



PRESENTATION

WE ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING TOUCH WITH THE CRAFT ELEMENT OF FASHION DESIGN AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO INDUSTRY AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

DESIGN PRACTICE | HISTORY | SOCIO-CULTURAL | LEARNING

Bruce has spent 25 years working in the fashion industry, both in the UK and abroad and laterly at Northumbria University as Professor in Design Craftmanship. He has worked for Katherine Hamnett and Italian fashion houses Luciano Soprani and Moschino, followed by Jeff Banks and DAKS. At DAKS he was Menswear Design Director responsible for the menswear design brand worldwide.



AT PRESENT WE ARE RIDING A RECESSION, THIS IS GIVING RISE TO HIGHER UNEMPLOYMENT AND AN UNSTABLE GLOBAL MARKET. ADD TO THIS THE PROBLEMS CREATED IN ADJUSTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY PEOPLE ARE PREDICTING AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE. THIS IS ALSO EXAGGERATING THE WORLD'S UNBALANCED WEALTH. WITHIN THE DESIGN SECTOR THE VIRTUAL WORLD SEEMS EVER MORE A SOLUTION OR MORE LIKELY A FORM OF ESCAPISM.

The traditional seasons are disappearing as a result of global warming. One day we are wearing a t-shirt and the next a wool coat. The global strategy of branding and merchandising that has dominated the luxury sector for years is falling away in favour of a more authentic localised experience. Pop up shops and limited edition products being produced for immediate sale. Customers do not want to wait six months any more for collections to arrive. We have become too impatient. Fashion shows are now online within minutes of having taken place and the garments can be copied and in the stores before we can blink. They are produced at a fraction of the price and leaving the original to be the late arrival. It is no secret that some high street retailers now offer 24 fashion seasons a year. There is too much choice, is it really necessary? The quality has been reduced for the sake of price. There is without doubt just too much product.



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Some major mainstream publications are struggling in this new online climate. Advertising pages are decreasing, and issues are slimmer, printing costs higher. The money is moving to the Internet and we are moving with it. Yet it is not all about cutting back, some corporations have doubled their Internet spend. It is predicted that 93% of people will buy online this Christmas. Blogging is the new form of brand publicity as well as an instant source of information.

While the media decides how to react to the online phenomenon, our conscious is being to work overtime. We have finally become aware of the Eco-luxe. Codes of conduct are slowly being implemented while guilt or gilt is making people think. We are starting to demand transparency, and sustainability has entered the business world. This need to change was highlighted in this years report

by George Cox of the Design Council when he talked about the importance of creativity and preparing future generations. He mentioned the need to create greater visibility to show the UK's greater capabilities. The designers of the future need to play a part in helping to solve issues and influencing others.

The solutions would appear to be that high fashion will be inspirational only, while core fashion will serve to satisfy daily needs and buy to throw away. Luxury will become localised as efforts are made to reduce carbon copy and transport costs. The slow movement seems to make sense, skills need to be taught and prediction needs to highlight originality not copying.

Heritage will be revisited as craft plays its part in providing these missing skills to the useless generation. Labour intensive craftsmanship is the

new luxury. Art design and science start to become linked in order to create new materials and products. Nanotechnology, Biotechnology and cognitive techniques are being researched while the properties of materials such as thermal, tactile and optical have new uses. Spandex, Gore-Tex, and Ultra Suede are now regarded as core items. Du Pont's Lycra T400 multicomponent yarn that created stretch jeans was an example of technology linking with fashion's demands, which is now second nature. However with technology moving so fast we are also craving for something more human, something that has emotion. The future will be about garments that reflect a person, individual expression; and designed with intellect.

In relation to the student experience the research, instruction and links gained at university help to prepare the graduates for going into commerce and the ever-changing design world. Therefore the knowledge and skills have to be in line with or at the forefront of their fields. If not the process becomes stagnated. We need to inspire the next generation to evolve. As commerce and industry change we must review the academic process and purpose. In the everyday world of wear and tear, resources cannot be wasted. More and more pressure is placed on the entrepreneur. There is a need for quality time, critical analysis and the ability to know at what point perfection is reached. The need to learn from novice to practitioner to expert will run alongside a need for students to prepare themselves to design solutions to social problems. Food for thought!

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