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# THE VISUAL RHETORIC OF CRAFTSMANSHIP

by

AMALIA KALLEN GONZALES

Under the Direction of Jennifer Bowie

## ABSTRACT

Within the existing research about communicative devices within visual rhetoric, most published research exists regarding two-dimensional design such as documents and media graphics. In this paper, I discuss the rhetorical value of handmade items and specifically speak to the *ethos* that three-dimensional, tangible handmade products inherently possess based upon their visual aesthetic.

INDEX WORDS: Visual rhetoric, Craftsmanship, Artisan, Ethos, Handmade, Production

THE VISUAL RHETORIC OF CRAFTSMANSHIP

by

AMALIA KALLEN GONZALES

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2010

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2010

THE VISUAL RHETORIC OF CRAFTSMANSHIP

by

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

During a recent attempt to conceptualize the meaning of Aristotelian “ethos” as it pertains to rhetoric and composition, specifically within the theoretical framework of visual rhetoric, I pointed to a wardrobe from IKEA. I explained that the wardrobe is aesthetically pleasing, with clean lines, and a great amount of functionality. With three flat surfaces for storage, and a hanging rack, the utility of the piece is not only adequate, it is superior to most wardrobes currently on the market in regard to price, and accessibility. In spite of this, it will also likely be sold, or given away in an upcoming move to another apartment. I then pointed to a coffee table, which I have owned for seven years. Purchased from a consignment store, the surface of the table is assembled from three sections of repurposed floorboards, and is held up by four legs, made out of spindles from a staircase from the same house where the floorboards were sourced. Although I reasonably do not have enough room to accommodate this piece of furniture, I will nonetheless make room for it during the upcoming move, as it holds a greater amount of character, and value, based upon its unique design, and artisan conception.

After providing this conceptualization, I realized for the first time the weight of the comparison between the character of these physical pieces and the rhetorical associations that can be drawn from tangible, physical objects and their associated rhetorical value. The comments I receive from guests upon viewing the IKEA wardrobe mostly include, “oh, I have that same one.” The comments I receive from guests upon viewing the coffee table include a greater variety of praise, and include questions about its origin, comments about its unique character, and admiration for the amount of time I’ve kept it over the course of several moves. To me, the IKEA item is disposable and easily

replaced. Its character representation is minimal and directly related to the fact that it is simply one out of millions of copies. In stark contrast, the handmade coffee table presents an enormous amount of character, which can be directly related through a visually inherent narrative regarding its imagined history. Though inanimate, this table holds the same rhetorical criteria as a human orator. The table (though not alive, and without a voice) still possesses the three qualities through which *ethos* is crafted, as stated by Aristotle. The table has *phronesis* (sound sense), *arête* (moral character or excellence), and *eunoia* (benevolence or goodwill). The table visually has an obvious “sound sense” of performing the task for which it was built, as it a sturdy, reliable platform. Additionally, even without knowing the item’s background, it is visually worn, imperfect, and mildly warped from humidity. This provides the viewer with a sense that the table was cared for<sup>1</sup>, and comes from decades of utility. These qualities fit not only the *arête*, but also the *eunoia* of the piece, as it has a resilience that will likely last for several more decades in order to serve its owner. It communicates a message to the end-user that it is reliable, durable, ready to perform, and able to handle weight, weather, dents, and scratches. Thus, although the table is a non-traditional communicative device, it does indeed have a character and voice that is expressed through its visual appearance. It serves not only as a functional object but also as a symbol of the value of handmade fabrication.

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<sup>1</sup> On an emotional level. Although the table is uneven and worn, its visual character and emotional worth caused its owners to keep the piece, instead of throwing it away, or giving it away as I recently did with the IKEA wardrobe after only two years of ownership. I purchased the piece from a local consignment store, and was told that it was only for sale due to the previous owner’s financial necessity. Personally, I feel that the table, despite its imperfections and age, has a character and communicative worth that is not readily seen in industrially designed, or mass-produced items.

This anecdote is veritably the basis for my examination of the visual rhetoric of craftsmanship, and has inspired a multi-media digital project related primarily to the *ethos* (and secondarily, *logos* and *pathos*) of handmade items in contrast to mass-produced items. The project is meant to serve not only as a resource to fill the gap in existing academic literature about the relationship between rhetoric and physical design, but to also act as an available pedagogical tool for further study and discussion of visual rhetoric within the realm of three-dimensional product design and production.

As discussed in an upcoming review of existing literature, little has been written about the *ethos* of tangible goods and products. It is my belief that through an examination of several types of produced goods (furniture, textiles, food, automobiles, and artwork), I can convey the rhetorical implications of some common items that have yet to be commonly considered within the field of rhetoric and composition. I will focus on handmade, or small-batch items, as it is my belief that they have *more* character and rhetorical value than mass-produced items. Currently, there is a small niche of existing literature within rhetoric and composition, and more within visual design and industrial design studies that focuses on the emotion and logical appeal (but not *ethos*) of manufactured and mass-produced items. Within this existing literature, very few references have been made regarding the *ethos* of handmade or artisanal items, and it is this gap in research that this project aspires to fill. I will address the rhetorical aspects of mass-produced items as well, in order to establish the contrast between these two methods of production. I intend to relate the study of three-dimensional objects within this framework of visual rhetoric, for as James Porter explains, the different methods of delivery are important to study in a world in which our methods of discourse are swiftly

changing, “because these past treatments, categories, and classifications, particularly the systems of Greek and Roman classical rhetoric persist. They have an enduring power and influence over our categories of thought, our systematic classifications, our vocabularies, our ways of thinking about writing, technology, and production” (Porter, 4). It is method of “production” that I intend to explore, utilizing visual rhetoric to examine the visual ethos of objects fashioned by hand. This discussion will also include references to published literature regarding mass-produced items in order to provide contrast and a point of reference to the importance of this study. As Porter notes, our method of discourse is changing, and I believe that this dialogue should evolve to include not only the rhetorical implications of two-dimensional objects, but of three-dimensional objects that are not yet widely considered to have an obvious communicative purpose.

The project was intended to extend beyond the traditional delivery of a narrative academic paper, and thus has been additionally modified for web-delivery. As an endeavor to discuss visual rhetoric, it was my belief that an online medium would be a more appropriate container for not only the narrative aspect of the paper, but the photographs taken during interviews, and hyperlinked media and videos leading to additional resources such as articles and films which add additional depth and visual understanding to this understanding about production and *ethos*. Though the text and material in this paper differ only slightly from the material on the website (which will be found at [www.amaliakallen.com/vroc](http://www.amaliakallen.com/vroc)) the following primary research, speaking points, and rhetorical purpose are found in both formats:

- The first tier of research includes quantitative data from an online survey about individuals’ perceived *ethos* of various items, ranging from handmade object to

mass-produced items, such as plates made by an individual potter compared to produced and sold by a major commercial retailer. This research was intended to acquire a wider understanding of general perceptions about craftsmanship, and fill a gap in existing academic publications about the perceived relationship between product design and character value within rhetoric and composition. The population sample was comprised of a diverse group of personal contacts, ranging in age from 18-45, and spanned a spectrum of educational levels, professions, interests, income, and aesthetic values. This population was chosen not because they fit a specific demographic or skill set, but because they were likely mostly laypeople<sup>2</sup>, and all consumers of basic and common household items, automobiles, or furniture.

- The second tier of research is drawn from interviews with a variety of individuals associated with production and design, ranging from purchasers, artists, and craftsmen/artisans. These interviews discuss the *ethos* of physical items including food, textiles, artwork, and instruments. Each of these items are discussed in their respective section further in this paper, and correspond to an interview with their producer. The interviews, while perhaps seemingly disjointed in regard to subject matter, were conducted to illustrate the collective relevance of the value of craftsmanship across several end-products regardless of the variety of their production methods. It was my belief that the first-hand report of these individuals would provide greater credibility to the discussion of perceived value of

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<sup>2</sup> As the term “layperson” is typically utilized to describe one who is a non-expert in a field of knowledge, I employ the word as the population group are experts of their own fields in some respects, but few, if any, are experts on the *ethos* of mass produced or handmade items. They all, regardless of their profession or educational level, likely purchase common household items from either large retailers or individuals, and it was this consumer perspective that I wished to study.

craftsmanship, as these producers make a living, or at least supplemental living on the production of small-batch goods / services, and could effectively speak to the value and worth of their labor and end-product. This is not to suggest, however, that industrial designers do not have the same associated value and worth in their end-product. Literature regarding industrial design is prevalent in design studies, but in few academic fields is handmade production and the visual character of handmade objects represented. The central argument of this thesis is upon the *ethos* associated with handmade products, and therefore there is a bias toward artisans and craftspeople as I have not interviewed industrial designers about their work.

- Finally, I collected the data and developed a website, which is a digital display of the quantitative and qualitative research associated with the exploration into purchasers' and producers' perception of the *ethos* of objects. The site itself is an exploration into the value of visual *ethos* within visual rhetoric, as it relies upon the use of the rhetorical canons of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery, to fully translate my intended composition and platform to viewers of the project. The site acts as the primary delivery device for the project, as it most successfully supports the "visual" aspect of the work. The site allows users to easily browse separate sections of the project and view photographs taken during interviews and hyperlinked material to further resources and referenced material in a segmented manner. The site also includes a link to this traditionally narrative text, which will be available to readers as a double-spaced document. This additional method of delivery enables ease of printing, and reading for those who do not wish to read

longer sections of web-text. The final text is available as a downloadable file at [www.amaliakallen.com/fullthesis.pdf](http://www.amaliakallen.com/fullthesis.pdf)

- The structure of the presentation addresses the purpose for the academic research and speaks to the gap in existing research that influenced the development of this resource. The rhetorical connection and existing literature is examined, and connections between classical conventions of “visual rhetoric” and handmade objects are formed. Findings from primary data are discussed, and support the subsequent research and interviews with artisans and craftspeople regarding their interest and method of production within their field of work. A discussion of the characteristics of “visual rhetoric” and how these elements will tie into subsequent interviews forms an introduction for the latter part of this project, and sections containing primary data and insights into woodworking, art, food, textiles, and automobiles are presented immediately afterward. Next, a discussion of the rhetorical strategies of the multi-media site are presented, followed by a discussion of overreaching topics, themes, and issues presented in this project. Finally, reflections and a projection of how this project can be utilized as a resource within visual rhetorical studies concludes the project.

Upon experiencing the finished site or reading this full paper, it is my hope that readers will have considered the rhetorical value of unassuming, everyday items and will be led to identify the character of inanimate objects as well as gain a greater understanding of how visual rhetoric can be viewed in a perspective apart from traditional academic studies of two-dimensional design. This type of research is important to the field, as the study of visual rhetoric has largely been developed upon the examination of two-



dimensional objects, primarily focused upon photographs and the typography and layout of documents. There is little research within the field of rhetoric and composition that specifically addresses the rhetorical relationship between three-dimensional, tangible items, and the way in which our lives are impacted by the perceived character of these objects.

It is my belief that the understanding of visual rhetoric can be easily expanded outside the field of traditional examinations of two-dimensional design and should include the rhetorical influence of “everyday items”. This project specifically focuses on items that are handmade, or produced in small quantities by an artisan or craftsperson, and addresses the rhetorical aspects of this kind of production, focusing primarily upon the *ethos* that unique or limited production items possess. Ultimately, it is my hope that this project will inspire a greater study into the rhetorical considerations of physical goods and produced items and will possibly act as a pedagogical tool for expanding the study of visual rhetoric further outside of the traditional study of two-dimensional graphics, media, and documents.

## 2 THE RHETORICAL CONNECTION: CONTEMPORARY FOUNDATIONS

“Design is an art of thought directed to practical action through the persuasiveness of objects and, therefore, design involves the vivid expression of communicating ideas about life” (Buchanan 1985, 7).

As previously mentioned, within the field of rhetoric and composition, little if anything has been published regarding the visual ethos of physical goods (however produced). Visual rhetoric itself is fairly modern within the overall discipline of rhetoric and composition<sup>3</sup>, and perhaps because of this, many authors have primarily explored familiar topics within rhetoric and composition while engaging a visual lens within their published articles. These articles have largely focused on document, web, or printed design rather than the design of three-dimensional goods, such as everyday household items, automobiles, or other tangible items that simultaneously act as communicative and operative devices. The omission of published studies about the rhetorical value of consumer goods and domestic possessions is intriguing, especially since within Richard Buchanan’s 1985 publication entitled “Declaration by Design: Rhetoric, Argument, and Demonstration in Design” he asserts such a strong call for the advancement of scholarly ties between rhetoric and design.

Buchanan’s 1985 article was published in *Design Issues*, a scholarly journal focused on design history, theory, and criticism. Though the article does indeed appear in a primarily

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<sup>3</sup> In his foreword to *Visual Rhetoric: A Reader in Communication and American Culture*, Bruce Gronbeck suggests that it was with Kenneth Burke’s 1950 publication of *A Rhetoric of Motives* that the contemporary understanding of visual rhetoric was birthed. Burked “defined rhetoric as a symbolic action that raised several possibilities for subsequent scholarship across the humanities” (5).

“design” focused publication, it has now been available and widely referenced for twenty-five years and has been cited and discussed by multiple scholars including many within the field of rhetoric and composition. George’s “Analysis and Design”, Hocks’s “Understanding Visual Rhetoric in Digital Writing Environments”, and Kostelnick’s “Process Paradigms in Design and Composition: Affinities and Directions” (all from *College Communication and Composition*), Fleming’s “Can Pictures be Arguments” from *Argumentation and Advocacy*, and Kostelnick’s “Supra-Textual Design: The Visual Rhetoric of Whole Documents” from *Technical Communication Quarterly* all reference Buchanan’s article, yet focus primarily on the pedagogical aspects of document design, written text, or photographs. Buchanan himself acknowledges the potentially expansive definition of “design”, and specifies:

I refer not only to graphic design, where communication is an obvious goal, and where the concepts of classical rhetoric are being applied with promising results, but also to the larger field of design, which ranges from industrial and product design to architecture and urban planning and for which there is no unifying theory of rhetoric (4).

