

Who Made It? Finding value in acknowledging nature of making to increase consumer value perception

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Abstract

When one looks at a painting or photograph, the artistry and skill employed are traditionally less likely to be devalued, while the perception of textiles and apparel are more commonly regarded as objects of labour and less as products of artistry. The purchasing audience acquires textile items more as commodities and less as collectables. While fashion may never be fully appreciated as art, the continual devaluation of it being less of a craft and more of a labour is concerning. As the fashion industry has grown to high levels of mass production and consumption, the manner in which these objects are produced is further removed from the consumer, decreasing the ability to find value in the making process. As the system supporting fast fashion grows, consumers continue to see clothing as disposable objects and the value attached to clothing continues to diminish. This paper considers the process of evaluating value in both art and craft and examines if consumer value perception of crafted goods can increase by acknowledging the collaborative and skilled nature of artisanally produced fashion and naming those involved in the creation.

Key words

craft, art, production, communication, value perception

Introduction

This paper was originally inspired by a series of articles published in 2015 by [The Business of Fashion](#). It asks the question: can traditional craftsmanship survive in the modern world? ('Can Traditional Craftsmanship Survive in a Modern World' 2015). The article likened artisanal craftsmen to endangered species and highlighted the importance of increased recognition for craft based apparel production methods. The series of articles emphasised a need for producers to value the production process instead of constantly devaluing them by prioritising the lowest manufacturing cost over specialised skills. The communication of the valuable design and quality attributes also needs to extend to the consumer, who has been taught through the fast fashion system, to see clothing as a disposable item produced by a labourer instead of viewing it as the product of skilled work. Nikolay Anguelov found the demand for new fashion is not consumer driven but retail driven and shaped through strategic media messaging. The need or want for greater consumption is not real but manufactured to drive profits (2016: 5-6). Building on Galbraith's theory, Baudrillard came to a similar conclusion proposing 'the system of needs is the product of the system of production' and that all of this is part of an overarching social and economic system and distribution of values (2016: 74-75, 78). When discussing patterns of consumption and production, retailers commonly claim their actions are in direct response to consumer demand, but when we look closer it is clear this is a system that manipulates consumer demand to create a model focused more on profit and less on quality, design and skilled creation.

Fast fashion broke down established retail and consumption models by eliminating the traditional price planning of inflated mark-ups to capitalise on early sales and the use of markdowns to clear merchandise. Fast fashion removed this stage by eliminating all markdowns and selling quantities that appeared to be available for a limited time, due to store turnover, at an already low price (Anguelov, 2016: 17). With lower prices came lower quality. In a study executed in the UK for the Salvation Army, it was determined that 62 per cent of respondents believed that the life span of an item of clothing was shorter than it had been 3 years before. The study also found that 63 per cent of new textile consumption enters the waste stream (Morley et al, 2006: 26,40). It is interesting to note, the secondary or used clothing market had seen a 71 per cent reduction in used clothing remaining in the UK. This was due to the quality of the clothing entering the second hand clothing market being deemed of lower value than the amount it cost to sort the items for resale (Morley et al., 2006: 8). As buying behaviours became habitual, consumer grew to accept lower quality and expect the lowest prices.

Value features quite heavily in discussions surrounding consumer behaviour. Whether it is examining the value that a consumer finds in an object compared to the price they are willing to pay, or the identification and possible reflection of personal and societal values in the object. In his analysis of consumption, Baudrillard proposes the consumer is drawn towards objects that reaffirm the acceptance of particular societal values (1998: 70). He argues that there is a 'social training in consumption' that is directly related to economic and production systems as well as collective behaviours (1998: 81-82). Showing the act of consuming to be deeply rooted in social belonging and not just a response to the object and its value, illustrating the valuation process is influenced by symbols and messaging. Howard Risatti proposes that value in objects is often blurred now as handmade objects are grouped with mass-manufactured goods and that the appearance of "limit-less-ness" where there is little to give an absolute perspective and value to things, to anchor them... Yes, they have value as commodities, but they seem to have little inherent value as made things' (2007: 200). The almost instant appearance of most trends in retail locations and at any price level has continued to blur the previous understandings of value and quality. Luxury items often have a similar appearance and design detailing as their lower price fast fashion counterparts. The looks of the runway originally trickled down to mass market, but

now they can be in a retail location in a matter of days or weeks democratising fashion to the masses but also erasing part of the exclusivity that added value to luxury items.

