

P / REFERENCES OF DESIGN

LOCAL TRADITION AND GLOBAL FUTURE: NEW PARADIGMS OF THE MADE IN ITALY CULTURAL DESIGN.

Vincenzo Paolo Bagnato*^a

a Polytechnic University of Bari, Department of Architecture, Construction and Design, Italy

* vincenzopaolo.bagnato@poliba.it

DOI: 10.63442/DOBR5689

**KEYWORDS | PRODUCT DESIGN, MADE IN ITALY, CULTURAL VALUE CHAIN, CIRCULAR SUPPLY CHAIN,
LOCAL PRODUCTION DISTRICTS**

ABSTRACT | This paper proposal, which is part of a wider interdisciplinary research called MICS (Circular and Sustainable Made in Italy), intends to reflect on the new contours of the contemporary idea of ‘Made in Italy’, exploring its cultural value chain and the user engagement’s new paradigms as well as the companies’ current narrative strategies and the role played by the product-service systems within the Italian production framework.

The paper will focus on the new and consumer-driven business models for resilient and circular supply chains analyzing how Italian design supply companies today address the public (visitors, buyers, customers, users, etc.) in the framework of an approach in which the ethical components prevail over the aesthetic ones.

Furthermore, the research will study the narrative forms, both physical and virtual, through which companies present, to an increasingly sensitive and attentive audience to environmental issues, not their products but their strategies related to sustainability, inclusion, respect for the environment, and control of their products’ life cycle, as well as how they pursue the objectives of product, process and social innovation.

1. Introduction

The paper represents a reflection on the contemporary contours of the Made in Italy design production in its relationship with the new social requirements, to lay a groundwork for further research steps aimed at defining and experimenting with a new country of origin effect based on circularity and sustainability, models and methods for technology-based branding, communication, customer engagement and experience.

As a first step of the research (view the acknowledgments below), the paper has the form of an essay rather than a traditional paper because due to the complexity and the multiple directions that a topic like this can take, in this phase the investigation needs to be anticipated by the definition of a general framework in which to move.

Considering the definition of a new competitive paradigm for the companies in the Made in Italy sectors and the development of models, approaches, methods and tools for design as main final objectives of the research, the paper is based on a methodology structured in three parts: in the first one (chapters 2 and 3) the text offers an overview on the contemporary interpretation of the concept of Made in Italy, underlying the relationship with its historical identity and actual external references and interpretations; in the second part (chapter 4) the essay moves from this relationship towards the detection of the main specific elements which characterizes the new Italian production showing their ethical, sustainable and innovative components; in the third part (chapter 5 and 6) the paper uses these elements to draw the contours of the contemporary Made in Italy paradigm, its strengths and its possible future implementations in cultural terms.

The conclusions, far from being final, try to get out from the complexity of the argumentations through the definition of some simple questions to whom it tries to give a first system of answers in the mark of starting building a bridge between design and consumer-driven business models for resilient and circular supply chains.

2. The Concept of Made in Italy

Italy has a long history of excellence in design, which ranges from ‘anonymous’ objects of its historical material culture to innovative products born in various historical periods, especially between the 1950s and the 1980s. The concept of Made in Italy traditionally evokes images of high-quality craftsmanship, sophisticated style and innovation in continuity with cultural tradition and, in more recent years, it has continued to evolve by adapting its productions to the global cultural, technological and economic changes which have led to a significant transformation in the so-called ‘Made in Italy’ design paradigm. Amongst other things, an aspect that characterizes this paradigm shift is certainly linked to environmental and social sustainability: Italian companies and designers are increasingly trying to integrate eco-friendly practices into their production processes, using recycled or recyclable materials and adopting design solutions to reduce environmental impact; moreover, sustainability itself acquires a social dimension through processes of ‘democratization’ which aim to improve people's lives through conditions that become inclusive and accessible to all.

A second important aspect of the contemporary Made in Italy is represented by the renewed dialogue between design and technology: being Italy renowned for its artisanal and manufacturing heritage, the access to information and digital technologies (Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, 3D printing systems, etc.), if at first it seemed to be a threat to its identity and productive culture’s authenticity, today it seems to reveal itself as a precious ally precisely because it defends the small productive realities offering them fundamental tools to enhance and innovate their productions, remaining competitive on the global market.