Thus, it is surprising that contemporary publications within the field of rhetoric and composition have not continued to follow suit and explore the rhetorical properties of produced, physical objects. The particularly striking introductory paragraph from Buchanan continues with:

although not so obvious at first glance, the themes of communication and rhetoric in this larger field exert strong influence on our understanding of all objects made for our human use...ironically, a unifying theory of rhetoric remains surprisingly unexplored, and at the same time, most needed in the

larger field of design (4).

Buchanan obviously references “all objects made for our human use” as being worthy of rhetorical consideration. Yet twenty-five years later, academic publications regarding the rhetorical value of designed home goods and consumer items such as furniture, clothing/accessories, automobiles, and food (to name a few) have seldom been written. These objects have an undeniable rhetorical aspect in that they not only speak *to* us (something about an item makes us purchase it instead of a comparable item, whether it be appearance, packaging, price, or name), but also speaks to others *about* us (conspicuous consumption<sup>4</sup> has prompted us to take note of others’ belongings, and the rhetorical communication in their value, character, and emotion). Nils Gore believes “the word *craft* should be considered very broadly, meaning *any* human transformation of raw material into another object” (39). In the *Handbook of Visual Communication*, Sonja Foss notes:

not every object is visual rhetoric. What turns a visual object into a communicative artifact — a symbol that communicates and can be studied as rhetoric — is the presence of three characteristics. The image must be symbolic, involve human intervention, and be presented to the audience for the purpose of communicating with that audience (144).

The objects<sup>5</sup> discussed in the referenced, published literature have all been fashioned by people, serve as a communicative or functional device, and have their own distinctive characteristics and qualities that make them notable and apparently eligible for academic

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<sup>4</sup> From Thorstein Veblen’s *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*, page 121.

<sup>5</sup> Documents, typography, media graphics, moving video, websites, etc. While these methods of communication are widely accepted under the field of visual rhetoric, they meet the same criteria as each of the upcoming items discussed (automobiles, food, textiles, etc.) according to Foss and Gore’s definition of communicative artifacts.

study. Therefore, the considerations taken in the subsequent sections about craftsmanship and craft-produced goods will touch upon a theoretical history, consider relative symbolism, note the difference and method of human intervention, and argue for the communicative and rhetorical strategies of an item or process.

To date, most journal articles continue to address the visual rhetoric within the scope of document or photograph analysis, and while they sometimes reference Buchanan, the primary focus of many academic publications within the field of rhetoric and composition continues to be within the pedagogical nature of textual or web-based documents, although increasingly more articles have been written examining video, audio, and multi-modal resources as visually rhetorical devices, including Anderson et. al's "Integrating Multi-Modality into Composition Curricula: Survey Methodology and Results from a CCCC Research Grant".

The rhetorical nature of visual acts within digital environments, and arguments for visual rhetoric as a useful pedagogical tool are widely addressed (Hocks 2003, George 2002, LaSpina 1998), though they do speak primarily to documents, and online media and not the rhetorical consideration of products or goods. George uses her article regarding the visual communication in the teaching of writing to speak to the way in which visual rhetoric can be employed in the writing classroom. George argues:

if we are ever to move beyond a basic and somewhat vague call for attention to 'visual literacy' in the writing class, it is crucial to understand how very complicated and sophisticated is visual communication to students who have grown up in what by all accounts is an aggressively visual culture (15).

George's article also crosses into the category of publications advocating for the analysis of

visual rhetoric to be utilized within multi-modal platform, in which multi-modal composition is viewed as having potentially beneficial ramifications for marginalized students (Faigley 1999, Sherman 2007). Sherman references these aforementioned publications in visual rhetoric and makes the argument that:

working through processes of composing and responding across multiple modalities can create new conditions of possibility for previously marginalized students not only to gain a voice, but also to be heard and seen in new ways by classroom beholders.

Ranker speaks to the benefit of including multi-modal visual rhetoric within the classroom, as he explores the development of a documentary film in a middle school classroom:

I investigated another dimension of the overlap between digital media and writing in pedagogical spaces by explicitly considering how digital video production, in connection with other media, has the potential to influence the writing processes of students in literacy classrooms (198).

Duffelmeyer mirrors these sentiments, noting “multimodal composing more meaningfully reflects the environment in which students receive and generate text today.” Again the pedagogical implications within the classroom in regard to digital media are explored, a popular and widely researched topic within visual studies. Stroupe continues the theme by presenting his essay regarding “a specific approach to reading, composing, and teaching the problematic combination of verbal and nonverbal features in texts conceived for on in electronic environments...” (608), likely influenced by Bernhardt’s 1986 text in which he states, “The physical fact of the text, with its spatial appearance on the page, requires visual apprehension: a text can be seen, must be seen, in a process which is essentially different

from the perception of speech” (66). And Kostelnick speaks to the value of visual cues not only in the textural narrative of the writing classroom, but of technical documents within industrial or corporate fields. All of these articles touch upon the most commonly studied practice of visual rhetoric as a tool for pedagogical efficacy, but still primarily focus upon the examination of printed, or web-based textual documents, and neglect to study the impact of physical design and ability of three-dimensional products to carry the same rhetorical weight as two-dimensional documents. These publications, while limited to two-dimensional studies, speak to the benefit of multi-modal composition as a pedagogical tool for understanding visual rhetoric, and have inspired the digital aspect of this project. It is my belief that as a multi-modal composition, the website can be utilized as a pedagogical resource as it is an interactive and engaging website which directly relies on principles of visual rhetoric to convey its message and additionally discusses visually rhetorical topics.

### 3 THE VALUE OF CRAFTSMANSHIP

In the following sections, common objects which are uncommonly considered to be communicative artifacts are addressed, and include (by order of appearance) woodworked items, artwork, food, textiles, and automotives. These items were chosen for they commonly impact almost every person's daily life, yet are not immediately considered to be rhetorical objects. In addition to existing academic literature related to each section's focus, I have included interview data with individuals who produce or manufacture these items. It was my belief that by speaking directly with people who, as Foss notes, "intervene" in the method of production, the argument for the role of three-dimensional objects could take on another layer of insight which I myself could not provide, or have researched otherwise. Therefore, the ensuing sections include a theoretical history, interview data, a discussion of the *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* of handcrafted items, and (in some cases) a comparative and contrasting look at existing mass-production practices.

#### 3.1 The Study: Primary Data

"The goddess Metis takes her name from this kind of intelligence [the fusion of *teche* (craft) and *metios* (cunning), which denotes 'wisdom, skill, craft' as well as 'counsel, plan, undertaking']" (Atwill, 56).

I will be the first to admit that I have purchased almost everything I own from Target. Growing up, I lived in a suburban area with an abundance of strip-malls, retail stores, supermarkets, and the additional presence of a large shopping mall. If I needed clothes, furniture, accessories, home goods, or anything else that could be filed under "material



possessions”, I went directly to an inexpensive “big-box” retailer. Becoming accustomed to purchasing inexpensive and interim goods directly influenced my attitude about the value of production, and while I’ve always held a reverence for craftspeople and artisans, it was beyond my financial means (or so I thought) to purchase my goods and services from independent businesses. Although I recognized the value of custom furniture, handmade crafts, and boutique clothing, the convenience and financial ease of buying a mass-produced item seemed to outweigh the sentiment of character or importance of a unique item. However, after attending countless craft fairs, trade shows, and art openings, I’ve since become very aware that the money I spend on items can either go to a corporate entity or a person who can then spend that money on being personally sustainable by furthering their independent business. I realize that many people hold this realization as something common, as they have either grown up with the aforementioned reverence for personal production, or have recently become aware of the prevalence of craft and value of personal sustainability. We live in habitation that we create for ourselves. Our domestic aesthetic choices include cutlery, pots and pans, rugs, artwork, furniture, jewelry, neckties, shoes, desks, pillows, candles, curtains, bathroom soap...the list is extensive to the point where it can not adequately be fully addressed even in the context of a thesis. These produced items have a rhetorical value that either consciously or subconsciously impacts the way we feel in our daily, domestic environment, and the way we continue to develop our perception of the worth of goods. These items “speak” to us in a way that impacts our perception of value, and influences our general reverence for the importance or significance of production. The fields of design and architecture have long associated emotion and feeling with aesthetics, and it is this emotion and feeling (*pathos*) that I will

speak to within the overall discussion of the rhetorical value of this project. But unlike primary discussions about “emotion” within traditional academic design publications, where the focus is on projected sales based upon customer reaction to design and packaging, my examination of emotion is combined with of *ethos* and character development of produced items to consider overall rhetorical efficacy.

We tend to feel different when we walk into a beautiful, antiquated building with marble columns and handmade stained-glass windows or custom brass elevator buttons than we do when we walk into a contemporary chain grocery store or retail business. Entire fields of study and industry are built around the analysis and development of visual design and the impact of labels and colors upon a consumer. The visual impact of book jackets and wine bottles are just some of the more obvious displays of how visual rhetoric impacts one’s perception regarding the value of an item. For example, I (and likely the majority of this thesis’s readers) quite often judge a book by its cover.<sup>6</sup>

Websites such as *The Lovely Package*<sup>7</sup> and *The Dieline*<sup>8</sup> are excellent examples of how commerce is propelled by visual rhetoric. These sites, as with most examinations about rhetorical values of products, focus on the exterior packaging and visual *representation* of the product, rather than the quality, character, and functional/logical considerations of the item itself — that is, the taste of the wine, the weld seam of a gas tank, or the durability of a chair. What I aim to explore in this project is not how the product is visually *represented*,

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<sup>6</sup> This is a common practice of course, and not surprising. *Judging a Book by its Cover: Fans, Publishers, Designers, and the Marketing of Fiction* by Nicole Matthews and Nikianna Moody addresses the fact that books are indeed subject to aesthetic criticism based solely on their superficial appearance, as the dust jacket or cover of a book almost always provides visual clues about the content of the book, and speaks to a specific target audience, and demographic.

<sup>7</sup> <http://lovelypackage.com/>

<sup>8</sup> [www.thedieline.com](http://www.thedieline.com)

but how the handcrafted product sells *itself*, based on character value and innate quality. Through implied visual knowledge that the thing one purchases or consumes has been individually made, I suggest that the consumer may purchase items based on aesthetic function or ease of purchase, but that they *value* the method of production more. That is, the visual rhetoric and *ethos* of craftsmanship may be more a compelling emotional anchor and purchasing consideration than mere convenience, cost, or aesthetic packaging. As we will see in later sections, the majority of handmade or small-batch items do not actually employ any type of branding, marketing, or packaging. This is not only because of the cost consideration that must be taken by the craftsman, but because the product is believed to have the ability to stand alone and does not require accompanying packaging.

As the author of this research, I understand how I personally feel about the value of handmade objects, but felt it necessary to research how others felt about the same items to which I have a particular, visceral response. I wanted to see if my evaluation of the worth of individual production was as great as others'. Therefore, I conducted a survey to examine the rhetorical choices others make in their buying habits and perceptions of produced items. The first half of the survey asked respondents about their purchasing habits of either hand-made goods or mass-produced goods. The second half of the survey relied on respondents' visual perception of different types of paired objects (a mass produced item and a handmade item) and gauged respondents' understanding of each object's visual ethos. For this sample, I sent the survey to the entire list of my contacts on Facebook. At the time of delivery, I had 231 contacts, and projected that I would obtain at least 50 responses. My personal contacts ranged in age from 20-48, and were divided by sex fairly evenly, at an estimated 50% male and 50% female ratio. The racial demographics were difficult to gauge

at the time of delivery, though a very rough estimate<sup>9</sup> placed my population sample at 60% Caucasian, 25% African American, 10% Hispanic, and 5% unknown/other. The digital delivery method was decided upon, for as Mary Sue MacNealy notes “computer-delivered surveys arrive faster as email can be sent to anywhere in the world in just a few seconds.... [they] allow the researcher to send the survey, receive replies, and read the data at their own convenience” (150). While not technically “emailed”, the survey was conducted online and was sent as an “event” on Facebook to each of my 241 contacts which notified each contact of the opportunity on their Facebook home page. The survey was live for nineteen days before the results were collected and tabulated by the SurveyGizmo software. Of the 241 invited participants, a total number of 45 respondents participated in the survey, and 42 respondents provided what can be considered “full answers” for the free-response portion of the survey<sup>10</sup>. According to Linda Sax in “Assessing Response Rates and Nonresponse Bias in Web and Paper Surveys”, some individuals may not use the internet primarily on their home computer and may have some level of distrust about third-party applications and security (410). Additionally, Sax notes that it is difficult to provide a standard rate of response, as “the available literature on Web surveys points to widely varying response rates. This is to be expected as access to Internet technology expands and changes. Additionally, response rates are probably more dependant on the population sampled than any other factor” (411). Therefore, it is difficult to accurately gauge why the response rate was so low (18.6%), but informal estimates place the length of the survey, method of delivery, and condition of anonymity as possible factors. It is my guess that the

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<sup>9</sup> Based upon a quick and informal tally of my personal Facebook contact list on April 10, 2010

<sup>10</sup> While the SurveyGizmo software requires respondents to enter valid text into the free-response boxes, 3 respondents either entered a string of random letters, or pressed the space bar which resulted in incomplete data.