Conversations about sustainability, ethical production and ethical consumption tend to be cautionary or designed to enact change through guilt of past behaviour or to empower the consumer into activism. They do not really get at the root of the problem, which is that we have created a market of objects with increased obsolescence and a message of devaluation encouraging the consumer to see the objects they purchase as disposable and of a limited life cycle. In his article, [Craft Revisited](#), Jeromy McFarren argues that 'the production of goods by corporate manufacturing, through modern machinery and technology, has displaced the labour force, separated the mind from the production process, depersonalized and devalued the act of manual skill, and enslaved us to a system of forced consumption' (2015: 28). The issue of fair price for fair labour has emerged in part because the consumer has been so divided from the act, time and skill required to produce a product that they have no context within which to consider true value beyond price (2015: 35). When we look at the separation between designer, maker and consumer, it is no wonder that the consumer has so little understanding of the time and skill necessary to make a product and no real context to assess value. With the constant lowering of prices, how is a consumer to find value in an item of clothing when their morning latte may cost more than the T-shirt they are wearing? (Sennik, 2013)

This research started as an examination of consumer value perception of fashion and textile goods in comparison to the valuation process used when consumers assign value to art or craft. Through a targeted literature review, I sought to consider if there was something in the value assessment of art and craft that could be borrowed from and perhaps lead to a change in the approach and conversation around artisanal textile and fashion goods. By focusing on a more positive value driven message, could we encourage the consumer to see clothing as a commodity with increased worth and less as a disposable item? Ultimately, if we could engage the consumer in a positive interaction and increase their connection to where, how and by who their clothing and textile goods are made, could we alter the value perception of these objects?

Value in art, the applied arts and fashion

For the purpose of this research, the discussion of art, fashion and craft is focused on the output produced by skilled artists, artisans and craftspeople. This paper is not considering in the definition of fashion, crafted object or art the inclusion of mass manufactured objects or apparel which have been un-designed or reduced to necessary element to be produced at the lowest price point with the highest profit margin. These mass produced items are only considered in regards to the impact they have had on their industries as a whole and are part of a different value and quality conversation.

Early research identified art being more commonly accepted as an object of value, while the value of craft is generally debated. Most sources pointed to one or both of the following two main opinions; value can be determined in an object through the consideration of aesthetics and skilled labour (Risatti 2007, Wagner 1998, Osborne 1986, Kant 1987). In [A Theory of Craft: Function and Aesthetic Expression](#), Howard Risatti acknowledges that despite utilising many of the same materials and processes, the viewer often does not attribute the same value or importance to objects of craft as they do to objects of art. The common reason for this is the broad opinion that crafted objects primarily possess functional value while the work of art is recognised as possessing an intellectual and aesthetic value (2007: 127). He observed a connection between art and craft or the applied arts as they share a number of similar values and are both the creation of skilled handwork. Prior to the mid nineteenth century, there was more of a connection between maker and consumer as the consumer was often interacting directly with the craftspeople (2007: 116, 152). That connection leads to an immediate understanding that you are purchasing something that is the output of skilled hands and creativity and not the mass output of machinery and an unknown maker.