Thirdly, another aspect is represented by the ability of the new Made in Italy to adapt to changes in the needs and expectations of global consumers: Italian companies are increasingly looking beyond national borders and trying to meet the needs of an increasingly diversified international market and this means not only offering products and services that reflect universal values of civilization but also and above all demonstrating sensitivity and responsibility towards major environmental, social and economic issues.

3. Made in Italy Between Local Tradition and Global Future

In a condition of liquidity such as that of our contemporary age, uncertain instead of certain, temporary instead of definitive, flexible instead of solid (Bauman, 2000), it's not easy, and perhaps it doesn't make reasonably much sense, to establish a universal definition of 'Made in Italy', at least for a couple of reasons: first of all because it's original meaning was defined ex-post, that is only after having observed the results of a very complex process in which creativity, social sensibility, artisan know-how and industrial technologies built an unrepeatable historic conjuncture which produced design artifacts with a very high (aesthetical and ethical) quality level (Fortis, 2005). Secondly, because it's evidently anachronistic to refer to a national context intended as a closed territorial unit in a moment in which the match is played between the local context (sub-national dimension) and the global market (trans-national dimension).

What can today probably have an interest, beyond the speculations about the origin of this phenomenon, is considering the Made in Italy in terms of a more general idea of excellence, in which the objects always have not only a function but also a 'soul' (Branzi, 2004), transferable to other cultural contexts, filtered through the actual contemporary social and economic situation; on the other hand, the importance of reaffirming the Made in Italy brand can be seen as the possibility to detect the cultural elements that it produced (also independently from the original socio-economic framework) anticipating the times and the forms through which it now flows into the idea of sustainability first and of 'country of origin effect' then (Pellegrini, 2016).

With the aim of making a new reading matrix, considering 'traditional' the idea of Made in Italy as a complex and heterogeneous industrial archipelago of local clusters with deep roots in artisan tradition, human capital and territorial culture able to produce always new high-quality objects within strong physical interactions and interpersonal relationships (Becattini, 1998; Sennett, 2008), the detailed analysis of this complexity leads us to detect some elements that, without claiming to be exhaustive, can be summarized as follow: Synthesis between art, tradition and material culture; Unicity in the product's character and identity; Strong relationship between raw materials, transformation techniques and supply chain; Propensity for innovation in the mark of a historically sedimented know-how; Capacity of finding out solution using the latest technologies, always seen as a means and not as end; Confluence of the artisanal manufacturing production into high quality design objects through industrial productive processes; Social attention, communication and interaction with the final users' needs and requirements, those intended both as individuals and as members of cultural communities; Production based on cooperation, intercultural dialogue and sharing; Aesthetical aspects based on semantic and semiotic elements. Even if these elements, still visible today, shall be considered as constant and temporally stable characteristics of Made in Italy, their relationship with the global scenario in which they are inserted has significantly changed: this means that the traditional dynamism of the Made in Italy system turns it into a constantly evolving paradigm in which it rediscovers and reinvents itself aiming at building a new system of values in the framework of the so-called 'New Normal', starting from the valorization of the local production districts so to give a contribution in creating a new country of origin effect extendable at international level (Lotti et al., 2015).

Starting from the valorization of the local production districts, what is happening is that the (so-called) Made in Italy tends to build a new system of values to produce a new country of origin effect extendable at the international level: beyond the 'traditional' 4A (*Alimentari, Abbigliamento, Arredo, Automazione*), in all the sector in which is nowadays possible to recognize the abovementioned characters of the new Made in Italy brand (automotive, fashion, craftsmanship, furniture, graphics-communication, urban spaces,

enhancement of cultural heritage, new digital technology) the companies that mainly belong to small local productive context with little chance of emerging in the global market, are increasingly moving towards the definition of social innovation strategies, sustainability and customization as well as on the offered user experience possibilities and usability.