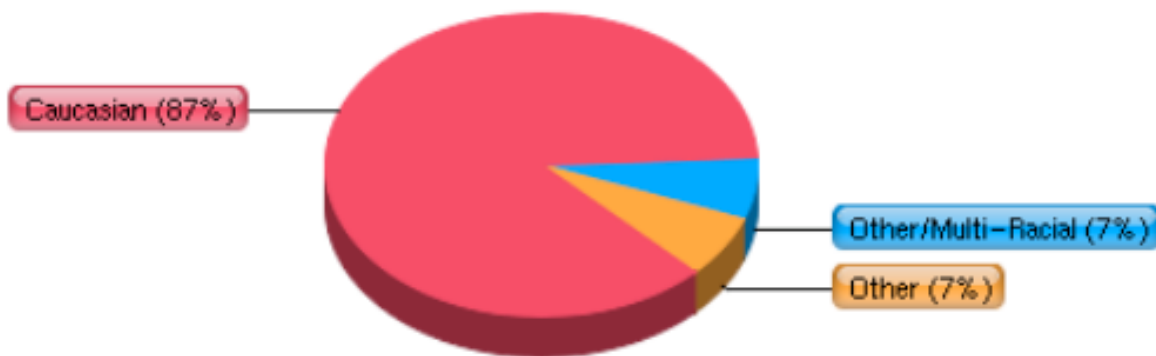
survey may have been too long, and respondents provided incomplete answers due to time restraints. SurveyGizmo collected 48 “abandoned” hits, which are considered to be visits to the site in which no responses were collected, and 18 “partial” responses in which visitors to the site finished some, but not all of the questions. Because the survey was anonymous, respondents perhaps did not feel a particular obligation to respond and because the survey was online, it was delivered in a medium that could be accessed only when Internet access was available. In regard to gender, though about half of my contacts on Facebook are female, and half male, the response rate of the SurveyGizmo survey goes against popular conventions of gender-based response, as Sax notes “men tend to respond to Web surveys at higher rates than do women” (411). However, of the 45 respondents to my given survey, 67% were female and 33% were male. Additionally, respondents had to be over the age of 18, not only for approval purposes, but because the survey population would ideally consist of regular consumers of household items, furniture, and decorative objects. As respondents had to be at least 18 years of age to participate in the survey, 31% were between the ages of 18 and 25, 67% were between the ages of 26 and 40, and 2% were older than 41(see figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1 Respondents by Age**



Regarding racial/ ethnic makeup, 87% were Caucasian, 2% self-selected as multi-racial, 2% were African American, 2% were Asian, and 2% were Hispanic (see figure 3.2), a moderate and notable shift from the projected demographics of the sample population. Though the demographics of the participants were much different than the base population of 241 people to whom the invitations were sent, it is difficult to accurately gauge why exactly there were a larger representative number of Caucasian respondents (87% responded from a 60% pool) and such a small number of every other ethnicity.

**Figure 3.2 Respondents by Ethnicity**

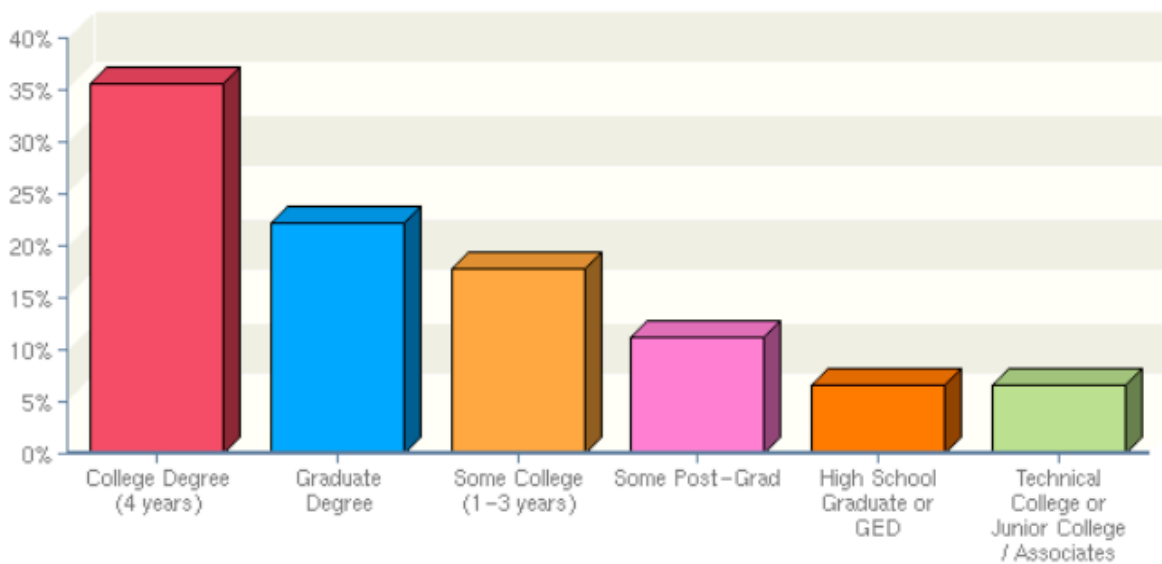


Additional changes in representation occurred in other areas of the survey. The majority of respondents had a graduate or college degree (22% and 35%, respectively), 17% had some college experience (between one and three years), 11% had post-graduate experience, 6% were high school graduates and 6% had been to a technical college (see figure 3.3). This does not reflect the general public, as the average number of individuals who have obtained the following as their highest level of education, as reported by the U.S Census in 2009<sup>11</sup> are

<sup>11</sup> From *The Educational Attainment of the Population 18 Years and Over, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin, 2009* from the United States Census Bureau. <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/education/cps2009.html>.

as follows: graduate degree, 10%; college degree, 18%, high school diploma, 31%.

**Figure 3.3 Respondents by Highest Educational Level**



My sample population has a marginally higher rate of educational attainment, and it should be noted that this may have affected the data provided in subsequent sections. The respondents' fields of work were surprisingly diverse, and only a slim difference existed between occupations ranging from those in the science/technology/programming field, to accounting, arts, and research<sup>12</sup>. The majority (86.2%) of respondents were the primary purchasers for home and consumer goods. The individual data about respondents' perceptions to furniture, textiles, and artwork comprised the data for the first half of the survey and appear in respective sections further into the paper.

The purpose of this introductory section was to understand how respondents felt about attractive or unattractive qualities in regard to handmade or mass-produced goods.

<sup>12</sup> The field of work was fairly irrelevant to the data collection, and was only addressed to note that the spectrum of professions in which respondents are engaged. As previously noted, the survey was sent without any consideration to professional affiliation of livelihood, and it was primarily the consumer perspective that I wished to gauge.

Individual results appear further into the paper, in appropriate sections, and address the levels of interest or disinterest that respondents influenced respondents' perception of value.

For the second half of the survey, respondents were asked to free respond to a number of paired items. The first pair included a mass-produced wardrobe (the IKEA wardrobe mentioned in the introduction (Figure 3.4)) and a second, antique wardrobe (Figure 3.5). Of the 45 survey participants, 42 submitted full answers to the free-response questions, and include the positive (Table 3.1 and Table 3.3) and negative statements (Table 3.2 and Table 3.4). While additional responses were collected regarding perceptions of places and sofas, only the responses to the wardrobes are detailed in this report of the general perception of *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. The full report and all answers may be viewed by visiting [www.amaliakallen.com/vrocsurvey.pdf](http://www.amaliakallen.com/vrocsurvey.pdf).

Overall, responses to the IKEA wardrobe received 1 positive comment regarding associated *ethos*, 7 positive comments regarding *pathos*, and 11 positive comments regarding *logos*. In contrast, the same wardrobe received 13 negative comments about *ethos*, 8 negative comments about *pathos* (practically the same as positive comments), and 10 negative comments about *logos* (again, practically the same as positive comments.) The antique wardrobe received 20 positive comments about *ethos*, 8 positive comments about *pathos*, and 8 comments about *logos*. It also received negative comments about *ethos*, 3 negative comments about *ethos*, and 3 negative comments about *logos*.



Figure 3.4 IKEA Wardrobe



Table 3.1 Positive Free-Responses to the IKEA Wardrobe

	Positive
<b>Ethos</b> (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It looks like it’s from IKEA, which is not unique, per se, though it does have ‘personality’ in that it looks stylish for pressed particle board.”</li> </ul>
<b>Pathos</b> (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It has a nice, sleek look”</li> <li>• “It is simple, modern, ergonomic, and austere”</li> <li>• “It’s stylish – it’s streamlined and simple”</li> <li>• “Modern and simple aesthetic”</li> <li>• “Clean lines, modern spirit, light and airy”</li> <li>• “Sleek and simple design – I feel accomplished after I put this together”</li> <li>• “Looks well made”</li> <li>• “Seems airy and light, simple and discreet without being boring”</li> </ul>
<b>Logos</b> (11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The low quality of this piece is actually convenient, as I would not want to keep it for a long time”</li> <li>• “Simple, low cost, temporary, utilitarian”</li> <li>• “Looks sturdy and functional”</li> <li>• “I would use it for a utilitarian purpose of storing my clothing”</li> <li>• “It could fit a lot of spaces and has versatility”</li> <li>• “I am a practical person with not a lot of money, and IKEA works for me”</li> <li>• “Neutral colors make it easy to decorate with”</li> <li>• “I would consider purchasing it as a temporary storage unit”</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It looks cheap, but functional”</li> <li>• “It seems inexpensive, which is good”</li> <li>• “It would make a good holdover until I found something nicer”</li> </ul>
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**Table 3.2 Negative Free-Responses to the IKEA Wardrobe**

	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Ethos (13)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It is not unique”</li> <li>• “I believe it is designed not to have a personality”</li> <li>• “It does not have much of a background”</li> <li>• “I don’t think it has a lot of character”</li> <li>• “It has about as much personality as my plain white laundry basket”</li> <li>• “It lacks character”</li> <li>• “I wouldn’t say it has character, per se”</li> <li>• “has little creativity or imagination”</li> <li>• “It has no character”</li> <li>• “It does not have any character”</li> <li>• “This is a wardrobe for those who like to play it safe”</li> <li>• “No real personality or character”</li> <li>• “It lacks uniqueness”</li> </ul>
<b>Pathos (8)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It looks cold and institutional”</li> <li>• “It does not evoke any special feelings or sentiments”</li> <li>• “IKEA. Vanilla, Cheap-o. I would not want it in my home because its ugly”</li> <li>• “Cheap piece of crap, and an exploitation of workers and resources”</li> <li>• “I feel uninspired and annoyed”</li> <li>• “I think it is dull and ugly”</li> <li>• “BOOOOOOOOOORRING”</li> <li>• “It will be ugly and annoy me”</li> </ul>
<b>Logos (10)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It looks like it would fall apart after an extended period of use”</li> <li>• “I would pay less for this, because it is not made of real wood / glass and is easily replaceable”</li> <li>• “It seems mass produced and of poor quality”</li> <li>• “Looks cheaply made...wouldn’t survive a move”</li> <li>• “I would use it to store my clothes until something inevitably broke or fell apart”</li> <li>• “It’s pretty simple / cheap and would probably fall apart”</li> <li>• “Looks cheap and disposable”</li> <li>• “Looks cheap and mass produced”</li> <li>• “It looks cheap and generic”</li> <li>• “...but it looks like it would fall apart quickly”</li> </ul>

**Figure 3.5 Antique Wardrobe**



**Table 3.3 Positive Free-Responses to the Antique Wardrobe**

	<b>Positive</b>
<b>Ethos (20)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “This piece certainly has more ‘personality’ than the first piece.</li> <li>• “I would go out of my way to make sure this wardrobe could fit into any new place into which I move in the future”</li> <li>• “It is very beautiful, and looks like it has history. I imagine a woman owning it”</li> <li>• “Somebody put love into making this”</li> <li>• “This seems to have much more history and imagination in it. It has weight – both physical and metaphorical”</li> <li>• “I would be interested in learning the history behind this piece”</li> <li>• “If it could speak, it would probably tell more detailed and intricate recollections than of someone my age”</li> <li>• “What this wardrobe lacks in versatility, it makes up for in character”</li> <li>• “Unique piece seems to require a room to be built around it”</li> <li>• “This wardrobe appears to be pretty solid, having survived decades of use, moves between different houses and possibly antique dealers, and very likely multiple owners.”</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Handmade and meaningful”</li> <li>• “Most likely it was handmade, and produced in limited quantities. The piece looks unique, and has character and detail in the carving and in the drawer pulls.”</li> <li>• “My age may be apparent, but so is my style. I’ve got good clean lines, and was built to withstand anything you can dish out...there’s a reason the classics never go out of style. The character is evident for me in this piece.”</li> <li>• “The character and detail reflect craftsmanship. It’s lived a full life – possibly in France.”</li> <li>• “It seems more solid [than the IKEA wardrobe] and has a ‘history’ for lack of a better term.”</li> <li>• “It has more character and history [than the IKEA wardrobe]</li> <li>• “It was probably hand carved and crafted by an artisan”</li> <li>• “It has so much more personality than the other piece has”</li> <li>• “This wardrobe looks like it has a history”</li> <li>• “This wardrobe inspires a fantasy and mythology that the [IKEA piece] does not.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pathos</b> <b>(8)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The details on the door make this a very sentimental piece with lots of old world charm”</li> <li>• “This feels warmer”</li> <li>• “It looks cooler, homier. I’d prefer this one, more old school vibe”</li> <li>• Old, full of character, unique, beautiful’</li> <li>• “I would be more likely to take care of this wardrobe because it looks so well crafted and has lasted for so long”</li> <li>• “It looks special to me – I would use it to store beautiful linens”</li> <li>• “I like this wardrobe – it has interesting details”</li> <li>• “It has a unique design that appeals to my taste and would inspire me to be more creative.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Logos</b> <b>(8)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Looks older, but in great condition. Looks detailed, and very functional. The construction looks sturdy.”</li> <li>• “My gut feeling is that it is well made”</li> <li>• “It looks durable”</li> <li>• “It looks like it was made from quality materials”</li> <li>• “It seems traditional and heavy”</li> <li>• “I would pay more for this because it seems well constructed”</li> <li>• “Looks very well constructed [even though it’s a terrible picture]”</li> <li>• “This wardrobe will, without any uncertainty, last much longer than the ones above because it is made to last.”</li> </ul>

**Table 3.4 Negative Free-Responses to the Antique Wardrobe**

	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Ethos</b> <b>(0)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>
<b>Pathos</b> <b>(3)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I am not attracted to the style at all – it doesn’t fit my personal style”</li> <li>• “It seems interesting, but I’d probably prefer whichever one was cheapest. I don’t know much about furniture, and can’t tell the difference between something that’s cheap and secondhand and something that’s expensive because it’s antique.”</li> <li>• “I am not particularly a fan of this style overall”</li> </ul>
<b>Logos</b> <b>(3)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Unless it had some sort of historical significant, I would spend more money to purchase the newer wardrobe”</li> <li>• “It has historical details, but I would not use it in my home unless it was given to me by a relative or had a family story of it being used for years.”</li> <li>• “I would not purchase this piece, as it feels old, heavy and large”</li> </ul>

Recalling Foss’s assertion that for an object to be visual rhetoric, it must “communicate with the audience”, there is no doubt after reading the numerous free responses to images of handcrafted and mass produced items that these inanimate pieces of wood, glass, and plastic have served as a rhetorical device. Each of the persuasive appeals of classic rhetoric is evident in all of the response to pieces included in the visual survey<sup>13</sup>. The *logos* of the wardrobes was addressed by respondents who noted their basic function as places to store clothes, books, linens, and other miscellaneous items. Comments ranged from the functionality of the piece, to the lack thereof. *Ethos* is present in the history that respondents ascribed to each piece, whether it is basic or imaginatively detailed. *Pathos* is achieved and documented by the number of descriptors used to identify how the piece

<sup>13</sup> For a full view of the entire survey and all responses, please visit [www.amaliakallen.com/vrocsurvey.pdf](http://www.amaliakallen.com/vrocsurvey.pdf)

made the respondent *feel*. It is significant to the range of feelings that a piece of furniture can extract from someone simply through its visual appearance, from ambivalence, to adoration, to annoyance.