Risatti believed that fine art has more freedom, as its primary function in being is to provide a representation of culture and aesthetics and that these interpretations are more fluid depending on the audience and the cultural environment the piece is viewed in. Crafted objects and the applied arts are always bound in their interpretation to the primary utilitarian function for which they were created (2007: 132). The primary focus of art is the symbolic, while the craft is relegated to the realm of the actual and utility. According to Baudrillard, the connection between culture art and objects is closer than commonly presented. He argues that culture and art can and is consumed by some the same way commodities are. In a system of production and recycling, art can be commoditised, produced and sold alongside infinite numbers of consumer goods. He argues 'culture is subject to the same competitive demand for signs as any other category of objects and that is produced to meet that demand' (Baudrillard 1998: 108). The unique value proposition of craft is as an object of applied arts, it can have both a functional and a social purpose (Risatti, 2007: 149). While it is a utilitarian object, it can also be a tool to convey symbolic meaning especially when created with consideration for aesthetic and semiotics.

Risatti also acknowledges the additional steps required in creating a crafted object. A work of fine art is created out of a manipulation of 'material into visual signs so that appearance always takes precedence over structure; appearance dominates structure' (2007: 132). While work in the applied arts requires 'conceptualization of the relationship between necessity, purpose, function, form, material, and technique... beginning with the recognition of need or purpose; that is, a problem or need must first be conceptualized as something requiring a solution' (2007: 63). He is able to draw attention to the many similarities between fine art and the applied arts concluding that one of the main barriers is perception. 'Painting, like all fine arts, has been 'intellectualized' through aesthetic theory so that it continues to be understood as a discursive, critical activity laden with metaphorical meaning and cultural significance. Like painting, craft cannot compete with mechanical production and, like painting, if craft is to survive in the modern world of the twenty-first century, it must make itself understood as a way of bringing objects into the world that is meaningful in and of itself' (2007: 153) This brings us back again to the message; how is value communicated to the customer and if it has a direct impact on the consumer's perception of value.

According to Janet Wagner, by its nature, fashion bridges the gap between art and the applied arts in terms of aesthetic value. 'As an applied art, a fashion good combines beauty of form, perceived visually and tactilely, with beauty of expression. While the aesthetic function of a fashion object is to make the wearer more attractive or sometimes to be admired purely on its own terms, the most beautiful garments also perform utilitarian and social functions' (1998: 138). Especially, when we consider the role of fashion as a tool of adornment or as a means of constructing and communicating identity. Risatti proposed that the divide between art and craft is less rigid and 'the lines are blurred when the viewer interprets the crafted object as "decorated". It still maintains its function as an object while carrying the aesthetic signifiers of a fine art object. It is in the perception of the viewer where the object becomes art or remains craft' (2007: 96). McFarren argues, 'Crafts are intended *to be used*, not solely to be looked at and pondered as fine art... They take the arts out of museums and bring them into our homes, where our experiences of them enhance our sense of ourselves and our communities' (2015: 35). Artisanally produced fashion brings together the attributes of design and art as well as the skilled execution required for craft and the applied arts. Fashion is often the symbolic vehicle we use to communicate aspects of our identity to the world around us. It uses symbols and signifiers much in the same way art does. People purchase clothing for necessity, but they also purchase items for aesthetic appreciation and self-identification. McFarren builds on this proposing that the engagement and interaction we have with the objects we consume leads to a deeper sense of our own self-awareness, especially when we are aware of the product origin and the makers involved (2015: 30). We can find deeper meaning in the things we consume when we can identify reflections of ourselves and our values interpreted through the aesthetic attributes and origin of these objects.