In Europe, the relationship between local traditions and global future is nowadays crucial in design's field of action because the necessity of defining new ethical values that follow the contemporary social senses and sensibilities of each local community has become fundamental to reach the objectives defined by the New European Bauhaus initiative, as promoted by the many platforms created for the cooperation of art, architecture, design, science, circular economy and AI, to build a sustainable, inclusive and innovative future (i.e. the Triennale of Milan in 2021, the MAXXI in Rome in 2022 and the *Biennale di Venezia* in 2023); otherwise, the challenges coming from the global dimension of things cannot be tackled any more by deleting or restricting the local traditions and this is true both in the dimension of production processes and consumer awareness (Ceconello, 2022). Furthermore, sustainability, innovation and identity as never before are now parts of a more general 'cultural dimension' which can be considered as a bridge between different backgrounds and as a *fil rouge* connecting all the local contexts with their specific relationships between industrial design and manufacturing knowledge (Dellapiana, 2022).

While the European Union identifies the productive factor of the manufacturing sector as fundamental for future sustainable economic development, in 2017 the Italian Government promoted and presented the Industry Plan 4.0 (*Piano Industria 4.0*) aimed at improving the digital innovation for the manufacturing sector (advanced craftsmanship), but the crisis has slowed down in approaching the new possibilities offered by the latest technologies.

In 2015 the Italian Government answered to the European guidelines also in terms of sustainability when, following the goals of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, it arranged the national scheme called 'Made Green in Italy' to integrate the Made in Italy brand with the dimension of sustainability: this led to a very positive outcome in terms of product's environmental sustainability (as evidenced by the report '*Italia Sostenibile*' by Cerved Italy), even if to yet excellent under the social and economic point of view. Nevertheless, all the sectors are now showing signs of recovery both at the productive and management level: which is leading to an important contribution, as we have seen, to the construction of a new paradigm of Made in Italy, made of the innovative supply chain, technology transfer, preservation of the artisanal dimension besides the acquisition of computer tools (hardware and software), clear traceability and authenticity of products, equilibrium between productive responsibility and necessity of quickly placing on the market, new ethical relationship between specific user requirements and mass customization (Goretti et al., 2019).

As a consequence, downstream of these processes, after the global transition to industry 4.0 with its four components (cyber-physical production system, internet of things, smart factory and internet of service), it's now that Made in Italy is trying to re-invent its identity updating its historical relationship between technology and craftsmanship, overcoming stereotypes and misrepresentations on behalf of its real social, economic and cultural characteristics, reconstructing the relationship between 'image' and 'information on it', taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the new digital technologies (Bettiol, 2015).

The companies are now asked to design their products differently, better explaining their philosophy, integrating sustainable strategies, strengthening customer services to be close to buyers as consultants and assistants; furthermore, the 'content' becomes fundamental for the future production in the local contexts: with which to communicate, inspire and bring the target audience closer by creating suggestions of living lifestyles through the product, as well as sustainability and circular economy are increasingly concrete resources and challenges for all the actors involved in the design processes.

4. Sustainability and Innovation of the Italian Production

Sense and aesthetical sensibility, empathy and adaptive flexibility, humanistic mode, meticulousness and attention to detail, tinkering, and enjoyable modernity (Amatulli et al., 2017) are keywords related to the concept of Made in Italy that can help us to reach the specific dimension of sustainability of its brand: an ante-litteram social and environmental sustainability strongly connected to a cultural context, with a central role of design that becomes an active subject in managing innovation processes, communication systems, cultural meaning of the functional solutions.

Furthermore, this extended interpretative perspective of the concept of sustainability is a key to changing our point of view on the actual idea of 'consumption' which tends to become a critical action done by the users/buyers that, without passively suffering choices 'from above', on one hand actively ask the company to demonstrate their strategies in terms of environmental respect and resource-saving, on the other hand, claim to 'communicate' with products that recognize their values and their identity instead of (only) that of the productive company (Micelli, 2017). As already underlined, this is certainly a form of sustainability, on one hand considered in its social aspects, on the other hand as a fundamental ingredient in the search for innovation: the increase in the number of actors involved, the extension to the intangible dimension of things and the open character of the manufacturing processes create the conditions for maintaining a constant updating independent from the companies' push and more and more related to the encounter of a large number of contributions at any level.

