

PROBING INTO ARTISTIC COMMODITY DESIGN THROUGH THE SHIFT BETWEEN ART AND DESIGN

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ABSTRACT:

According to the current trend in which artwork is becoming a design commodity, the following two spirit-led models are proposed to describe artistic commodity design: the artist-led model and the designer-led model. These two models generate innovative form shifts such as reproduction, decomposition, and innovation. The shifting methods corresponding to these three form principles are classified into the "3T" models: 1) transfer—the transfer of design based on shape, color, or texture; 2) transit—deconstructing an artwork's composition, or augmenting an artwork by incorporating functionality and 3) transform—extracting the spirit or style of an artwork based on a designer's conceptualization. Therefore, we can achieve a common goal that coordinates varied purposes and styles by determining the spirit-led model, form principle, and 3T method that the artistic commodity should display.

Keywords: Artistic Commodity, Shifting, Design Method

1. INTRODUCTION

The cross-over and collaboration between art and design can be seen in the Taiwan government's promotion of cultural and creative industries, such as the "Challenge 2008: National Development Project." However, Gold (2007), who is an artist, designer, composer, and inventor, indicated that, because artists perceive the world introspectively and designers care about the perception of people in the world, divergences exist between the languages and emphases that artists and designers employ. In traditional society, the status of artists was higher than that of designers. However, the influence of designers is greater than that of artists today because design is currently powerful. In addition, Buchanan (2007) asserted that consideration of common factors associated with both art and design is a valuable topic. Deliberating the similarities and approaches employed by professionals in both fields allows people to examine shared thoughts and emotions, although they may seek them through different approaches and for different purposes.

Cultural commodity design is growing fast; however, researchers do not always agree that the artwork, which is designed to be an artistic commodity, accurately represents or contains the intended meaning. Both researchers, artists, and designers must communicate with each other more effectively. Numerous designers have found that their understanding of an artwork is typically misunderstood during the communication process. Consequently, there are divergences in the shift between art and design. If artists and designers can reach a consensus on the message they seek to communicate prior to engaging in cooperative efforts rather than simply offer their professional abilities as a service, a situation that benefits all involved parties can be achieved.

2. ARTWORK SHIFTS TO ARTISTIC COMMODITY DESIGN

Ransome (2005) indicated that in a society based on "work" shifting to "consuming," people aspire to explore values through culture. Specifically, for people who have a lot of leisure time, concepts such

as culture, taste, and appreciation become points of emphasis. From the perspective that the application of artwork to artistic commodity design is a major trend that is indicative of the shift between art and design, we show that when an artist or a designer is the leader of a design spirit, they can bring out different innovative principles of form and shift.

Artwork is neither understood by the majority of audiences, nor is it owned by many people. Henrik and Vanessa (2008) researched the phenomena and effect of visual art that had been appropriated into commodity design. They indicated that artwork involves the non-functional expressions of people's experience, sophistication, and creativity. However, when a piece of furniture is designed artistically, or if a painting is printed on a T-shirt, the artistic expression becomes an integrated product. Thus, the dissemination of art is considerably dependent upon its commercialization. Artwork is not only sold directly or indirectly by galleries, art markets, or through museum collections. The opportunity to increase sales can be realized by applying a model of art commercialization.

Recently, the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Art (NTMOFA) actively used their collections to develop artistic commodities such as ornaments, clothing, tableware, backpacks, and decorations. These items are affordable for people to purchase as a souvenir. The NTMOFA cooperated with national craftsmen to design modern and fashionable decorations by extracting the spirit, pattern, or color of specific artwork. The NTMOFA stated that their shop is positively seeking self-orientation and brand identity. They focus on the works of certain artist and subsequently promote a series of specific artistic commodities that cannot be purchased outside of the museum. The artistic commodities shown in Fig. 1 are an example of the commodities that audiences can purchase after visiting an exhibition. This strategy offers a platform for displaying the work of artists and self-produced companies.

The combination of cultural creativity and life has become a trend. Artists can transform artwork into design that blends into people's lives instead of indulge in self-admiration and violate the "functionless" aspect of art.



