Crafting Cultural Heritage

The making of artefacts is a core activity in society, the result of which contributes to the building up of our physical surroundings and material culture. Throughout history, craft skills have been highly appreciated and have often been seen as crucial component of a capable human. Despite this, the knowledge base that constitutes the actual making is often overlooked in research. What can we learn about things by learning about their making? How do different craft skills offer an understanding of its historical use? How can theoretical and methodological approaches be developed concerning the actual making? How can we study and understand craft as cultural heritage?

This book contains a selecion of papers from the session Crafting Cultural Heritage at the Assosiation of Critical Heritage studies inaugural conference Re/theorising Heritage 2012 in Gothenburg. The contributors are Anneli Palmsköld, Thomas Laurien, Eleonora Lupo and Elena Giunta, Gunnar Almevik, and Nicola Donovan. Their common interest are theories and methods of crafting that could benefit heritage studies approach to making.



Edited by Anneli Palmsköld, Johanna Rosenqvist and Gunnar Almevik



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CRAFTING CULTURAL HERITAGE



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Contemporary Authentic

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"Activation aims at reproducing and transmitting cultural heritage through a sustainable re-contextualisation and reuse of its values, in particular incorporating its authentic qualities in the contemporary context"

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Contemporary Authentic

A design driven strategy for activating intangible heritage and craft knowledge

By Eleonora Lupo and Elena Giunta

1. Introduction: design for intangible heritage and craft knowledge

This text aims at defining a possible practice-based theory and strategy for an innovative and design driven approach (called 'activation') to valorise intangible and living heritage forms, in particular the craft knowledge incorporated and embedded in people and places (design activation for craft). This strategy of valorisation is also linked with the important role that craft practices can play in the dynamics of understanding and development of those places' quality, and with the processes of valorisation of the identity of a territory and a community of people that own the same craft knowledge (design activation through craft).

In the field of heritage studies, the contribution of design is still under estimated, even though it can be potentially relevant and distinctive in defining new meanings and ways to disseminate our heritage and make it more accessible. In fact, in Italian design history the 'cultural approach' is recognised worldwide as a distinctive feature: this sensibility to culture, local skills and resources has a certain recognition in the reputation of Italian design abroad. In this context, the field of cultural heritage challenged and stimulated Italian design to develop an experimental research approach based on situatedness and sustainability: it distinguishes itself among others for its early advanced vision and original perspective in considering the cultural asset a territorial and community-based resource whose valorisation and experience can be designed, organised and enabled according to a logic of local development. Design focuses on processes by which cultural heritage generates value in terms of system and experience thanks to the adoption of an innovative, systemic and diffused vision of cultural patrimony in all its forms in order to make its 'activation' socially and economically sustainable for the community through a participatory process.¹

Craft knowledge and skills, like traditions and behaviours, can be considered a form of intangible cultural heritage², here defined as 'typical knowledge'. Even if craft appears physically in objects or products, in fact it has an immaterial form whose visibility is critical: craft heritage is strictly connected with traditional material cultural heritage but includes immaterial values as well, which concern the skills needed for mastering crafts, as well as their symbolic meanings. It is often easy to save the physical product of craft (such as a handcrafted object), while saving all information related to the context, the handcraft abilities and techniques is much more complex.

Due to its process nature of "performance embodied in people"³, in order to be preserved, this typical knowledge needs to be continuously performed, taught and socialized – in other words, 'activated'. Typical and traditional craft knowledge could not avoid the interaction with the surrounding environment, its dynamics of exchange, production and fruition. When the context changes, it is therefore often necessary to re-contextualize it in a new context, transforming and adapting the knowledge and preserving its specificities. For this reason an effective activation process should consist of a collaborative process of knowledge sharing between the owner and the future users.

We define this concept as design driven heritage valorisation activation because it is a process that emphasises the 'use value' of the heritage. It moves beyond the traditional valorisation approach, based on the improvement of access and fruition of the patrimony (through exhibitions design or

use of technologies), to the 'innovation' of cultural heritage. Activation in fact aims at reproducing and transmitting cultural heritage through a sustainable re-contextualisation and re-use of its values, in particular incorporating its authentic qualities in the contemporary context (i.e. new objects, artefacts, services, events and spaces), creating new connections or a 'frame' of meanings and potential ambits where heritage can be activated, made dynamic, reproduced, renewed and re-generated (or 'actualised') in continuity with its tradition, but also in dialogue with the contemporary context. This dialectic between persistence and transformation, continuity and change, introduces the necessity of framing the concept of 'authentic', its recognisability and reproduction: the 'reproducibility of the authentic' is based on models of interpretation and representation of a specific heritage, whose authenticity factors (typicality, recognisability, etc.) are constituted by material and immaterial dimensions (artefacts, processes, techniques, knowledge). These factors can be 'extracted' from forms and processes of a specific cultural patrimony to become object and matter of design through cultural inventories in a documentary process orientated towards creative transformation and re-contextualisation, or an 'activation in continuity' that drives from traditional to contemporary, from a native authentic to an original authentic.