Baudrillard addresses the role of value in fashion, as a structure created with a built in obsolescence; it is a system constantly seeking “newness” and reinvention (1998: 100). Mass-marketed brands provide a constant stream of products designed to replace what is now inherently out of fashion and therefore no longer of value. He believes this reoccurring cycle can also be observed in art and culture as part of the concept of “cultural recycling”, identifying that productions of art and culture in the current system are also subject to the same demand for “newness” and a constant recycling of concepts (1998: 102). He argues that the process of valuation in both art and fashion becomes convoluted when we have the contradictory approaches of a desire for democratization and universality contrasting with finite and limited creations of higher value (1998: 106). Baudrillard addresses the loss of quality or value, ‘what happens is that, as “mass-produced” objects, works so produced become effectively objects of the same kind... and acquire the same meaning in relation to those things. They no longer stand opposed, as works and as semantic substance’ (1998: 107). McFarren is concerned that mass produced objects are often devoid of the soul and beauty found in a handmade object, brought to life through the relationship between maker and material. He believes that these handmade objects carry something of the maker in them (2015: 30). He examines the disengagement that comes from the deep separation between designer, maker and consumer. This degree of separation and lack of understanding of how our products are made, influences not only the devaluation of objects but also the devaluation of the maker themselves. While Wagner suggests it is the constant engagement with the impression of “newness” in fashion is what cultivates our critical judgment and aesthetic appreciation for fashion and that our understanding of aesthetics and beauty are culturally learned (1998: 139- 140). The different retail and production systems the consumer has been exposed to from the industrial revolution until now have ultimately influenced the messaging and impression of value the consumer is exposed to. These contexts of value have become socially learned tools to evaluate and assign value to everything we consume, leading us back again to the importance of the message and perception attached to objects.

When considering art and craft, there exists a connection that both are made by human hands and require a level of skill to produce an item of significant quality. So why does the consumer consistently seek lower priced and in many cases lower quality objects and in particular clothing? Fast fashion and its marketing message have continually devalued the worth of apparel and most consumer objects, often making price the determining purchase motivation. In fact, fast fashion marketing works very hard to keep the conversation focused on the latest trends available at the lowest price. They actually promote the disposability of their clothing instead of trying to cover it up, not keeping an item is an opportunity to buy something new so durability and quality are no longer part of the conversation (Joy et al 2012: 288). Currently, the most profitable global fashion brands are a mixture of luxury and fast fashion brands. The top 10 includes brands like Inditex, the parent company of Zara, and H&M alongside LVMH, owner of Luis Vuitton, and Hermes. H&M alone had over \$25 billion in global sales in 2015. (Fashion United, 2018) These messages seek to convince the consumer that low prices are too good to pass up, buy one in each colour and because it was so cheap discard it and buy something new tomorrow. The saturation of runways trends into low cost fashion retail locations has blurred the lines between luxury and quality items made by skilled artisans and the low cost mass-produced objects (Anguelov, 2016: 4). A study on young consumers in Hong Kong and Canada identified this product overlap, demonstrating that similar items were available to these consumers at different price and quality levels but due to the disposable nature they associated with clothing, they were more likely to purchase the lower priced item (Joy et al 2012: 282- 283). The consumer now has a choice to buy the latest trend from a higher quality retailer for a higher price or at a lower price and lower quality but similar appearance. These fast fashion retailers often have the same or even more brand visibility in the market allowing them more control over the conversation.

Media is another tool used to drive consumption and frame our perception of fashion. Editorials place fashion items in context to classify them socially and culturally, while fashion marketing provides connection to brand

names and ultimately assigns them an understood value (Anguelov, 2016: 7). Customers who traditionally favoured luxury brands were first exposed to new trends and brand image through fashion editorials. Most consumers would have to wait for these trends to trickle down to mainstream retail allowing those who could afford luxury the ability to be the first to participate in a fashion trend. Brands now see both the traditional luxury consumer and the aspiration consumer wooed away by the availability of high fashion style, right off the runway. Items, which at first look, have the same visual appearance as the luxury item but for a fraction of the cost (Anguelov, 2016: 17). The speed, volume, disposable and ultimately the similar aesthetic appearance of mass-produced fashion make it difficult for the higher quality items produced with specialized skills to differentiate themselves. Especially when you consider the volume of marketing messages of low prices and constant newness that these mass-produced brands flood the market with. If we are to change the message, we need to go begin with the components believed to be at the core of value perception in art and craft-aesthetics and skilled labour.

