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International Furniture Design Trends
in the First Decade of 20th Century

PhD thesis installment

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Sopron
2012

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1. Timeliness of the subject

Rich multicolourness of furniture design and all other spheres of design have been observed at the early decades of the 21st century. The prime task of design research is understanding its typical, historical and systematic multicolourness reasons. This observation aims to introduce tendency of international furniture and design planning, of creators and design infrastructural system, which essentially influences its function at present and in future.

2. Method of research

2.1 Sources

Results of topical observations, experiments /exhibitions, arrangements, museums, galleries, design studios / presented the main source of the contemporary characteristic of the theme.

Further researching work extended personal experiments and information materials. Two main sources made complete this important task. The first source is traditional and printed photo documents (they can be obtained in the library of MOME, in the Arts and Industrial Design Museum and the Design Terminal Library.)

The other source is information data on internet: international and domestic magazines, encyclopaedia, designers, manufacturers, arrangements, museums, which served as research spheres.

2.2 Applied methods

There were 2 researches - methodological models applied in the dissertation.

a, Analytical feature.

Design problems, problems of designers, tendencies, technologies were analysed beforehand from the collected information documents worked out /partly/ according to some points of view .

b, Synthetic systematizer and estimation.

With hypothesis drawn up schematically beforehand and also with collected classified facts, we can draw up connexions and statements, which strengthen or reject previous suppositions, and also further (partial) hypothetical agreements could be articulated being able to place design problems, events, tendencies or designers in new relations.

3.Theses

3.1 Technology design

About technological development, its tempo, extension, complexing we may state that - despite the more or less coming to a stop or crisis - it is growing and growing. For design this creative activity - which is tightly attached to technology - means permanent challenge in reaching the aims, methods, results in the past and future.

The main problem of design is how to be in synch with dynamic development of technology, how it suits to keep with human demands, with changeable surrounding and what it can add to make it better.

3.2 Culture and design

History of design has never had such colourfulness and differentiation in culture as in our days. There are regions, which exist as creative manufacturing customery centres where teaching and exploitation of high standard design were introduced some decades ago.

Intensive globalization – quick spreading of the „world village” -, technology data and materials of different advanced countries with different cultural traditions would show the fact that design has never been so colourful, varied, controversial as in our days.

This variety or complex and differentiated complex in objects used daily can equally be found in complicated systems.

3.3 Maintained environment -conscious design is the new paradigm of design

The main paradigm of design is the „ecoapproach”, which was introduced as an alternative movement in the 60s of the 20th century. We cannot find any field in which it did not have definite importance. It became the essential driving force in technological development, innovation, aesthetic ambitions. Conscious of maintaining aspect and its enforcement have become the basic purpose of design.

The last 2 decades of development show that

„maintaining aspect” of design can be as multicoloured as the aesthetical formal approach.

Maintaining aspect influences all components of design: starting with planning, continuing with its use, function, shape, technology of the material and finishing with consuming. Classical division of modern and post-modern design depends on design paradigm. Both have real reasons for existing in case they enforce maintaining aspects.

3.4 Being institutional and also being design.

There is no field of design – architecture, interior design, products, fashion, visual communication – which have not appeared at international fairs, exhibitions and which always attract hundreds and thousands of visitors. Several dozens of great exhibitions like CES, IAA, IFA, ISH, Furniture Exhibition of Cologne, Salon of Milan, World Architecture Festival, Heimtextil, etc. also several hundreds of regional and local exhibitions are arranged nowadays.

These events give „tangible”, up-to-date information for the trade, for the public, about the situation, development trends of design and the future directions.

International and domestic organizations of design branches have appeared in the past decades with great intensity. Design branches in different countries have design professional organizations of their own. Design has increased its professional and power of interest protection in the past decades.

Design centres, institutions are meant to introduce and organize life of the design in each country. Not only in Central Europe but naturally in Hungary as well, the number of universities and colleges, institutions has been increased.

The number of designers and experts dealing with design is higher than 20 years ago. In China and India the number of design schools is several hundred. The time is not far ahead when this fact will result a big and strong generation, will lead to re-drawing the map of the design.

Design became stronger and it spread in countries with different past and different traditions.

Design collection got an important place in traditional museums of art as well. Some internationally famous design exhibiting places like Vitra Design Museum in Weil-am- Rhein, MAD in New York, Design Museum of Gent, Design Museum of Holon in Israel, etc. were opened in the last decades, and more and more museums dealing with special design branches like furniture, visual communication, fashion, etc, are volunteer to demonstrate these things.

3.5 Creativity, competition and design

Introduction of design, its popularity can be seen in the increasing number of design awards in the last 20-30 years. We cannot find any averagely developed country, which did not have its own domestic award, which did not place design in a special economic and cultural life of the country .

New awards are arranged not only according to territories, but also according to social, cultural activities. These new structures show that role of design significantly changes in the society and our surrounding, and that this acknowledgement - the design - represents, organizes, moves different positive social ambitions, efforts.

There is a demand for original plans, ideas, conceptions in the economy, which result branchy creative design competition , spreading all over the world. It is common that around 3-4 thousand applicants from a lot of countries of the world apply for a big international design competition.

3.6 World net and design

At the beginning of the 21st century a new quickly developing communication technology - the internet - makes it possible to expand design and makes it more dynamic. There are lots of sources on the net, which bring information tendency and culture, economy, technology and, of course, design closer to us.

Internet changes imaginations about possibilities, tasks, tendencies, inherency of design. Design's future needs a better understanding of the relation between the internet and design.

4. Further directions of research.

International design has been dynamically changing, new centres, premises, values, aims are appearing. Though these features are roughly outlined, they give a contribution to better a understanding of the design and its better results. Extension of dissertation's horizon, introduction of new tendencies, new branches, may serve as summary of the contemporary international design.

Publications

Books

Design Yearbook 2011 (author, 228 pp., Designtrend Publishing, Budapest; Hungarian Design chapter by English too.)

Design Yearbook 2010 (author, 228 pp., Designtrend Publishing, Budapest; Hungarian Design chapter by English, too.)

Design Yearbook 2009 (author, 228 pp., Designtrend Publishing, Budapest; Hungarian Design chapter by English too.)

Design Yearbook 2008 (author, 228 pp., Designtrend Publishing)

Art Dictionary (Design head words, Corvina Publishing, Budapest, 1997)

Towards New Hungarian Industrial Art – Studies (Eds. and all, 220 pp., Hungarian Art and Design University Publication, 1991).

Design Theory – Studies (Ed., introduction and translating, 224 pp., Hungarian Art and Design University Publication, 1990)

Other printed issues and internet periodicals

2006 – Editor in chief of www.designtrend.hu online design information magazine, regular publication.

1998 – 2001 Editor in chief of Bútortrend (Furniture Trend) Magazine, regular publication.

1995 – 1997 Columnist and editor of Atrium Architectural and Design Magazine, regular publication.