2. The 'craft heritage activation' framework of the Contemporary Authentic project

The Contemporary Authentic/Milano project⁴, developed by the research group Design for Cultural Heritage of Politecnico di Milano⁵ was an occasion to develop an articulated strategy of 'craft activation'. The Milanese craftsmen (henceforth often called simply 'masters') and their knowledge in its different forms (defined as performative and

productive⁶) have been considered an endangered intangible heritage in need of being 'activated' (from documentation to transmission, from fruition to use) and promoted under the brand of 'Contemporary Authentic/Milano'.

The project, developed during the years 2010-13, is based on the complementary, intercultural and interdisciplinary nature of different forms of expertise, and includes national and international partners: Fondazione Cologni dei mestieri d'arte, working for the promotion of arts and crafts⁷; Università Statale di Torino, with experts in anthropology⁸; Politecnico di Torino, with expertise in local and territorial development⁹; Hong Kong Polytechnic School of Design, with experience in community and cultural development¹⁰; and the University of Barcelona, with experts in folklore, performance and museographical studies¹¹.

The project had the aim of enhancing the wide-spread but somewhat misunderstood and invisible presence of craft masters and intangible practices and knowledge still active in the Milan area with a territorial approach addressing local sustainable development as well. This in order to make more visible and accessible their value in terms of knowledge, technical and productive skills and make 'reusable' their procedural, relational, performative qualities, size and spatial impact, through the creation of a complex system of promotion and dissemination identified by the brand 'Contemporary Authentic/Milano'.

Contemporary Authentic, according to the activation strategy, in fact promotes a shift from the simple representation and elicitation of knowledge to the innovative reproduction of intangible heritage, focusing on replicable modalities of incorporation of those cultural legacies in the contemporary context, thus insisting on the 'use value' of cultural assets, considered an 'open-ended knowledge system' for promoting a region as well.

Within this macro objective, many solutions have been developed to respond, through strategies and design tools, to the need of effectively documenting the intangible living heritage possessed by the masters (especially knowledge and its immaterial nature – i.e. relational, performative and territorial qualities), and activating, transmitting, renewing, revitalizing, reusing and socializing it in a sustainable manner in relation to authenticity, typicality and possibly intergenerational and intercultural exchanges.

Contemporary Authentic started from a documentation action aimed at both safeguarding and understanding these typical Milanese identity features through the development of a web-based visual and multimedia catalogue (or repertoire) of the masters and their knowledge ('the endangered master list'). It then turned this catalogue into a system of diffused events and laboratories aimed at both celebrating the masters and helping to establish new relations and innovative re-contextualisation of their knowledge in the contemporary system (through pilot actions called botteghe and convivia).

3. Contemporary Authentic valorisation chain

In order to reproduce Milanese craft knowledge, Contemporary Authentic combined the chain of generation of cultural heritage related to craft heritage in Milan with the chain of the design driven valorisation processes.

The chain of generation of cultural heritage refers to those cyclical and evolutionary processes over time, identified by ownership, transmission, rereproduction and eventually discharge and loss of

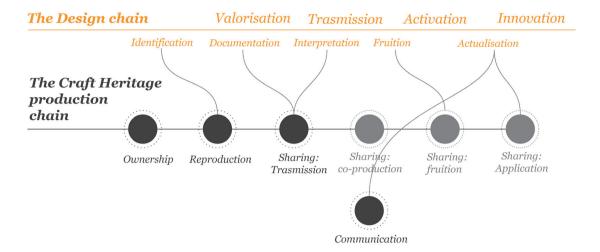


Fig. 1. The valorisation process. The chains of generation of cultural heritage and of the design driven valorisation processes¹², graphic by O. Mangiante

cultural practices, in which a negotiation happens (consciously, collectively, institutionally or not) in order to select which part of these practices is transmitted as heritage and in which form. The chain of the design driven valorisation processes instead refers to those deliberate enhancement processes that provide a heritage acknowledgement, safeguarding, documentation, interpretation, promotion, experience, transmission and innovation.

In the case of an intangible heritage and knowledge such as that of craft, characterised by a performative and procedural nature, the more these chains tend to overlap and coincide like the double helix of a strand of DNA, the more fruitful the heritage activation is because a deliberate design action can also become an action of generating cultural heritage, making synergic the processes that are naturally or historically determined with the processes that are activated artificially and by design. We

call this the 'innovation potential' of a cultural asset, in which we can insert, by the design strategy, a sustainable 'delta of transformation' in the evolving nature of intangible heritage so that the double helix behaves like a cyclical process of recursive and virtuous continuous generation and evolution.

In addition, the Contemporary Authentic approach distinguishes itself as an extended design driven valorisation chain: while many projects focus just on one phase of the valorisation chain (e.g. documentation, transmission or re-use of the heritage) Contemporary Authentic activated the whole chain of craft knowledge, from archiving to innovating the Milanese craft heritage and its touristic promotion. This innovation is based on an activation quality protocol that aims at establishing a set of tools, among which is the regional 'craft production quality mark' described in the following paragraph.