### 3.2 Furniture and Woodwork: Labor as a Persuasive Appeal

"...*People* magazine dubbed him 'The Hemingway of Hardwood'. But his business card always said "woodworker". 'I like the word,' he once said, his eyes brightening behind large, owl-eyed glass frames. 'It's an honest word.'" *New York Times* obituary for Sam Maloof, renowned designer and woodworker.<sup>14</sup>

It is outside of the discipline of rhetoric and composition, and within design studies, that the majority of texts regarding three-dimensional objects and their perceived character and emotive properties exist. In her 2008 article about the depiction of craftsman at the Qusayr 'Amra complex in Aman, Jordan, Hana Taragan examines the visual rhetoric of the wall paintings of builders and workers, and the curious portrayal of the Caliph<sup>15</sup> as a worker and laborer. This examination is pertinent to the overall discussion of ethos associated with craftsmanship and labor, as the position of the ruler in the wall paintings "convey the message that the Caliph or prince is a "glorious builder" surrounded by an aura of prestige" (Taragan, 142). While interesting, and one of the few articles specifically focusing on a relationship between craftsmanship and visual rhetoric (specifically the development of *ethos* by the value of visual representation), Taragan's scholarship primarily concerns the anthropological implications of the role of the craftsman/builder and associated value and *ethos*, and does not fill the gap in rhetorical literature about the

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<sup>14</sup> Grimes, William. "Sam Maloof, Furniture Craftsman, Dies at 93." *The New York Times* 27 May 2009.  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/27/arts/design/27maloof.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=sam%20maloof&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/27/arts/design/27maloof.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=sam%20maloof&st=cse)

<sup>15</sup> A "successor of Muhammed as temporal and spiritual head of Islam – used as a title." "caliph." Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2010.  
 Merriam-Webster Online. 9 April 2010 <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/caliph>>

visual rhetoric and *ethos* of produced end-products. To date, there have been numerous articles published associating the value of objects within the scope of marketability or design aesthetics within the field of design (specifically industrial design), but there is limited discussion specifically addressing the rhetorical appeal of *ethos* and the implications for this consideration to be utilized in the field of rhetoric and composition. Even within the field of industrial design, very few publications have extended beyond the focus of aesthetic or marketable value to include emotional/character considerations of three-dimensional objects. Research examining the role of the craftsperson tends to appear in design journals and converges most heavily on the role of the craftsperson from a historical perspective. The craftsman and process of craftsmanship is revered, but still, publications tend to focus not on the value of the final product, but the way in which the craftsman can pass his antiquated knowledge to a new generation of designers in the form of observations, and studies (Wood et. al 2009, 68). Desmet does illustrate how consumers can have strong reactions to commercial items' emotional / aesthetic impact, though the article utilize the example of a mass-produced item and not a unique, hand-made object, in his 2007 article "Emotional Design: Application of a Research-Based Design Application". In the referenced study, a number of mass-produced telephone models were placed before a panel, and judged based on their "product character". The responses were meant to gauge the "wow appeal" of the item, and participants were asked to note their emotional response to the phones, including the feeling of desire, fascination, pleasant surprise, satisfaction, amusement, boredom, contempt, dissatisfaction, disgust, and unpleasant surprise. While focusing on product "character", this examination tends to actually focus on how the item achieves *pathos* and not a critical examination of the true *ethos* of the items. Additionally,



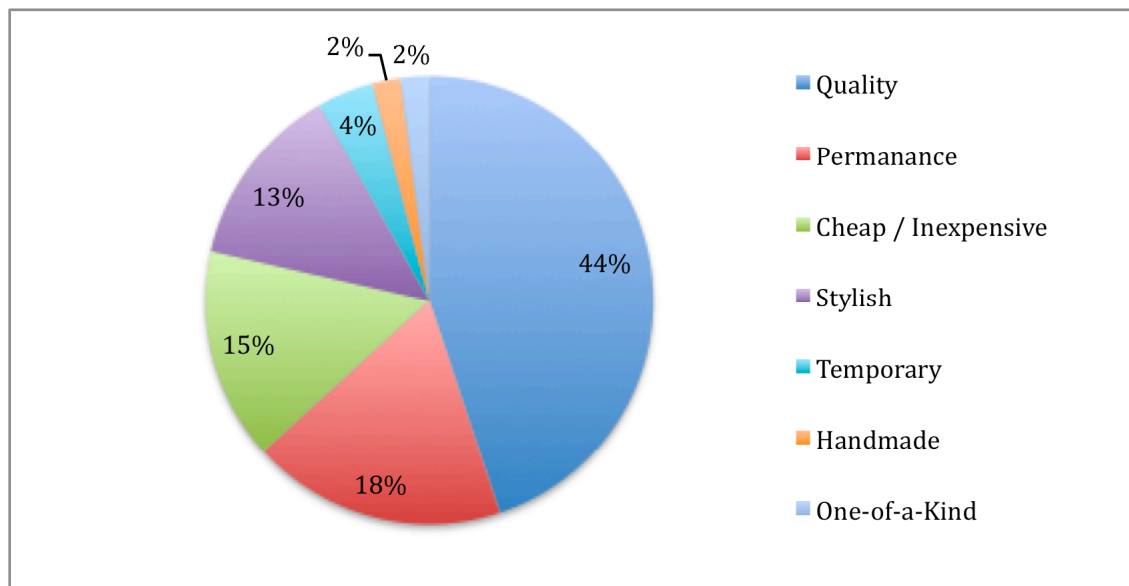
the article focuses on mass-produced industrial design and its impact on marketability, and it is illustrative in the general lack of academic literature regarding the emotional value of handmade items as rhetorical devices.

Few exceptions to this trend of design publications focusing on the marketability of design exist, even in the context of industrial design, such as Demirbilek's 2003 article about the "semantics" of product design or Lacey's 2009 case study regarding the emotive quality of hand-made ceramics. Lacey's article, while existing within the discipline of industrial design, is currently one of the few academic publications that aligns near to the examination of the visual rhetoric of craftsmanship that this project seeks to discuss. Lacey draws on research conducted upon a series of users who were asked to draw a design of their favorite mug and then respond as to why they felt a certain way about the object. Lacey groups the responses into visceral, behavioral, and reflective categories, but then focuses more on the cognitive processes behind user responses, and does not venture into exploring the *ethos* of the objects, based upon derivation. It is this article that inspired my primary research into the *ethos* of objects based upon perception of origin, and I created an online poll to measure respondents' typical purchasing habits. It was interesting to see that handmade or unique items were not heavily valued within furniture production, though it was not surprising that the primary value of an item of furniture was in its quality. Generally, woodworked items have a direct correlation between quality and handmade production. As seen from the aforementioned responses about furniture, it is this *ethos* of production that this section seeks to address.

For furniture, respondents generally noted that they *primarily* source pieces of furniture based upon quality (44%), and then permanence (18%). A lower number were

attracted to cheap items (15%), stylish items (13%), temporary items (4%), and then handmade (2%) or one-of-a-kind (2%) (see figure 3.6).

**Figure 3.6 Primary Purchasing Factors - Furniture**



To gain further primary insight into the value of handmade items and woodworking, I interviewed Neil Turner, a luthier<sup>16</sup> based out of Marietta, Georgia. While not furniture, the process of creating an instrument from wood relies upon the same (if not additional) tools and precise skill as does the process of creating larger pieces of furniture. Even within instrumentation, there is the possibility of purchasing a cheaply made and mass-produced piece, or the elective of buying a custom instrument with a greater *ethos* and character. Again, the argument that there is a greater inherent *ethos* within the visual representation of a handmade item is presented, and I was interested in speaking with Turner to understand why he elects to pursue a career in woodworking, though he has had a professional career in architecture and design. Turner spent five years pursuing and

<sup>16</sup> "luthier." *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. 2010. Merriam-Webster Online. 30 June 2010 <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/luthier>>

earning his degree in architecture and for years afterward, worked professionally as an architect to design a number of buildings, mainly commercial retail buildings. Over time, the value of that work ceased to speak to him, and he turned his burgeoning interest in music and banjo playing into a career. He began his own woodworking shop and currently runs his own business, Buzzard Mountain Instruments, from his home. Neil's banjos begin at \$1,200 and increase in price depending on materials and customer specifications. He notes that a custom banjo usually ranges closer to \$2,000. I mentioned to Turner the interesting discrepancy about the data pointing to people's disinterest in buying a "handmade" piece of furniture, but their apparent reverence for the handmade wardrobe as opposed to the IKEA wardrobe, and asked him what he thought about the generally perceived *ethos* of craftsmanship and production. Turner responded,

I think that since Henry Ford, people aren't as tied to an end product. It's a factory mentality ; you go in and you do one piece of a product. I think that lends itself to that kind of attitude that the end product is not as important, or it's not as valued as it really should be. When it comes down to it, people vote with their pocketbook. If people decided to stop shopping at [big-box retailers] and started shopping at Mom-and-Pops, we'd have a different society going on. When it comes to money, people have to spend money on things they think are important, and some things aren't as important to some people as others. Fortunately, in the music world, people are willing to spend more on an instrument, because it's a subset of the market, and people do realize that they're getting something that is custom built for them. It's hand built, and they do value that.

Recalling Foss's notation that for an item to be considered worthy of visual rhetorical considerations, it must require "human intervention", I argue that there is far more human intervention in the process of handcrafting several pieces of wood into a perfectly rounded, aesthetic instrument with a full tone than there is in the manufacturing process of the same instrument, where machine-carved and manufactured pieces are utilized. The process of handcrafted woodwork is not typically swift, easy, or hasty. For a woodworker like Turner, the process of assembling a functional and quality piece is an entirely hand-worked process and few (if any) shortcuts can be taken. Like the previously referenced wardrobes to which survey respondents' discussed, the final product of woodworked production has more character, personality, and history that manufactured items (from IKEA wardrobes to factory-made banjos) simply do not possess. In this latter form of production, the *ethos* is lost in the sense that the parts utilized to build the whole tend to be inferior, the production process is automated, and the human element of manipulation is obscure. Turner notes that if he had everything on site (which is rare), he would have to do some "glue-ups, wait for the glue to dry, build neckpieces, work on the pots (the round part), the tone-ring, assemble the pieces, stain and finish the wood, wind the strings, and so on. Usually I tell people it'll be three to four months. I'm just a one man shop, so I have to do it all."

Turner's biggest mass-production competitors aren't truly competitors at all, because they're in a remarkably different price range, are cheaply built, and don't have the same tone as handmade instruments. Turner says, "there is an intrinsic value [within handmade instruments] as opposed to a handmade item." And as instrumentation is a craft that requires some level of necessary hands-on engagement, Turner notes that the "factories" that produce cheap banjos typically have at most only fifteen to twenty

employees. Therefore, the mass-production of instruments isn't as industrialized as perhaps food, or textiles, but still certainly lacks the direct level of human intervention considered of visually rhetorical objects.

For Turner, his production of open-backed banjos music in North Georgia automatically gives his craftsmanship greater worth because it carries an occasional and geographical value based off of a valued history. The historical emergency of the banjo lies in southeastern roots<sup>17</sup>, and the inherent value of a banjo made in the American southeast region is greater than a banjo made elsewhere, like California, Korea, or England where many of the banjo "factories" are located. Thus, the rhetorical canon of invention comes into play as Turner speaks to the *topoi* of antecedent and consequence, or cause and effect. Not only is the *ethos* of his instruments greater due to their handmade nature, but the fact that they carry "genuine roots" provides an additional character value to his wares. Turner notes that the banjo is inherently an American instrument, and cites the "je ne sais quois" that people prefer about a banjo from America, particularly the south, or Appalachian region; the cause of historical relevance and the proximity to a geographical area of note gives Turner's banjos a greater *ethos* through their *arête*, or excellence. It is more wholly "a banjo" than a banjo made overseas, or in other American regions. Additionally, Turner prefers to use American woods and sustainable woods. The attention not only to the preservation of a tradition of craft, but also the concern for the longevity and well-being of banjo-making is a prime example of the *arête* and *eunoia* of rhetorical ethical appeal. The banjo has "excellence" of character, being constructed out of a material that is not only

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<sup>17</sup> In America, at least. Turner notes that banjos came from slaves, who fashioned the instrument from a similar African instruments based off of gourds. The sound, shape, and general popularity of the banjo evolved over time, to the point where we have our current 4 or 5 string banjo.

regional, but also sustainable, and historically accurate. The benevolence of the piece is within the attention to its owner's pride of ownership and concern for the value and perceived goodwill of the item.

Thus, as a handcrafted item, the handcrafted banjo has a relative symbolism and acts as a rhetorical device. While perhaps not as obvious as a communicative symbol as typography, or a photograph, the banjo serves as a statement about the value of labor and historical preservation and accuracy. As with any woodworked item, including furniture, the rhetorical value of craftsmanship is nuanced in the detail, individual time, and production of the piece.

### 3.3 Art:

“...we have seen design grow from a *trade activity* to a *segmented profession* to a *field for technical research* and to what should now be recognized as a *new liberal art of technological culture*” (Buchanan, 1992).

