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The Aesthetic Appreciation of Design:
An Interactive Aesthetic Model

La Apreciación Estética del Diseño:
Un Modelo Estético Interactivo

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Abstract

This doctoral thesis presents an original model for the aesthetic appreciation of design. Design is a contemporary subject in Aesthetics. It is defined as the process of conceiving and executing ubiquitous objects of use that serve practical purposes, satisfy needs, and enhance practical life. The overarching aim of this thesis is to provide a comprehensive account of the aesthetic value of design. To this end, I develop a model of the act of appreciation in terms of patterns of use, founded on the fundamental insight that the aesthetic properties of design are recognized interactively. The model allows us to situate aesthetic reflection about design in the arena of the conventional and the familiar. Furthermore, it reconciles the functional aspects required for the legitimate aesthetic appreciation of design with the distinctive autonomy of aesthetic value.

Recent functional aesthetic accounts provide a framework for the appreciation of design objects that strictly relies upon the normative role of proper practical function. These accounts leave little room for particular uses of the object as those necessary to ground a distinct functional aesthetic value. Consequently, these theories cannot accommodate a full-blooded conception of the aesthetic value of design, beyond the minimal property of appearing to fit a functional utility. By contrast, I argue that an adequate and comprehensive analysis of the aesthetic appreciation of design rejects an inert conception of the object of use and embraces its broader expressive and symbolic aspects. To address the omissions of the existing, narrow-scope alternative theories, I propose an improved normative framework for aesthetic appreciation in terms of the common patterns of use created in relation to design objects over time. The present thesis examines the interactive structure of the act of appreciation from an affective perspective that allows us to incorporate the agential dimension of aesthetic experience in relation to the design object. Ultimately, I argue that locating aesthetic judgments of design within a shared background of patterns of use allows for intersubjective assessment by making particular uses compatible with the ideal universality of aesthetic responses.

Keywords: design, aesthetic appreciation, patterns of use, aesthetic value.

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Resumen

Esta tesis doctoral presenta un modelo original de apreciación estética del diseño. El diseño es un tema contemporáneo en Estética. Este se define como el proceso de concebir y ejecutar objetos ubicuos de uso que sirven propósitos prácticos, satisfacen necesidades, y mejoran la vida práctica. El objetivo general de esta tesis es dar una cuenta comprensiva de su valor estético. Para ello, he desarrollado un modelo del acto de apreciación en términos de patrones de uso basado en la idea fundamental de que las propiedades estéticas se reconocen de forma interactiva. Este modelo nos permite situar la reflexión estética sobre el diseño en el ámbito de lo convencional y lo familiar. Además, reconcilia los aspectos funcionales necesarios para la apreciación legítima del diseño con la autonomía distintiva del valor estético.

Las cuentas estéticas funcionales recientes proporcionan un marco de apreciación de los objetos de diseño que se basa estrictamente en el papel normativo de la función práctica adecuada. Estas cuentas dejan poco espacio a que los usos particulares de un objeto sean necesarios para fundar un valor estético funcional distintivo. En consecuencia, estas teorías no pueden dar cuenta de una concepción completa del valor estético del diseño, mas allá de la propiedad mínima de aparentar ajustarse a una funcionalidad práctica. Por el contrario, argumento que un análisis adecuado y completo de la apreciación estética del diseño rechaza una concepción inerte del objeto de uso y abarca sus aspectos expresivos y simbólicos más amplios. Para hacer frente a las omisiones de las limitadas teorías existentes, propongo un marco normativo para la apreciación estética en términos de los patrones de uso comunes creados en relación con los objetos de diseño a largo plazo. La presente tesis examina la estructura interactiva del acto de apreciación desde una perspectiva afectiva que nos permite incorporar la dimensión agencial de la experiencia estética en relación con el objeto de diseño. En última instancia, argumento que ubicar los juicios estéticos de diseño dentro de un trasfondo compartido de patrones de uso permite una evaluación intersubjetiva al hacer que los usos particulares sean compatibles con la universalidad ideal de las respuestas estéticas.

Palabras clave: diseño, apreciación estética, patrones de uso, valor estético.

Resumen detallado

Esta tesis doctoral presenta un modelo original de apreciación estética del diseño. El diseño es un tema contemporáneo en Estética. Este se define como el proceso de concebir y ejecutar objetos ubicuos de uso que sirven propósitos prácticos, satisfacen necesidades, y mejoran la vida práctica. El objetivo general de esta tesis es dar una cuenta comprensiva de su valor estético. Para ello, he desarrollado un modelo del acto de apreciación en términos de patrones de uso basado en la idea fundamental de que las propiedades estéticas se reconocen de forma interactiva. Este modelo nos permite situar la reflexión estética sobre el diseño en el ámbito de lo convencional y lo familiar. Además, reconcilia los aspectos funcionales necesarios para la apreciación legítima del diseño con la autonomía distintiva del valor estético.

En el primer capítulo titulado *Diseño*, delimito la que será una aproximación general al diseño. Proporciono una caracterización precisa del objeto de diseño que lo distingue de la naturaleza y de otros tipos de artefactos. Para ello, analizo aquellas características principales del diseño que se ajustan a una comprensión más amplia de su naturaleza, de modo que más tarde pueda ofrecer un modelo de apreciación estética que tenga en cuenta esas características. Siguiendo con la estructura del capítulo, en la sección 1.1, analizo el objeto de diseño como un artefacto hecho por el hombre con una dimensión funcional y estética. En la sección 1.2, caracterizo la apariencia cotidiana del diseño comenzando con su practicidad inherente y continuando con un énfasis en características tales como el hecho de que es producido en masa y mundano. En la sección 1.3, explico cómo un significado enriquecido de diseño se deriva de la condición de accesibilidad. Eventualmente, este enfoque permite entender que la forma del objeto transmite significados tanto funcionales como semánticos. En la sección 1.4, resumo las principales conclusiones del capítulo que se siguen del objetivo principal de dar cabida a una visión estética del diseño que no reduzca su significado a su naturaleza puramente funcional o técnica, sino que reconozca su aspecto práctico como un objeto que típicamente satisface nuestros deseos humanos y necesidades prácticas.

Los defensores de una explicación esencialista de la función han enfatizado el papel que juega la atribución de una función adecuada a un objeto para establecer los límites entre el diseño y otros tipos de objetos estéticos, como el arte o la naturaleza. Desde esa perspectiva, los diseños se miden en términos de su practicidad y eficiencia más que por otros aspectos como su dimensión expresiva. En mi opinión, este intento tiene un efecto aislacionista. Convierte los objetos de diseño en tipos prácticos pero

mudos al restringir la importancia de su carácter estético a la función. Por tanto, mi principal esfuerzo teórico se centra en profundizar en una caracterización del diseño qua diseño que nos permita comprender su condición mundana y cómo su forma es accesible para nosotros. El diseño se comprende como una forma de presentar una cosa que a menudo se produce en masa, con contenido y significado expresivo. Asumiendo dicha presencia cotidiana de los objetos de diseño, acomodo una visión general y enmarco el diseño en un continuo estético con el arte o la naturaleza sin negar que el uso práctico pueda ser parte de su significado.

Siguiendo con este análisis del diseño que enfatiza su dimensión funcional y estética y la riqueza de su carácter mundano, en el capítulo segundo titulado *La apreciación del diseño*, presento la explicación de la apreciación estética del diseño que toma en consideración su condición funcional. El capítulo se divide en dos secciones principales. En la primera sección, presento el enfoque funcional del diseño siguiendo una descripción general de la funcionalidad. En el punto 2.1.1., introduzco la función adecuada como una noción que en algunas visiones explica la esencia del diseño como objeto funcional. En la sección 2.1.2., presento el modernismo como la visión normativa del diseño que afirma que lograr la funcionalidad es el principio de diseño más importante. En la sección 2.1.3., extiendo el enfoque teórico moderno al presentar el concepto de diseño de Glenn Parsons. Parsons define el diseño como una actividad cuyo objetivo principal es producir "planes ideales" para un objeto funcional. En la sección 2.1.4., presento la caracterización de Jane Forsey del objeto de diseño como un objeto distintivo cuya condición funcional determina su carácter mudo y mundano. En la segunda sección, expongo la explicación funcional de la apreciación estética del diseño. En el punto 2.2.1., analizo cómo se entiende la idea de que la forma exhibe funcionalidad. En la sección 2.2.2., presento la visión que toma la funcionalidad como el aspecto central de nuestra apreciación de los objetos funcionales. En la sección 2.2.3., cuestiono el papel normativo de la propiedad estética de *verse adecuado* en la apreciación del diseño. En la sección 2.2.4., muestro la insuficiencia del análisis estético funcional para explicar el valor estético del diseño y la necesidad de proporcionar un modelo más amplio de apreciación estética. En la sección final del capítulo presento las principales conclusiones que surgen de cuestionar el modelo de apreciación estética funcional del diseño.