Figure 1: Artistic Commodities on Sale at the NTMOFA.

3. SHIFT OF SPIRITUAL-LED MODELS

Nelson and Stolterman (2003) asserted that design problems differ from other traditional problems because service is an essential element. By definition, design is a type of service relationship. All design activities must be processed based on the dynamic relationship between those being serviced (e.g., clients, agents, customers, and end-users) and those providing the service (e.g., designers). However, observing some typical and professional designers' behavior shows that their approach to providing services is unclear. The connective service relationships in design are key factors that differentiate traditional design, art, or science. Science and art are essentially cultures of problem and action, which are self-serving. Artists frequently express their passions, feelings, and understandings about the world to fulfill their personal need for self-expression. However, designers serve others rather than themselves (other-serving).

Furthermore, Nelson and Stolterman (2003) proposed the following four models of designer roles based on designer-client relationships (Fig. 2): 1) Designer Artist—In this model, the designer has absolute influence during the design process, whereas the client has none. The designer is uninterested in the requirements of the client, and creates a design based on his or her own judgment of the requirements for a suitable design solution. The behavior of this type of designer is similar to that of an artist, and such designers are typically famous. 2) Designer Expert—This type of designer takes the initiative, and the client responds to the designer’s proposal. The designer’s role in the design process is that of an expert. They fulfill their role based on a predetermined concept and objective, and do not consider it necessary to interact with the clients. As an expert, the designer determines which general solutions or methods are suitable for the client’s specific situation. 3) Designer Technician—For this model, the designer’s role is similar to that of a technician. Rather than providing creative input during the design process, the designer answers questions or responds to the client’s desires. 4) Designer Facilitator—In this situation, clients have a clear awareness of requirements. Therefore, the designer becomes to be a facilitator, and only follows the client’s requests without any personal input.

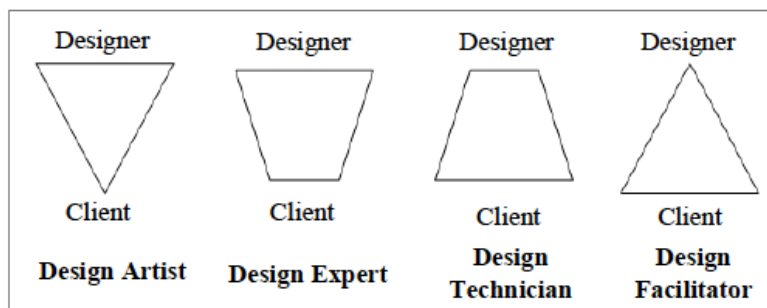


Figure 2: The Role Model of Designer/Client Relationships.

Ho, Lin, and Liu (1996) proposed a cultural commodity model that can be used to distinguish between the following four levels: 1) style-led—designer, user, and producer; 2) marketing strategy—domestic, international, and other nations; 3) design displaying—localized or internationalized; and 4) form elements—shape, color, medium, and composition. The styleled level is similar to Nelson and Stolterman’s collaborative designer-client relationship model.

Consequently, we assert that the shifting process of artistic commodities can be separated into the following two spirit-led models (Hsieh and Guan 2011):

1) Artist/artwork-led—The final work retains the majority of the original artwork’s appearance, and the designer’s innovative input is minimal. The designer’s role in this collaborative model is a balance between that of a design technician and design facilitator.

2) Designer-led—During the design process, the elements of the original artwork are deconstructed through the designer’s innovative design, or the designer extracts the spirit of the artwork or artist, and subsequently redesigns a novel commodity. The designer’s role in this collaborative model is a balance between that of a design expert and design artist.

Fig. 3 shows these two types of spirit-led shifting of artistic commodity design. The artwork is a block print work produced by the contemporary Taiwanese artist Ting-Shih Chen.

Supposing via equivalence of black box design process (the black area of Fig.3), by following the artist/artwork-led model, a necklace was produced that retained the appearance of the original artwork and conformed to a modern aesthetic style. The necklace allows consumers to increase or decrease the artistic elements of the necklace based on their personal preference, which satisfies the desire for change. By adhering to the designer-led model, a fashionable toilet was produced by deconstructing the elements of the artwork to provide an innovatively functional artistic commodity.