Research in relation to the examination of visual rhetoric and two-dimensional mediums, such as photography, has been widely published though these articles tend to focus primarily upon the communicative purpose and obvious “message” of media, rather than the element of human intervention or development of relative symbolism via *ethos*. Though even this visual approach has its purists who challenge the notion of visual design as a rhetorical device such as Fleming’s “Can Pictures be Arguments?” in which the author posits that in order for argumentation to occur, there must be mutual discourse, in which there is a response to a statement. However, McComiskey argues that a shift in rhetorical theory has occurred from being primarily textual to primarily pictorial in his publication about the “Visual Rhetoric of New Public Discourse”. He focus on illustrative examples of how we utilize pictorial representations in place of text for a variety of instruction manuals and informational publications, such as airplane emergency procedures (187) and how the use of image has largely overtaken text as a rhetorical medium<sup>18</sup>. In her article examining the role of rhetoric within fine arts (2004) Helmers explores the way in which we can utilize rhetorical principles (specifically, the persuasive appeals) of fine arts, which include “objects of shape, form, and material...[encompassing] sculpture, paintings, pottery, textile

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<sup>18</sup> Of course, McComiskey does acknowledge that while visual rhetoric plays an increasingly larger role in rhetorical studies, oral tradition is far from being obsolete, and his article is simply a call for advancement for the work of visual rhetorical studies (191).

design, and prints" (63), and fortunately includes the three-dimensional mediums of textiles, pottery, and sculpture into her considerations. Handa (2004) and Hairman (2007) however, focus on the visual rhetoric of contemporary art, digital media, and speech, a commonly observed rhetorical approach toward two-dimensional artwork and visual design. Finnegan also addresses traditional "rhetorical negotiating of images in archives" (117) and focuses primarily upon the rhetorical qualities of archival photographs and their associated value. Yoos also explores the two-dimensional, in a study questioning, "how do we use visual schemata, graphs, models, and pictures to lie or deceive? And how do pictorial representations and visual schemata function in communication and rhetoric such that they can lie and deceive" (107). While valid, it is not simply 2-D "visual schemata" that can or should be considered to have rhetorical associations of intended persuasive methods of deception. Harrison associates visual rhetoric with "visual social semiotics" (47) to explain how images create meaning. She focuses again on still images including photographs and illustrations. Even more articles focus on the two-dimensional aspect of visual rhetoric and pictorial representation and include research related to film studies, and advertising / marketing design and cognitive processing of visual images as text (Messaris, 1997; Bartholomae, 2003; Tremonte, 1995). In Scott's 1994 article "Images in Advertising", she believes that rhetoric may be utilized within advertising studies, but that they must adhere to "the invention, the arrangement, and the delivery of argument" (265).

Few of these articles touch upon the ethos of the artistic product in regard to its production and primarily focus again on the semiotic value of symbols or arrangement. Within the field of rhetoric and composition, Grigar extends beyond conventional textual analyses by exploring "physical acts and actions intended to make a point" and focuses on



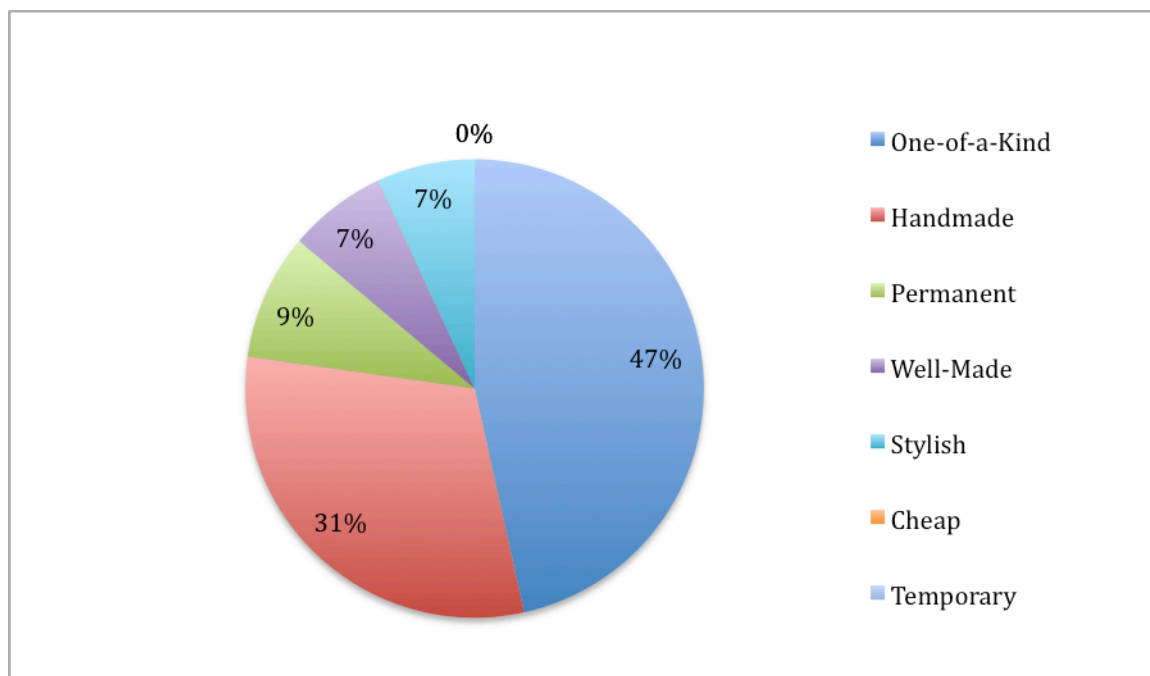
the kineticism of new media works by female artists within the field of rhetoric and composition. In her “Kineticism, Rhetoric, and New Media Artists” Grigar states “although it is common for rhetoricians to analyze arguments found in oral and written texts, scant attention has been paid to physical acts and actions also intended to make a point” (105). In this context, Grigar speaks to the relationship between the direct relationship between the artist and their art (and in this case, the art is the artists’ movement) and connects, while focusing on a different delivery method, artwork with *ethos*.

Within visual arts, there is a wide spectrum of reverence for the artwork or the artist. As with most crafts or trades, items may be valued at a greater amount simply based on the good reputation or fame of the artist. The artwork may be directly proportionate to the *ethos* or good reputation of the artist. It is within the realm of ornamental design, decorative arts, furniture, and visual art, that one finds that the referenced *ethos* may over-ride the *logos* or *pathos* of the piece.

In the survey, referenced earlier, 69% of respondents noted that they “strongly agreed” with the statement that handmade artwork is distinguishable from the look of mass produced items. Another 22% noted that they “agreed”, and 2% were neutral on the matter. Nobody disagreed, though 4% “strongly disagreed”, and 2% of respondents felt that it was not applicable to them. In another question, 98% responded that they would pay extra on a piece of artwork that was one-of-a-kind, whereas 2% responded that they would not. It is notable to look at the number of respondents who largely agreed in some way that the look of handmade artwork was apparent in contrast to mass-produced art and the accompanying figures about what individuals looked for when purchasing a piece of artwork for themselves. The majority of respondents spoke to the *ethos* or character of the

artwork as the primary purchasing factor, and a very low number spoke to the aesthetic value, or emotional value obtained by visual *pathos* as being an important factor when considering artwork. Forty-seven percent selected “one-of-a-kind”, 31% selected “handmade”, 9% selected “permanent”, and a surprisingly low number of people selected well-made (7%) or stylish (7%) (see figure 3.7). Not one respondent selected “cheap”, or “temporary”.

**Figure 3.7 Primary Purchasing Factors – Artwork**



Additionally, the survey was formatted so that respondents could only pick the primary adjective that they thought most closely aligned with their influence regarding the purchase of artwork. They did not have the option for a free-response, and picking one of these aforementioned choices was mandatory. Therefore, respondents may have picked a choice that most closely aligned with their provided choices, but there may have been other considerations that are not represented in this paper. When concerned with artwork, it seems as though the reigning factor when it comes to purchasing is the fact that the piece

has *ethos*. The fact that something is one-of-a-kind, and then handmade, takes precedence over the aesthetic appeal. Artwork, even if it is not to a person's taste, may be sought by collectors based purely on the fact that it is rare, unique, or valuable. Collectors of fine art have been known to have artwork in storage, simply to hold onto the item and retain its value. In this case, the *logos* is lost, as the piece is not being displayed as a visual object. It can be argued that the *pathos* is also lost, for one cannot experience "emotion" without physically viewing the piece. However, the term "emotion" is broad, and may encompass the sentiment of jealousy, or possessiveness that the piece inspires when hidden from public view.

But it is uncommon to encounter a rare art collector or dealer and much more common to experience a gallery of new works by relatively unknown artists. Here, still, the *logos* and *ethos* of the pieces are highlighted, whereas the *pathos* is almost necessarily put aside. To further understand why a primarily visual medium would have greater apparent character value than emotional value, I interviewed Atlanta-based artist Sam Parker about his thoughts regarding the *ethos* of artwork, as traditionally observed as a communicative and aesthetic device. Parker is a well-known artist and tattooer in Atlanta, and he recently earned an MFA from Georgia State University, where he also instructed. Parker has been interviewed by a number of publications regarding his artwork, and his articulate and thoughtful discussions appear in local papers, such as *Creative Loafing*. Parker approaches the production of artwork not only from an aesthetic standpoint, but from a theoretical perspective, and had unique insights into how the *ethos* of visual artwork (which I had assumed would actually have a primarily emotional draw, or emphasis on *pathos*) is represented. Parker stated that the *ethos* of a piece may often override the *logos* or *pathos*

of a piece, simply because the artist's reputation may drive the monetary value of the piece. He referenced Thomas Kinkaid, an artist well known for his depictions of pastoral and idyllic themes and use of light and pastels. Kinkaid's works are sold at a number of galleries throughout every U.S. state, as well as some international locations<sup>19</sup>. In order to supply to such a large number of outlets, Kinkaid does not actually paint each piece himself. Instead, prints are made of Kinkaid's original works and then texturized by hand with a clear gloss, to give the appearance of a hand-painted work of art. The practice is well documented and hardly obscured from public knowledge, yet the pieces are very popular and have a high retail value<sup>20</sup>. It is Kinkaid's name, rather than the production, or aesthetic appeal of the piece that primarily drives sales. Yet Kinkaid's production practice obviously recognizes the additional value of hand-made production, else the consideration for adding a layer of clear gloss on a print to give it a deceptively handmade appearance would likely not have been adopted. For Parker, this production method goes against the grain of what he considers to be "artwork". Parker agreed human intervention is what gives artwork the value of *ethos*<sup>21</sup>, and Parker's approach to artwork and value is that of time, consideration, and original conception. He brought a sketchbook to our interview as an example of his process of handmade production, which he of course made himself. The binding of the book is a hard, protective cover, wrapped with images from old books and magazines. Inside, Parker's original artwork is displayed next to the repurposed binding. He has stacks of

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<sup>19</sup> There are seven galleries in Georgia alone that sell Kinkaid pieces, and several dozen international locations throughout the U.K, Russia, Mexico, Malaysia, Ireland, and Canada.

<sup>20</sup> On Kinkaid's website, while prices vary, an 18"x24" print costs between \$200-\$800.

<sup>21</sup> This is not to suggest that prints, or replicated artwork such as photographs are in any way less value than paintings, illustrations, or sculptures. These mediums employ the same amount of thought, skill, and work as all other mediums. When referencing Kinkaid's prints, it is the deliberate illusion of craftsmanship and handmade production that lacks *ethos*.

store-bought and bound paper, notepads, and sketchbooks in his studio, but prefers to work within a medium that already has some sort of hand-made touch to it. I asked Parker if he feels more or less inspired when he draws in a hand-made sketchbook, and he replied that if he makes a mistake, he is less apt to start over, or rip out the page. As a leaf of paper within a hand-bound book, he notes that the sketches feel like a part of a project already, rather than a stand-alone element meant for later display later. The character of the hand-bound sketchbook is such that even without being completed, it has an *arête* and *phronesis* that gives a character and representation of value based upon its artisan conception. Parker has produced several of these books, and is considering a show of his collective works in the future, for through handmade production of the binding, the one-of-a-kind books are artwork in and of themselves. Rather than separating the internal drawings for display in a frame or mat as he would with a store-bought sketchbook, the character lies in the entire compendium of work and through its handmade conception takes on a character value not readily seen in traditional store-bought sketchbooks.

Regarding the *ethos* of his pieces as stand-alone works, Parker believes that it is difficult to divorce the emotional considerations of a piece of artwork with the artist's *ethos*. He notes that with many art shows, only a preview of one or two images is shown in marketing materials, and it is primarily the artist's name that encourages attendance at shows. Of course, rarely is the piece seen before its unveiling, so the interest in the piece is necessarily driven by the artist's established character and reputation, which reflects upon his or her pieces. I addressed the interesting figures from the online survey that note that most respondents valued hand-made or one-of-a-kind artwork as opposed to something that was necessarily "stylish", and asked him what he thought about these figures from a

rhetorical standpoint, specifically if he thought that the *ethos* of the hand-made piece of art truly did override the aesthetic value of a piece. Artwork is inherently meant to be visualized, so if it was not purchased to have a specific aesthetic value, then why was “style” so lowly valued amongst survey participants? Parker noted that it was difficult to generalize about artwork, as each existing piece of artwork is so fundamentally different than every other<sup>22</sup>. But referencing back to Thomas Kinkaid, he said:

it’s his name. The artwork, as it is...is shit, but a lot of people seem to like it, either because that’s their taste...but I think it’s the name. People like feeling as though they own something important, and the importance of those [Kinkaid] pieces aren’t reflected in their aesthetic quality. It’s reflected in the fact that it’s sold in a “gallery”, which are really just retail stores, but that gives an additional illusion of quality, and character. At art shows, local art shows, you’ll find that people tend to buy things that they like, and they like them because they have quality and character. A real person drew it, or painted it, or sculpted it, and that’s important. It might not be the most well done thing, or have the greatest color combination, but it’s unique, and that seems to be most appealing.

Artwork as a communicative device has long been considered in practically every academic field, including (but certainly not limited to) communications, sociology, anthropology, art and design, philosophy, and as seen with Grigar’s examination of the rhetoric of kinetic movement, within rhetoric and composition as well. However, the *ethos*

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<sup>22</sup> This is perhaps why so few articles have discussed the rhetorical implications of artwork, as it is difficult to focus on many styles, themes, and communicative purposes of artwork, after first attempting to identify what construes as “artwork” in the first place.

of production within artwork has been largely unexplored, perhaps because visual arts have long been considered to be primarily a political or emotionally driven communicative device and the development of the work has been associated with the artist, and not their product.