En mi opinión, el compromiso estricto con el papel de la función adecuada en la apreciación del diseño es problemático porque limita nuestra apreciación estética del mismo. En las explicaciones de Parsons y Carlson y Forsey, el acto apreciativo correcto

se entiende como un logro epistémico que capta la funcionalidad del objeto. Estos análisis fomentan un enfoque estético más holístico (o teleológico) del objeto apreciado. Realzando así la función que el objeto realiza en su entorno o contexto adecuado. Para los objetos de diseño este contexto propio es nuestra vida cotidiana y práctica. Sin embargo, estas explicaciones dejan poco espacio a que los usos particulares de un objeto sean necesarios para fundar un valor estético funcional distintivo. Dado que *verse adecuado* sólo nos permite capturar un tipo particular de significado funcional sobre el objeto, considero que es crucial incluir otros aspectos que sólo pueden explicarse debidamente prestando atención a nuestra interacción con los objetos de diseño en patrones de uso concretos.

A pesar de su importancia, *verse adecuado* a una función no es necesario ni suficiente para una correcta apreciación estética del diseño. Defiendo esta conclusión por dos razones. La primera es que la comprensión de una forma como funcional no tiene necesariamente un significado estético en sí mismo. Los tipos comunes de categorías funcionales involucradas son, por extensión, inadecuados para determinar qué características de la forma son estéticamente valiosas. La explicación estética funcional se limita a seleccionar un conjunto de propiedades funcionales a la luz de cierto contenido cognitivo o logro funcional. Una segunda razón en contra de su suficiencia se sigue directamente de este hecho. Tomando una noción cognitivamente rica de valor estético, el placer estético se deriva de la percepción de que la apariencia de un objeto es adecuada para su propósito. La función adecuada establece los estándares normativos según los cuales ciertas formas se consideran estéticamente apropiadas y, por consiguiente, valiosas. No obstante, apunto que el valor estético del diseño no se explica absolutamente en términos funcionales. Hay muchos contraejemplos de objetos disfuncionales que, sin embargo, se consideran bellos. Por lo tanto, ese tipo de insuficiencia no puede ser respaldada por ninguna explicación de belleza funcional. Incluso si podemos determinar qué funciones son apropiadas para una forma de diseño en particular, no hay razón para considerar estas formas como estéticas únicamente por lo bien que expresan la función.

Desde mi punto de vista, hay más propiedades estéticas y expresivas de los objetos de diseño que las que una explicación estética funcional está dispuesta a reconocer. Una objeción importante a este requisito de poseer conocimiento funcional para apreciar el diseño se apoya en los argumentos de Budd. Centrarse exclusivamente en el papel que tiene el conocimiento funcional no sólo pasa por alto el auténtico impacto y valor de la dimensión estética del diseño; también disminuye otros modos más plurales de

apreciación estética que pueden construirse adecuadamente a partir de un uso o usos actuales del diseño.

En el tercer y último capítulo titulado *Una explicación apreciativa enriquecida del diseño: un modelo estético interactivo*, desarrollo un modelo alternativo de apreciación que cuestiona la idea de que la adecuación funcional juega el papel normativo que le atribuyen las explicaciones estéticas funcionales. Por tanto, ofrezco una visión más profunda de en qué consiste la apreciación del diseño que pueda hacer justicia a la riqueza del carácter estético del diseño. Muestro que los patrones de uso juegan un papel clave en la comprensión del carácter estético adecuado del diseño. Al centrarme en cómo los usos particulares enmarcan la apreciación estética, puedo explicar cómo una variedad de propiedades estéticas sobresalen como resultado de nuestra interacción con el objeto de diseño. Por lo tanto, un nuevo modelo estético interactivo para la apreciación que garantice una comprensión estética adecuada del diseño requiere tener en cuenta lo que denominaré forma en uso. Esto implica ir más allá de la evaluación de la idoneidad funcional proporcionada por las explicaciones estéticas funcionales sin abandonar la importancia de las preocupaciones funcionales.

De modo que, en la sección 3.1, proporciono una descripción general de los patrones de uso y muestro que dichos patrones están relacionados con el carácter estético del diseño, ya que ponen a disposición propiedades estéticas del objeto de diseño que no serían comprensibles sin una interacción particular con el objeto. Para respaldar esta afirmación, argumento a favor de una comprensión pluralista del papel que juega el uso en la apreciación. En la sección 3.2., avanzo el modelo de apreciación que se deriva de enfatizar la interacción con el objeto como el escenario paradigmático para la apreciación estética. Dentro de este modelo, abordo el valor estético desde un modelo afectivo que combina la comprensión y el afecto para los juicios estéticos adecuados del diseño. En la sección 3.3, examino la idoneidad del modelo estético interactivo y delimito la dimensión agencial implícita en nuestras experiencias estéticas cotidianas. De acuerdo con esto, ofrezco una caracterización del acto interactivo de apreciación y aclaro el aspecto normativo que los patrones de uso aportan a la apreciación estética adecuada. En la sección 3.4, presento algunas de las ventajas del modelo estético interactivo como modelo para la apreciación estética del diseño. En particular, me centro en la dimensión expresiva del diseño y su condición material. En la última sección, resumo las principales conclusiones del capítulo.

En líneas generales, una descripción original de los patrones de uso explica el carácter estético del diseño a la luz del significado de apreciar una forma en uso. Este punto de vista nos obliga a adoptar una posición más pluralista con respecto al papel normativo de la función adecuada al aceptar el impacto que los usos particulares y alternativos del diseño tienen en su apreciación estética. Su ventaja clave es que explica cómo las formas se perciben libremente como estéticas en un determinado contexto de uso. Por ello, la preocupación por la funcionalidad en la apreciación responde a intentar reconocer la singularidad estética de los diseños como objetos que median entre nosotros y el mundo que nos rodea; es decir, por cómo pueden mejorar (estéticamente) nuestras actividades y prácticas cotidianas. La interactividad se define como un aspecto intrínseco de la apreciación del diseño. Esta condición activa del acto enfatiza el carácter agencial del apreciador que se soslaya en la mayoría de las teorías estéticas funcionales. Al mismo tiempo, se profundiza en el sentido subjetivo de lo que es experimentar el diseño estéticamente: cómo uno reflexiona sobre el tipo de experiencia estética que se convierte en un patrón propio de uso.

Siguiendo con este punto clave, rechazo la idea de que tener una experiencia estética con el diseño se limite a captar perceptivamente (o cognitivamente) ciertas propiedades estéticas. Una experiencia estética genuina de un diseño expresa una evaluación personal del objeto que se ve facilitada por su uso. Eso significa que hacemos juicios estéticos adecuados del diseño en función de cómo interactuamos diariamente y creamos relaciones con el objeto de diseño. Establecer una visión estética interactiva en contextos cotidianos amplía aún más el modelo de experiencia estética: somos agentes estéticos prácticamente inmersos en la vida cotidiana e interactuando estéticamente con objetos ordinarios. El acto apreciativo se define mejor cuando se concibe a partir del hábito y la repetición. Esa caracterización de apreciar adecuadamente el diseño refuerza la condición de estar estéticamente comprometido con él: involucra todos nuestros sentidos más el tipo de conocimiento necesario para atender con precisión al objeto de una manera reflexiva.

En definitiva, argumento que atender a los patrones de uso nos ofrece una explicación estética más rica del juicio estético del diseño. Esto cumple en última instancia con un objetivo principal de esta tesis que es dar cuenta del aspecto normativo de los juicios estéticos de diseño. Así, muestro que este aspecto no está plenamente satisfecho por las explicaciones estéticas funcionales, ya que la normatividad que se deriva de la adecuación funcional no tiene en cuenta el valor integral del carácter estético

del diseño. Las explicaciones estéticas cotidianas tampoco pueden adaptarse a este aspecto normativo porque consideran que la experiencia de lo cotidiano no está normativamente restringida. De modo que defiendo mi punto de vista contra la posible acusación de relativismo al mostrar cómo el compromiso personal y creativo con el objeto de diseño generado en los patrones de uso es compatible con otorgar cierta validez universal a nuestros juicios estéticos. Esto es posible identificando cómo un patrón particular de uso puede encajar en una cierta *forma de vida*. Asumo el sentido wittgensteiniano de dicha noción para fijar correctamente la corrección de un patrón de uso: algunos usos son más apropiados para un diseño cuando se perciben como adecuados para una forma de actuar concreta. Por lo tanto, al apelar al carácter compartido de los patrones de uso, mi modelo estético interactivo proporciona una forma de fundamentar la validez de nuestros juicios estéticos de diseño. Garantiza el tipo de evaluación intersubjetiva requerida para una explicación adecuada del valor estético del diseño.