In the ambit of this new sustainability paradigm, the Italian design supply companies have accepted new consumer-driven business models, welcoming the opportunities offered by the new information technologies and systems of interaction that allow buyers and users to participate in the design decisions through individual experiences, collective interpretations and definition of new meanings, symbols and rituals: new narrative approaches that make possible to share knowledge and offer to the public the possibility to become active creators, co-designing and sometimes co-producing, starting the product development process from the bottom and not anymore from above (Micelli & Di Maria, 2000); but also living real experiences in specific real contexts or virtual spaces as a sublimation of the sharing of cultural meanings and ethical values with the companies, in a socially and economically sustainable way. In other words, through the new models of interactions, consumers have now tools to get out from individuality and build social relationships with companies and with other consumers, so that the manufacturing systems, in this case of Made in Italy, cannot live anymore on the old image of its brand, but it's now asked to redesign not only its productive framework but also its context of consumption to allow participation and definition of new significances.

In terms of innovation, as already mentioned, the Made in Italy design tradition has always been characterized by a condition of flexibility, mutability, creativity and intuition: then, not products intended as reiterations of static and dogmatic aspects, but future-oriented solutions open to a multitude of productive outputs (Mancini, 2018). Now, the evolution of this concept can be the idea of innovation as an expression of an equilibrium between art, technology and the human factor, based on relentless experimentation which always starts from the reinvention of the past and never by its denial, also in absence of the highest technological tools (Dellapiana, 2022). Moreover, an innovation that is not radical but 'incremental', produced by a sequence of small contributions that can be added over time, from generation to generation, without an explicit boost but, in a way, spontaneously, as a natural consequence of a working methodology and ritual.

5. New Paradigms of the Made in Italy Design

Currently, the narrative dimension of Made in Italy in the international context is characterized by some shortcomings which are mainly attributable to the following aspects: absence of a common strategy for the entire industrial network; not always clear definition of the common values that link the specificities of the different local production contexts beyond their differences (among themselves and with those of other countries); a certain reticence of the small companies to make their know-how available; confusion between the

communicative dimension and that of marketing, that is, between narration and marketing of products; limited acceptance of the information and digital technology contributions, including those relating to online sales (Micelli, 2018).

This situation clashes with the increasingly active role required by users who focus less and less on the products' functional aspects and more and more on the symbolic and cultural ones, attributing to the concept of 'quality' a connotation more in line with an idea of continuity with history, identity of the cultural contexts and authenticity of the production processes.

It is therefore clear that in Made in Italy, the relationship between production, storytelling and user experience must necessarily be generated starting from the ethical comparison with the material culture and cultural heritage of the territorial contexts, with their tangible and intangible elements, and must also be freed from traditional marketing mechanisms aimed at mere commercialization and move closer to build open, participatory and ultimately 'cultural' dialogue with users.

Therefore, the possibilities offered by the new business models and their relationship with the Made in Italy brand, as well as the necessity now socially shared to build a condition of circular economy, brings us to overcome the concept of 'made in' and arrive, as anticipated by the previous reflections, at that of 'country of origin' (Lotti & Trivellin, 2017).

The country-of-origin effect is the impact of the idea of quality associated to a specific cultural context on the users/buyers' purchasing processes. In the case of the Made in Italy products, the COOE can be defined as the trust people place on the objects whose design and production have been developed in Italy, due to the positive image they have of this country, with its abilities, experiences, knowledge and capacities (Bertoli & Resciniti, 2013; Bettiol & Micelli, 2005).

Being related to the buyers' perception and behavior (especially foreigners), downstream of the processes of market integration, standardization and trend for delocalization, the COOE is now taken into account by the companies through strategic systems of communication, interaction and participation, to rebuild their identity. Hence, the companies start addressing the shopping experiences of their clients but, as we have said before, is not possible anymore to consider the users/buyers as passive consumers, so becomes important the respect their consciousness and awareness about the products' cultural values. But actually, the problem is that, due to the difficulty of a product to be designed, manufactured and assembled in one unique country, the COOE has become fragmented at least into three main constitutive elements: the overall image of a country, the image of a country and its products, images of products from a country (Bertoli & Resciniti, 2013).