### 3.4 Food, and the *Ethos* of Visual Transparency

“Salamis stay in butcher paper so they can breathe - you open it up, and its twisted, and knotted, and it's “meat art”, and people really appreciate that. We've been trained that if something *doesn't* look the same, then it's wrong. And we're re-educating people about something that they should know...things that their grandparents should have taught them about”. Rusty Bowers, speaking about the visual *ethos* of handmade food.

Academic publications regarding the relationship between food and rhetorical studies are understandably limited. Until recently<sup>23</sup>, the purpose of eating was more a means to an end — cooking served to satiate hunger and obtain nutrients at a low cost, in contrast to the contemporary popularization of interest with the origin and sustainability of food sources and production methods. The “character” emotional appeal of food has become a major interest over within the past several years. With the advent of food oriented television networks, a massive cookbook industry, celebrity chefs, international gastronomic tourism, “agritourism”,<sup>24</sup> and a renewed interest in food production and organic food consumption, we are more informed and interested in the production and presentation of our food choices than we have been in years, if not in our entire history (Ketchum, 20). It is only recently, due to globalization and the possibility of losing cultural value and tradition of preparation, that most issues has been raised regarding the origin,

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<sup>23</sup> This will be discussed shortly, but generally, the “artistic” or “philosophical” value of food as an academic point of examination is a relatively new concept. In the early 1980's, the Slow Food movement, a slow push for organics, and the introduction and gradual acceptance of international and foreign foods beyond the usual fare of Chinese take-out became noteworthy to those studying the communicative relevance of food (though largely from a marketing standpoint).

<sup>24</sup> “Agricultural tourism is a commercial enterprise at a working farm, ranch or agricultural plant conducted for the enjoyment or education of visitors, and that generates supplemental income for the owner.” *Agritourism: UC Small Farm Program*. <http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/agritourism/>.



production, treatment, packaging, or distribution of foods<sup>25</sup>. The *ethos* of food, based not only on how it is presented, but where it comes from, is critically examined in a growing number of movies, books, and articles. Academically, Murcott speaks to the different realms in which food may take sociological meaning in her 1982 symposium, and cites that “foods themselves can be seen to convey a range of cultural meanings; the [manner in which we eat, table manners, and presentation] communicate information in terms not only of occasion, but also social status, ethnicity, and wealth” (203). This sociological approach is rare, but still most common within existing academic literature addressing the rhetorical value of food. Articles addressing the visual rhetoric of food packing exist as relayed by McQuarrie and Mick in which the *text-interpretive* perspective of food packaging “draws on semiotic, rhetorical, and literary theories to provide a systematic and nuanced analysis of the individual elements that make up the ad” (38). Kniazeva’s “Packaging as Vehicle for Mythologizing the Brand” hardly needs further explanation beyond its title, and Kniazeva critically examines the role of marketing (sometimes deceptive marketing) to sell products under the guise of an idealistic agrarian mythos. In doing the research for this chapter, I found that it was incredibly easy to follow a series of tangential ideas about the relationship between rhetoric and food, but for the purposes of this paper, we will consider

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<sup>25</sup> Aside from the occasional public health scare. Upton Sinclair’s 1906 novel “The Jungle” portrayed the meatpacking industry in a very negative light, which led to a consumer panic. Sinclair himself wryly noted that the impact on his book had less of an impact on the public’s moral consciousness about the treatment of laborers, and instead drastically reduced meat consumption over the next several years. “I aimed at the public’s heart, and by accident hit it in the stomach” (Smith, 51). Later in Smith’s article, he notes, “the abattoir itself has been shifted away from the city centres of a populace increasingly shielded from the sight and sound of violence committed in their name” (51). We have been, perhaps, less aware or concerned about our food until recently, because it has been largely moved toward isolated regions of the county, and then shipped to us for consumption in supermarkets.

those elements of *ethos* and *pathos* which make artisanal food production (and conversely, mass-production) noteworthy and relevant within rhetorical and composition studies.

When I was in middle school, I took my first year of French. We learned basic greetings, numbers, colors, and the words “*boulangerie*”, “*charcuterie*”, and “*patisserie*”. Respectively, they mean shops that sell bread, prepared meats, and pastries. I recall being mildly surprised by the fact that there were specific terms devoted to these specific retailers, as my family typically made one weekly stop to Mars, the local supermarket, and bought everything in one place. You don’t often find a “butcher” around town. This type of ethical and emotional appeal has been lost in our contemporary culture. Bakeries typically sell bread, cupcakes, cakes, coffee, sandwiches, and a variety of other fares. American businesses are not typically able to offer a single artisanal good such as cured meats, or freshly baked breads, unless accompanied by a number of other retail items. Of course, there is a deli and bakery section in the supermarket, and independent delis and bakeries exist around town, but the simple fact that we were learning terms for these stand-alone businesses seemed remarkable. Why can’t we (or, *don’t we*) support a stand-alone butcher? Is it a convenience factor? Is it a cultural factor? Prior to the 1920’s, butchers and bakers were commonplace in American cities – so what changed? Most likely, price, convenience, and our developed perspectives about the value of food affect our response to the worth of artisanal production. The visual rhetoric surrounding mass production, marketing, and availability of food shifted so dramatically over the course of just a few decades, that it irrecoverably changed the way we temporarily value food, and artisanal production.

Mark Bittman noted at his speech at TedTalks in 2007, “in 1900, everyone was a locavore. Shipping food all over the place was a ridiculous notion. Every family had a cook,

usually a mom, and those moms bought and prepared food. It was like your romantic vision of Europe.” The *pathos* of the at-home-cook was not as prevalent as now, for the act of cooking from basic ingredients was commonplace, and a daily occurrence. But Bittman, speaking to a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience, relies upon the visual aspect of a “romantic vision”, and the allusion to traditional customs harkening back to a European system of production.

Bittman continues, and notes:

there was no snack food, and until the 1920’s, until Clarence Birdseye<sup>26</sup> came along, there was no frozen food. There were no restaurant chains. There were neighborhood restaurants, run by local people — none of them would think to open *another* one. Back in those days, there was *no philosophy of food*. You just *ate*. There was no marketing; there were no national brands. Hardly anything contained an ingredient, because it *was* an ingredient. Eventually, [states like] California produced too much food to ship fresh. So it became critical to market canned and frozen foods. Thus arrived... convenience. It was sold to proto-feminist housewives as a way to cut down on housework. There were fewer meals with home cooked breads, desserts, and soups, because all of them could be bought at any store. Not that they were any *good*, but they were there.

Indeed, food became industrialized, and lost its unique flavors and intrigue in almost every food group. Food became an instantly accessible commodity, and the method of production

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<sup>26</sup> Clarence Birdseye, working as a naturalist for the U.S Government in the Arctic, observed firsthand how fish froze so quickly in sub-zero temperatures that their cellular structure and taste were not compromised when thawed later. Birdseye invented and patented a flash-freezing procedure, which paved the way for the expansion and popularization of frozen foods. <http://web.mit.edu/invent/iow/birdseye.html>

shifted from a skilled person to a series of machines and refrigerators, and the role of the artisanal food producer was largely lost. Then, in the late 1970's, Steve Sullivan of Chez Panisse began experimenting with traditional French breads and influenced a resurgence in artisanal bread production in America. Sullivan had intended to study rhetoric at the University of California Berkley, but followed a career in culinary arts instead, according to Saekel's article "Bread Revolution". Prior to this, bread was "mass produced [and] packaged bread ruled the roost. Americans used bread for sopping up gravy, and as a wrapper for equally mass-produced lunch meats", according to Sullivan (Saekel). By the early 1980's, Sullivan's bakery, Acme Bread Company, had gained worldwide attention and kick-started a national revitalization for artisanal bread production. Sullivan's breads carried the same ethical *arête* mentioned earlier; the styles and names were reflective of "old world" styles of baking, and the "moral character" of the bread was evidenced by the atypical characteristics of what had come to pass as "bread" for over two decades; the flavors, textures, and appearance of the imperfect, crusty breads were not only an element of the rational purpose of bread (consumption), but also served as a semiotic symbol of an abandoned art. Furthermore, the popularization of something so innocuous as a loaf of bread became a semiotic beacon for the return to artisanal food production. In addition to bread, *Gourmet Retailer's* 2004 article about the 25 top foods that changed American perspectives about artisanal food production also cites the development of craft cheeses, noting that "the same well meaning industrialization that reduced our bread to tasteless, white fluff also standardized cheese making, resulting in huge blocks of cheese distinguishable from one another only by their color" (83). It is notable that *Gourmet Retailer* was able to identify 25 different foods that have changed so dramatically in terms

of craft production over the past several decades, and evidences the shift in acceptance and popularity of artisanal production. Since the early 1980's, we have seen a boom in "gourmet" foods. The term gourmet initially served almost as a rhetorical refutation *against* the culinary advancement and reclaimed preparation techniques, as it connoted an expensive, and inaccessible (and perhaps snobbish) attitude about food. As our store shelves have seen the gradual, and now commonplace, presence of so-called "gourmet" foods, the rhetorical *arête* and *eunoia* of these products has shifted to a position of reverence. We generally trust in the ethical appeal of small-batch foods, as they frequently come from artisanal producers, local farmers, or organic producers. The *phronesis* has changed as well and is no longer "food-for-food's sake", but now frequently possesses a concurrent concern for environmental impact, overall sustainability, and preservation of production techniques.

I interviewed Rusty Bowers, an artisanal producer of cured meats and salamis who owns a small business in Atlanta, Georgia called The Pine Street Market. Bowers is one of the few independent producers of cured salamis and meats in the Atlanta area, and is representative of the growing sector of small-craft producers of prepared foods. A chef of 15 years, Bowers worked in a number of cities across the world and found his culinary education led him toward the practice of *salumi*<sup>27</sup>. From a rhetorical standpoint, he found that the individual production of *salumi* spoke to him, for he believed that the human intervention had been lost through industrialized food production. As he said:

along the way, I fell in love with this style of food to where it's the way things used to be, and not the way things are now. The way things are now is

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<sup>27</sup> Not to be confused (as it often is) with salami. Rather, *salumi* is the practice of preparing cured meats (primarily pork).

*fast*. Everyone is in a hurry and they want to press a button to get their meal. They want it to be exactly the same, and I guess the Slow Food movement is all about taking everything back to the way it used to be, and waiting for things. Stuff should be worth the wait, and worth the price that you pay.

To be sure, the meats from the Pine Street Market are generally more expensive than mass-produced bacon, salami, and hot dogs typically found in a supermarket. The market produces house-cured meats, aged in custom-built, climate-controlled curing caves. The visual rhetorical aspect of price lies in the marginally greater cost of the meats, for the background and character of the meat is reflected in the consideration and time put into the production of a small-batch product. Additionally, the aspect of human intervention is present by the methods in which the market sells their product. The primary source of revenue is a storefront retail business, as well as area farmers markets. At both venues, a representative of the market personally speaks with customers, and is able to discuss the entire process of production firsthand. The visual transparency of human production is evident, and Bowers notes:

we hand-mix all of our spices, and hand grind all of our spices, and avoid all of those crazy chemicals. We hear a lot of feedback about how there is no soy, dairy, phosphates, or any of that stuff. A lot of people are allergic to those things, because people are over exposed to these things. When you buy almost any product from a grocery store, it has so many ingredients and all that crazy stuff goes into your body. I think people like the fact that our product is handmade, it's local pork, and they get to meet the person who made it.

Supermarkets are stocked with a huge selection of meats and other foods at moderately reasonable or low prices, but have a distinctly impersonal character, and the products have a particular lack of *ethos*. We have the convenience of walking into a supermarket and picking up either a chicken breast, chicken wings, top sirloin filets, *organic* top sirloin filets, a rack of ribs, a t-bone steak, bacon, thick-sliced bacon, etc., but are divorced from the human element of production. Our opportunity for selection and availability (of not just meat, but most any edible product) has been increased by mass-production, factory farming, and an extensive network of far-reaching food distributors and transporters. Harold McGee notes in his comprehensive *On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen*:

beginning with Europe and the Americas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, industrialization has generally made meat less expensive and more widely available thanks to the development of managed pastures and formulated feeds, the intense breeding of animals for effective meat production, and improved transportation from farms to cities (122-123).

The *ethos* of this production method, though it has increased the availability and convenience of food to a mass populous, has significantly diminished. Having a chance to speak with the producer of ones' food is rare, as the majority of our food has been replaced by a primarily "human" method of intervention by machines, and production lines<sup>28</sup>. The

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<sup>28</sup> Additionally, the method of sales at supermarkets has also moved toward a process of automation, and the character of food has been additionally diminished by the fact that it is entirely possible to purchase mass-produced food at a self-checkout, eliminating any sort of human interaction or intervention.

visual transparency and personal character of slaughter<sup>29</sup>, for example, has shifted over the last century from a visible and hands-on practice, to a distant, nigh invisible, and production-line process that has practically eliminated the sense of “craft” from butchery. The *ethos* and also the emotional value of food, and food consumption have been proportionally lost with the movement of production from a small-batch operation to a distant and impersonal factory structure. Generally, we have come to value the worth of artisanal foods and their origination less, and have reservations about paying more for individually made items because we have been acclimated to the overall visual rhetoric of mass-produced foods, from their packaging, to price, to availability.

Currently, we cannot reasonably subsist off of the few artisanal food producers who may live in our region, because simply, there are not enough of them to meet our demand for production. Bowers himself acknowledges the fact that if his wife was not working full time, their business would have a much more difficult time staying afloat. To Bowers’s knowledge, there are currently only three people in Atlanta who have a small-production “butcher” shop with cured meats. He estimates that there are about six small-batch cheese makers in the area as well. These individuals also sell their products at farmers markets, where again, prices are reasonable, but still marginally higher than the cost of the same volume of food at the grocery store. While the price may be a deterrent to some, the visual price, and true cost of the food is also a rhetorical device; in conjunction with the visual

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<sup>29</sup> It is unsavory for most people to consider slaughter as having “character”, though it must be approached from a practical standpoint, rather than a humane or food-lifestyle perspective. I myself have some qualms with certain methods and circumstances of butchery, but it is an undeniable part of (the majority of our) diets, and will not be discussed in further ethical detail for this reason. For further reading about a history of the movement of slaughterhouses from public to private domain, look into Christopher Otter’s “Civilizing Slaughter: The Development of the British Public Abattoir, 1850-1910.”



ethos, and emotional aspect of small-batch production, the price of artisanal food is reflective of the individual work put into the production of an item. To recall the notion of visual transparency, the price of artisanal food often directly plays off of the *eunoia* of the item. The cost of the item is higher, because the time put into the production of the item was greater, as the craftsman has the best intention, and goodwill toward the end-user to provide them with an item of superior quality, and in the case of food, taste.

