figure 4 shows the designer Alvaro and the Chilean artisans in the development process of PET Lamp and figure 5 presents the products resulting from the artisan's project in Chile.



Figure 4: Alvaro and Chilean artisans in the process of developing the PET Lamp
Source: <http://catalandeocon.com/product/pet-lamp/>



Figure 5: Lamps developed in the PET Lamp project with Chilean artisans
Source: <http://catalandeocon.com/product/pet-lamp/>

The project was then developed in Ethiopia, in Addis Ababa, where the work was done in a community exclusively of women. These artisans worked with a spiral weaving technique to make containers for “*injera*”, traditional Ethiopian bread. In order to adapt to the techniques of this craftwork, Alvaro modified the design of the lamp. In this way, the bottle was cut and woven, allowing the creation of lamps more suitable for large spaces and providing some acoustic insulation. Figure 6 presents the group of Ethiopian artisans creating the PET Lamps and figure 7 presents the products resulting from the project of artisans in Ethiopia.



Figure 6: Group of Ethiopian artisans creating PET Lamps
Source: <http://catalandeocon.com/product/pet-lamp/>



Figure 7: Lamps developed in the PET LAMP Project with Ethiopian artisans
Source: <http://catalandeocon.com/product/pet-lamp/>

Subsequently, Alvaro went to Kyoto, Japan, to spend three weeks and was invited by a journalist to work with local bamboo artisans. The co-design work was done with the artisans and the lamps were exhibited at the 21_21 Design Sight in Tokyo. Figure 8 shows the lamps developed in the project.



Figure 8: PET Lamps developed with Japanese artisans in the background
Source: <http://catalandeocon.com/product/pet-lamp/>

In 2016, the designer was interested in working with Chilean artisans again, but this time with Mapuche natives, specifically with the women belonging to the community of Nocha Malen (Figures 13 and 14).



Figure 13: PET Lamps developed by artisans in the Nocha Malen community.
Source: <http://acdo.es/product/mapuche-single/>



Figure 14: Chilean Artisans in the Development of PET Lamp
Source: <http://catalandeocon.com/product/pet-lamp/>

Also, in 2016, Alvaro started the project in Australia with a remote community of Ramingining in the Northern Territory and the result was a huge lamp for use in large spaces (Figures 15 and 16).

The designer at the presentation of "bid_2017" reports on the project experience in Australia:

"We have done studies in communities that have remained more authentic and kept their traditions in time. The Aboriginal world is amazing, it's another world, it's the oldest living culture in the world. It has a linear life, without changing the environment. It has nothing written, they convey the knowledge through ephemeral paintings, dreams and stories. We did an immersion in the culture, an immersion in the village, we fished with them, we lived like them, ate what they... Their craft techniques of weaving begin by collecting fresh leaves from the palm tree and separated it into two broad fibbers. To give colour the fibbers they used roots of bushes, yellow, red... Little by little we were getting into the technique. The colour depends on the time of the year in which the roots are harvested. In every season of the year there are lamps with different colours. Each artisan wove a lamp individually. It was 8 in all. Australia's most famous aboriginal, Mary suggested weaving all the lamps with the leftover fibbers to make it into a single lamp. We began to investigate the family ties of the Aboriginal world. It does not necessarily exist in a blood-based family sense, as we do. I wanted to give a sense, a graph of family unity of the artisans who were working on the project. The idea was to weave a kind of infinite union. "



Figure 15: PET Lamp developed in Australia Source:

<http://www.altaniaresidencial.com/decorar-lmparas-mimbre-5-razones-para-no-dejarlas-escapar>



Figure 16: Australian artisans developing the project

Fonte: <http://catalandeocon.com/product/pet-lamp/>

Alvaro has other projects, in addition to PET Lamp, in which design products were developed, which are not exposed in the article. For this work, it was decided to focus on PET Lamp, due to the aspects that involve the project, which makes it relevant in the theme of this paper.

4.2 Designer *Martín Azúa*

Martín Azúa is a designer of objects and spaces, born in the Pais Basco, graduated in Fine Arts from the University of Barcelona and works in the city where he studied since 1994. As designer, follows a line of work in which considers experimental methods as a fundamental means of the design process. His work is focused on the inclusion of the natural processes that derive from day by day and the use of craft resources in order to conserve cultural and technological diversity. He works with local production and is committed to the environment and social development (Martín Azúa Site)¹.