Aesthetics

Risatti believed that 'most any object can be a work of art. All that is required is for it to possess sufficient aesthetic experience' (2007: 18). Kant identifies a differentiation between craft and art as art is made out of an enjoyable action, while craft is a product of labour. In his opinion true art is created without constraint (1987:171). Harold Osborne defines aesthetic objects as 'any artefact that is adapted to evoke and sustain aesthetic attention or any artefact which is produced with the intention of giving it the capacity to evoke and sustain aesthetic attention' (1986: 331). Objects of art are produced with physical, sensory and aesthetic elements, all of which exists with or without a viewer there to interpret them but are key to that work being interpreted and valued as a beautiful work of art. With consumable products, even those that fall under the heading of applied arts, their aesthetic values are bound to and either enhanced or restrained by their functionality (Wagner, 1998: 129). This functionality can call into question the role of aesthetics in their creation. The challenge between recognising equal or similar value between art and applied arts is evident when considering if function is greater importance over aesthetics when creating a crafted object. While most aesthetic choices in art are subject to creating a visual and symbolic understanding with the viewer, material choices in a crafted object are first subject to the required function, possibly making aesthetics a secondary concern. In many cases the quality or flaws within the material may even dictate changes in the final aesthetic appearance (Risatti, 2007: 127, 195). Osborne offers in regards to art, 'aesthetic value is a necessary and the only necessary condition for any artefact to qualify as a work of art... when we are exposed to a work of art we form a vaguely defined assessment of its total value, including aesthetics amongst other linked values, without distinguishing among them' (Osborne, 1986: 336). Kant believes due to the nature of art the, definition between object and art comes from intention. Was the intention to create a work to generate a response or was the intention to create the object itself? He uses this to further classify art as fine art or mechanical art (Kant, 1987: 174). All of the above opinions are interesting to consider when analysing the influence of aesthetics to the consumer, but it is also important to remember that the existence of aesthetics are not enough on their own, it will be the reception and interpretation of aesthetic values and experience that will ultimately influence the consumer in generating a value perception.

Aesthetic attributes in commodities are of value to the consumer as they are part of the consumption experience (Wagner, 1998: 136). The aesthetic attributes of the object only raise the value of the product because they take it from merely being an object of function to one that also provides an experience or interaction, giving the object a deeper appreciation and connection to the user. Like art, clothing is subject in its creation to the design elements of line, shape, colour, texture, light and contrast (Wagner, 1998: 138, 140). Additionally, clothing and textiles featured in works of art are viewed as a means of personal adornment and often used to convey symbolic meaning to the viewer. Here they are not seen as items of lesser value, in fact in many cases, clothing and textiles are subject to critical and symbolic analysis in works of art. Their symbolism,

design, treatment and function can be thoroughly discussed and not merely brushed off as a bodily covering that could have been made anywhere in the world by any person. In my opinion, it is the consumer's interpretation of the value of aesthetics appearance and the opportunity for adornment that may allow fashion to reside as an object of value alongside art and craft.

While art is often automatically assigned a certain level of value just for being recognised as a work of art, with fashion, craft and other applied arts that recognition of value is less universally accepted. According to Wagner 'as applied art objects, fashion goods represent a more complicated aesthetic than do fine art objects. In the fine arts, aesthetic value is "pure" intrinsic value; that is the fine art object is consumed just for the sake of experiencing its beauty. In fashion, aesthetic value is derived not from beauty alone, but from a complex of values... such as quality and status' (1998: 143). Joanne Entwistle explains that fashion and applied arts are part of "aesthetic markets" and that value is subjective and due to the nature of fashion, the perception of value is not constantly stable. Value is established through mediated messaging and method of selling the object to the consumer (2009). 'The value people set upon things of beauty is a reflection of the value assumed to reside in a successful aesthetic experience. Because our assessment of aesthetic objects imply judgment about their effectiveness for sustaining aesthetic experience there is in our evaluations of them an implicit attribution of high worth' (Osborne 1986: 332). Aesthetic attributes provide a link between the consumption of art, craft and fashion, yet aesthetic value is often ignored by marketing in favour of price-based messaging.

