

In the first writing assignment I explained why the end result, tactility, material and making process are a whole and need to be shown or refer to each other. Having this said, I think it's about the handmade vs. machine made battle. Where handicraft is associated with quality, status (high price) and beauty, machine made is associated with 'made in china'-crap, and lots and lots of the same bright coloured plastic. But is this true? Are the production chains not super improved in the couple of decades, and is 'handmade' not already an advertising term?

. handmade

Before the industrial revolution basically everything was handmade. From the Middle Ages to the late 18th century the guild was overarching, not only the craft, but also material goods that belong to everyone, and all of craftsman and their knowledge including the professional secrets. The guild guaranteed the quality of the craftsman en therefore the quality of the work. This fact is a big part of the positive influence the guilds had on the economics development, as well locally as international. Nowadays 'handmade' is still associated with the quality of a craftsman and the attention, love and time he spend while making it. You can see the increase of the use of the word handmade, and you can tell it's a bigger part of our society. When is something called handmade?

hand·made

/han(d)'mād/

adjective

adjective: **handmade**; adjective: **hand-made**

made by hand, not by machine, and typically therefore of superior quality.

"his expensive handmade leather shoes"

Use over time for: handmade



I believe it's allowed to call it handmade if there is only one small part in the production chain done by hand. In 2010 Louis Vuitton, maker of handmade bags and wallets, was forced to call two advertisements back. In the photo was a woman sewing a bag with a needle and thread, suggesting the bags are fully handmade. While actually the handmade part of the bags is using a hand driven sewing machine in a very small part of the, mostly mechanised, production chain. And still the bags are called handmade. But Louis Vuitton is a high segment brand that also stands for quality and craft. I remember an episode of 'keuringsdienst van waarde' about a handmade, mouth blown 'made in china' wineglass from Ikea, for only €1,50 a piece. An experienced glass craftsman from Holland said it was exceptional work and required a lot over expertise, if it was done by hand. There are a very few so skilled and if it was sold for that price, in that volume, it was a machine made glass recording the craftsman. Because the quality of the machines is so improved, the quality is almost the same but a lot more efficient and cheaper. But in the factory in China there where a 1000 people making the ikea wineglasses by hand. But ikea has next to the handmade wineglass 151 other handmade products in their assortment. And a lot of objects have a 'handmade character'. What happens if you can't tell the different between handmade and machine made anymore? And what does handwork look like? And are handmade items sometimes machine made?



THE SEAMSTRESS WITH LINEN THREAD AND BEESWAX

A needle, linen thread, beeswax and infinite patience protect each overstitch from humidity and the passage of time. One could say that a Louis Vuitton bag is a collection of details. But with so much attention lavished on every one, should we only call them details?

LOUIS VUITTON



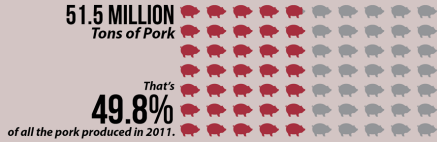
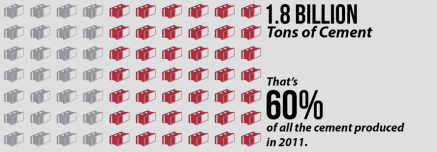
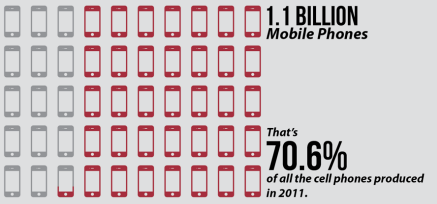
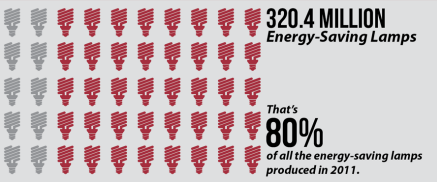
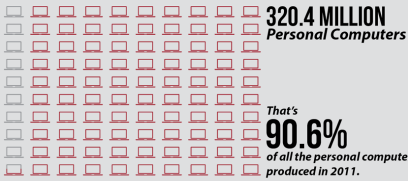
Handmade items usually have the 'handmade' imperfections. The flaws naturally arise making items by hand. I explained earlier the 'creative imperfection' according to professor Ellen Rutte. The 'flaws' are carefully designed to finish the product or give it the unique and handmade feeling. The Japanese worldview of the wabi-sabi is comparable. In the book *Wabi-Sabi: For Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers* by Leonard Koren it's explained as:

Wabi-sabi is the quintessential Japanese aesthetic. It is a beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. It is a beauty of things modest and humble. It is a beauty of things unconventional... It is also two separate words, with related but different meanings. *Wabi* is the kind of perfect beauty that is seemingly-paradoxically caused by just the right kind of imperfection, such as an asymmetry in a ceramic bowl, which reflects the handmade craftsmanship, as opposed to another bowl, which is perfect, but soul-less and machine-made. *Sabi* is the kind of beauty that can come only with age, such as the patina on a very old bronze statue.

