



ASSEMBLE 2010: AUDIO TRANSCRIPTS

Session: Making and Creative Production: Panel Discussion

Chair: Dr Jane Harris, Director, Textile Futures Research Centre, University of the Arts, London

Panel: Michael Eden, Maker
Lynne Murray, Maker and Brand Director, Holition
Andrew Cornell Robinson, Artist
Tom Gallant, Artist

JANE HARRIS: Thank you very much Tom [Gallant], and thank you to all the speakers too. [...] As I said, it is a little bit like Pecha Kucha, you really are hearing snippets of incredibly rich working processes, collaborations, consideration about future technologies [and] materials, I kind of almost don't know where to start; and that's my job done. All of you have really approached a new media format, or a type of collaboration, in a very different way. How much is it that material and process, which you've all begun with in some form, has informed that transition?

MICHAEL EDEN: When I'm designing on the computer, I'm looking to create the same energy in a line, a curve of a bowl that I can achieve on the wheel. So, there is a direct sort of correlation, [a] direct link between sitting on the wheel and sitting at the computer. I do feel as though my work, my current work, is still at a very early stage, and I really do want to marry these two worlds together, bring that sort of material and process knowledge, and the quality of those materials, into this new revolution of additive manufacturing. You know, I just feel very strongly that it's up to us as makers not only to respond to the demands of the clients that we're working with, it's important not just to respond to the new tools that we have - all this digital software in manufacture - we shouldn't just respond to it, but we have to help shape the future of this technology, we have to have more of a say in the way it goes, and the way that our collaborations with industry work, so that our voice isn't lost.

LYNNE MURRAY: I think, from my point of view, certainly working quite closely with brands and working closely with their perception of their crafted product, and almost creating with them a new language as to how they view what digital crafted product is, I think it's about communication in a sense; it's about how they communicate that essence of a crafted product through a new way of communicating that crafted synergy to a new communication tool. And it has to come, particularly from what I'm working on at the moment, it absolutely has to be crafted in the same way that the actual products, which they're so precious about, have been created and have this perceived integrity and inherent quality to them. And that's really important, what we're trying to do in the digital sense is to really look at harnessing that appreciation of craft and building it into the way that the digital aspect of it is communicated. And it's really difficult, to get that level of understanding as to what they are wanting to present within their crafted objects and to what level they're wanting to communicate in a new way using these technologies. It's about getting that balance as appropriate as possible, [not] just on the Tissot project (not hugely crafted products but they would think they were), [but particularly as] we're now working with a lot of leather goods companies, and the level of craftsmanship is so, so important. And it's a difficult balance, but it is absolutely looking at exactly the same values of manufacture.

ANDREW CORNELL ROBINSON: This value work that I zipped through at the end was actually a project that lasted about a year and a half, and it was not typically how I've worked. I've typically worked alone, in the studio, you know, not talking to anybody, talking to the walls, and then having somebody in at the end. This project forced me to deal with the kind of multidisciplinary stuff that others have talked about. I've never worked with a tailor, or a textile designer, and that was daunting and fascinating. And the thing that was interesting about it, that kind of levelled the playing field and levelled that sense of ego that you talked about, was the story. We all agreed that this was a story that we would kind of create around. And it's interesting that you mention brand, because I, maybe I'll be forgiven some day in Purgatory, but I actually worked for a branding company for a while, and it was a weird experience, but it was all about creating mythologies for junk that you would sell at, I don't know, Marks & Spencer or something like that. And I learned, interestingly enough, a lot from

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how to tell a story from those folks, but really for me it came back down to 'could I create something that had some meaning for (this is a weird term for me) makers, and peers who worked in different disciplines outside of myself?'

JANE HARRIS: Unfortunately we haven't got time to continue with this, but I think what you all exemplify is this moment in time, which is extraordinary in that [whilst] you are unpacking new boxes for all of us, in very different ways, it's still very much a 'watch this space'. And I think also partly because of the technologies that you're engaging with, which in many cases are still only a couple of years old, and we don't yet know what they're really going to be capable of, but you exemplify all kinds of approaches to how that thinking and how those processes may be unpacked in the future. So, thank you very much to Lynne, Andrew, Tom and Michael.