4. The craft activation quality protocol

Contemporary Authentic promoted a protocol of craft knowledge activation that is based on an articulated strategy:

- Craft knowledge visualisation tools to represent, for each craftsman, his 'master-knowledge system' through different narratives and analytical models: these tools (from visual models to video documentaries of the endangered masters to the online repository) work not only as documentaries but focus on eliciting and transmitting the procedural, relational, performative qualities, skills and abilities of a master (and his knowledge) in an engaging way (see master-knowledge system model and video narrations described below);
- Dynamics of knowledge activation based on 'sharing relations', which means establishing relations of knowledge sharing between the master's knowledge system and the local community system (designing models of cultural offer, experience and participation of the craft heritage; see convivia described below), and between the master's system and the entrepreneurial and industrial system (designing models of production and innovation of the craft heritage, in new artefacts and processes; see botteghe described below). These dynamics usually act on three axes (taking different forms): the spatial axis (i.e. 're-contextualisation' of the craft heritage), the temporal axis ('actualisation' of the craft heritage) and the procedural axis ('incorporation' of the craft heritage);
- *Craft production quality mark and brand:* Contemporary Authentic joins the values of a brand to those of a quality certification system. Today brands are often a distinctive element for a region: they represent the identity of places through a strategic positioning and offering of the values of a city

or region starting from a corporate image (naming, logo, message, symbols) based on characteristic local features and qualities. The brand makes it possible to create a relationship between the place and its potential visitors that relies on the region's reputation and perception. In this frame, Contemporary Authentic has already started to function (and will be improving) as a brand to promote the local craft skills of Milanese masters as a distinctive value for the city of Milan¹³.

The concept of quality, on the other hand, is still more commonly used to refer to products or production than to geographical areas. Quality certification is usually associated with a warranty of conformity to norms, procedures, requirements that products or production processes should fulfil (i.e. safety certification, or process efficiency in the Italian system¹⁴). However, quality can refer to a territory in few cases, like the one of typical products whose origin is protected by different norms and marks in EU law15: PDO (Protected Designation of Origin), PGI (Protected Geographical Indication), or TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed). These typical productions, regulated under a scheme of product quality policy that is based on recognized skills, methods of production and ingredients linked to their geographical origin¹⁶, are in any case related only to the agricultural and food sector and not to craft, with some exceptions¹⁷. Other quality systems connected with locations concern environmental quality, whose certification testifies some parameters of sustainability in tourism (both in attraction and hospitality)18. Finally there are artisanal quality marks that certify distinctive traditional productions, but often without links to a specific location¹⁹.

Contemporary Authentic, mixing the values of a place and those of a craft production into a 'situ-

ated craft' aims at becoming a quality certification for the innovation of the typical craft production of a territory, and Milan in particular. Above all, Contemporary Authentic strives to make the methodology for certifying traditional production synergistic with branding strategies, to communicate new tourism and development opportunities of a city. This process has just started, and hopefully through further development it will represent a collective intelligence of a territorial productive system able to exploit its knowledge strengths and owners and certify the quality of the more virtuous productive behaviours. It will also work as a quality warranty for the cultural sustainability and respectfulness of the new craft production.

- Touristic itineraries and cultural offer of craft heritage: these actions respond to the objective of sharing craft knowledge with the community system. In the context of the expo that will be held in Milan in 2015, Contemporary Authentic established the first prototype of itinerary of Milanese craft knowledge as a tourism offer in the city, with the objective of celebrating and making visible and accessible to a wide community the territorial milieu that generated the tradition of Milanese craft.20 The itinerary, suitable to implementation, includes the studios and workshops of Milanese craftsmen surveyed by the project. This itinerary is still in the initial stage and should be further promoted by a specific communication campaign and signage, and developed by digital applications that will better link the online repository with an augmented in-place experience of the region by using the anytime/anywhere ubiquitous accessibility paradigm typical of a 'smart' heritage.

- Authenticity/innovation matrix for craft activation evaluation: this matrix, which responds to the objective of sharing knowledge with the entrepreneurial system, has been developed for evaluating the grades of authenticity and innovation of new craft production processes. It is based on the identification of authenticity factors (material-formal and intangible-procedural) of a typical craft knowledge that can be used as inputs and drivers for a process of innovation, which sustainably negotiates between persistence and transformation, continuity and change, without being prescriptive. In fact, it is open to multiple combinations, represented by the different percentages and the visual images '/' of the brand that are shown in the label. Within the processes of reproducibility of the authentic it will simply function as a warranty that a certain grade of authenticity has been preserved and combined with innovation in the realisation of a new product or process and as a system to trace and make visible this authentic knowledge and its origin in the whole productive chain. It has been exemplarily used for the development of the nine concepts in the Contemporary Authentic concepts catalogue.21

In this framework, Contemporary Authentic aims to become established and familiar as one structured intervention methodology that is replicable and repeatable in other contexts for craft knowledge activation, just as it has been tested in the Milan prototype.

5. Contemporary Authentic innovative findings

In order to develop the whole methodology, Contemporary Authentic Milano has been structured in several research phases that included various activities conceived to produce specific and tangible outcomes.