Since 2007 the designer has a project exhibited in a permanent collection at the MOMA (Museum of Modern Art) in New York and, pieces exhibited in the collection of the Barcelona Design Museum. Martín works in projects with the creation of different products, for several renowned companies. He has developed trophies for sporting and cultural events, created spaces and exhibitions and has received several awards recognized in the field of design. In addition to all these professional activities, the designer teaches at the Elisava School in Barcelona and serves as a member of the advisory board of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Barcelona. Martín has also worked as an international consultant in the area of design and craftsmanship in development aid programs funded by the European Community (Martín Azúa Site).

In the magazine *Nuevo Estilo*², a published article on the works of Martín Azúa mentions the intrinsically interconnected relation between design and craftsmanship in his works and cites its connection with natural processes and the use of what is traditional. The designer in an interview with the magazine says that objects explain stories and transmit values and that in the creation of their products, he seeks to engage with the local tradition with simplicity and emotion. Martín has the versatility in creating his objects, which go from chairs to shoes, from jewels to exhibitions, being able to be inspired by everything around him. His greatest references for the accomplishment of his works are nature and craftsmanship. The designer in addition says that he works with local providers, with objects that tell something from the culture. He believes that products must communicate what they are made of, where and by whom, considering of great

¹ Source: <http://www.martinazua.com>

² Source: <http://nuevo-estilo.micasarevista.com/decoradores-arquitectos/disenador-martin-azua>

value the direct access with producers and creators through the partnership of work in the development of objects (Nuevo Estilo magazine, 2016).

Martín makes co-design partnerships with artisans in the development of their pieces. His interest in craftwork has existed for a long time and currently he participates in different projects promoted by artisan associations in Catalonia, the Pais Basco and Galicia. Thus, he has gradually established contact with the artisans and created openness to the collaboration, although some are not always open to the work of co-design, being necessary to respect them, explains the designer in an informal conversation (bid_2017). According to Martín, the work process in association can be initiated when the designer thinks about a product or process and then searches for the artisan. However, for him, the most interesting projects arise when there is already mutual knowledge. The relationships between designer and artisan evolve through the projects and thus the collaboration becomes more precise and efficient. Martín thinks that when an understanding is achieved at work with the artisan and an effective collaboration, there is no need to look for another, unless different techniques or skills are needed. To establish the partnerships, the designer usually adapts to what the artisan can give and face along with him the technical challenges.

According to the designer, the technical part is assigned to the artisan, the designer draws the piece and the artisan resolves it. Therefore, the artisan has a very important role in the work of co-design, he is in the place of who solves and therefore needs an inventive and creative effort to solve. Martín mentions that he can elaborate the design of the piece, but who resolves is the artisan and the artisan is the one who has the knowledge of the technique and the combination of the materials, in order to make the piece to be produced. For the designer, this must be recognized, Martín sustains the importance of the artisan's work and reinforces that the vision that exists of them, like helpless and underclass professional, should not exist.

The designer realizes the magnitude of artisan's work in their partnerships, establishing the act of both signing the pieces. Martín believes that when the artisan also signs the works, both contributions are recognized. His contribution is generally more conceptual and the artisan's contribution is more technical; however there may be other types of approaches. This initiative to promote the co-authorship of the artisan in the pieces happened in a natural way, according to the designer (informal conversation in the bid_2017 Meeting).

An example of the recognition of the artisan's work in co-design with Martín can be found in his ceramic pieces with Marc Vidal, an artisan who works with him, in which the pieces are signed by both as presented in figure 17. However, according to Martín, there are cases in which this level of trust and recognition has not yet been reached, because there is also the situation in which disclosing a collaborator means losing it, there is this dilemma.