The development of *eunoia* is additionally seen in the visual appearance of artisanal food, and the packaging (or lack thereof). Indeed, the visual transparency of the labeling does provide the consumer with a greater sense of the product's integrity. Rhetorically, these products that one can simply *trust* for no other reason than they are individually produced speaks to the element of *eunoia* that this object possesses. The benevolence of a food item that promises to not contain fillers, preservatives, and any number of unpronounceable chemicals inherently has a tremendous amount of visual ethos. The visual representation of *ethos* is evident in a food product by how little it has been augmented from its original or at least, intended state. Many times, in order to provide a friendly visual *ethos*, food relies not upon the inherent value of its quality or goodness, but rather relies upon persuasive visual packaging and deceptive representation to establish a false sense of benevolence and emotional appeal. In order to discuss his perspective about the visual character of his product, I read Bowers a quote from a presentation from the *Conference on Elusive Consumption in Retrospect* that goes:

locally produced food that is sold in markets and in farm shops rarely has any declaration of content. On bread that is baked in the grocery store, nobody demands a list of ingredients. We trust, rather, in the quality and

genuineness of the product since the transparency and presence act as the guarantee (62).

He responded by noting:

we don't use artificial casings, so everything has a natural casing. With that, you get the bends and the twists. [The sausages are] not always the exact same size, and it looks more interesting and rustic. We use the old-world method of the lactic acid cultures so it has that good, white mold on [the sausage].

The visual rhetoric of artisanal food craftsmanship lies not in the way it *does* look, but rather, perhaps in the way it *doesn't* look. Artisanal foods are subjects to terms that are typically avoided, like “knotted”, “moldy”, “bumpy”, “lumpy”, or “hard”, but that’s what true and natural food looks like. These products could certainly fit into highly designed packaging, but more often will be found in butcher paper, a simple bag, or plain sealed plastic. Artisanal foods rarely carry any elaborate labeling or logo. The ingredients are hardly listed, or if they are, they are typically all natural, with the possible exception of one or two mandatory or necessary preservatives. Visually, the food has an inherent *ethos* and simply by possessing what could be contemporarily considered “imperfections” such as knots, bends, twists, or lumps, the appearance of artisanal or craft produced foods give credence to the value of production and origination.

Robert Kenner’s documentary *Food Inc.* (2009) looks critically at corporate farming practices in the United States, and the subsequent illusion of mass-farmed food packaging and its end-goal of presenting a bucolic *ethos*. Commentator Michael Pollan points out that the most popular iconography on packaged foods is a scene of a cow, farm, or rolling fields.

He addresses "the pastoral illusion" that currently exists to entice consumers to identify mass-produced products with an idealistic, agrarian *ethos*. This is of course, quite inaccurate. *Food Inc.* points out that in fact, only about four major companies control the pork industry, and only about seven control the beef industry. But as consumers, we appreciate and long for the aforementioned "pastoral illusion", where our food comes from a humane and small-craft production facility. Bowers commented on his own experience with the reality of deceptive marketing:

a company came through when I first opened, and said 'we have an artisan line of pork that's humanely raised'. It had a name with the word "farm" in it, and seemed like it was all natural or organic. Then I was thinking, 'why is this setting off an alarm in the back of my head?' — I did some research online, and the "farm" doesn't actually exist, they're just taking commodity pork and putting a new label on it.

The rhetorical strategy of the visual packaging of the aforementioned "pastoral illusion" of mass-produced meats provides a deceptive *ethos* (but an *ethos* nonetheless) regarding the quality, and origination of the food. Like the previously discussed section about Thomas Kinkaid's illusion of handmade items, the value of small-batch production and agrarian standards is revered and acknowledged by mass-producers and sought to be emulated for the sake of an emotional appeal toward a consumer. As previously noted, the illusion is likely accepted by the consumer, for while the *ethos* of small craft production is greater than mass-production, the convenience of mass-produced items utilizing the false illusion of said *ethos* is attractive to buyers. As with furniture and artwork, this raises an interesting question about our perceptions toward the visual *ethos* of craftsmanship. Admittedly, as

our existing commodity structure stands, supermarkets make it possible for growing neighborhoods and massive amounts of people to conveniently and cost-effectively consume products which otherwise would not be available. And there is a small, but ever-growing market of small-batch producers of various kinds of foods. So why do most of us still go to a supermarket instead of to Rusty Bowers's Pine Street Market? Because most of us likely don't *have* a Rusty Bowers in our neighborhood. Artisanal production, while gaining mounting support, still remains a niche market, due to the fact that the majority of trades (whether they be mechanics, food production, or any other skilled craft) are not prevalently valued. Matthew B. Crawford's *Shopclass as Soulcraft* questions our general penchant for academic knowledge, and our ambitions to achieve a salaried, corporate career as opposed to gaining a trade or craft. Crawford worked at a think-tank in Washington, D.C before opening his own motorcycle repair shop in Richmond, Virginia. He posits that we have grown up as a class of people who are trained to word-process, spreadsheet-develop, and meeting-attend, and lack general production and repair skills. From a visual rhetorical standpoint, this is interesting, and will be primarily explored further in the later section about automobiles. "White-collar" professions adopt a style of dress that is cleaner, more linear, stylish, and expensive than "blue-collar" trades, which inevitably have a visual association with blood, grease, oil stains, calluses, or sweat. Visually, we are trained out of valuing labor trades, and this may account for the rise in corporate or professional positions and the decades-long decline (and just now, marginal renewal) of food trades.

### 3.5 Textiles and Crafts

"Quilts are not art because no one treated them like art. They were the physical embodiment of families and communities, but that was not reason to preserve them..."

Sociologist Howard S. Becker, quoted in Simon Bronner's *Art, Performance, and Praxis*

In Johnson and Wilson's 2005 article about the method of production of textiles by women, we see a sociological approach in their research, rather than a rhetorical study. They examine the motivational factors that are important to women who create hand-made textiles, in the same fashion as previous generations of women. Rohan pairs the development and longevity of craft to the rhetorical aspect of memory and notes, "memory as craft, as practiced in the domestic sphere at the turn of the century, posits memory as a veritable rhetorical canon in its own right, a means of persuasion, and also its end, a process that requires the development of complex rhetorical devices — both material and cognitive" (370-371). In her 2008 dissertation *Handmade Online* explores the aesthetics of objects on Etsy.com, Abraham explores the "traditionally gendered nature of craftwork, [and] reconfigured notions of labor and leisure." In Torrey et. al's 2009 article about the sharing of craft knowledge on the internet, they speak to the previously mentioned "visual transparency" and sense of camaraderie that runs through small-craft production. The *eunoia* of craft is readily apparent, as the sharing of knowledge impacts the development and production of handcrafted items, through shared knowledge and collective goodwill for the perpetuation of craft trades and skill. Neil Turner expressed the same notion of visual transparency, and notes that in his own development as a luthier:

we don't have anything to hide. Honestly, I don't know if I could have done

what I've done without the Internet, and having that available to me. I knew how to do basic woodworking, but having the Internet as a resource to me is great. There are a lot of people who share what they do. I'd go out and read five or six different things, and say 'ok, he does it this way...this other guy does it that way...well, if you take part of one and part of the other...' and then I'd put it together and make my own way of doing it.

A noted characteristic about craftsmanship in general is the overall accessibility and willingness to share information within trades. From a communications perspective, the discourse within craftsmanship and handmade production is incredibly open and participatory. Within the context of my research, it was a pleasant experience to speak with all of the interview subjects who were enthusiastic and passionate about what they did and how they did it.

I interviewed Shana Wood, a local textile designer, and artist based out of Atlanta, GA about her method of production, the history and influence of her style, and her perceptions about the character and value of her work. In 2004, she was a member of a collaborative art group that developed and exhibited an elaborate and time-consuming installation piece made of crocheted fabric. At the time the group members decided to do the project, none of them knew how to crochet. In the aforementioned tradition of the sharing of craft knowledge, one of the member's mothers came to a meeting and showed everybody how to crochet. She showed the group three stitches, and this propelled the eventual production and execution of the gallery show. Like Turner, Wood is most apt to read and absorb information or instruction, and then turn that knowledge into her own individual production method. The fact that this knowledge is influenced by a source

evidences the *ethos* via *eunoia* of the piece, in that it displays a collective character and knowledge built from a benevolent community. For the past two years, Shana has been making “airplant pods”, a type of textile container though until recently it never occurred to her to sell them. She gave them away to friends as gifts, and until a recent craft-fair, limited the craft and design process as a personal venture. It is important to note that throughout primary and secondary research regarding the purpose of handmade production, it has rarely been for an end-result of profit, and rather, a genuine ambition to learn more about a process, a desire to continue a trade or skill, and dedication to the production of quality and functional items.

In Faythe Levine’s *Handmade Nation* (a book, and also a documentary film), rise of the “DIY craft revolution” is documented. The film is a heavily edited version of an astonishing 80 hours of material that Levine gathered while on a cross-country trip in which she interviewed over 50 artists, designers, and crafters. In both mediums, the genuine love for craft from each of the artisans comes through in how they openly talk about their process, their inspiration, and their desire for their medium (whether it be hook-rugs, needlepoint, screenprinting, sewn textiles, printed textiles, etc.). And like Wood, the majority of artisans seem not to have begun their venture with the intention of making a profit. Rather, the business aspect of craft has been a secondary thought, after they realized they could turn their passion into profit. The consideration of audience, rhetorically, is interesting in this aspect, because it defies the classical notions of rhetoric that associate speech or communication with purpose and audience. How does one effectively apply visual rhetoric to an item that may have been made for no audience at all? It is again the *ethos* of the piece that remains paramount, in that the genuine quality of the

item, and the *phronesis* or “sound sense” of the purpose of the item as a functional, and useful (if only to be aesthetic) object is immediately apparent. Talking with Wood, Turner, and Bowers, it is evident that each person primarily views their work from a production and quality standpoint, rather than always looking at their bottom-line. Only when I specifically asked did any discussion of sales or price arise. Instead, the focus of the interviews was primarily on the inspiration, care, quality, and value of the finished item, and the enjoyment of the process. Says Wood,

on every level that I can think about it, [handmade items] are more valuable. Emotionally, psychologically, financially...on all of those levels. When it's time to move, and you have that pile of junk on the floor, none of it is anything that people have made for you. It's that IKEA furniture, and it is those disposable things that end up in the pile.



### 3.6 Automotives and Mechanics:

“The craftsman is proud of what he has made, and cherishes it, while the consumer discards things that are perfectly serviceable in his restless pursuit of the new.” Matthew Crawford from *Shopclass as Soulcraft*, referencing Richard Sennett’s *The Culture of the New Capitalism*.

As little literature has been done about the rhetorical theory of jewelry, textiles, or food, even less has been done about automotives and mechanics. Though an enduring part of our culture, particularly consumer culture, little has been written regarding the *ethos* or *pathos* of the automobile. Most frequently, it is discussed in terms of *logos* and the rational aspects of mobility and utilitarianism. In his dissertation on the “rhetorical dreams of the automobile”, Albin speaks generally to the rhetorical aspect of overall car culture and visually examines the “photographs, paintings, pamphlets, drive-ins, scale models” and other indicators of automotive communication. Sheller’s *Automotive Emotions* is vaguely rhetorical in that it examines the *pathos*, or emotion surrounding car culture, but focuses less on the automobile as a method of visual language, as more as a sociological cornerstone, influenced by socioeconomic and regional understandings about the value of automobiles and mobility. Rybacki presents the Burkean analysis of vintage car racing and addresses the symbolic impact of automobiles as rhetorical vehicles, noting “vintage racing offers a set of related signs [to things like shopping malls, rock concerts, and Olympics games as fodder for rhetorical studies] that work in concert to create a unified view of American car culture” (77). Rybacki acknowledges the role of the automobile as the primary attraction in racing – not the driver, and this outlook is the “error in *telos*” in

contemporary races (83). Therefore, is entirely possible to look at the methods of rhetorical persuasion that have been discussed throughout this project (*logos, ethos, pathos*), in addition to visually rhetorical aspects such as marketing, advertising, production, and hand-production versus mass-production and clearly associate all of these principles with automobile production. Since its inception, the automobile has classically been associated with the production line, as made famous by Henry Ford. It is undeniable that practically every single automobile that exists in this world has come from a factory or production line. However, as with any piece of machinery or mechanics, there is an inevitable point in time in which the die-cast metals, molded plastics, and stitched fabrics from which these items are assembled eventually wear down. The role of the craftsman is not traditionally in the production of automobiles, but in the restoration, repair, and upkeep of the vehicle.