From a scientific point of view, the phases have been:

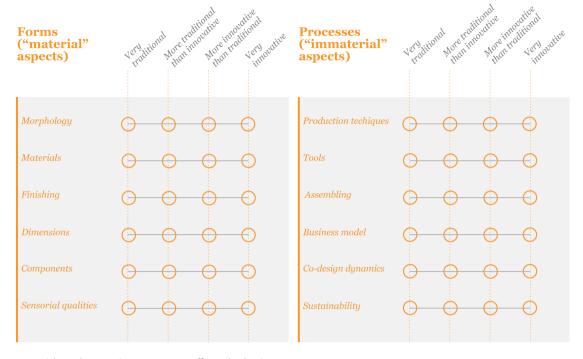


Fig. 2. The authenticity/innovation matrix 22 , graphic by O. Mangiante

- 1. Theoretical research: defining the research theoretical and methodological frame (i.e. model of masters-knowledge system);
- 2. Desk and field research: developing the repertory of good practices (case studies) and the list of Milanese masters;
- 3. Envisioning: developing the scenario handbook, including the design-driven strategies and modalities of the masters' knowledge system activation;
- 4. Action-research: developing pilot applications for the research findings and scenarios in the realisation and production of the Contemporary Authentic Repository, the Contemporary Authentic brand and the public events (Convivia, workshops/Botteghe, etc.) for knowledge activation.

The relative innovative outcomes developed are:

5.1. The master-knowledge system model²³

This is an info-graphic model to visualize the master's knowledge system, its relations and knowledge activation processes within the territorial dimension. This descriptive model has been used as a visual tool for collecting the qualities of the typical knowledge owned by each master and its activation dynamics already active (it is available online for each master). Beside the analysis, it also supported the design of new activations.

Two main types of variables are visualized:

- The spatial dimension (or location), represented in the model through the concentric areas that enlarge the horizons of observa-

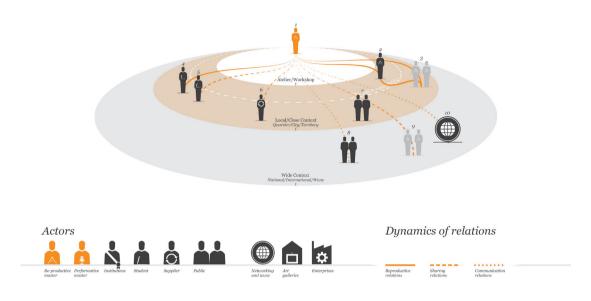


Fig. 3. The Master-Knowledge system $mode^{24}$, graphic by O. Mangiante.

tion from the primary nucleus (core level) of the master (typically his studio or workshop) towards the wider region (from close context such as the neighbourhood or district up to the intangible web);

- The relational dimension of the master (or dynamics of knowledge activation), which includes reproductive, sharing and communication relations, and is visually represented by different lines (dotted, dashed, etc.) connecting the master with his network of relationships at different spatial scales.

5.2. The repertory of good practices of craft knowledge activation²⁵

This catalogue has selected, investigated and classified case studies of processes of cultural transformation relative to some 'craftsmanship masters' in various parts of the world and various sectors (spaces, product, fashion, food) and their inte-

gration into the contemporary context in various forms and modes (i.e. identity matrix of a territorial area, drivers of economic and social development, integration in new production and distribution systems).

Case studies of good practices (i.e. samples of knowledge that have been re-socialized) are selected and organized using evaluation criteria both territorial (Milan area, national or international) and thematic (local identity and typical knowledge, reproductive knowledge or master, performative/relational knowledge or master), and for their potential for transferability to other contexts or types of knowledge. The research has considered and used the term re-socialize to rethink the complex system of relations (of production, reproduction, use and communication) that revolve around the practice to establish better conditions to allow the activation of knowledge in order to re-place it

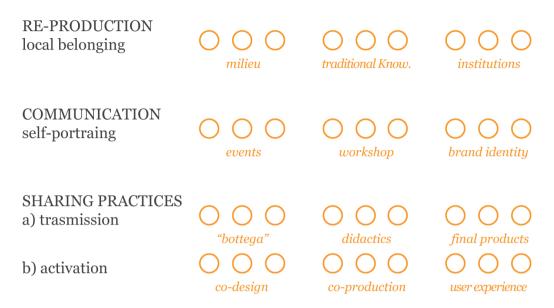


Fig. 4. Evaluation matrix for Good Practices.²⁶

in the social system between its utilitarian value and its cultural value.

The case studies were collected by all partners involved in the research process. Together the cases form an atlas of examples, rigidly evaluated on the basis of a matrix system that provides the size of innovation. Starting from the dynamics of knowledge activation, transfer and sharing and according to the theoretical framework of research, the best practices have received a specific assessment for each topic of interest, from the local roots to self-representation, from craft education to re-socialization.

Observing the cases, it was possible to formalize a 'set' of natural or induced actions that were able to keep alive the practice and to actualize it (e.g. the network of schools, viral communication via the web, the use of local raw materials, etc.). It was also

possible to sketch a series of 'master portraits' that characterize the relational model of masters according to the bias towards one form of knowledge transfer or another (i.e. master-guru, master-adviser, implicit master, master-as-service and so on).