Value from Labour

The second component in assessing and creating value is the area of skilled labour and labour output. Items created by hand, by an artisan recognized to have a high level of skill and required a significant time investment to produce tend to be perceived as having a higher value than those that were mass produced on machinery in a factory setting. The challenge comes from the earlier discussed separation of designer, maker and consumer, where the knowledge of the making process is no longer communicated to the consumer and all objects tend to be grouped together simply as products. When the story of where, how and by who an object was made is eliminated from the retail and marketing messaging, the consumers no longer have this information when assessing the value of the product and are forced to make choices simply on aesthetics, visible quality and price. This assessment process is further challenged by retail platforms moving more to online where quality is more difficult to ascertain, as shopping occurs without contact with the physical product (Anguelov, 2016: 16).

Risatti identifies that this separation between the physical process of making and the finished artistic entity can be observed all the way back to the Renaissance, when artists began 'to disassociate themselves from the notion of workmanship as a strictly physical labour by stressing the intellectual elements that their art entailed...in an effort to raise the prestige' (2007: 213). Fast forward seven centuries and our current system of producing goods still encourages this separation between creative conception and the manual process of making. The Industrial revolution and growth in machine-assisted production began a democratisation process of increased access to a larger variety of products at multiple levels of quality and price. Before mass manufacturing, the human input in the production process was clearly identified and people purchased products produced in their communities. As we expanded through globalisation the process has become depersonalised and focused almost solely on corporate profits (McFarren 2015: 28). As industrialisation grew, the relationship between maker and consumer and the visible differences between handmade and machine-made objects preserved a division in the classification of quality and status in a product, therefore influencing the perception of value. Risatti suggests that prior to the industrial revolution 'there was no need to distinguish between handmade and machine made because all objects produced... were essentially handmade. In that age the interrelationship between skill, material, function, hand and creative mind was the social context in

which the object existed; it was a context that need no conscious articulation because it was understood and internalized by all' (2007: 152). The community connection consumers had to the craftsmen added value to the product and a product produced by skilled hands was viewed to have significantly higher prestige and value than the item produced in a factory. While the industrial revolution made product more available and increased product choices, the division between quality and quantity was preserved, in the beginning, through the connection between maker and consumer. As globalisation has spread, manufacturing has shifted from developed to developing countries. McFarren believes that 'today very little value is derived from, or imparted to, the objects we use on a daily basis. The objects are generally uniform in design and similar in appearance to those used by everyone else, made of materials that are usually devoid of natural attributes, and are thus alienated from the user on every level. We do not usually know who made them or how, and as a result have no connection to either the maker or the process. No relationship has been communicated, and often no experienced gained through the acquisition of the object, which was likely obtained through an anonymous environment' (2015: 32-33). This degree of separation and experience is further sanitised as we now acquire many of our goods through internet shopping, forgoing even the retail experience further reducing the connection between designer, maker, consumer.

A changing consumer

Due to recent growth in the areas of sustainable and responsible consumption practices, there is a perceivable growing interest in knowing where, how and by who a product was made. This creates an opportunity for greater recognition and value for labour and skill intensive making and workmanship. This form of consumer value assessment often takes into account the level of skill and labour involved in the creation of the object, leading the consumer to view this as key element adding value to the product. It is this shift in consumer interest and values that may create an opening in the message makers and designers are using communicate with consumers. There could be an opportunity to change the message of value from one that is price focused to one that speaks to the value and quality of the product itself. If the message focuses on where, how and by who a product was produced, there could be an opportunity for artisanal makers to differentiate themselves from the marketing noise surrounding mass produced fashion and present themselves to the consumer as a value-added choice.

Risatti proposes for craft to receive the same value perception as art, the connection of the object to meaning and culture needs to be just as important as the function and material. 'In the present industrial-technological climate, conceptualisation is valued over execution, execution seemingly being reduced in importance to the level of the rote or mechanical' (2007: 169). We have entered a period of consumer fatigue over product uniformity and the overwhelming abundance of available product. Artisanally made items last longer than their mass produced counterparts, have unique design features and are often more aesthetically pleasing but they get lost in the noise and overwhelming presence of mass manufactured retail. Those who are currently favouring artisanally produced items, are commonly purchasing through retail channels which also provide direct interaction with the brand, designer and possibly even the maker, through events like pop up shops and maker markets. Larger brands are also trying to capitalize on a growing interest in hand crafted details with brands like Levis using slogans that reference craft, "made and crafted" (Levis, 2018).