Considering the stark imbalance in company size, typical of the contemporary Made in Italy productive system, it should be considered that the fragmentation which characterizes it very often tends to become an opportunity to transform the signs of recognition into a system of socio-cultural distinctive values; when these values take on a certain strength, they are intercepted by the contemporary scenario that, once accepted, it translates them into possible directions for design, productive and marketing strategies with a greater awareness. With no ambitions of being exhaustive, these directions can be: interoperability between objects, machines and people; virtualization as a function of the productive, economic, environmental and social sustainability; modularity of adaptable and open products, services and processes; decentralization as organizational form of the processes (Celaschi et al., 2017).

As a consequence, the user experience is therefore fundamental in the dialogue between companies and buyers, but it must be intended not as something added to the ordinary objects with the mere objective of selling a product, but, on the contrary, as an occasion made of specific spatiality, temporalities and rituals when companies and buyers can share a common ground of iconographic repertoires, ethical values, bonds with tradition, socially eligible degrees of innovation, forms of customization (Rinaldi, 2015).

Today, communicating one's impact and sustainability by informing the consumer about the creation of green products, use of natural and recycled materials, etc., is a fundamental competitiveness factor for local companies: the attention to quality of life becomes an issue to be addressed through the new business strategies to make people understand the new directions that the more careful design actions are going to take, rediscovering an approach that in our modernity has as a founder in the person of Adriano Olivetti which, ahead of his time, investigated the problem of interaction already between the Fifties and the beginning of the Sixties working with designers like Sottsass and Maldonado (Riccini, 2010).

6. Towards a New Cultural System of Values

The new contours of the contemporary Made in Italy, its cultural value chain and the user engagement's new paradigms of the companies, as we have seen, are nowadays interested in a process of transformation in which a fundamental role is represented by the strategies used by the product-service systems and by the new consumer-driven business models. The resilient and circular supply chain is now fully recognized as a necessary condition, as well as the fact that the ethical components of products and processes prevail over the aesthetic ones is not an option anymore but a widely recognized fact.

The way Italian design supply companies today address the public (visitors, buyers, customers, users, etc.) and the narrative forms, both physical and virtual, through which companies present, to an increasingly sensitive and attentive audience to environmental issues, not their products but their strategies related to sustainability, inclusion, respect for the environment and control of their product's life cycle, as well as how they pursue the objectives of product, process and social innovation, are all elements that the new design approach must consider in its background research (Dalla Mura, 2015).

Although the level of awareness, as often pointed out, is higher than in the recent past both in companies and consumers, what seems to be by no means certain is first of all the fact that the Made in Italy design with its many local cultures could build automatically a relationship with the global design landscape; secondly, that the entity of the social and emotional level of communication, its natural modalities, as well as the dimension of time (temporality of experience) defines always compatibility with the physical context, its social acceptance and its eco-sustainability (Giovannella, 2008); thirdly, the fact that all the forces involved in the new product development process (designers, engineers, marketing experts, etc.) easily reach a balance between them without cultural coordination (Bettiol & Micelli, 2005).

This is the reason why the designer is still fundamental in its capacity to mediate between different knowledge, activate interdisciplinary contributions, give sense to innovation, improve the cultural dimension of objects, humanize technology, promoting eco-efficient behaviors (Lotti & Trivellin, 2017). Furthermore, as well as we put the word 'new' beside the concept of Made in Italy and that of country-of-origin effect, the same should be done for the idea of 'authenticity': also, in this case, design can be a privileged actor in detecting and managing the forms of expression of all the possible new authenticities which can come out from any local context, productive territory, social community and innovative reality at a different scale. Thus, to link them together in a unique (even if diversified) cultural common ground within a new multiverse geography of productive systems able to improve, through good objects and services, the environment and the people's everyday lives (Norman, 2013; Scalera, 2020).

More specifically, the power of cultural renewal that the Made in Italy design is interested in, belongs to its narrative power and the possibilities offered by the digital and/or virtual storytelling, whose impact is not measured on a generic final user but on a 'social capital' made of people belonging to a specific cultural context with strong and dynamic relationships between them, sharing a common system of ethical and aesthetical values, rituals and behaviors and open to the global world (Bertola & Colombi, 2014).