Lin RT. (2009) proposed the “4C” elements of cultural creative commodities: 1) cultural—the design incorporates common cultural elements; 2) collective—the elements that can adequately represent the object are extracted, and then the artwork is transformed into articles for daily use; 3) cheerful—creative commodities should inspire cheerfulness and be aesthetically pleasing; and 4) creative—commodities that creatively integrate common culture. According to the “collective”, element in the artist-led model, the white part retains more elements of collecting from the artwork, and the designer is less involved. In the designer-led model, fewer elements of the artwork are collected, but the designer’s innovative design is interpreted instead. Consequently, despite being based on one artwork, an artist-led or designer-led approach generates various form-shifting principles in artistic commodities throughout the design process.

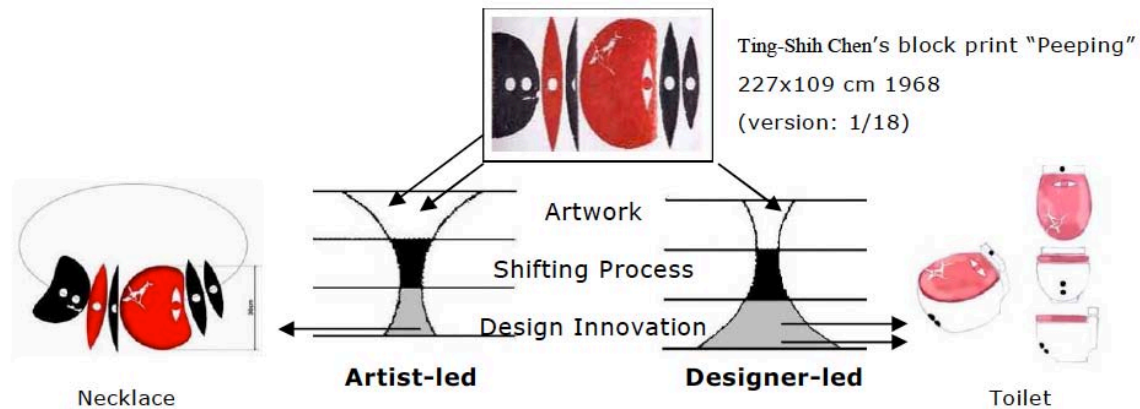


Figure 3: The Spirit-led Shifting of Artistic Commodity.

4. INNOVATIVE FORM PRINCIPLES AND SHIFTING ARTISTIC COMMODITY DESIGN METHODS

Gold (2007) expressed that both personal and cultural creativity can occur to different degrees. We frequently state that one object is more creative or innovative than another, it means the more far from present thing or the lower copy level are more innovative. A core concept of creativity is creating objects that never been produced or conceptualized without imitating existing products. In other words, artistic commodity designers should not invariably duplicate artwork or reprint patterns of other artwork on their commodities. Instead, designers should seek inspiration from artwork and infuse the designer’s concept into their own work.

As summarized in Fig. 4, Razzaghi (2008) indicated that innovation can be distinguished into the following three levels: 1) low innovation—designers slightly alter the aesthetic or practical function of a product; 2) mid innovation—the product provides users with characteristics that have not appeared regularly in markets; and 3) high innovation— designers can completely control the design of product. Qiu and Ho (2002) purported that cultural design communication can be categorized into the following four levels: 1) basis— this level emphasizes achieving a completely realistic appearance; 2) composition—this level stresses a design’s representational and symbolic formation; 3) transformation—emphasis is placed on inference, association, analogy, and the appearance of applied cultural meanings; and 4) innovation—this level focuses on perceived cultural meanings, local history, or philosophical paradigms, thereby transforming relative issues and challenging the original model of appearance and creation.

