

THE EVOLUTION OF THE DESIGNER

Bits 'n Pieces 4-11-09 until 4-12-09 New York

We live in a sped-up world in which technological advances occur faster and faster. We can't imagine, for instance, living in our homes and working in our offices without products that were lab experiments only five years ago. Often, it has been technological innovation that has served as the catalyst for these changes. For example, will the 3D printer – the cost of which has plummeted in only a decade – move from the lab and the factory into our homes and offices in the near future? How could seemingly small changes like this actually have a big impact on society, socially, economically and culturally?

Technology has bestowed a greater responsibility on the designer by radically altering his role. Design will not only be about creating products that are a result of innovation, but envisioning future scenarios and communicating these clearly to the public, suggesting new production processes and testing the manifold uses of new technologies. The designer is now in a position to tell factories which tools should be made and/or designed in order to make products, becoming as much researchers, scientists and engineers as “designers.” In this way, they must begin to use technology as a tool with which to expand what we perceive as “normal” and constantly re-create our quotidian world.

The concept of Bits 'n Pieces came to life when a diverse group of product designers based in the U.S. and Europe began to discuss how their various projects were informed by digital technology. Differences in location seemed to create differences in perspective but there were also, unexpectedly, many things in common.

Bits 'n Pieces addresses the myriad ways in which the digital era has changed the world of design, from the ways in which designers imagine images, objects and space to how they fabricate prototypes and manufacture at the mass level. Digital information emailed directly to a press, mill, laser-cutter or 3D printer can sometimes be picked up the very next day in the form of a three-dimensional object. Today, design developments speed across the globe via the Internet. It has also become increasingly easy to produce images, objects and architecture that were previously impossible thereby expanding the consumer's horizon at a much more rapid rate.

Much of the work in Bits 'n Pieces asks what we do and how we do it now that the digital revolution is behind us, and we have entered a post-digital era. Whether an object is digital or analog is no longer of any importance, since digital technologies are now embedded in the ways we think, work and play. Ten years ago, digital technologies were a goal rather than a means; one assumed that everything should and would be digitized. The tendency was “You are either with or against us”. One example can be seen in the music world, where around the turn of the century there was a big division between the digital musicians, with the blips and drones and the musicians that swore by analog. This discussion is now slowly quieting down and making room for subtle incorporations of digital in analog music and vice versa. Today's designers must dart back and forth frequently and effortlessly between digital and analog, using whatever means suits the job. By now, digital technology is “here to stay” and is a tool in a toolbox, next to all the other already existing (and emerging) tools.

Source: <http://www.bitsnpiecesnyc.com/pages/concept>