This aspect has a deep impact on the conception of the new products because changes, on one hand, the ways of consumption and customer expectations, on the other hand, the companies' approach to production which becomes more and more customized and personalized: this encounter produces a

dimension called 'cultural manufacturing', that in the cases of territories characterized by strong cultural roots, such as Italy, is transformed into a cultural experience closely linked to a specific physical and social context of use (Ceconello, 2022).

Regarding the relationship with digital technology, if Stefano Micelli, paraphrasing the work of Maholo Uchida, says that empathy is the key through which design can make the digital world acceptable, preventing technology from reducing the role of human dimension and, in the meanwhile, building new forms of co-habitation for reality and virtuality based on innovative aesthetics and new forms of interaction (Micelli, 2018), trusting technology seems to be now a more easily accessible street.

In the case of the Made in Italy districts, this change of behavior undoubtedly leads to a real and diffused cultural change, as well as to a concrete opportunity to raise and increase competitiveness in the global market. Certainly, but not only that, because this perspective re-activates an artisanal dimension made of small productive archipelagos, auto-production systems, etc., in those territories in which the big industry is physically too far away: economy, simplicity, clarity and beauty but also awareness, privacy, context, experience, synergy, emotions, participation, identity and cultural meaning are the main ingredients for the cultural framework of the new relationship between digital technologies, design and Made in Italy brand. But the very big power of this new dialogue goes at least in four main directions: the possibility for products to be manufactured locally; the facility in preserving over time the cultural manufacturing know-how; the capacity of joining together the humanistic aspects of production with the technologic-scientific ones; sensibility in combining virtuality and reality in the user's interaction and participation processes. On a productive level, the new possibilities offered by the dialogue between Made in Italy design and digital technologies improve the potentialities of the products in terms of customization and non-standardization through the sharing of information and participation in making decisions, as well as expand the design freedom of movement already in the concept phase where many possible final product proposals can be created in a digital environment. This means that design and production build an innovative relationship that is very similar to that of a traditional craftsmanship activity: what happens, then, is first of all that design and production are not sequential steps anymore but become synchronic and simultaneous activities, secondly, that artisanal creativity and rational management of the processes are no longer in opposition, thirdly that self-manufacturing becomes increasingly available (Ramoglu & Coskun, 2017).

As already happened in the past, also in this case the technological innovation flows into a radical social and economic innovation, thanks to the strong union between products (with its components of design, production, and put on market), productive systems, territories, natural environment and people, so that the digital transition is accepted for its power to produce democratic and socially virtuous processes that can be returned to the creative dimension of the craftsmanship (Sbordone & Turrini, 2020).

7. Conclusions

This paper, which aims to be an essay, must be considered as a starting point of an investigation which, more in detail, in the next step of the research will focus on specific local contexts within the Made in Italy productive system, to analyze the impact of the aspects above illustrated and regarding their matching with the contemporary paradigm, in its evolution to the cultural country-of-origin effect.

In any case, as a conclusion, we can try to answer the following questions, according to the general objective of exploring the future perspectives of the Made in Italy design culture within the global design landscape: How do customers and users attribute value and significance to the products? How do companies manage the relationship between brand identity and (mass) customization? How do companies declare and show their way of being inclusive, sustainable, and innovative? Which is in general the relationship between cultural dimension and marketing?

First of all, we can say that customers and users can give value and significance to the products considering a variety of factors, which depend on individual expectations, needs and personal social background, as well as criteria that come from their relationship with one or more cultural contexts. Besides the traditional evaluation elements like quality, functionality, aesthetics, durability, prize, etc., the main aspects that now seem to be fundamental are the emotional factors (aspiration, references to individual memories, social identity, etc.), the active involvement in the user experience, the reference to cultural and social factors and the forms of flexibility in terms of customization.

As a consequence, companies are now asked to manage the relationship between brand identity and customization first of all building an identity that must be shared with the clients and not imposed from above: is not possible anymore to speak of 'company's identity', against which the users don't feel like sharing it, but, on the contrary, the identity becomes a value with many different interpretative declinations with a unique cultural common ground. Even the word 'mass' is going to disappear, not in favor of extreme individualism, but for a more human material culture open to diversity and contrary to the cultural leveling.