There is an example of the old 16th century Japanese imperfect wabi-sabi teacups being so popular the last decade they become super expensive and rare. So the production of conscious imperfect teacups becomes a fact to satisfy the need of the wabi-sabi products. But those where large scaled, production chains. Not very sabi... Is only the hint of handmade, and the *feeling* of wabi-sabi enough to satisfy our need for unique and authentic products?

THINGS CHINA MAKES

Growth in China's manufacturing sector might be slowing down, but China still makes a whole lot of stuff. Here are 10 things that China makes more of than any other country in the world:



By Lisa Mahapatra
Source: Bank of America Merrill Lynch report titled "Hot So: Trivial Facts" by David Cui
Attributions: David Chapman, Doreen Lagaron, Edward Boatman, Eugene Dubnik, Cornelia Dargatzis, Timur Zima and all from The Noun Project

. machine made

The image of machine-made is mainly the made in china, badly made and produced with thousands a time. But even the production in China is improved at the last decades. This image shows how large the production is in China, and this is not all-bad quality. There are a lot of machinery methods that are better than doing it by hand. It's uniform and because it is consistent it's reliable. When you buy a coke, you know what to expect and you know what colour of red your can will be. In this case you can build a steady worldwide brand. It's known that large-scale production (by hand or machine) is more effective and therefore cheaper. And machine productions can be even bigger and extra effective. And of course there are some products you don't want any asperity or imperfection like, very practical, your stove or oven, for safety reasons.

And if the ikea wineglasses are seen as 'machine-made and if it's handmade it is exceptional craftsmanship', the machine is actually improving the handicraft. Is it important in what way the product is made? By hand or machine? Or are just the outcome and the feeling important? And is machine-made inferior to handmade because of the imago's?

. newer technologies

The newer technologies are sort of the link between handmade and machine-made. They're very good in the flawless production of unique pieces so they're mainly focused on the individual production. They can't replace real production chains because they lack on speed, volume and amounts. And even if it is a unique piece, they miss the characteristics of handcrafting. And that's where de making process comes in. Where I just asked myself the question if it is important in what way something is made, I think the making process is very important. The conclusion of the first part of the writing assessment was:

I thought I was sort of against technical (re)produced object, but I realized I find objects more attractive when the making process is visible. It can be produced by hand or digital, but the end result, tactility, material and making process are a whole and need to be shown or refer to each other.

. tool

For the tools of the trade I want to design a machine that imitates handcraft. The border between handmade and machine made is obvious changing and I think it can be very interesting to highlight the contrast of the outcome, what looks like handmade, and the very machinery production method. Or will they become the same when put so close to each other? Is the tool becoming a part of the trade? Maybe it answers the questions I have about

the machine and handmade proposition. What happens when there is no significant different between handmade or machine-made? For now I want to make a machine where you can see how it works, see a small version of a factory, and still the outcome looks like it's handmade. For all of the process of designing and fine-tuning the machine and its concept, look at my wiki!

. human machine

In the book *unconformity and entropy* about the concrete printing technology, developed by Factum Arte for Anish Kapoor's, the concrete sculptures are described as an artful balance between design and chance. This chance I want to use to make the handcrafted look. To give it meaning (and refer it back to each other) the human is part of the working machine. To play with the 'handmade' term, if there is a human action involved, is it handmade? Even when the action is unconsciously? As they say in the book: 'there are many connections between soft matter, animal intelligence and automatic machinery'.

. beads

I decided to make a bead machine. The beads are close to me; I have a lot of information about, and experience with those handmade beads. And I'm curious if it is possible to get the same result without all of the handwork and the time that goes with it. But still, why beads?

Beads are as old as the world. Besides the decoration function beads have a very rich history, symbolic and practical. Of course beads are always part of a bigger picture, the chain. The first beads are the form of the sun and the moon, and nowadays it's still the archetype for the bead.

At all early object there is a reason to decorate. A higher purpose for every form, colour and pattern. That is also true for the human decorations. They where status symbols with hidden messages as the religion, the marital status and the ancestry. But also the status of grief was communicated through chains and body decoration. There are still a lot of African tribes that keep their history of chains and beads alive.

The Turkana women from Kenya are a good example. You can see trough their necklace what age they are, there marital status, the amount of children and lots of more information about there life. Because they live half nomadic you can see all the places they lived, and the necklace is building as long as they live trough important moments and by important people. Like the husband makes the wedding necklace, suitable for the future wife. And that is just one example of a lot of rituals around the life-necklace, no one will be the same. They never take it

off, except when they are very diseased, and at the end of their life it becomes the gravestone. A European culture tradition is showing how long you have been married through pearls. For every year a pearl, given by your husband, and this still happens present-day. Between the 16th and 20th century beads were a medium of exchange. The bead throwing at the Mardi Gras festival in New Orleans is an effect of the status beads had back then. Still is it the more the better and young women are flashing their boobs in exchange for extra beads. 100.000 Years ago beads were buried with the body as a burial gift to provide luck in the hereafter.