Furthermore, Lee (2004) proposed a cultural framework with multiple layers, including layers that represent artifacts, values, and basic assumptions. These layers are identified by key design attributes that represent function, aesthetics, and symbols. Leong and Clark (2003) proposed a framework of studying cultural commodities that classified the following three levels: 1) the outer “tangible” level; 2)

the mid “behavioral” level; and 3) the inner “intangible” level. Based on these two studies, Lin RT. (2007) also developed a framework of studying cultural factors (Fig. 4) that distinguishes culture into the following three layers: 1) physical or material; 2) social or behavioral; and 3) spiritual or ideal. These three cultural layers can be applied to Leong’s three cultural levels. Regarding cultural objects that can be applied to cultural design, the following three design features can be classified: 1) The outer level includes shape, color, texture, decoration, surface pattern, and detail; 2) The middle level includes function, operational concerns, usability, and safety; 3) The inner level includes special content such as stories, emotions, and cultural features.

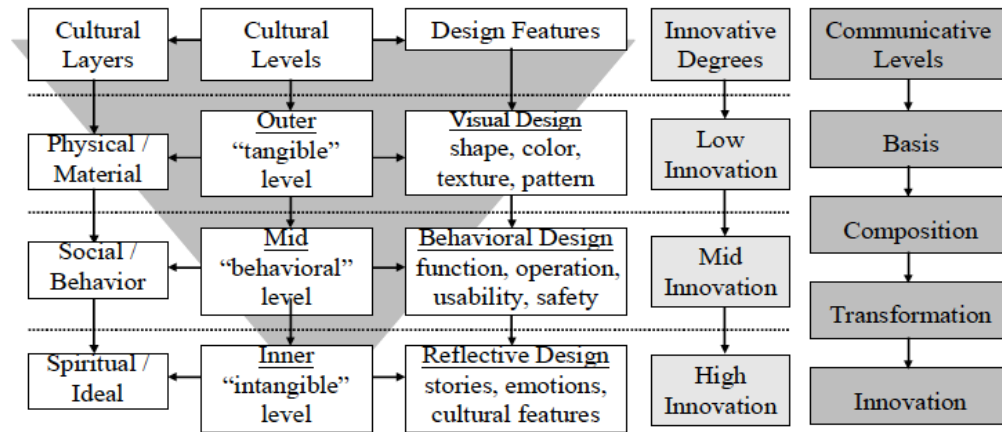


Figure 4: Three Layers, Levels, Features, Degrees and Four Communicative Levels of Cultural Product Design.

Consequently, we propose that artists or designers who are spirit-led engage in form shifting during the process of artistic commodity design. This concept can be classified into the following three form principles which are based on the degrees of design innovation:

- 1) **Reproduction**—the original characteristics of the artwork are retained. The design process is fulfilled by modifying the appearance to suit a specific aesthetic appeal. This principle is similar to that which applies to traditional artistic commodities that have patterns printed on them. This principle belongs to the outer level.
- 2) **Decomposition**—the elements of the original artwork are deconstructed or augmented with mid-level functionality, although the original artwork remains identifiable. This principle belongs to mid level.
- 3) **Innovation**—the designer collects the creative spirit of the artwork or artist, and subsequently redesigns a novel form of artistic commodity in which the original artwork is unrecognizable. This form belongs to the inner level.

Moreover, the shifts that correspond to the three proposed form principles can be classified into the following “3T” shifting methods:

- 1) **Transfer**—the designer’s aesthetic considerations are infused into attributes of shape, color, texture, decoration, surface pattern, or detail of the outer level.
- 2) **Transit**—“Transit” originally means changing to another condition or appearance, and often involves the thought, perspective, standpoint, attitude, mood, status, situation, period, or direction of humans (Lin QZ. 2009). It is indicative of functionality, composition, or the combination of mid-level attributes in our research. Thus, the designer endows functionality or decomposes the elements of artwork, which consequently begin to physically transit.

3) Transform—"Transform" originally means character, essence, contradiction, strength, thought of abstract things, especially in philosophy and belongs to a form of rhetoric. It primarily substitutes abstract or lifeless objects with concrete objects, and transforms the original element into an entity that is completely different from the essence (Lin QZ. 2009).