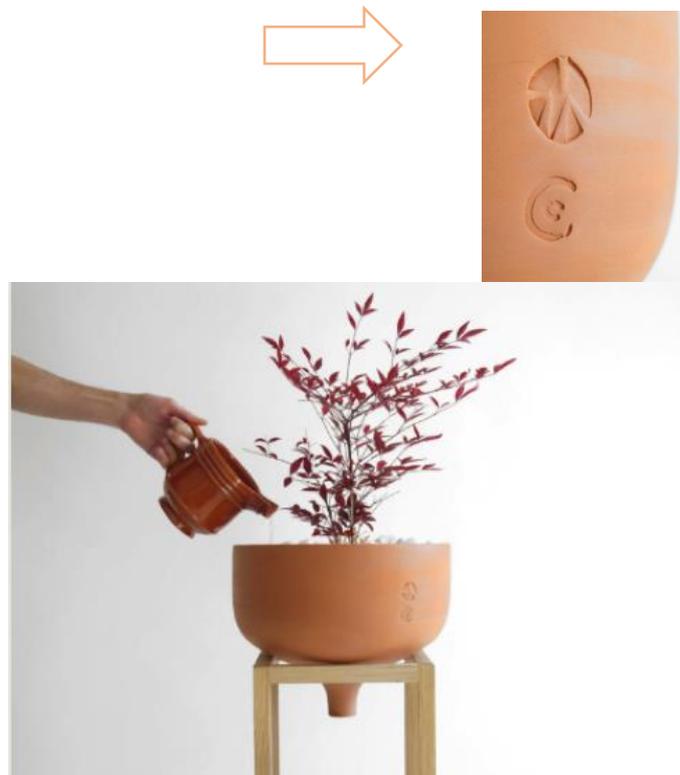


Figure 17: Signature of the artisan Marc Vidal and the designer Martín Azúa in the piece
Fonte: <http://www.martinazua.com/product/new-manantial/>

For the same reason that the designer considers the signature of the designer and artisans in the pieces important, in his presentation on Collaborative Models: Craftworks and Design, in the 7th Meeting of "bid_2017", he presented some artisans who work with him, the way they work and the raw material to which each one is expert, reaffirming the importance that the designer gives to the work of these artisans in co-design partnership.

The designer understands that in a collaborative work there is a mutual learning between the professionals, although each one is responsible for a part in the development of the product. For him, collaborating is to learn, and learning must be achieved on both sides. The designer also mentions that collaborating is to be interested, is to share. The project should not go in a single direction, in which the designer conceptualizes, and the artisan materializes it, otherwise there is nothing to share. Collaborating is also recognizing the contributions of the people who work on the project, economically, in terms of credits and recognition ("bid_2017"). The designer believes that in an association between craftwork and contemporary design, in a work of co-design, both

professionals need to recognize each other through the value position of the products and the work employed in the creations. Contemporary craftwork is positioned to question the value of products and work.

To be able to work in a co-design partnership with artisans, Martín says that it is necessary to understand that artisans do not want someone as “commander” of their work; they are ideologically positioned in a thought that they are controllers of their own work. He adds that in the work of co-design with artisans, there is a need for contours during the partnership that need to be respected. In addition, he considers that incredible pieces can be made with the artisans, but that sometimes is required to these a great physical effort. As the artisans are mostly elderly people, it is necessary to idealize interesting and simple products, to enable to work with them.

An example of a co-design work by Martín occurred with the esparto artisans of Murcia, from the town of Blanca. In this region there is abundant esparto³, so the artisans of the region exploit very much this material. According to the designer, they have a very special way of working and when you can perceive a little their dynamics, you start to work well with them. When the designer went to visit the place, he realized that the esparto mats produced by the artisans were different from those made in the industrial production. They worked in teams of women who were rotate around the piece. By understanding their work, Martín designed a piece formed by several centers, creating a glow effect. Through the reflections, he realized that when the mat was produced with a single center, the shimmer translucent in half. Figure 18 shows the result of the co-design work with the artisans of Murcia.



Figure 18: Rug made of esparto with artisans from Murcia
Source: <http://www.martinazua.com/product/magma-rug/>

³ Esparto, *halcfah* grass, or esparto grass, is a fiber produced from two species of perennial grasses of North Africa and Southern Europe. It is used for crafts, such as ropes, basketry, espadrilles and good-quality paper. *Stipa tenacissima* and *Lygeum spartum* are the species used to produce esparto (Source: Wikipedia)

The magazine Neo2⁴ has published in June 2017 an article about the work of Martín, mentioning the connection between design and craftsmanship present in his works and presents the project of the designer in collaboration with the Alhambra Beer Brand, in the creation of an urban intervention occurred in the Born neighbourhood in Barcelona. “Stop” the name project is a 50-square-meter handmade rug made in co-design with Murcia's artisans. This piece was developed for over three months. The main material chosen was the esparto, because it is a wild plant of the same family as barley, one of the ingredients to produce beer. Figure 19 presents the creation with the artisans for urban intervention.