Turkana women with necklace

.reference



5 examples of praying beads from different religions



the aureole and the god's eye, visualized as a chain and bead

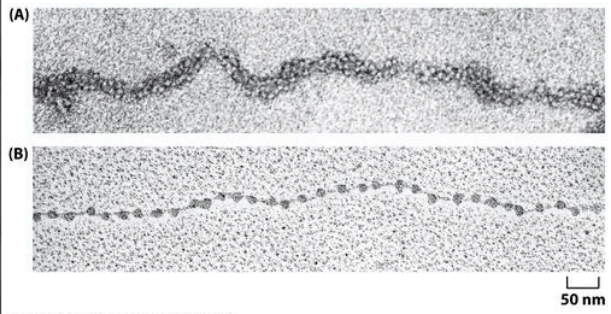
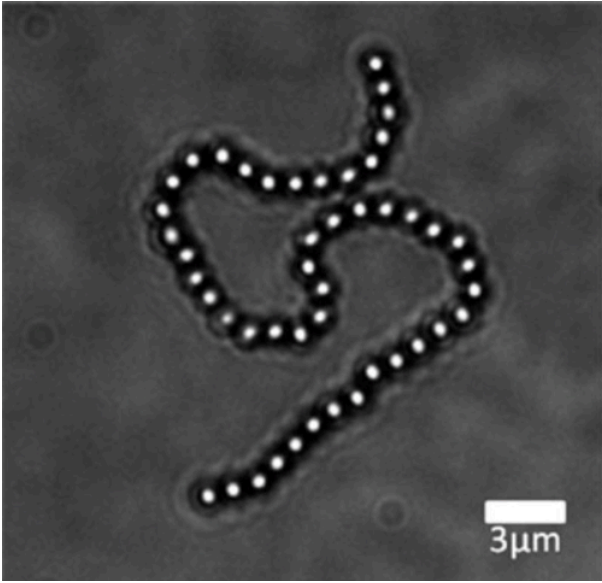
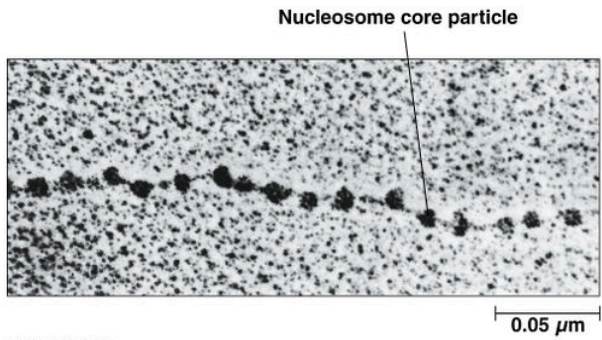
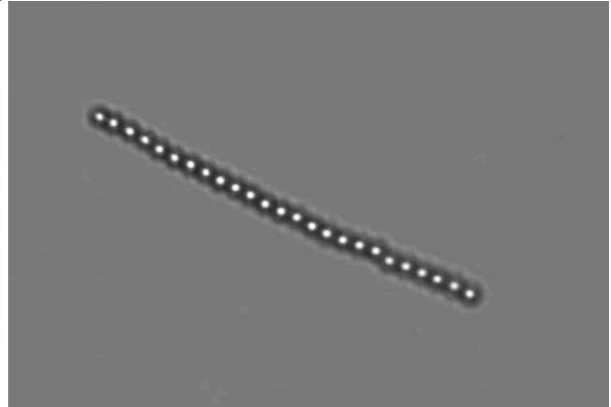


Figure 5-21 Essential Cell Biology 3/e (© Garland Science 2010)

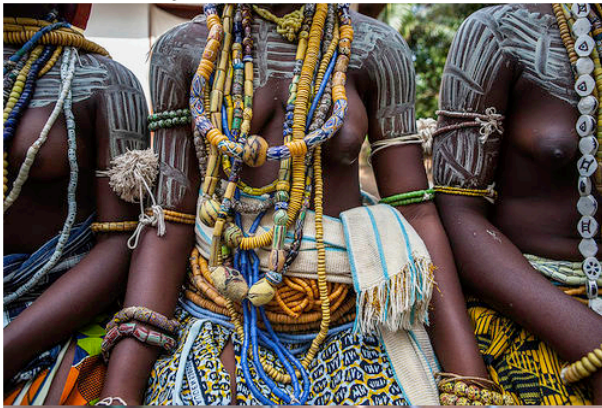


Nucleosome core particle

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dna strings, looks like beaded chains



Ghana waistbeads