De este modo, el modelo estético interactivo ofrece un análisis más sensato y completo de la apreciación estética del diseño; interpretando la expresividad material del objeto y fomentando una relación más sostenible, madura y familiar con él.

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INTRODUCTION

Design mediates our common experiences and actions. While it is mostly related to human wants and needs, it also endows ordinary things with appearances that are attractive, interesting, delightful, boring, practical, clumsy, elegant, and so forth to us. These two aspects are fundamental for any account of the aesthetic appreciation of design, be it oriented toward functionality or aesthetics. For even if there is no established theory of design that all aestheticians can take as their starting point, some aestheticians have provided accounts of design appreciation in recent decades. In this thesis, I want to participate in the task of analyzing and disentangling some key questions about the aesthetic appreciation of design. How do we relate to design aesthetically? What kind of aesthetic meaning does it possess? What sort of aesthetic experiences does it provide? More specifically, do we interact aesthetically in a special way with design? Is having a functional role a concern we should take into account when aesthetically engaging with the object? Does design merit separate attention from other sorts of aesthetic objects? Does it have a different kind of aesthetic value?

My approach to these questions will proceed with the framework of two further aims: first, I want to stress the importance of design in the aesthetic realm, and second, I want my model of design appreciation to provide a new approach to the concept of the aesthetic. Both aims will crystallize in an enriched appreciative model of the aesthetic value of design.

In the first chapter, I will discuss a number of features that are commonly referred to when characterizing design. Following some well-established accounts of design, I will first characterize it as an intentional artifact. Two kinds of intentions are often invoked: a functional dimension and an aesthetic dimension. Those who prioritize the functional dimension tend to define design objects as artifacts that have solved a problem. In contrast, artistic models stress the aesthetic dimension of design and tend to conceive of design objects as akin to art objects. The characterization of design I will adopt here will navigate between these two concepts. It will take into account the aesthetic dimension of the object while preserving its practical function.

Another important feature of design objects is that they are frequently mass produced. Those who contrast design with art emphasize its mute character, the fact that it lacks expressive or semantic properties. However, I will show that design can also possess some of these features and that they are crucial for our aesthetic appreciation.

In light of this, I will elaborate a characterization of design that includes how it addresses us, emphasizing the significance of accessibility as a feature that design exhibits in contexts of interaction and that further allows us to explain how the object's functional and semantic meanings are interlaced in its form.

The second chapter is devoted to the critical analysis of the functional aesthetic account, one of the most important appreciative accounts of design today. I will provide a general analysis of the functionality of design based on the notion of proper function. Then I will explain why some normative modernist models see functionality as the key principle that governs the value of design. I will then discuss how recent functional views of design, such as those of Glenn Parsons and Jane Forsey, have incorporated the role of functionality in their accounts of the aesthetic appreciation of design. These views provide an appreciative framework for design that focuses predominantly on its functional character.

I will continue by examining in some detail the functional aesthetic appreciative model. This model integrates the function of an object in its aesthetic appreciative account of design. It succeeds in accounting for the intimate, symbiotic relationship that aesthetic concerns and functional concerns have in the aesthetic appreciation of design. I will show how this model relies on functional categories in its argument that we can aesthetically perceive that an object's form is successful or optimal when displaying functionality.

However, my approach to this model will be critical. First, I will challenge the idea that grasping the form of a design object as functional is sufficient for it to be aesthetically valuable. Second, I will show that looking fit is not a necessary condition of the aesthetic value of design. Thus, the normative role that looking fit is meant to play in the aesthetic appreciation of design is neither necessary nor sufficient. In my view, it reduces the aesthetic value of design to a judgement about the object's functional success. Finally, I will illustrate the broader view that functional aesthetic views have left behind.

The third chapter offers a new appreciative account of design: the interactive aesthetic model. My proposal includes functional concerns in appreciations of design in a different and original way. Assuming that there is no reliable (perceptual) way that functional categories can constitute the full aesthetic character of the design object, I will take into account that design objects are objects of a certain kind that are often recognized as performing practical functions.

After this, I will argue for the broad role that everyday patterns of use play in our appreciative encounters with design objects. First, I will show how an enhanced aesthetic model that focuses on the grasping of patterns of use is more sensitive to the context of interaction with the object and the personal and functional relationship we have with design. Second, it captures all the significance of the aesthetic value of design by adopting an aesthetic understanding of form in use. The notion of form in use allows for grasping aesthetic properties that become salient only in interaction with the object. I will support a more pluralistic position regarding the role various uses play in an interactive appreciative account of design. This goes beyond the normativity often attached to the notion of proper function.

I will demarcate our understanding of the aesthetic appreciative act in the premises of cognitive and affect accounts. I will argue that understanding and affect are necessary features for making accurate aesthetic judgements of design. Thus, in a combined framework for aesthetic experience, I will maintain that that is the better way to describe the subjective dimension of our aesthetic experience with designs and that habit and repetition characterize interactive appreciative acts. After considering the role of patterns of use, I will characterize the normativity of the aesthetic agency involved in design appreciation by showing how personal patterns of use become shareable. I will appeal to the Wittgensteinian notion of *forms of life* to explain the expected universal validity that is integral to the aesthetic appreciation of design.

Finally, I will point out the advantages of the interactive aesthetic model over current everyday aesthetics accounts and the comprehensive nature of its analysis of the material and expressive conditions of design.

Chapter I. Design

Introduction

In this first chapter, I will delimit a general approach to design. I will provide an accurate characterization of the design object that distinguishes it from nature and from other kinds of artifacts. Thus, I will analyse the central features of design that fit a broader understanding of its nature such that I can later offer an aesthetic appreciation model that takes those features into account. The chapter is structured as follows: in section 1.1, I will analyse the design object as a human-made artifact with a functional and an aesthetic dimension. In section 1.2, I will characterize the everyday appearance of design starting with its inherent practicality and continuing by stressing features such as the fact that it is mass produced and mundane. I will explain in section 1.3 how a rich meaning of design follows from the condition of accessibility. Eventually, that approach will allow us to understand the object's form as conveying both functional and semantic meanings. Section 1.4 summarizes the main conclusions of the chapter.

1.1. The Object of Design

What does a design object consist of? Which are the minimal conditions that differentiate Banksy street art from an iPod or a chair from a rock? One core principle contrasts design with both art and nature. Design is, first and foremost, a certain kind of intentional artifact. A car, a plane, or a chair are commonly recognizable for having a degree of authorship that is inherent to them; that is, they are consciously planned objects (Hilpinen, 1993).[1] Conversely, natural objects like a seashell, a sunrise, or a cave can be understood as accidental occurrences. They are considered to be nondeliberate or unintended. Malcolm Budd (2003) states that what is natural should not be thought of as what is human neither in itself nor its origins, since a natural thing cannot be a matter of human contrivance. Thus, in light of this artifactual-versus-natural distinction, design objects can be distinguished from natural objects in that they are made by humans.[2] Hence, even though nonhuman animals can also produce things that in a certain sense can be considered as planned, such as a spider web, a nest, or birdsong—for they have a purpose and clearly are made rather than naturally occurring—these things are not considered to be instances of design but as products of living beings.

A second key aspect of a design object is that it must have a certain degree of artifactuality. Design objects are artificial; they are works of human artifice. It is clear that this condition cannot be sufficient to characterize design objects as a distinctive type. Our everyday reality is permeated by artificial objects that are intentionally produced. This could be understood as implying that everything is, in some way, designed. However, my use of the term 'design' suggests that its meaning is more restricted. Not everything that is manufactured is considered to be a design object, although from a purely technical perspective, they could be so considered. As Jane Forsey (2013) accurately points out, we usually associate design objects with coffeepots or iPods, but we rarely speak about genetically modified corn, frozen

[1] According to Amie L. Thomasson (2007), artifacts have conceptual dependency when the author or maker has a substantive concept about them, that is, when she knows which are the relevant properties of what it means to be that type of artifact. They are mind-dependent objects in this respect. That is, their very production partly relies on the possession of the relevant concept or conception by their makers.

[2] As Jane Forsey (2013) suggests, the intentional feature of design involves two main conditions: it has to be created by someone and it has to be the product of a human intention.

pizzas, or hybrid plants as design, even though we cannot deny that they are intentionally planned.

This point is crucial to any definition of design. As Forsey notes, starting from such a broad notion of design would lead to the claim that almost everything around us counts as design and that would in turn lead to a *reductio ad absurdum* about the meaning of design. If every manmade object counts as design, we lose the ability to distinguish between an iPod and genetically altered corn. Thus, an overly inclusive analysis of design is useless. Some essentialist analyses of design began by offering a conception of design as a specific kind of action that typically involves a rational solution to a functional problem (Parsons, 2016).[3] Thus, if we pay attention to the common use of the term design, we realize that it is in the narrower sense of the word that we use design and that use only includes a subclass of the totality of objects designed by human beings.[4]

Nevertheless, the condition of artificiality, that is, the idea that is a consciously planned object, appears insufficient to fully characterize design objects. There seems to be more to our common use of the word design than an appearance of artificiality.