Therefore, the purpose of the matrix was to identify 'virtuous' elements/dimensions in order to name them and to fill a list of plausible activation strategies 'to be inserted' into the endangered masters cases, a sort of collection of transformations that might be appropriately allocated due to the desirability of the re-socialization processes. This is properly the final aim of Contemporary Authentic, as an experience of 'restitution' and resocialization (also mediated, as mentioned, and shaped by documentation and communication, as designed) of an intangible system of knowledge and living human treasures.

5.3. Endangered Milanese master list²⁷

This is a list of endangered Milanese masters, collected according to specific selection criteria and documented on visual basis, in order to refer to them for further valorisation and activation activities.²⁸

The main sources for selecting the Milanese masters have been the register of historical shops and workshops in Milan provided by the Comune di Milano-Productive Activity Area, the register of handicraft enterprises provided by the Milan Chamber of Commerce, and the calendar of festivals and performance events in Milan in order to identify reproductive/relational masters.

The following main criteria are used to make a preliminary census of Milanese masters:

- 1. Type of knowledge owned by the master, as defined by the research frame: re-productive or performative/relational knowledge, considering their overlapping.
- 2. Dynamics of activation of knowledge, i.e. reproduction, sharing and socialization, referring to the spatial-proxemics metaphor of representation used in the visual model of the master-knowledge system. The list objective is both to document which dynamics are already carried out by the masters (basically they maintain and reproduce their core knowledge), and to identify which other dynamic of knowledge sharing can be improved, promoted and supported (dynamics of socialization and communication related to local community or the business community).
- 3. Application areas of knowledge classified as spaces, objects, fashion, food in order to not reflect specific product areas or types of material handled and instead include both types of reproductive and performative knowledge.

4. Milanese typicality degree, considering if a master/knowledge can be considered Milanese due to its type of activity with a clear belonging in Milan (e.g. panettone, Ambrosian chant, etc.) or because of a typicality acquired over time (e.g. a shop that becomes a reference point for Milan for a particular type of manufacturing or category) and recognition by the neighbourhood.

From an initial list of more than eighty masters that have been contacted or visited for a first evaluation, only fifteen (due to budgeting constraints) have been selected for close observation, conducted by visiting the workshop, photo and video recording and direct interviews.

As mentioned, the research is focused specifically on the methods of transferring practices in that 'formative-educational situation' that historically is defined as learning by 'apprenticeship'. Therefore, from the perspective of design-driven development, the masters practices were 'observed' with a mode of inquiry that is both analytical and interpretative, the one of video also used as a mnemonic pre-text. This, according to Piredda, conceives the audio-visual language as a real epistemological model for registration/construction of reality. This is clearly visible in the fourth outcome of research: a process of re-telling the masters and their knowledge through 'video narration'.

5.4. Masters video narrations²⁹

For three masters that have been considered of relevance for all the selection parameters, short video documentaries have been produced in five episodes, with the objective of documenting each master and his story (portrait), the context in which he works (from the smaller context of the studio to the larger one of the district, city etc.),

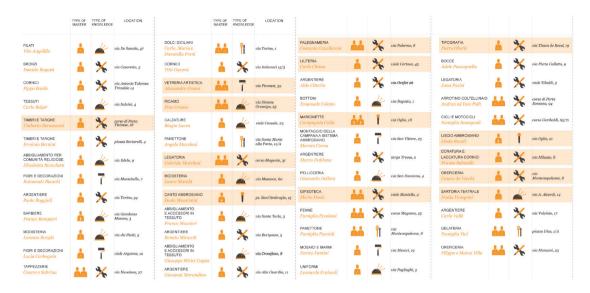


Fig. 5. List of endangered masters surveyed by the project.

the modality and potential for reproducing and transmitting his knowledge. The episodes are all available online through the digital repository.

These documentaries are not simply video recordings (a basic strategy level present in many other projects³⁰ on which Contemporary Authentic built its model), but ways to explore and visualize articulated processes concerning typical craft knowledge as an emblematic form of contemporary intangible heritage. Therefore they are integrated by different visual layers of info-graphics and tools that mix different media and data based on the idea of timelines and layers³¹. The objective is to create a descriptive system of all the components that are in the back-stage (that is the process, the knowledge, the relations) using a metaphor of layers on a timeline that can translate visually the depth of the tacit knowledge recorded.

This various work of mediation and trans-media-

tion can be described with a climax of terms: translation, visualization (intended as the translation of dynamic images) and transmission. Is in the interest of the discussion to try to trace their mutual boundaries. Translation is an activity comprising the interpretation of the meaning of a text (the 'source' or 'in-coming' text) and the subsequent production of a new text, equivalent to the original one, in another language (the 'final' or 'out-coming' language). The term 'translation' indicates not only the act of translating, but also the translated text that results from this activity. For these reasons, some scholars and theorists have often preferred to avoid the ambiguity by using a different term such as 'the translate', or the expression 'translating activity' (activité traduisante) or 'translating operation' (opération traduisante) and so on.

In Contemporary Authentic, the translation coincided with the identification of a coherent way of writing the screenplay – writing that tackled the technologies in the sense of both the means that record/return the knowledge and the modalities that socialize it: "In particular, digital media have introduced a dialectical process between linear and reticular, between verbal text and iconic text"³². Translation is re-writing, with a discursive strategy, in accordance with a communication project that, in the case of Contemporary Authentic, is the nature of the socialization practice in the 'apprenticeship' modality.