Then, companies are nowadays obliged to declare and show their way of being exclusive, sustainable and innovative: this happens in all contexts, physical and virtual, such as shops, temporary expositions, fairs, museums, online platforms, etc. The traditional distribution ways, selling and commercialization are outdated, as well as the products (or the services) cannot be sold if they don't show their 'ethics' in terms of environmental respect, resource-saving, and productive sustainability.

Last but not least, the relationship between cultural dimension and marketing appears now profound and multifaceted. The cultural dimension of products and services provides insights into the values and priorities of a target market; therefore, marketing efforts must align with these cultural values to resonate with users and we must consider that the cultural dimension has an influence also on language, communication, symbols that are meaningful to the users (semantic and semiotic dimension of things), hence, companies must take into account the necessity to be always dialogic in their marketing strategies, building trust and credibility, not only in the small contexts but also in the global market. No doubt, these first general answers to the questions above detected, have many possible declinations according to the specificities of each local social context. But as another fact to be highlighted, each productive context is ultimately a social entity and it relates to the market (local or global) always in social terms, and this awareness constitutes the quintessence of the renewal of the Made in Italy circular and sustainable contemporary brand.

References

- Amatulli, C., De Angelis, M., Costabile, M., & Guido, G. (2017). *Sustainable Luxury Brands: Evidence from Research and Implications for Managers*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-60159-9>
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid modernity*. Polity Press.
- Becattini, G. (1998). *Distretti industriali e made in Italy: le basi socioculturali del nostro sviluppo economico*. Bollati Boringhieri.
- Bertola, P., & Colombi, C. (2014). Rebranding made in Italy: a design-driven reading. *Fash. Pract.* 6 (2), 175-200.
- Bertoli, G., & Resciniti, R. (2013). *International Marketing and the Country-of-origin Effect. The Global Impact of 'Made in Italy'*. Edward Elgar. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781781955611>
- Bettiol, M. (2015). *Raccontare il made in Italy: un nuovo legame tra cultura e manifattura*. Marsilio Editori.
- Bettiol, M., & Micelli, S. (2005). *Design e creatività del made in Italy. Proposte per i distretti industriali*. Mondadori.
- Branzi, A. (2004). Mediterraneo profondo. In: R. Fagnoni, P. Gambaro, & C. Vannicola (Eds), *Medesign_forme del Mediterraneo* (pp. 34-41). Alinea.
- Ceconello, M. A. (2022). Circular Economy Solutions and Strategies for the Furniture Sector in the European Union. *DIID* 78, 108-117. <https://doi.org/10.30682/diid7822k>
- Celaschi, F., Di Lucchio, L., & Imbesi, L. (2017). Design e phigital production: progettare nell'era dell'industria 4.0. *MD Journal* 4, 6-11.
- Crampton Smith, G. (2016). Why It took so Long. *AIS design Journal/Storia e Ricerche* 4 (8), 16-28.
- Dalla Mura, M. (2015). Il design italiano oltre la crisi. Autarchia, austerità, autoproduzione: VII edizione del triennale design museum. *AIS/Design Journal/Storia e Ricerche* 3 (6), 233-241.
- Dellapiana, E. (2022). *Il design e l'invenzione del Made in Italy*. Einaudi.
- Fortis, M. (2005). *Le due sfide del Made in Italy: globalizzazione e innovazione*. Il Mulino.
- Giovannella, C. (2008). L'uomo, la macchina e la comunicazione mediata: evoluzione di paradigmi e design per le esperienze nell'era organica dell'interazione. In: G. Barletta (Ed) *Machinae, Tecniche arti saperi nel Novecento* (pp. 471-490). B.A. Graphics.
- Goretti, G., Cianfanelli, E., Terenzi, B., & Tufarelli, M. (2019). Advanced Craftmanship in Furniture. The Tuscan sector between Tradition and Innovation 4.0. *DIID* 10-11 (62-63), 27-33.
- Lotti, G., Tosi, F., Follesa, S., & Rinaldi, A. (2015). *Artigianato Design Innovazione. Le nuove prospettive del saper fare*. DidaPRESS.
- Lotti, G., & Trivellin, E. (2017). Una possibile strategia per il prodotto italiano. *MD Journal*, 4, 60-73.
- Mancini, M. (2018). *Innovazione: scenari per il design*. Carocci editore.
- Micelli, S. (2017). Le tre rivoluzioni del management digitale. *Sinergie. Ital. J. Manag.* 35 (103).