A further way of demarcating design can appeal to the singular purpose design objects seek to accomplish. As intentional artifacts that are part of material culture, most design objects are created with the aim of fulfilling some purpose or function. Knives are made to cut, shoes to give us the ability to walk more comfortably, glasses to improve our eyesight, and so forth. The second feature of design objects is functionality, which generally means the property we attribute to an object by virtue of the fact that it was designed to perform a determinate function. For instance, a vase is primarily designed to contain some liquid or substance. While many things can be used to perform or are capable of performing that same function—for example, a shell—they have not been originally designed to perform that specific function, to work as a container. Moreover, a vase can also function as a sand mould for playing on the beach or as a bookend. That means that apart from the intended function an

[3] According to Parsons' definition, designs are plans that a reasonable person does not immediately see as an inadequate solution to a problem. However, other theoretical approaches extend from the perspective of design as an activity that solves problems. Definitions of design vary greatly. Halstrøm & Galle (2014) define it as a type of communicative act, Krippendorff (2006) defines it as a type of meaning, and Folkmann (2013) defines it as a type of event or process.

[4] Broadly, this meaning of design outlines its intentional aspect as an activity embedded in human actions in its attempt at shaping our environment, see Heskett (2005).

object has been designed for, any design object can be functional or useful to us in many other varied or unimagined ways.

The notion of functionality plays has been central to some of the contemporary approaches to design theory. An object's functionality is identified with its intended (or proper) function given the kind of thing it is. According to Parsons and Carlson (2008), each type of object has only one proper or essential function that properly marks it as belonging to that particular functional category. Jane Forsey (2013) also emphasizes the teleological dimension that function adds to our concept of design. She stresses that we usually perceive design objects as always being created with a certain function in mind.[5] This is a crucial point for functional conceptions of design: they conceive of design as primarily concerned with how things are made or produced to achieve some aim or goal. Accordingly, the distinctive function of design is a practical one. As Houkes and Veermas (2004) maintain, the act of design is the creation of certain use plans for a particular object or event. Design objects can be defined as types of artifacts that solve problems. Parsons further remarks that merely planning to use something to achieve an aim cannot be sufficient for design. There are many different objects and everyday activities that involve certain use plans without being design. Thus, functionality is as a necessary but not sufficient condition for a definition of design.

Functional approaches often draw a distinction between functionality and usefulness. For example, shells were not originally conceived or intentionally made to perform any human-related function. Nevertheless, they can acquire a determinate function when used as containers. Similarly, if I decide to use the bed of my grandpa's Mitsubishi truck as an improvised pool in a hot summer day in Córdoba, the casual attribution of that function is what explains the functionality of the trunk as a pool, but that function is not proper to the truck qua truck. Thus, the usefulness of an object generally refers to the actual way something is regarded for its potential adaptiveness or as affording a certain function to us.

Others, like designer David Pye (1978), claims that to the extent that an object's functionality depends on the purposes that humans produce and use certain objects for, it would be wrong to deny the variability of functions: purposes are not eternal or

[5] She notes that "the purpose of an object is the realization of a given function or concept that precedes its existence; it needn't be a function that we want it to perform" (Forsey, 2013, p. 160).

immutable.[6] As he points, an object's functionality can change depending on who uses it and for what purposes. An object that has been designed to perform a particular function may be used to perform another function while remaining in the particular category it initially belonged to. In each case, the use of the object will determine the particular function it will serve.

Besides, we can say that even if functionality seems to be a pervasive aspect of design, it is insufficient for identifying a particular object as a design object. First, there are many different types of artifacts that are not often identified as design, for example some artworks and craft objects, that nonetheless have a practical function or satisfy certain human needs. Religious painting, for example, is an example of one of the functions artworks traditionally have satisfied. Thus, practical function does not exclude design even when practicality may be its primary aim (as in the case of an artificial heart valve). Second, even if we accept the claim that design objects aim at satisfying a practical function, they also appear to satisfy other aims that go beyond the merely functional ones. For instance, the delicacy and exuberance of Daniel Ost's floral arrangements underline the fact that design is not narrowly concerned with functionality but includes decorative or aesthetic aims (see appendix, p.118). In fact, this aesthetic function or dimension is often overemphasized.[7] Thus, design objects have other functions—aesthetic, symbolic, artistic, or historical, for example—that are part of what constitutes them as design. Even when these functions seem to be more frequently satisfied by the arts—art may have at its primary aim to provide an aesthetic experience (or an artistic experience broadly understood)—design objects can possess aesthetic or symbolic value (or function) while primarily serving a practical goal.

Another key aspect related to the aesthetic dimension is that design is strongly focused on the role that the look of an object plays in our daily lives. While an ordinary screw does not seem to be calling our attention to its presence, design is commonly thought of as involving presentation. In this sense, design implies a concern with the appearances of things, with how they are presented to us. Thus, design objects have not been merely conceived to satisfy practical functions but to also promote or foster

[6] He is skeptical about the possibility of establishing the functional essence or proper function of an artifact.

[7] Eventually, the way that we sometimes engage with quotidian things, or design objects as art, strongly depends on their aesthetic character or condition, for instance, when we include them as part of the interior or exterior design of our homes. For more about the notion of usefulness, see Hick (2019).

aesthetic attention and this goal determines the object's conception or design. So a third feature of a design object is that it has an aesthetic dimension that is related to how it was constructed.

Andy Hamilton (2011) suggests that when considering something as design, we should pay attention to how the designer makes decisions about the perceivable qualities of an object, its 'visual or sonic appearance or feel' (p.57). Accordingly, things like car motors or plumbing devices do not seem to be considered as design in the sense presented here precisely because some of their components are normally hidden and, hence, their configuration (or design) is not subject to any aesthetic consideration. Glenn Parsons (2016) accurately points out that in contrast to the perspective of the engineer—which includes only elements that are vital to the object's functioning—the designer focusses on the elements of the surface that will figure in the user's interaction with the object. That is a crucial point, since it points to the fact that design often incorporates the expectations of the user and her possible perceptions and experience of appreciation. Ultimately, this encompasses an understanding of the design object where its functional and aesthetic purposes intimately interact.[8] Depending on where the emphasis is put, different approaches have pushed the characterization of design in opposite directions. While some emphasize functionality, others underline the aesthetic quality.

It seems that the practical and aesthetic aspects have equal importance in design and that focussing only on functionality or prioritizing the aesthetic dimension over the practical cannot be, by themselves, sufficient for a proper characterization of design. Still, there are some cases of design—typically fashion or architecture—in which the aesthetic dimension seems to be highly important. In these cases, the roles of the designer and the artist blend ambiguously. As authorial works, some of them can be approached and highly valued aesthetically while they are also practical.[9]

[8] Nevertheless, Parsons challenges Hamilton's aesthetic conception of design as too narrow because he thinks that there can be cases of design that apparently involve no aesthetic element at all, such as the chemical composition of detergent. Thus, Parsons' theory downplays the aesthetic or symbolic dimension of design, prioritizing its functionality instead. However, even if there may be cases where the aesthetic dimension is minimal or nonexistent, most design objects have an aesthetic element.

[9] In cases such as perfumes or fashion items, it is precisely the search for the wearability of products that makes them stand apart as designs (Shiner, 2015).

After having established some of the main features of design—conceived as an intentional artifact in which the practical and aesthetic dimensions are interlaced—we can advance a little bit more into the picture of what makes design special.

1.2. The Everyday Appearance of Design

A great variety of objects, from satellites to soapboxes, are typically recognized as design. We often think of them as mere real things (Danto, 1981), as things that are quotidian to us, part of our everyday reality. In that sense, design can be characterized as mundane. Mundane generally means something ordinary and often uninteresting or unremarkable, like a can opener. In order to be mundane, design needs to be involved or to take part in an everyday situation that shapes how we engage and do things with design objects in our daily routines and practices. Often, we become aware of the everyday role of design when it stops functioning. However, this does not mean that our attention to the can opener is triggered only in dysfunctional circumstances. A peculiarity of design objects is that while they are mundane, they seem to ask for special attention. Moreover, the attention they claim goes beyond the features of the object that seem more relevant to its functionality; it often focusses on the features that invite aesthetic appreciation.

Some designs, like a Ferrari sports car, seemingly call to our attention as aesthetic objects beyond the ordinary. This seems to be at odds with the everyday character I am commenting on. In fact, recent everyday aesthetics approaches (Haapala, 2005; Saito, 2007; Leddy, 2012; Forsey, 2013) have claimed that everydayness is a condition that causes quotidian objects—some design objects included—to pass unnoticed. Also, some designs do not call attention to themselves except when we use them. A famous case is Braun's modern home appliances. Most of the celebrated brand's products, such as razors, kitchen tools, or radios, seem to fit into a characterization of design as 'aesthetically invisible'. They are consciously designed to be unnoticed at least when nobody is using them, so they can sit in the kitchen or the bathroom without catching our attention.[10] This ordinariness and the unnoticed character of design do not involve an attitude of indifference or disdain, but they seem to be the marks of our everyday encounters with design objects.