Automobiles have an obvious rational appeal. They are methods of transportation that can not only carry human passengers, but also cargo. They can travel faster than a bicycle, keep passengers dry from rain, etc, and therefore the logical appeal of automobiles is quite evident. Each model and make of car has a distinct *ethos*, which hardly needs to be explained, as one must only consider his or her fickle devotion or hatred of a brand for whatever reason. And emotionally, a car can serve as a beloved possession or an environmentally disastrous piece of machinery. Automobiles have a varied history of being attacked, adored, revered, and loathed for their impact on culture, design, and society. The High Museum in Atlanta has just ended a run of an entire exhibition entitled “The Allure of the Automobile” in which 18 custom-built vintage automobiles were highlighted not only for their aesthetic design, but also the value of their individual character, rarity,

and unique production method. It is the fact that the museum is highlighting the handmade automobile that is notable to this section on automotives and mechanics, as it would be unlikely that a museum would house a mass-produced automobile. The *ethos* of the automobile that comes from a production or assembly line is much less than that of an automobile made by hand. The function of each vehicle is the same, and likely utilizes the same fuel, tires, and parts, but has a distinctly different ethical and emotional appeal. And if a mass-produced automobile were to be displayed in a museum, it would likely not be until that vehicle had reached “antique” status, where the occasion of the vehicle’s date of production gave it rhetorical value as a rare or antiquated piece of machinery. I interviewed Victor Elliot, a photographer by trade, who has spent the past several years rebuilding his antique Buick. He has reclaimed the original glory of his car by rebuilding it from the ground up; he has repainted, purchased whitewall tires, sourced the interior components, worked on the engine, etc. As he says,

Well, I do the work myself for the simple reason that I like it. It’s very gratifying to do something and see the results after. Also, it makes me feel really great to have something that I can be proud of, and show off as I want. I also like doing all of the work myself because I know that it’s getting done properly. I don’t really have to question someone else’s work, and I always know where I stand with my skills. Cars are interesting in the fact that they can be very practical or extremely impractical. As for the value of my labor, I never really thought of it that way. I guess to me it’s priceless only because I really enjoy doing what I do.

I recently owned a 1974 Honda CB360 motorcycle, which, whenever anybody saw it, received the same appreciation and praise as the aforementioned coffee table. The character of the bike was commented upon, estimates on monetary value were made, and sometimes people were even afraid to touch it for fear that they might somehow mar the perfectly intact gas tank, seat, or handlebars. In 1974 the same motorcycle would likely not have received such reverence of quality or character, because the occasion had not been established at that time to truly serve as a foundation for the development of the bike's *ethos*. However, as a valued and semi-rare object in 2010 the bike has an inherent *ethos* based on the same qualities as the coffee table. Elliot spoke about the occasional value of his Buick from 1940 until now (2010) :

First off, it was a huge deal to have certain types of cars in the 40's. A Buick like mine, was always a huge deal in the neighborhood when someone came home with a brand new one. In that time, cars were seriously a show of wealth, and social status. Much like they still are today in many ways. People paid extra for 4 doors back then, because it was considered to be a luxury thing. As for why the upkeep is important and embraced, I'd say it's because they don't take the pride they did back then to make a car. Vintage cars were engineered to last as long as the materials they were made of. They didn't engineer an electric fan to go up after 30,000 miles. They tried to do things to make the driver feel that much more comfortable in the vehicle. My windshield wipers are driven by a cable and pulley system which only Buicks and Cadillacs had because they were quieter. It's also a very

romanticized period in American history too. The cars can tell a lot about our culture at that point in time. The designs of the cars, the chrome, the stainless, the ornamentation, the accessories, etc. are all things that tell a lot about the time and what was important to people. Car manufactures at that point were in huge competitions with each other on everything. It was without a doubt a time when people actually cared about what they did, and what they made. It's hard to find craftsmanship like that any more.

The fact that my motorcycle and Elliott's Buick are in prime condition speaks to the care that their previous owners took in the upkeep and replacement of the vehicles. The original "candy orange" gas tank reflects the genuine character of the bike, as in 1974 this was the stock color (the other one was "Hawaiian Blue Metallic"), and the representation of the bike in its original condition and specifications signifies the *arête* (excellence) of the vehicle. Finally, the *eunoia* of the bike is evident in its working condition. The value of craftsmanship in this item is in the fact that thirty-six years after production, the time and energy put into it by professional and amateur mechanics, the dedication and perseverance for maintaining the tank, fuel lines, engine, seat, wiring harness, fuses, etc., speak to the goodwill put into the maintenance of the vehicle, and by proxy, the goodwill put forth to the rider by this working vehicle. Additionally, the perceived character of vehicles is evident in the personification provided by their owners, as many vehicles are given names. For example, my motorcycle with the red-orange gas tank was named "Jolene" after the Dolly Parton song about a redheaded woman. Elliot also gave a name to his car, and states,

I do have a name for my car. Her name is Penelope. I guess you can call it a personification. I let the car pick the name. It's one of those things where I was just driving her one day, and the name just came to me. I do believe that older cars have a lot more character than new ones. I guess that's why they get the names.

The human intervention within the maintenance and upkeep of vehicles gives them rhetorical credence, as does the role of their relative symbolism. As a communicative device, automobiles can serve to convey a number of values, including socioeconomic status, environmental values, etc. But with automobiles with a craftsman touch (those antique vehicles subject to routine maintenance and upkeep), the primarily rhetorical symbolism given exuded by the vehicle is that of care, as seen in prior sections about woodworked materials, food, artwork, and textiles. The time, energy, and money placed into the upkeep of a vehicle serves as a communicative device, and provides a greater *ethos* for older vehicles, in contrast to newer and mass-produced vehicles.

#### 4 THE WEBSITE AND USABILITY

As previously mentioned, the existing literature about the benefits of multi-modal presentation as an effective pedagogical tool was a huge inspiration for the development of a digital container as a supplemental aspect of this overall thesis project. Whether in academia or industry, the ability to express information in an engaging multi-sensory medium is beneficial for a comprehensive understanding of a subject and it is my belief that not only the text, but also hyperlinks, photographs, audio clips, and embedded videos will serve as an illuminating resource to inspire continuing studies about the value of craftsmanship and its relationship with classical rhetoric.

The original website was to be hand-coded, with the intention to most effectively represent the value of “craftsmanship” in the regard that the site would be independently authored/coded and produced. However, it speaks to the value of craftsmanship that the development and comprehensive skill of a craft is not something easily replicated or learned especially within a short amount of time. As with any traditional craft, such as those discussed in this paper, web authoring is a craft in and of itself and is a skill that takes an incredible amount of time, trade knowledge, and specific tools to master. Therefore, it was unfortunately necessary to utilize a pre-coded Wordpress theme for the website design to most effectively represent the project in the anticipated manner which was to be sleek, professional, easy to read and navigate, and usable. The resulting site is located at [www.amaliakallen.com/vroc](http://www.amaliakallen.com/vroc), and utilizes the “Autofocus<sup>30</sup>” theme as developed by Allan

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<sup>30</sup> <http://allancole.com/wordpress/themes/autofocus/>

Cole<sup>31</sup>. The design was chosen for its highly visual layout and support of photographic headers. As a visual rhetoric project, I felt it appropriate to concurrently display an image with accompanying text to most appropriately serve as chapter and section headers. The base theme is adequate for readability and layout, but after personally conducting usability testing, found that changes were necessary to truly present a site that would be highly usable by all audiences.

The overall objective of this site is to concurrently serve as a satisfaction for the thesis requirement for my masters program, to possibly serve as an academic resource for those interested in widening their view about visual rhetoric, and to also serve as a portfolio of my ability to write for the web and utilize a back-end CMS system. Therefore, the site will potentially reach a wide audience and it was necessary to provide content that would be usable and readable by all audiences. The primary considerations of the usability testing were to observe and troubleshoot for the following issues. The observations and adjustments are noted in each appropriate section:

- **Readability:** The base content font was set at a grey, Georgia (serif) 11 point font. As san-serif fonts are preferred for maximum web readability, I changed the font to an 11.5 point Arial / Helvetica font, and changed the body text color from grey to black, to increase contrast on the page and make content easier for readers to see. I changed the menu links on the top right corner of the page from grey to black as well and increased the size of the text to be more readable. As additionally noted below in “visual display”, I widened the content column on the individual posts to increase screen space, and lessen the need for scrolling on the reader’s behalf.

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<sup>31</sup> <http://allancole.com/>



Additionally, a link to the full and comprehensive .pdf text of this narrative paper is provided as a link under the “About” section, so that the content can be printed or enlarged for readers who do not wish to read long sections of text on the web.

- **Navigation:** The home page displays a clear header title, which is accompanied by a smaller sub-title. The subtitle, found in the front matter of the narrative thesis, serves to immediately inform the reader as to the intention and scope of the project. To the right, the menu contains a “home” section which leads the audience to the main page, an “about” section which serves as an abstract, contact information, and link to the full text. Also contained in the menu are the “bibliography” and “links for further reading / viewing” which contain the back matter of the narrative text, as well as interactive links for those readers who may be interested in exploring the topic even further. Overall, the entire header serves as the traditional front and back matter of the narrative thesis. On the home page, each image visually represents the content of each section and upon scrolling over the image, an opaque box appears with the title and first sentence of each section. On the base template, this box was set at 60% opacity. I changed this to 90% opacity to increase readability and navigation for my audience. On the individual posts, there are navigational arrows that appear light grey, and black once scrolled over. These direct the reader to later or previous sections of the paper. And finally, at the bottom of each page, I have changed the text to “Next” and “Previous” with “Continue Reading” and “Earlier Sections” to more appropriately assist the reader through the narrative layout.
- **Visual Display / Layout:** The base structure for the theme is such that the 10 main boxes on the home page were twice as large as they currently appear, which

increased the size of the image but caused the reader to have to scroll further down the page to access information. As the image itself on the home page is only meant as a navigational device, I changed the style.css file to reflect a diminished image which cut the user's scrolling in half and made the full content of the home screen more visible. Additionally, the base template displays a large, opaque date on the upper left hand corner of each home page image. I felt that this was unnecessary for the organized narrative layout of the project and changed the opacity from 100% to 0% in order to provide the reader with less distraction. I also eliminated the two-column layout of the base template and widened the content column to provide more visual space for the narrative content, and images. The second column contained EXIF data for the included images, which for the purpose of this project was unnecessary and distracting.

Overall, the site is an effective container for a project that is highly narrative but relies upon visual images and hyperlinks for effective understanding and representation. As it is web-based, the paragraphs as seen in the traditional narrative paper have been broken down to further accommodate the reader of the web-text.

## 5 DISCUSSION

Prior to beginning this project, I had general assumptions and hypothesis about the outcome of the primary research and the direction that the results would lead the rest of this project. The online survey showed that while individuals tended to value handcrafted items very differently, depending on their function and purpose. Furniture, for example, was valued for its quality but not for its handmade origin. Artwork was alternatively valued for its handmade origin, but not style. The variation between associated value of different objects was much broader than I had anticipated. Additionally, the response rate of the survey is not as complete as I had hoped. Only 45 out of a projected 50-70 respondents completed the survey, and of those 45, 42 provided full answers to the free-response section. Sixty-seven percent of respondents were female, and 33% were male. Additionally, the ethnic makeup of the respondents was not as varied as estimated, with 87% Caucasian respondents and only 13% of other racial backgrounds. This population does not reflect the general population, nor does it reflect the intended population and expected diversity of respondents of the provided survey. So when considering this research, it should be noted that the figures may not accurately represent popular considerations about the rhetorical value of produced items.

Additionally, as previously mentioned, this research intended to fill a gap in existing academic literature regarding the rhetorical value of handcrafted items. It did not primarily take into the rhetorical value of mass produced items or industrially designed items. This of course lends a bias to the content of this research, and the associated goals and themes discussing rhetorical value. Interviews were conducted with artisans and

craftspeople, and it is these perspectives that are highlighted and used as referential, primary data throughout the piece.

With these considerations in mind, the results of the research were interesting, and addressed a number of issues related to the rhetorical development of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. As mentioned multiple times, Foss's considerations of:

- Relative Symbolism
- Human Intervention, and
- Communicative Rhetorical Strategies

were utilized as the basis for each section's discussion about the development of rhetorical persuasion within handcrafted items. In most, but not all sections, additional considerations of:

- Display
- Presentation
- Price
- Process, and
- Visual Transparency

were discussed, to provide further evidence for how three-dimensional objects, primarily consumer goods and common household objects, could serve as rhetorical devices. Overall, each subject discussed held a greater price/monetary value, relied less upon auxiliary visual packaging or displays to present itself as valuable, was presented or sold personally by its producer rather than through a conventional retail outlet, had a process that was built and developed from a collective knowledge, and had a great amount of visual transparency which gave the object ethical relevance.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

Although the rhetorical connection between the persuasive appeals of inanimate three-dimensional objects has not yet been widely explored, there is a very evident connection between the way items are produced and the amount of value that we ascribe to physical products. Whereas the logical appeal of produced goods is obvious, the *ethos* and *pathos* of furniture, food, artwork, textiles, and automobiles lacks an obvious academic presence though the examination of media and documents (equally as inanimate) reigns within the study of visual rhetoric.

The focus of this paper was indeed the *ethos*, and to a lesser extent the *logos* and *pathos* of handcrafted or artisanal items, but this is certainly not to imply that the value behind mass-produced items is inherently *bad*. The aim of this paper was to promote the visual representation of produced items as a communicative device, deserving of the same academic consideration as documents and media graphics and was not intended to slander or demote existing literature, industrial design, or larger retail businesses. As stated in the prior section on food, mass-production has its place and is culturally relevant and occasionally entirely necessary to the sustainability of households and local commerce. The point in highlighting the value of handmade items is to promote the higher *ethos* of these items through a method of comparison and contrast. Industrial design is widely covered within its own primary discipline, and the number of texts regarding the emotive qualities of mass-produced items have been referenced in the previously stated review of existing literature on this topic. As a person who takes a keen interest in modern design and industrial design news and events, it is my hope that the field of consumer product design may take this literature as a note to consider the inherent character represented by a

product. Additionally, as referenced in this work, many of the artisans and producers interviewed or cited produce with the intent of being sustainable, traditional, and of good character. The work of the craftsperson and their individual *ethos* is telling and directly influences the quality and *ethos* of their resulting end-product. It is with the same fervor and dedication to craft that should be considered upon the production of anything, for it is likely that the result will have a certain benevolence and goodwill, and excellence of quality.

Moving forward, I hope that this discussion in a narrative form is equally as enlightening as the multi-media project which serves as the primary medium for this presentation about visual rhetoric and the associated *ethos* within three-dimensional objects, specifically those objects which are utilized for everyday, household consumption. It speaks to the ever-growing field of visual rhetoric that this paper, though originally conceived and intended for development as a purely online device and wholly in replacement of a narrative text, must be submitted as such for academic requirements. Multi-modal composition is still finding its place within academic and industrial composition and while a shift has been obviously made toward a method of web-based content and online repositories, it seems the rhetorical persuasion of these texts must wait for a method of continuity and publication standards to be considered entirely legitimate.

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