Figure 19: Urban intervention created with the local artisans of Murcia
Fonte: <http://www.martinazua.com/product/alhambra-rug/>

Posteriorly Martín launched a "Numbered Collection", (site Despiertaymira⁵), which comprises a selection of craft objects and furniture with sustainable materials. The choice of materials and the impact on the environment were preponderant over the collection, the objects were created with ceramic, wood and vegetable fibbers, that require little processing and become an end product, in which texture, colour and even smell (esparto mats) have a connection with nature. The collection

⁴ Source: <https://www.neo2.com/crear-sin-prisa-martin-azua-cervezas-alhambra/>

⁵ Source: <https://www.despiertaymira.com/index.php/2015/07/martin-azua-y-su-coleccion-numbered/>

was also committed to the social development, contributing to the non-disappearance of traditional craft workshops and their ancestral techniques. The designer's interest in environmental issues and sustainability came a few years ago, transporting him to his creative universe. Some of the pieces created in the "Numbered Collection" are shown here, the basket Motxilak (in Basque), designed by him and made by the artisan Beatriz Unzueta (Figure 20), produced from a handmade basket of chestnut wood, with a fabric bag inside, in the form of a backpack. This type of basketry was common in the rural areas of the Basque Country and was intended for the loading of potatoes due to its resistance, lightness and durability of the material. In a backpack shape allows you to safely carry a computer or a tablet. The designer had the idea of recovering the initial utility function of the Motxilak basket for a contemporary urban use.



Figure 20: Motxilak basket

Source: <http://www.martinazua.com/product/motxilak-basket/>

The second piece, shown in figure 21, is the Backpack Bag. A backpack that transforms from 2D into 3D, just by pulling the zipper up. The main idea of the project was to make the product simple, in which a strict functionality may have simple but not obvious solutions. This object was co-authored by the artisan Jordi Miquel. This piece conveys the concept that luxury is the simplest.



Figure 21: Backpack Bag and the artisan Jordi Miquel.

Source: <http://www.martinazua.com/product/numbered-bag/>

5. Final Considerations

The fashion sector begins to follow paths in accordance with the concepts of sustainability, highlighting ways to make fashion with greater environmental, social and cultural commitment. The new reflections coming from “slow fashion thinking” are revising the values of production and consumption, opening space for new possibilities of making fashion.

When it comes to “craft fashion”, it’s perceived a direct association with this movement, the slow fashion, in which the quality and durability of the pieces are present. Moreover, referring to craft fashion, social and cultural sustainability is intrinsically related.

In the craft fashion, the work of co-design between designers and artisans has been increasing, however not always this partnership is properly recognized and divulged by the designers. In the fashion world the development of products based on local traditions and as a form of cultural manifestation, still needs large steps to be taken. However, these partnerships are established in some other areas of design even using traditional textile techniques (tapestries, braids, etc.). This article tends to reflect on these partnerships, the ways they establish themselves, function and are recognized in these other areas of design and that can serve as an example to fashion design.

Having knowledge about the work of designers Alvaro Catalan de Ocón and Martín Azúa with artisans in the development of products, a case study was carried out in order to deepen the understanding of the aspects related to the valorisation of co-authorships of the artisans in the pieces developed together with the designers. From this research some illations can be drawn:

The richness of co-design work is found in the synergy of the designer-artisan partnership. This partnership needs time spent together, so that the designer has the opportunity to observe the way the artisan work in order to take better advantage of the their work dynamics.

The designer must realize that in a collaborative work there is a mutual learning between the professionals, although each one is responsible for a part in the development of the product. That is, the project should not follow in a single direction, in which the designer conceptualizes, and the artisan makes, otherwise there is nothing to share. To share is to get interested, to collaborate in each other's work. The designer should wish that the products created be as much part of the designer as of the artisan. It should allow freedom of action on the part of the artisan enabling him to also put his form of expression on the pieces. Only in this way the products can obtain a strong social, ecological and cultural component.

To collaborate is also recognizing the contributions of the people who work on the project, at an economically way, in terms of recognition of credits. The recognition must be official through clear communication of the partnership, in a joint signature of the product and even in the storytelling of the process.

The fashion designer in a similar way to the cases studied here should develop collections that are committed to the environment and social development, contributing to the non-disappearance of traditional craftwork and their ancestral techniques.

Thus, it is expected that in the near future the artisan will be increasingly valued and that his partnership in co-design used in fashion products will contribute to a better promotion of Social Responsibility and the valorisation of Local Communities.

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