[10] A key point of the evaluation of design is that this aesthetic invisibility is often taken, paradoxically, as a mark of aesthetic success.

On the other hand, as I have already mentioned, design objects have a practical purpose: they are physical objects, like a cap or a website, with which we physically interact. However, many different types of everyday design objects are not, strictly speaking, material or do not offer a sort of interaction where the materiality of the object is at the forefront. These cases of design thinking, such as interactive design, service design, or system design, are forms of design that are embedded in our ordinary lives but that foster a form of interaction and use which is more intellectual than physical, such as websites or cell phone apps. An example of design thinking is the human-centred approach to designs for healthcare devices in hospitals. This approach focuses on the patient's experience in emergency rooms and mostly focuses on improving her state of wellness. The same method has been applied in the design of start-ups that gain wide acceptance such as Airbnb. As already noted, these forms of design are solutions to problems that begin as a plan or an idea (akin to the case of conceptual art).

Another meaningful aspect of design is how it intersects with our daily lives. Design objects are commonly characterized as mass-produced objects. Their historical development runs parallel to the new possibilities offered by the mechanical production techniques of the last century. Design both made possible and contributed to a form of producing ordinary objects that was more rational and efficient for the consumer world. As manufactured objects, design objects seem to have a distinctive appearance, especially in comparison to the handmade appearance of crafts object or certain artworks. As Forsey (2014) notes, the artisan's skill or ability can be more easily appreciated in a finished craft object. Thus, in the context of design objects as mass-produced objects, design objects also tend to be seen as ephemeral. That means that they can be easily replaced or substituted when they are part of a consumerism production cycle. Additionally, they are easily replicable. As a consequence, designs are expected to become obsolete or to expire in a (pre-)established period of time. That means that the character of design objects is somehow marked with a halo of impermanency and obsolescence. Their obsolescence is both material—they become useless at a certain point—and aesthetic, in the sense that their appearance is sometimes perceived as outdated after some time, especially when new designs come into existence.

Nevertheless, many design objects are seen as durable. Indeed, there are some atemporal designs that we recognize as classics for the way they have survived the test

of time. In this sense, design objects are often taken to be distinctive of a particular period, style, or mode or as belonging historically to a certain school of design or a craft tradition. While these objects remain fashionable, it seems that they can speak of a particular age in a clear voice. Hence, design classics are great exemplars or types that preserve their temporal mark across time.

Given that most designs are produced for mass consumption, they are deliberately anonymous and nonpersonal. We usually do not know who designs regular Zara T-shirts—at least, not for each fifteen-day update season. This is also a fact that reinforces features of design such as impermanency and ephemerality. Typically conceived for a trend, design objects are also normally taken to be more disposable. How the finished product looks or feels is what matters in the consumerist approach, which often attracts the consumer to the object even before they use it. Indeed, in some cases, the appearance of age and signs that an object has been used over time are taken as diminishing the impact and appeal of its look. For that reason, used or worn appearances are more easily dismissed in current cycles of consumption.[11]

Often, designers are not entirely responsible for the final finished product, since most of their work is done in the idea stage of manufacture (Forsey, 2013; Parsons, 2016). For that reason, the designer's trace is less visible. In fact, the designers for things like cutlery or socks are often not identified. Thus, a designer's association with her designs can often be diluted or not as intimate as they are in artistic, more personal ways of production. Especially when compared to works of art—which are typically more communicative objects that explicitly identify the artist—design seem to reflect fewer traces of the designer's personal work. Still, this does not mean that designers always lack personal commitment. Some designers develop a more committed and personal relationship with their design collections. Examples include Paula Scher's graphic designs (see appendix, p.104) and Nanna Ditzel's furniture.

Thus, describing design as a manufactured object does not necessarily mean that there is no room for a designer's voice. An Eames chair or a Chanel dress is a very recognizable design that is part of a huge collection that defines a designer's trajectory. In some cases at least, design objects reveal a strong personal narrative resulting from

[11] This point about the main aesthetic value of design is critically approached in Saito (2018).

a sincere creative endeavour. It could be argued that the authorial weight of exceptional designs evinces a more artistic status and that they lack a mundane appearance. Still, we recognize a large number of common designs as designers' achievements, from Adidas trainers to Kusama decorative pumpkins. In these cases, design ultimately gets a more artistic credit.

The fashionableness of design sometimes results from a playful combination between the timeless character of the object and the type of authorial frame in which it is sketched. For instance, think of how in 2019, a miniscule Le Chiquito leather bag by Jacquemus (see appendix, p.106) realised the concept of a classic two-handle bag through the vocabulary of the designer's brand universe inspired by the French Riviera: a solid, colourful, and minimalistic design that plays with the significance of proportions by scaling a regular bag down two sizes. The result is that a micro bag celebrated joviality and quickly became iconic. In sum, the everyday appearance of design seems to be as complex as the appearance of the many other arts, although in this case, it has also to do with how things are functional.

1.3. Accessibility and the Meaning of Design

As already suggested, one of the key aspects of design is functionality. Think, for instance, in the case of an ordinary chair. It seems that our interaction with the chair somehow is mediated by how its design makes it easy for us to acknowledge its functionality, that is, as a comfortable place to rest. Not all design objects make their usefulness manifest in the same way. The appearance of some chairs suggests that they are more comfortable to sit on. Usually, we grasp this dimension by paying attention to how the object has been made or how it presents its function in appearance. An example of what comfort can be at first glance is the wing chair designed by Michael Malmborg. It is a remake of the classic wing chair that uses memory foam that NASA developed for spacecraft instead of conventional padding. The chair is perceived as comfortable even before using it, so its functionality and comfortability are given both by its visual appearance and by the physical experience of interacting with it. One can get a similar kind of impression when looking at iittala's new furniture collection on its website or when trying a new chair at an IKEA showroom.

We say that a design object is accessible when it facilitates its use in a particular context. An object's accessibility has to do with its form and appearance and with the lack of obstacles to relating or interacting with it. Donald Norman (1988) argues that the aim of design is 'mak[ing] things visible' (p.13). In his view, any design object should be conceived to display its maximum degree of functionality. Proper interaction with design objects often requires understandability and usability. Thus, accessibility is primarily concerned with the surface of things. As Glenn Parsons (2016, 54) points out, the notion of surface includes interactive dynamics—the way the object is used and how it responds to use. Thus, design encodes certain action possibilities, or what design theory now calls, following Gibson (1979), *affordances*.[12] As a result, we can say that designs are accessible when we perceive in a clear way the kind of interaction they afford.[13]

Assuming that efficient ways of interaction are preferred, design offers various possibilities of interaction with an object. A generally accepted thought about design is that its main purpose is to make life easier. Hence, many design objects are tagged as user friendly when they solve domestic and practical problems in simple or ingenious ways. A droll example is the Dombo cup by Richard Hutten for Gispen (see appendix, p.128). Its two giant round handles are specially designed to facilitate children's learning to drink without spilling its contents. This shape is also useful for the elderly or for people that suffer from a motor disability. The designer explains that the handles are a reference to the human ear, the only body part that continues to grow our entire life (maybe the cup metaphorically conveys the idea that learning grows through listening). At the same time, the key point of that design is that it is functionally successful while having a pleasing aesthetic appearance. Or, further, as functionalists like to claim, its functional appearance is aesthetically pleasurable.

How are we to understand the idea of an object's function being accessible? Considered from a mere perceptual level—that is, before exploring the object in use—an object's accessibility primarily has to do with how we perceive the form of the object as realizing a particular function. Thus understood, the function is given openly,

[12] For more on how design objects display affordances and how these are understood as human potential actions through conventions, see Norman (2005).

[13] The *Spun* chair (2007) by Thomas Heatherwick is a peculiar case because it adapts the form and movement of a peg- top (see appendix, pp.109, 114, 115).

or in a transparent way, through its perceivable (aesthetic) form.[14] Modernist design theory has explicitly focused on that kind of functional outlook. Within a modernist account, design works as a medium to communicate something about the functionality of the object. Thus, in the case of functional objects, form conveys a kind of functional meaning: we can see in the form of objects how to use them. They are designed in such a way that their form appears to invite us to perform certain actions, movements, and gestures. A key aspect of the functional model is that we can immediately perceive the appearance of the object as useful. The form of design is said to aspire to an ideal of transparency: we directly perceive the functionality of the object in its design without inferring it or deriving it from other features of the object. In short, the phenomenon of perceiving the usability of the object in its form may be a key aspect of our relationship with design.

