

VANNI *goes arty* 2008



The relationship between design and contemporary art. Is there a possible synergy between the two and how the focus on a particular territory reconciles with the goal of both of addressing a global public and economy?

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Design is produced in three ways. The first takes design objects as purely communicative. In rich towns, rich countries, rich fairs, design objects have turned into symbols: very few get manufactured. They are empty tokens serving to promote a company brandname or a designer name: they’re a communications and media factor, lasting no longer than a fashion. They have no market and don’t hit the production line.

Then there’s the second way of producing design objects, the historical manufacture of objects in large series. This way has shifted from the rich to the developing countries. Turkey, India, Brazil and China produce hundreds of copies of designer objects. There is a firm called Vitra based in Turkey, not Basel, producing millions of copies of bathroom fittings. (Ross Lovegrove is currently working for them.) What I mean is, this is design seen as series production and not communication.

Then there’s a third way of doing design as found in the really poor countries where communities of users have no option but to learn to design the objects they use: survival design. But often it has a valid aesthetic content too. These three design modes are not found in separate parts of the world, but exist side by side in the same cities: Milan, Turin, Paris, London, Brussels.

