

lación creativa con el entorno. Creemos que sí que está en nuestras manos el ofrecer objetos que puedan ser reinterpretados, recreados, cambiados y completados. Esto implicaría establecer una relación entre el diseñador y el usuario de complicidad y respeto que tenga en cuenta aspectos sensibles que el mercado no contempla. La experiencia nos demuestra que todo esto es más fácil con objetos cotidianos humildes que no están excesivamente marcados por la personalidad del diseñador, en los que es más sencillo desafiar o cuestionar los usos y contextos predeterminados. Objetos abiertos en los que el usuario se convierte en protagonista. Estas cualidades son las únicas capaces de salvar de la vanalidad a los objetos y rescatarlos de la lógica del mercado.

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Unfinished objects

The market has become the stage where most of our relationships take place; everything happening in it is in answer to commercial, statistic, market sector, percentage, etc. criteria, values which can be measured and confirmed and which evidence that the market sets its own needs above the interests of the consumer. It is the quantitative logic of unlimited production and consumption, justified by the idea that economic development means social welfare, thus presupposing that there is a harmony between market interests and those of the consumer. Nothing can be further from reality; products are always devised to be desired and consumed, but hardly ever fulfill our expectations but rather quite the contrary, create others, thus perpetuating a necessity for new products. The market constantly feeds our dissatisfaction. The presence of an excessive amount of products saturates our environment and means no greater real possibility of choice; in most cases it only means more of the same (apparently different, but basically the same). There is a logic when buying, an anticipation of benefits or satisfaction of needs and desires, which can vanish when we establish a closer relation with the object: its intrinsic value disappears, and its only value becomes the one we give it. Some design theorists have taken positions when faced with these problems and propose a search for new work environments and new quality, thus allying themselves with the consumer and sometimes fleeing from commitments to market production and pressure. The designer should not ignore the user's capacity for placing objects in a physical and emotional, personal and private context. The user is the first to show us that objects go far beyond their material properties or pre-determined uses. In *ad hoc* solutions (for immediate use), in alternative or secondary uses, we find that spontaneity, play, and imagination have the main role; people leave increasingly specific and sophisticated objects aside and, in a modest and anonymous way continue charging everyday objects with new utilitarian meanings. Adapting the environment to our own wishes or desires is one of the keys for our emotional upkeep. Claude Levi-Strauss speaks of our

primitive capacity for invention, improvisation, and entering into contact with reality in a creative manner. Unfortunately, many current products still involve the individual in a socially adequate way of acting and behaving which estrange him from enjoying potential freedom.

In fact, some of the qualities we claim for new products, such as emotional permeability and creative implications, can be found in many of our possessions which we consider «special» since childhood: the transitional object, toys, gifts, souvenirs, relics, collections, found objects, etc.

The transitional object: during the first years of childhood, many children develop a strong emotional attachment to objects such as a blanket, a rag doll or a stuffed animal, etc., with which they keep up an intense physical relationship (sucking, embracing, chewing, etc.). Over the years this object becomes dirty and spoiled but its smell, taste, and quality of touch make it irreplaceable. The child goes to it when looking for security as a sign that everything is in order, everything is going well.

Toys: they are an instrument, a means to develop creativity and imagination. Their value lies not so much in themselves as in their ability to make us discover our environment and ourselves. Quite often toy-objects are not devised as such but children's uninhibitedness can transform their function depending on their creative needs.

Gifts: sometimes the way an object comes to form a part of our lives is transcendent. This happens with gifts: the ceremonial, the mystery, the excitement, are all a way of singularising an object, of giving it a sentimental value.

Souvenirs: their only use is a physical representation of a moment, a circumstance, a trip; it is as if we were afraid of losing our experiences and thus turn them into objects.

Relics: family objects which bring back a past and tell us of our origins. They are always related to people and we are thus tied to them at a sentimental and spiritual level.

Collections: objects involved in an activity which pursues control, order, and lasting; sometimes, collecting also means restoring, recovering objects which were destined to be lost.

Found objects: they are usually objects which have been thrown away, which have no name or use, but

which for some strange reason catch our interest. They are a creative activity; looking for positive aspects in apparently banal objects, lacking in material values, but which are suggestive due to their colours, texture, specific shape, etc.

In all these cases, we give objects meanings which challenge and go beyond traditional value systems. They are to do with forming and keeping up our intimate personal identity. With them we create affective, and even therapeutic, links and dependencies in which the object itself is not as important as the relationship we set up with it. These possessions confirm our ability to charge objects with memory and use them as emotional detonators which allow us to more or less regulate our moods while offering a certain relaxation, privacy, or emotional security; for this reason it is usually so difficult to renounce these possessions.

Much of the behaviour to which we refer is developed with greater freedom in the domestic environment (home as refuge); established rules and restrictions seem to relax when we are at home, which eases a more intimate sort of relationship both with people and with our possessions. We find Isao Hosoe's work in this sense interesting. It is directed towards a domestication of the office and other work areas.

We have referred to links people establish with objects as part of the process of setting up their own identity. An object can modify experiences people have with the outside world, but it can become a negative effect (anthropomorphism, fetishism, etc.) if this identification or dependence on an object excludes us from human relationships.

When we study these kinds of behaviour, we must ask if designers are capable of giving objects this sort of qualities, or, rather, if they can leave a space for people to fill objects with affective contents and qualities, thus favouring this type of relationship with the environment. We believe that it is within our reach to offer objects which can be reinterpreted, recreated, changed, and completed. This would imply establishing a relationship of complicity and respect between the designer and the user, which would take into account the sensitive aspects not contemplated by the market. Experience proves that this is easier with humble everyday objects which are not overly marked by the designer's personality, in which it is easier to defy or question predetermined uses and contexts. Open objects, in which the user becomes the main character. These are

the only qualities capable of saving objects from banality and rescuing them from market logic.

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