The form of design can facilitate relating, interacting, or engaging with the object in cases where it seems that there is a kind of semantic meaning involved. Typical cases are advertising, communications, and digital experiences.[15] But it is not only in that domain that designs present a more sophisticated or complex content or meaning. Frequently that meaning is prescribed to designers for commercial reasons. So eventually both functional and semantic meanings may intermingle in the form of the design. However, the fact that the form of design communicates a certain (external) meaning or content in an easy or accessible way somehow differs from the fact that design communicates a kind of complex or elaborate content. Often the accessibility of a design invites us to consider the object as simple or naïve, which is a mistake in my view.

In his theory of mass art, Nöel Carroll (1998) claims that simplicity of form—which is often grounded in repetition and the use of known formulae—facilitates an understanding of an artwork. This enables mass artworks to reach a wider audience. Serialized TV shows, pop music, and video games are easier to engage with than an avant-garde work. Mass art is characterized by the fact that it reproduces generic, simple forms and by the fact that the type of content it can convey is limited. In the

[14] I will expand on how form is related to function in the next chapter.

[15] An example is Sagmeister Inc.'s 2010 billboard in New York City for Levi that said "We Are All Workers". This provocative installation piece conveyed the idea that we are all workers by continually breaking apart and rebuilding the letters of the message on the cogs of wheels that turned. The advertisement was very popular with people in the neighbourhood, which is proof of design's ability to successfully challenge mainstream forms of advertising (see appendix, pp. 122-124).

case of mass entertainment, that content is generally perceived as superficial or vague. By contrast, Carroll holds, artistic forms are expressive of an artist's subjectivity and typically involve a profound or reflective content.

If we approach design in terms of its role as a communicative mass-produced object, that is, as an accessible object, and compare the accessibility of design with Carroll's conception of mass art, we can ask what sort of content design objects can convey. Attending to the form of design in light of its practical purpose, it seems that everyday objects have no significant or complex content qua the kind of things they are. Design objects do not seem to have the sort of meaning aspirations that artworks may have. They cannot have profound content or express a dep emotion or a particular point of view (Parsons and Carlson, 2008; Forsey, 2014).

However, to characterize design as lacking meaningful content or as non-expressive appears to conflict with the ways we speak about and relate to that kind of object. In other words, it seems that design can and often does convey more than functional meaning. Part of how we usually relate with design objects is that we grasp their symbolic or expressive meaning.

Some expressive meaning can endow designs with an anthropomorphic appearance. An example is the case of Eva Zeisel's ceramic salt and pepper shakers (see appendix, pp.119, 120). They reproduce the act of hugging so that both pieces express or symbolize tenderness. This design carries associations of feelings because it resembles human figures. There are other, more complex ways that some designs can show an expressive or symbolic dimension in light of the designer's creative attempt to express particular feelings or evoke a distinctive emotional state in the consumer or user.[16] The ethereal and delicate appearance of the Icefjord Centre realized in the shape of a boomerang seeks to metaphorically embody the fragility of human existence (see appendix, p.130).[17] Architect Dorte Mandrup suggests that the

[16] For example, as Shiner (2015) suggests, some perfumes structure olfactory elements in a way that expresses the feelings or ideas evoked by a particular place. Thus, these olfactory associations eventually can take on expressive content.

[17] The structure of this architectural work is characterized by the use of autochthonous Icelandic wood. The warn and organic quality of this material contrasts with the robustness and ageless quality of the natural volcanic rock that integrates the glacier valley in which the centre is built. Mandrup arrives at the use of wood for its fragile material condition as a means to represent our contingent presence in the preserved environment of the glacier. Following Goodman's view (1978), a building can have meaning if it functions symbolically by exemplifying (through denotation) or expressing (through metaphorical exemplification) certain properties, ideas, sentiments, or external objects. However, this does not mean that the building has any semantic role at all.

expressive meaning of the building is a more conscious and sustainable way of understanding the impact of architecture on our relationship with nature.[18] As she maintains, we can reflect on concepts such as time and existence through the building's restless form when contrasted with the appearance of the hill or the sea that we face when inhabiting it. Other designs play with humour. Front Design's 2007 hanger (see appendix, p.110) is a standing structure made of inverted hangers that is paradoxically quite functional. It is meaningful for it conveys a kind of ironic comment about the functionality of ordinary design. Paying attention to these cases of design shows that functional aspects can be consciously mixed with a more communicative aspect.[19]

Given all this, a very important feature of the design object is that some meanings can be expressed through certain design forms. The form of design need not be plain or simplistic in its content or in the way it conveys it. It can be original or interesting. Thus, design objects can realize functional and expressive purposes through a particular form.

In the next chapter, I will focus on the aesthetic dimensions of design and on some significant features of the object that go beyond the functional understanding of its form.

1.4. Conclusions

Without seeking to provide a closed definition of design, I have offered certain features that seem characteristic of design objects.

First, design objects are human-made artificial objects. They are different from natural objects because of their intentional nature. And they are also different from merely technical artifacts, such as artificial heart valves or gas pipes, in that the intention of the latter examples is exclusively practical.

Second, I pointed to functionality as a key feature of the design object. Broadly, that means that design has the aim or purpose of satisfying a practical function. This purpose is more easily graspable when considering the design object as a solution to a problem. However, I have claimed that more casual functions should be taken into account. Furthermore, I have claimed that no single function is sufficient for

[18] Wagner M., Wehye S. (visited on 2021, December 19). *Another kind of knowledge.* Louisiana Channel. https://channel.louisiana.dk/video/dorte-mandrup-another-kind-of-knowledge.

[19] I have elsewhere argued for that meaningful expressive aspect of design (Jiménez Sánchez, 2019).

individuating a particular object as design given these two considerations: practical functions do not exclude design because they are also found in other types of artifacts, such as artworks or craft objects; and the design object can satisfy more than one purpose or function at the same time, such as aesthetic, symbolic, artistic, or historical ones.

Still, functionality has a central role in design. I think that an object's functionality should reflect its usefulness. In this sense, functionality should be understood in a broad, flexible, way. First, we should be flexible in allowing that an object that has been designed to perform a particular function can be used to perform another function. Second, our account should encompass aspects of our relationship with the object that go beyond its capacity to perform a particular function, for example an aesthetic dimension. That aesthetic dimension results from an explicit aesthetic attitude or intention embodied in the creative endeavour. Accordingly, design is described as an activity that involves a mode of presentation for how it expressly deals with the quotidian appearances of things in our everyday lives. While some designs accentuate the aesthetic dimension (for example, fashion) or even exaggerate it (as in *designart*[20]), the relevant conclusion is that design should be taken as an intentional artifact whose practical and aesthetic dimensions are intertwined.

Third, I have argued that a third core feature of design is its mundane condition. As a real thing that is part of everyday reality, design asks for different kinds of attention, including attention to how it engages us during our daily routines and practices by shaping how we do things. The material condition of design also relates to the fact that it is mass produced and thus is more ephemeral (that is, disposable), anonymous, and impersonal. In addition, the designer's involvement with the final product is less intimate than in other ways of production (such as arts or crafts) and her trace is often less visible in the object's appearance.

I have also shown that some cases of design become classics because of the way they give rise to a designer's voice or style in a certain period, school, or tradition. These designs seem to reveal a strong personal imprint and a sincere commitment to the creative endeavour. However, even though some designs appear to get more credit as artistic works, their rich and complex everyday appearance has to do with their functional dimension.

[20] See Coles (2005).

Fourth, I have claimed that the accessibility of design has to do with the fact that its appearance presents no obstacles to relating or interacting with it in a particular context. Designs are accessible when they provide a kind of mediation between us and the world around us. From that perspective, I have outlined how functionalists understand function as showing itself openly, or in a transparent way, through the object's perceivable (aesthetic) form. Many functional models of design follow an ideal of transparency whereby the design object's form invites us to perform certain gestures or movements that are necessary to its usefulness. Thus, perceiving the usability of the object is a key aspect of our common relationship with design.

Fifth, I have advanced the idea that a design object's form is not restricted to carrying a functional meaning. Designs can be communicative and meaningful objects. These aspects are often consciously mixed with other functional aspects. I have argued that even when designs are not typical candidates for presenting the sort of expressive content that artworks typically exhibit, the form of design should not be understood as simplistic or mute. Thus, I think that design objects can convey certain symbolic, expressive meanings in tandem with functionality.