- Micelli, S. (2018, July 12). Made in Italy, la sfida di empatia e tecnologia. *Il Sole 24 Ore*.
- Micelli, S., & Di Maria, E. (2000). *Distretti industriali e tecnologie di rete: progettare la convergenza*. Franco Angeli.
- Norman, D. (2013). *The Design of Everyday Things*. The MIT Press.
- Pellegrini, S. (2016). *Il marketing del Made in Italy*. Armando Editore.
- Ramoglu, M., & Coskun, A. (2017). Scientific Craftmanship: The changing role of product designer in the digital era. *The Design Journal* 20, S4497-S4508. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14606925.2017.1352946>
- Riccini, R. (2010). Un'impresa aperta al mondo. Conversazione con Tomás Maldonado. In C. Bigatti, & C. Vinti (eds), *Comunicare l'impresa. Cultura e strategie dell'immagine nell'industria italiana (1945-1970)* (pp. 134-152). Guerini e Associati.
- Rinaldi, A. (2015). La user experience dei prodotti made in Italy. In G. Lotti, F. Tosi, S. Follesa, S., & Rinaldi, A., *Artigianato Design Innovazione. Le nuove prospettive del saper fare* (pp. 203-215). DidaPRESS.
- Sbordone, M. A., & Turrini, D. (2020). Designed & Made in Italy. Invarianti, transizioni, nuove mappe valoriali. *MD Journal* 9, 6-19.
- Scalera, G. (2020). Unique & Universal. *MD Journal* 9, 154-161.
- Sennett, R. (2008). *The craftsman*. Yale University Press.

About the Author:

Vincenzo P. Bagnato (Bari, 1974) is an architect, PhD at UPC of Barcelona and Associate Professor of Industrial Design at the Polytechnic of Bari. He develops investigations about contextual and social design, sustainability, and innovation in product and architectural design, as well as studies on the relationship between design, heritage, and public spaces, publishing more than a hundred essays in international journals and scientific books.

Acknowledgments: This paper is a part of the program: MICS – Circular and Sustainable Made in Italy, Spoke 7 'New and consumer-driven business models for resilient and circular Scs' P.5 Research Project 'Cultural value chains: From local traditional production districts to a new country of origin effect' (Coord. Annalisa Di Roma). Project funded by the European Union – Next Generation EU – National Plan of Recovery and Resilience (PNRR) – Mission 4, Component 2, Investment 1.3, Call No. 341 (15th of March 2022) of the Ministry of University and Research. Protocol instance PE00000004, Decree granting of funding No. 1551 (11th of October 2022), CUP D93C22000920001.

P/REFERENCES OF DESIGN

This contribution was presented at Cumulus Budapest 2024: P/References of Design conference, hosted by the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest, Hungary between May 15-17, 2024.

Conference Website

cumulusbudapest2024.mome.hu

Conference Tracks

Centres and Peripheries
Converging Bodies of Knowledge
Redefining Data Boundaries
Bridging Design and Economics
Speculative Perspectives
The Power of Immersion
The Future of Well-being
Taming Entropy: Systems Design for Climate and Change
Ways of Living Together
Cumulus PhD Network

Full Conference Proceedings

<https://cumulusbudapest2024.mome.hu/proceedings>

ISBN Volume 1: 978-952-7549-02-5 (PDF)

ISBN Volume 2: 978-952-7549-03-2 (PDF)

DOI Volume 1: <https://doi.org/10.63442/IZUP8898>

DOI Volume 2: <https://doi.org/10.63442/TADX4016>

Conference Organisers

Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design Budapest (MOME)

mome.hu

Cumulus Association

cumulusassociation.org