It indicates starting from inner level, the spirit of artist or artwork that is transformed by the designer's perception, and the original artwork becomes unrecognizable.

As shown in Fig. 5 shows, we incorporate the practical design of research by Lin (2007) as an example of the application of the spirit-led form principles and "3T" shifting models:

- 1) A shift of reproduction is achieved by transferring the horizontal and vertical composition, as well as the color of Mondrian's "Composition with Red, Yellow and Blue" into the decoration of an apartment's fire hydrant. The designer adheres to the condition of unspoiled equipment (i.e., the signs of red and yellow frames) to add artistic aesthetics.
- 2) A shift of decomposition is achieved by applying the transit method. The elements of "Lozenge Composition with Red, Gray, Blue, Yellow, and Black" are analyzed, deconstructed, and applied to a modern TV cabinet, which corresponds to the behavioral level function.
- 3) A shift of innovation is achieved by extracting the spirit of Mondrian's artwork, and subsequently transforming the style of horizontal and vertical division into an exhibit cabinet that contains mementos and travel souvenirs, causing the original artwork to appear indiscernible.

The shifting of reproduction, decomposition, and innovation of form principles are representative of the spirit-led principles of art and design. The collaborative process is detailed as followed:

- 1) Discuss who is responsible for spirit-led based on the factors of purpose, subject, and so on.
- 2) Select a suitable artwork (e.g., an artist or an art style) to be the primary basis for shifting.
- 3) Determine an appropriate artistic commodity form principle that provides the designer with a direction for the intended design.
- 4) Confirm which of the "3T" shifting methods corresponds to the selected form principle, and commence the artistic commodity design.
- 5) Produce a prototype of the artistic commodity by adhering to the specified spirit-led form principle and shifting method.
- 6) The divergences in the cooperative process are reduced, and the participants in artistic commodity design reaches a consensus.

In conclusion, regardless of whether a commodity design process is artist-led or designer-led, the process entails various form-shifting principles. If a consensus can be achieved in communication prior to collaboration (i.e., the leader and the strategies taken to achieve the target form principles are determined), then the perspective divergences of the connotation and creativity which is high or low can be decreased.