The term visualization is here understood as 'putting into pictures' a thought, a memory, a projection. Therefore, the word is used as a synonym for the term representation: in the visual arts, representation means precisely an image born from the creative mind that, through any kind of technique (architectural, sculptural, pictorial or otherwise) becomes an object that can be communicated to others. In the case of the Contemporary Authentic, the audio-visual medium is designed to be used on the web, an alternative channel to traditional media such as film and television. The challenge of audio-visual products for this research was totally devoted to enable the visual emersion of all the intangible contents embedded in a master's practice: a work of construction and re-construction (also including archive material) of the submerged 'backstage' related to the knowledge of the master and his history.

Finally, transmission (from the Latin transmittere) means to pass from one person to another, from one place to another, from one time to another, from generation to generation. From the latest etymology: to communicate information through any vehicle. Documenting the knowledge transmission during the 'apprenticeship' meant to re-build playback situations of practice suitable for telling.

5.5. Botteghe Contemporary Authentic³³

Contemporary Authentic triggered (in a teaching incubator) three 'simulate' workshops in which the masters worked for a week with a small group of apprentices (design students) in Milan, simulating the model of the Renaissance workshop known as a bottega. In a dynamic encounter of trans-generational and inter-disciplinary (including design, applied arts and crafts) in vitro knowledge transfer, the audio-visual tool has been tested as a means of collecting and re-purposing knowledge with a docunovel approach.³⁴

The design workshop goal has been to make explicit the 'use value' of three selected endangered masters' knowledge (Costante Cavalleroni, carpentry; Alessandro Grassi, glasswork; Piero Oberti, typography) in new cultural formats, enabling both the dimension of fruition/experience and the dimension of incorporation/innovation of those typical forms of knowledge. The process was led by Siu King Chung, a visiting professor from Hong Kong Polytechnic³⁵, and involved forty-five master of interior design students.

The first goal of this action-research activity, addressing the knowledge sharing with the transmission and production system, was to support a new dialogical form of contact between masters and students, craft and design, heritage and innovation, based on mutual respect and a learning-bydoing approach. In order to achieve this mutual understanding, the photo stock-taking technique has been used to observe, map and interpret the craft knowledge processes. The maps realised were visual displays to unveil and discuss, during the meta-design phase, the authentic qualities of the craft knowledge and its potential, and to generate, share and negotiate with the masters new visions and opportunities. This has been a very delicate



Fig. 6. An example of photo stock-taking map.

and complex process in order to respect the masters' skills.

The second goal was to design new and innovative contemporary authentic products and processes based on heritage. The nine design concepts developed³⁶ exemplify the different approaches adopted in order to innovate peculiar aspects of craft knowledge. Beyond the dichotomy of the material-formal and immaterial-procedural aspects of the authenticity/innovation matrix for craft activation evaluation, the design concepts achieved changes of typology, merceological sector and ambit of application of craft (from typographical printing to portable lamps or temporary exhibition design, from glass windows to lamps and furniture); changes of business model (online communication and promotion, co-creation with end users); changes of production process (usage of waste material, different use of tools, imperfections and finishing).

The design results of the whole process were officially presented in May 2013 at Spazio MIL -Museo

Industria e Lavoro e Archivio Giovanni Sacchi in Milan³⁷ with a public conference and exhibition.

5.6. Contemporary Authentic Milano 'Convivia'

This research action, addressing knowledge sharing with the wider community system, has been conceived as a public symposium in which two formats (addressing different audiences, experts/ stakeholders and the general public) have been tested:

- Craft dialogues: panel discussions to support dialogue between masters, academics, design foundations and associations for craft, with the aim of exploring the limits and potential of the current state of art;
- Craft shows: live performances and curatorial exhibitions, with the aim of promoting, disseminating and making known to the general public the contemporariness and liveliness of craft.

The convivia aims at establishing temporary but cyclical platforms to alert society to the relevance of craft as heritage and contemporary cultural production. In latin convivia means spontaneous people gathering for informal meals and discussion.

The first prototype of convivia was held on 18 May 2013 at the Spazio MIL - Museo Industria e Lavoro e Archivio Giovanni Sacchi in Milano.³⁸

5.7. Contemporary Authentic Milano Repository³⁹

An online database⁴⁰ has been designed to make accessible all the research outcomes like the visual and narrative documentation and transmission of masters' craft practices and techniques, the best practices, the concept catalogue, and so on, in order to depict and provide to the public a permanent narrative and polyphonic information system about Milanese masters.⁴¹ The repository is graphically coherent with the brand and corporate image developed for the project and the interface allows the interrogation of the documental apparatus composed of different sources and media (photo, video, texts, info-graphic).

The choice of a database system with data selection and articulation modes driven by users is intended to further exploit the opportunities of knowledge transmission, mediated and transformed by the relational systems that they cross: "The medium always transforms the existing forms of relationships [...] it works 'shaping' the reality in order to communicate it"42. The view of the online audio-visual, by selecting as entry point a master or according to the narrative topics by which the individual video story is structured (i.e. the master, history, processes, barriers and potential, curiosities), is repeatable. The process generates a kind of silent production of imagery and knowledge: the space of the user and that of the author of the audio-visual mix in a third one, an area of memory that is dynamically re-written in each fruition sequence.