Chapter II. Design Appreciation

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I sketched an analysis of design that emphasizes its functional and aesthetic dimensions and the richness of its mundane character. In this chapter, I introduce an account of the aesthetic appreciation of design that takes into consideration its functional condition. The chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first section, I will introduce the functional approach to design following a general account of functionality. In point 2.1.1., I will introduce proper function as a notion that in some views explains the essence of design as a functional object. In section 2.1.2., I will present modernism as a normative view of design that claims that achieving functionality is the highest design principle. In section 2.1.3., I will extend the modern theoretical approach by introducing Glenn Parsons' concept of design. Parsons defines design as an activity whose main goal is to produce 'ideal plans' for a functional object. In section 2.1.4., I will introduce Jane Forsey's characterization that a design object is a distinctive object whose functional condition determines its mute and mundane character.

In the second section, I will present the functional account of the aesthetic appreciation of design. In point 2.2.1., I will analyze how the idea that form exhibits functionality is understood. In section 2.2.2., I will present a current aesthetic account that takes functionality as the core aspect of our appreciation of functional objects. In section 2.2.3., I will question the normative role of the aesthetic property of looking fit in the appreciation of design. In section 2.2.4., I will show the inadequacy of the functional aesthetic analysis for explaining the full aesthetic value of design and the need to provide a broader model of aesthetic appreciation. The final section presents the main conclusions of the chapter.

2.1. The Functional Account of Design

In this section, I will offer an overview of how the functional aspect of design is bounded to a certain meaning of functionality. Thus, whether or not we subscribe to a more pluralist model about the kind of functions attributable to an artifact, the key idea of a functional account of design is that functionality (for example, providing rest, light, warmth, or helping us eat, walk, and so forth) distinguishes design objects from other artifacts whose form does not strictly correspond to the satisfaction of a practical function but does correspond to an aesthetic function, for example. Assuming this, any conception of design based on the significance of proper—or intended—function will stress the role that the functional aspect of design has for its aesthetic appreciation.

2.1.1. The Design Artifact and Proper Function

The functional analysis of design claims that the main characteristic of design is that it serves a practical function. Design objects typically satisfy practical functions, such carrying us from point A to point B (i.e., planes, cars, boats), cleaning household objects (i.e., dishwashers, vacuum cleaners), or virtually connecting us with other people (i.e., phones, computers, iPads). Assuming this, we can ask how the functionality of a particular artifact is established.[21] That is, what criteria do we use to identify the particular function(s) an artifact has as the artifact it is? Are chairs things that we can identify regardless of their (main) function or is the main function of chairs what defines them as chairs? In response to these questions, normative artefactual theories have provided arguments that artifacts should be defined in terms of their main functionality. In other words, these arguments account for how certain function(s) can be individually ascribed to an artifact. They offer an explanation about why certain function(s) belong to an artifact.[22] Following that model, we can distinguish two main accounts of the function of an artifact: intentionalist accounts and evolutionary accounts.

Intentionalist accounts of artifact function claim that it is fixed by the creator's original intentions and that the simple recognition that an artifact was designed by

[21] From now, I will use the general notion of "artifact" in this section to refer to a design object.

[22] Much of the discussion and disagreement in theories of the functions of artifacts focuses on the issues of whether an individual artifact has only one function or more functions or if a single function is more central than peripheral functions or if it can have various functions at the same time or across time.

someone to do X is enough evidence for the claim that X is the function of that artifact (Baxandall, 1985). That means that no alternative functional role beyond the artifact's intended one can be legitimately identified as its proper function. For example, while the Cellini Salt Cellar could be used as a paperweight, its proper function is holding salt, not keeping paper from blowing away.

In contrast, those who subscribe to an evolutionary account of artifact function maintain that the designer's intentions have no determining role in ascribing a particular function to an artifact. They argue in favour of an alternative etiological explanation. In that account, the proper ascription of the main function of an artifact follows a selected effect theory, the notion that an artifact's proper function is fixed by its efficient effects or successful ways of functioning in the context of how it was produced.[23] Thus, the proper function of an artifact is determined by how it has been (naturally) selected by marketplace forces (Parsons & Carlson, 2008). Consequently, the current function the artifact performs why it exists at all today.

Aside from more relativistic or pessimistic views about the possibility of determining an artifact's function,[24] both intentional and evolutionary (or etiological) accounts of function argue that there is a difference between functions that are claimed to belong to the object and the ones that are imposed on it by use, context, or happenstance. Proper function is distinguished from other possible functions that an artifact can accidentally perform in its lifetime. While these other casual functions are possible, they do not determine what the artifact is as an artifact. Only its proper function does so.[25] Thus, intentional and evolutionary views are mostly monistic, for they are committed to the idea that an artifact has a single proper function as the artifact it is. However, they do not need to be monistic. Some modal accounts have claimed that an artifact's function is contingently fixed by the context of use. In this view, we should attend to how the artifact is being used at a particular time and space in order to grasp its function by recognizing how it successfully performs that function in other

[23] In the selected effect theory, an artifact's effect is successful when it meets a market want or need. This success explains the current existence of the artifact when it leads human agents to manufacture and distribute it. See Parsons & Carlson (2008).

[24] Pye (1978) pointed to the indeterminate character of function against more essentialist views that argue that one function can determine the form of an object.

[25] The contrast is captured linguistically by the difference between an object's having a function F and its *functioning as* F (Parsons & Carlson, 2008).

possible scenarios.[26] Modal theory allows that an artifact has several functions across time or that it satisfies different purposes in its lifetime. A pluralist account of functionality does not accept that the meaning of function is elusive. The function of an artifact can be determined with no ambiguity whatsoever in each moment.

Without entering here into that debate, the critical point is that even when the design artifact can satisfy multiple functions, one of these functions needs to be identified or designated in order to determine an artifact's membership to a certain kind. For intentionalist accounts, the main function is fixed by certain intentions or (social) attitudes towards the artifact, whereas for etiological accounts an established type of use for the object is required. That means that intentional and/or singular uses of an artifact are boundlessly tied to the designer's plan and its causal history. Intentionalist accounts are more suitable for artistic objects, for they have room for originality and uniqueness as necessary features of these objects, while etiological accounts are often considered to fit the case of everyday artifacts better, since they assume that originality and/or uniqueness are not essential to the object's status or condition as designs (or when approached as historical objects).[27] At the same time, that assumption underscores the fact that there is an apparent tension between a design object's functional dimension—when it is conceived as a mere artifact—and an aesthetic dimension that connects it with artistic objects and with crafts.

In the next section, I will introduce how the role of proper function frames and grounds the view of design. And, consequently, how an appreciation of design that relies strictly on its functional aspect can apparently exclude some possible aesthetic and expressive features. I will start with modernist thinking, then I will look at new essentialist concepts of design. Finally, I will discuss strict intentional accounts of design.

[26] Here Nanay (2013) introduces a sort of modal flexibility: the function of artifacts is fixed by counterfactual facts. He claims that "the function of an artifact is not whatever it does that fulfills the goals of the agent who is using it, but what it does that *would* contribute to the fulfillment of the goals of this agent".

[27] Eaton (2020) made that assumption when providing an etiological account of function that supports the notion that the purpose of an artifact is not aligned with the designer's intent.

2.1.2. Modernism and Design

Early, in the last century, modernism brought widespread attention to the key role that design could play in the new industrialized world. The concept of design was separated from the realm of the more traditional applied arts with the purpose of bringing into life an innovative production model. A new interest arose in creating utilitarian products whose appearance manifested an idea of their functionality or functional meaning. Many utilitarian objects such as pieces of furniture, home appliances, or public buildings were primarily regarded as vehicles of functionality and stripped of many of the symbolic meanings and much of the middle-class status they had traditionally carried. The highest aspiration of modernist thinking was using design to achieve certain social and moral values that were considered more liberal or progressive. As a philosophical position, modernism supported a more rational conception of design using new standards of practical efficiency in the global marketplace.

A hallmark of the modernist perspective is the idea that good design is the result of finding the most functional form possible. A chief consequence of this view is that every feature—such as decoration—that serves an aesthetic purpose without contributing to the object's functionality should be dispensable. Functionalism is the main school of this modernist model (Loos, 1908/1970). A key idea in the modernist analysis of design is that a perfect communion between practical needs and aesthetic feelings for design objects can be achieved by rejecting decorative elements in designs. Until this time period, these elements were integral to the conception of a more crafted or less manufactured object. Instead, the modernist view that good design is primarily dependent on functionality became normative.

The influence of normative modernist analysis is still with us. Paradigmatic cases of contemporary design, such as Braun's home appliances or Apple's i-products, perfectly exemplify the modern standards of good design. They are clear examples of the realization of a set of rational and functional principles in an object's form.[28] Glenn Parsons (2016, p. 238) notes that a key idea in the modernist school is that functionality is a perceptible aspect of the object. It is perceptible when it manifests itself in the "outer shell," or appearance of the object; that is, when we perceive how easily it could

[28] See Dieter Rams's 10 principles of design in Lovell (2011).

be manipulated or how safely it could be used and so on. Thus, for modernists, the major goal of design is not only to be maximally functional but also to exhibit its functionality in its appearance.