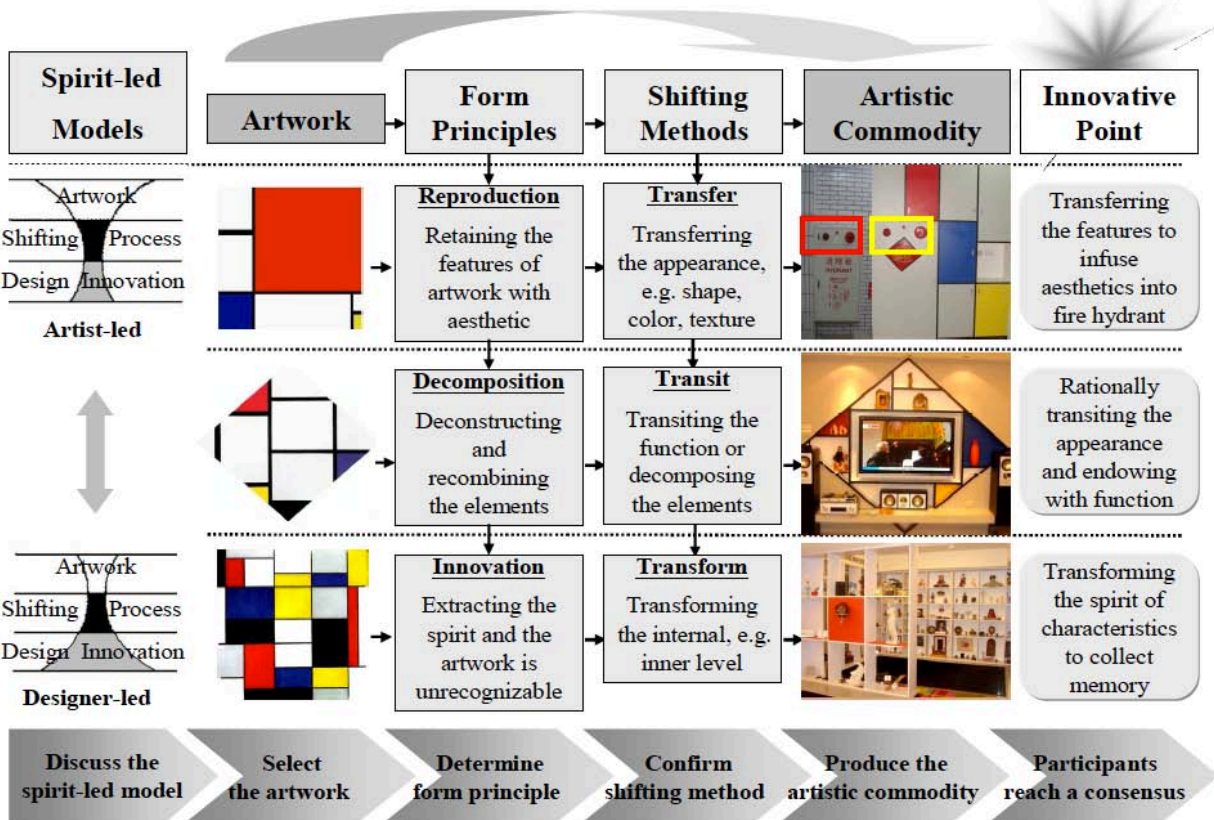


Figure 5: Relationship among Spirit-led Models, Form Principles and Shifting Ways of Artistic Commodity Design.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Art can stimulate designers' imaginations and capture the attention of a wide audience. Design is essentially a carrier that can disseminate the aesthetic expressions of artists. Since 1960, the field of design has shifted toward concepts associated with culture and art. Furthermore, the development of art has shifted toward a wider and newer expressive model. Both art and design share the foundations of creativity and the pursuit of expressing beauty. The conceptual processes of art or design are identical. However, this cannot change an artist's beliefs that a specific artwork is superior, their introversive worldview, or their self-serving values. A designer values innovation as the highest ideal and strives to care for people by holding service toward others in high regard. Therefore, divergences exist during the collaborative process that may cause concern when artists and designers cooperate to accommodate the trends of cultural and creative industries. Because the shifts are representative of the transformation of wisdom and creativity (i.e., knowledge shifting), the shifting process must exist in the divergences. Therefore, if artists and designers can reach a consensus prior to cooperating, an outcome that is beneficial to all involved parties is achievable.

After interpreting the recent examples of the shift of artwork into artistic commodities, we propose two spirit-led models (artist-led and designer-led) that are suitable approaches to the process of artistic commodity design, and are in accordance with Nelson and Stolterman's four types of designer roles. Subsequently, based on degrees of innovation, we assert that an artist or designer who is the spirit-led can produce various form shifts through the process of artistic commodity design. The levels of innovative design shift can be classified into the following three form principles: 1) "reproduction"—an approach for transferring shape, color, and texture corresponding to the outer level; 2) "decomposition"—a method to transit functionality and composition corresponding to the middle level; and 3) "innovation"—an approach to transforming spirit and emotion corresponding to the inner level.

Consequently, our analysis of the shift between art and design shows that an artist or designer who is the spirit-led of artistic commodity design can produce different innovative form shifting. The shifting methods can be classified into the following 3T shifting models: 1) transfer—the transfer of design based on shape, color, or texture corresponding to the outer level; 2) transit—deconstructing an artwork's composition, or augmenting an artwork by incorporating functionality; and 3) transform—extracting the spirit or style of an artwork based on a designer's conceptualization, thereby making the original artwork indiscernible.

Therefore, we confirm the definitions of transfer, transit, and transform to integrate these concepts for application in cultural product design. If artists and designers can reach a consensus on 1) who is the spirit-led, 2) which form principle should be applied, and 3) the most suitable shifting method for an artistic commodity (based on purpose, style, or strategy) prior to over collaboration, then the divergences of the artistic commodity design process are reduced. We recommend that future studies examine case studies of artistic commodity designs based on the two spirit-led models, three form principles, and the "3T" shifting methods proposed in this study.

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