At different levels and with different impacts, all

research actions of Contemporary Authentic have been aimed to re-introduce the practice, embodied in the person of the master, into the social system by promoting the production of new use value, taking into account the potential of heritage development, considered as a cultural chain intrinsically innovative.

5.8. Evaluating the territorial dimension and impact of high-quality knowledge processes

Craft knowledge activation is conveyed to the geographical territory and impacts practice again. From the body of good practices emerges the issue of territorial roots (related to the masters and their studios), which expresses itself in a series of topics such as the milieu, the historicity of knowledge (the story and the culture of the place), and the relational/territorial network (or relations with local influential actors in the field of local culture and institutions). The relationship between the master and these elements is a long-term result. The micro-system master/studio, in a certain period of time (long enough) and often through generations, is able to weld emotional as well as cultural and social ties with the places, the people and the institutions on the basis of these bonds. That defines the territory within which their art develops.

The concept of typical knowledge exceeds that of typical product (either craft or culinary) and therefore can be framed in the craft production quality mark and activation protocol.

It is arguable whether a process of 'generational deposit' can establish tangible and intangible ties with the territory of belonging. This process, called geo-localization, has been modelled on the research with the master-knowledge system model. As mentioned, the display model of knowledge represents synoptically, and from a relational point

of view, the diversity of levels involved (the context, the specific cultural assets and the system of user and the community of reference). The key action of this analysis/representation is the highlight on the reciprocal interactions among the levels and the elements.

5.9. Knowledge transmission evaluation

By the phenomenological observation of the various models we can conclude that the quality of knowledge plays its own role in the specific interaction with its territorial system, which ultimately contributes to its own birth and survival. On the other hand, the geographical territory is enhanced not only by products but really in terms of capital, due to (typical) craft practices and performance that are 'placed' in it. Returning to the subject of quality protocol and brand of craft practices, the research enhances the 'territorial capital' (which definitely and precisely describes the quality of placed-knowledge), both intangible and living, turning it into an indicator of evaluable parameters according to the evidence from good practices.

As mentioned, the current artisanal quality marks certify distinctive traditional productions often without linking them to a specific location or considering the social dimension of the phenomenon. Otherwise, the 'Contemporary Authentic/Milano' quality mark intercepts the potential of a geo-social system that is expressed in the evaluation of the following parameters:

- Depth of generational deposit, or vertical extent of the relational plot (transfer of knowledge among teachers and other local actors, trans-generational or gender steps and intercultural hybridization);
- Horizontal extent of the geo-relational plot ('territorial colonization' and exploitation of

deposits of raw materials, local recurrence of processes and products);

- Presence and frequency of recursive master/ context processes (phenomena of mutual survival and definition)

These parameters serve as quality policies for the typical knowledge that should be based on recognized skills and processes, methods of reproduction and 'relational' ingredients, obviously not to forget the geographical origin.

In order to test this quality model, each endangered Milanese master involved in the research process has been evaluated with the aim to put in evidence one or more weakness of the system: this work is fundamental to the 'Contemporary Authentic' model of intervention/enhancement. In the case of Milanese masters, thanks to this evaluation, it has been possible to predict the opportune design actions for each master, addressing specific activation on one or more levels of the master-knowledge system model (i.e. some masters were challenged in the documentation and narration phase, others in the transmission phase).

With the common goal of expanding the design, by connecting the masters with new players or re-articulating their territorial system of relationships, in the case of 'Contemporary Authentic Milano' the field of craft knowledge is being reactivated by means of two types of 'pilot actions': reproductive actions⁴³ (botteghe) and experiential-communicative actions (convivia).⁴⁴

The research demonstrates that at the end of the actions, structural changes in the relational models of the involved masters are observable. The convivia has enabled their knowledge and practice by improving the assessment of the territorial (intangible and living) capital, and therefore increased

the overall quality of their typical (craft) knowledge in a fruitful exchange with the context.

Conclusion: towards a critical mapping and a smart craft heritage

Craft has never been as central to the cultural discourse as it is today. It seems to be accessible, genuine, democratic and fashionable, but is probably often misunderstood. Exactly for this reason a critical mapping is needed. As previously mentioned here, craft can be intended as both a form of heritage and a form of contemporary cultural production. On one hand there are the concepts of craftsmanship - typical and traditional knowledge and living intangible heritage owned by people (the craftsmen) and localised in a specific milieu. On the other hand there is the concept of workmanship and the forms of contemporary production processes of making represented by the makers, auto-producers (supported by technologies), that are challenging the industrial production with small-series production and unique pieces without any reference to tradition. These two visions of craft are not necessarily dichotomically opposed. In our understanding of craft, according to the Contemporary Authentic strategy, framework and protocol, craft encounters design to innovate its processes and is nurtured by heritage to keep its authenticity. Digital technologies can play an important role not only in the development of new productive processes, but in the establishment of a 'smart' diffused system and platform of visualization, narration, sharing and collaboration of the craft heritage activation, enabling augmented inplace experiences of the craft intelligence of a territory, shaping an intangible geography of cultural contents superimposed on the physical reality.