Fashion rarely goes through the hands of only one producer. From designer through materials to finished product a garment can easily possess the work of multiple people. If we again borrow from trends in art, there has been visible growth in the area of collaborative, crowd sourced and experiential art. This type of art is growing in popularity as it provides a heightened level of engagement, which increases perceptions of meaning and connection adding value to the aesthetic experience (Morse, 2014). Additionally, millennials have demonstrated a strong desire for experiential retail. They are looking for retail offering attention to connection, personalization, aesthetic appearance, quality and an experience (Calienes et al., 2016). Their desire for

unique products with a story or a connection have led to growth in alternative retail formats like the website Etsy (<https://www.etsy.com/>), maker markets and the maker movement ('The art and craft of business' 2014). These retail channels provide access not only to unique product, but often to the maker as well. This has led me to consider if we were to focus marketing to tell the stories of our makers; to not only name them but to celebrate them for their skills and talent, could this bridge that division between designer, maker and consumer? I believe that knowing the story of where, how and by who your product was made can bring back the context the consumer is currently missing, giving them tools to do a more educated value assessment and feel connected to the products we consume. Bandana Tewari believes 'the answer to saving these crafts lies in a fundamental shift in perspective: recognizing that there is a human being behind every handmade good. An increasing devaluation and disassociation of man from craft, process from product, is one of the biggest shortcomings of our developing world' (2015). The goal would be to re-focus the message from that of price to one of story telling, highlighting value, skill and offering a point of differentiation over the mass-produced objects similar in appearance. According to McFarren change needs to come from consumers by 'claiming a stake in our goods its to become knowledgeable about where to find the distinct, the novel, the representative of our own cultural viewpoint' (2015: 34). This action can 'shift the value system' (McFarren, 2015: 34) to one that supports the best interests of both consumers and makers. By empowering ourselves with the knowledge of where, how and who makes our products, we can make better consumption choices and choose items that are of value to us, are products we can identify with and are products that not only enrich our lives but the lives of the maker.

To support this change, Risatti believes that 'the handmade object of craftsmanship needs to be accorded a more prominent place in our thinking, for it sheds light onto the world that offers a needed counterpart to that anonymousness and 'unlimited-ness' that industrial production encourages' (2007: 202). When something is crafted by skilled hands and thoughtful design the object is imbued with meaning, it carries something of the maker and the making process can be reflected as value in the object itself (Risatti, 2007: 188). Bandana Tewari, calls on the luxury industry to embrace the collaborative nature of making, especially considering their reliance on so many specialized craft people to produce garments and accessories. She believes that 'each brand in the luxury industry has a role to play in making the luxury sector's link to these craftspeople visible' (2015). Annamma Joy and colleagues, propose a marketing focus on aesthetics and an emphasis on artisanal quality could be a key point of differentiation for the luxury market (Joy et al., 2012: 292). Some slow fashion, community and social enterprises and fashion collectives are already doing this by featuring maker profiles on their websites. Acknowledging a maker at this level not only increases connection, it takes transparency to a higher level. This could also be a positive step towards addressing some of the other issues involving the fashion industry, as it is difficult to produce with unethical practices when you are celebrating and making your craftspeople more visible. Identifying the collaborative and skilled nature of producing artisanally made fashion can offer an opportunity to deepen the connection and understanding of value between the designer, maker and consumer, leading to a more educated consumer with the context to possibly make more responsible consumption choices. This literature review is just the first phase of a larger research project. The second phase is currently in process and involves the creation of collaborative fashion and art pieces that take direct inspiration from areas of art, craft and fashion, are composed of crowd sourced materials and highlight the skill, agency and collaborative nature that can exist in producing fashion objects.

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