Acknowledgement

The paper is the result of a collective work, anyway E. Giunta is responsible for the editing of paragraphs 3 and 4, while E. Lupo for paragraphs 1, 2, 5.

Endnotes

- 1. Lupo 2008a, 2009b, 2009d.
- 2. Intangible heritage, according to the UNESCO definition, is a kind of distributed knowledge, often not represented or manifested in distinctive or emerging and spectacular forms but a valuable expression of typical creativity embodied in people and rooted in activities and places.
- 3. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004
- 4. www.contemporaryauthentic.com/. The repository collecting all the results is online at archivio.contemporaryauthentic.com/).
- 5. Scientific coordinator: Eleonora Lupo. Project manager: Elena Giunta. Reseachers: Sara Chiesa, Ilaria Guglielmetti, Orsetta Mangiante, Ece Ozdil, Neva Pedrazzini, Sara Radice (http://designforculturalheritage.wordpress.com/). The Politecnico team also included Walter Mattana, Francesca Piredda and Lorenzo Ameri (from the research group Imagis).
- 6. Lupo 2008
- Alberto Cavalli (Director), Alessandra de Nitto, Federica Cavriana, Emanuele Zamponi (www.fondazionecologni.it).
- 8. Valentina Porcellana.
- 9. Federica Corrado.
- 10. Siu King-chung (www.hkcmp.org/)
- 11. Josefina Rui Roma, Josep Mana Oller.
- 12. Lupo 2012
- 13. The Contemporary Authentic brand image has been designed by Orsetta Mangiante.
- 14. www.imq.it
- 15. ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/index_en.htm
- 16. REGOLAMENTO (CE) N. 510/2006 DEL CON-SIGLIO del 20 marzo 2006 relativo alla protezione delle indicazioni geografiche e delle denominazioni d'origine dei prodotti agricoli e alimentari (che sostituisce il precedente n°2082/92) (www.trueitalianfood.it/uploaded/

reg_510_2006.pdf)

- 17. www.marchiovaltellina.it/marchi-collettivi
- 18. For example, some Italian networks of small villages are promoted and communicated under brands like "Bandiere arancioni" (www.bandierearancioni.it/) or "Borghi più belli d'italia" (www.borghitalia.it/), which also act like quality manifestos: they prescribe a list of minimum quality requirements for admission to the network and to benefit the brand's visibility and reputation.
- 19. See for example Dergano Officina Creativa ww.derganofficinacreativa.it/, Segno Italiano, www.segnoitaliano.it/, Segno Artigiano, (accessed 2 November, 2012).
- 20. archivio.contemporaryauthentic.com/itinerari/
- 21.archivio.contemporaryauthentic.com/catalogo/
- 22. Lupo 2012
- 23. This activity has been coordinated by Elena Giunta and Eleonora Lupo, with graphic elaboration by Orsetta Mangiante.
- 24. Lupo and Giunta 2011
- 25. This activity has been coordinated by Neva Pedrazzini and supervised by Elena Giunta and Federica Corrado. All partners contributed case studies.
- 26. Giunta-Corrado 2012
- 27. This activity has been coordinated by Sara Radice and supervised by Elena Giunta. Interviews have been conducted by the research group of Ilaria Guglielmetti, Elena Giunta, Eleonora Lupo, Orsetta Mangiante, Neva Pedrazzini, and Sara Radice.
- 28. archivio.contemporaryauthentic.com/masters/
- 29. This activity has been scientifically directed and coordinated by Walter Mattana and Francesca Piredda (research group Imagis-Movie design http://www.moviedesign.org), with the collaboration of Lorenzo Ameri and the Movie Design Lab of Politecnico di Milano (scientific coordinator Dario Sigona, project manager Davide Grampa).
- 30. See for instance: www.aess.regione.lombardia.it/reil/, www.memoro.org/it/ (accessed 2 November, 2012).
- 31. A similar example is the carpenter (the Art of Making Project) vimeo.com/30698649 (accessed 2 November, 2012)
- 32. Piredda 2008, p. 64

- 33. This activity has been coordinated by Elena Giunta ad curated by visiting professor Siu King-Chung from Hong Kong Polytechnic. Tutors for the workshop were PhD candidates Elena Ascari, Ece Ozdil, and Lucia Parrino.
- 34. In opposition to the term docufiction; cfr. Piredda 2008, p. 69.
- 35. Scientific coordinator of the Community Museum Project (www.hkcmp.org/cmp/)
- 36. archivio.contemporaryauthentic.com/catalogo/
- 37. www.spaziomil.it/index.htm
- 38. www.spaziomil.it/index.htm
- 39. This activity, in its conclusion, has been conduced by Orsetta Mangiante, appointed researcher responsible for the design and implementation of the platform, with the contribution of Giorgia Lupi.
- 40. archivio.contemporaryauthentic.com/
- 41. A similar example is www.sardegnadigitallibrary.it/(accessed 2 November 2012).
- 42. Piredda 2008, p. 72
- 43. Realized in November 2012.
- 44. Realized in May 2013.

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