More precisely, a key idea of the modernist view is the recognition of how the form of an object expresses its function. This brings in a sense of correctness to the practice and appreciation of design depending on how successfully a form realizes a particular function. This crucial idea is expressed in the famous dictum that form must always follow function. Modern designs are often characterized as 'clean'. That is, their form is unembellished; the object's appearance effortlessly conveys its function.[29]

Another main aspect of the modernist analysis justifies the requirement that the design appear functional. Modernist theory argues that we can cultivate beauty through the pursuit of functionality rather than through the use of decoration or ornament. Therefore, a design that is functional is considered to be more aesthetically valuable. Many pioneer designs created at the Bauhaus school of design were strongly committed to that aesthetic principle. For instance, the Kandem table lamp by Marianne Brandt or Annie Albers's innovative textile patterns (see appendix, p.108) are great examples of an aesthetic commitment to modernism. The main point is that modern designs were considered to be beautiful designs because they were functional, echoing the traditional notion of functional beauty. Thus, a last key point of the modernist school is that functionalism allows us to establish a robust connection between aesthetic value and the function of an object.[30] In the next chapter, I will focus on the functional appreciative account of design by explaining how current aesthetic theories provide theoretical support for the modernist aesthetic belief that a design can be considered beautiful when it appears functional.

[29] Jan Michl (2013) accurately points out that modernists were fascinated with the utopian idea of the existence of a type of natural design. The main appearance of modern designs is perceived as revealing their "pure" skin. This metaphor of nudity seems to be mostly exemplified in modernist architectural works.

[30] Parsons (2015) notes a main concern about the limitations of modernism as a philosophical aesthetic theory. He argues that functionalism offers no real explanation for how the very fact that an object functions in a determinate way—for instance, the fact that a pan can fry some potatoes—affects whether or not that thing is perceived as elegant, award-winning, robust, or as an instance of any other kind of aesthetic quality.

2.1.3. Parsons' Conception of Design

In an attempt to revitalize the modernist vision of design, Glenn Parsons (2016) offers a robust functional conception of design. He conceives of design as a solution to a technical or practical problem. Following Houkes and Veermas's (2004) account of the practice of design, Parsons points to the relevance that some a priori plans appear to have for the process of conceiving a new kind of thing or artifact. For Parsons, design involves the production of a new kind of thing by creating reasonable plans for solving a problem. In other words, design produces artifacts that solve problems.[31] However, one key condition to that conception of design is that in order for any design plans to be successfully achieved or accomplished, they have to be reasonable. In Parsons' conception, reasonable plans are plans that we can implement in the near future and that we believe can be properly realized.[32] For example, at this moment, design plans for a time machine do not seem to be technically reachable. One would say, following Parsons, that they are not realizable in the same way that might be expected in more common design objects or in objects that are not so common but are currently under development.[33]

Thus, given that, according to Parsons' normative conception, design mainly consists of finding practical solutions to functional needs materialized in the form of some reasonable plans, one could ask whether dysfunctional—though not unrealizable—design objects should be excluded as examples of design. It seems that there are some renowned designs but also more critical and conceptual ones that don't fit in Parsons' analysis. Examples include the iconic and cherished Juicy Salif citrus squeezer by Philippe Stark or Katerina Kamprani's inverted watering can or any other imagined fake design (i.e., Homer Simpson's makeup gun).

Nevertheless, Parsons' normative conception allows for some degree of dysfunctionality regarding certain design plans. The examples mentioned above do not

[31] Saul Fisher (2019) questions Parsons' conception of design for the case of architecture. He argues that so much of the design thinking that is behind the creation of many architectural works goes beyond the concept of a building as a type of artifact that solves a problem. Thus, the case of architecture is not a proper case of "design" in the technical sense Parsons argues for.

[32] For a keen criticism about how we can truly determine the reasonableness of any design's plans, see Galle (1999).

[33] For example, some innovative design plans for a car's steering wheel aim at monitoring the driver's health status. In Parsons' view, the design plans for the steering wheel are seen as technically more affordable at this moment than the ones planned for a time machine.

need to be discarded, they only need to be relativized. Parsons says, "We do not want to say that someone who draws up plans for a lemon juicer that can't juice a lemon properly is not designing: what we should say is that he designs, but poorly" (Parsons, 2016, p. 27). Thus, dysfunctional design counts as design, but since the practical needs that the object has to fulfil—as the kind of functional thing that it is—are not properly satisfied, it is considered to be bad design.

Parsons' conception of design emphasizes that it is a rational activity. For him, the success or appropriateness of a design is measured according to how the object accomplishes a practical function in the most reasonable or efficient way. Another important idea embedded in Parsons' functional conception of design is that modern designs must look functional in order to be good. Rational design solutions have to avoid—or at least reduce to a minimum—certain expressive elements in the appearance of the object. Since expressive elements of design often do not seem to directly contribute to the object's main functionality, good design must dispel them. Moreover, they can be considered as elements that detract from the object's functionality. The functional look or appearance must prevail.

Parsons' follows Loos's rational approach to design in order to argue that expressive ornaments in design mostly appear to have the role of expressing our own "valuable nature" as human beings.[34] But why couldn't design also aspire to possess this expressive content? Parsons' answer is the better realization argument: other practices better fulfil that expressive role, such as many traditional art forms, and this expressive goal should be extricated from design practice so that other practices can fulfil it in a better way. Hence, the main purpose of most modern design objects is to successfully carry out practical functions and technical needs instead of trying to realize other symbolic functions or merely satisfy our (aesthetic) desires and fantasies. Parsons' key concluding idea is that the standard of rationality of design is whether it achieves a functional appearance.[35]

Parsons' main point is that the goal of design is to possess functional value. The aesthetic claim that Parsons endorses as a result of this view of design appreciation

[34] He claims that a kind of "erotic impulse" is behind our unconditional love of ornaments. In this sense, they satisfy our fantasies and desires. "But in all of them, the basic impulse driving the expressive dimension of Design is the same: the desire to render things attractive through 'showing forth' their valuable nature" (Parsons, 2016, p. 174).

[35] One premise of Parsons' better realization argument is that the attempt to display our valuable nature is better realized by our actions than by the expressive elements of design objects.

is primarily focused on its functional (aesthetic) form. Therefore, inasmuch as design objects are primarily considered to be bearers of functional value, any other kind of meaning, such as expressive or symbolic meaning, is to be seen as merely attached to a design form as ornament or decoration and consequently as unnecessary.

2.1.4. Forsey's Conception of Design

One of the aims of Jane Forsey's conception of design (2013) is to explain what makes the design object unique. Her working definition of design contrasts design objects with both artworks and craft objects. Unlike Parsons, she does not define design in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions. But like him, Forsey argues that the main characteristic of design is its functional purpose. She characterizes the design object as functional because it primarily serves practical purposes and satisfies human needs. Although functionality is not an exclusive feature of design—for some artworks and craft objects also perform practical functions—Forsey stresses that functionality appears to be a common feature of many designs and everyday objects. In her conception, functionality is crucially related to the distinctive character of design as mundane. Design objects are ordinary objects that have a functional role in our daily routines and habits. Thus, she describes design as immanent, mass produced, and mute.

Forsey defines the distinctiveness of design as our ability to understand its meaning and appearance as a functional object.[36] When she says that design objects are immanent, she means that their principal aim is to be useful rather than to perform a more transcendental or spiritual function, as artworks do. Accordingly, she claims that design objects are meant to be used and not to be merely contemplated.[37] She points out that artworks are produced to express certain emotions, ideas, or points of view about the world. Thus, the immanency of design relies on the motives and aspirations at the heart of the practice of design that are different from those traditionally presumed for art. Second, design can be described as a mass-produced object primarily because it is considered as a replicable type. Moreover, it is typically produced anonymously. As a consequence of this, the appearance of design objects is commonly mechanized or technological. In contrast, handmade craft objects are more

[36] Forsey's analysis of the meaning of design is different from current formalist (Bell, 1958) and expressivist (Collingwood, 1958) theories of art.

[37] This would be considered the main purpose of an artistic object.

singular. Most craft objects can be appreciated for how we recognize the artisan's ability in their form. So even though both types of objects have a practical function, design objects differ from craft items at the level of the finished appearance. Thus, in design objects, we commonly perceive traits that have been technically produced.

A third feature of Forsey's analysis is that design is mute, or inexpressive. Design objects do not appear to express any kind of content like the content we typically find in art. Artworks are seen as more complex types of objects that seek to express ideas, emotions or values. In contrast, design objects fulfil the aspiration being useful or practical. Thus, design objects are perceived to be less profound than artworks. In Forsey's characterization, design objects that seek to communicate or be about something are exceptions, mainly because design works in the arena of use and practicality.[38] So even when design aims to transmit certain values or social meanings, it achieves that goal by helping us do something.

Thus, the appreciation of design is centred on its functional quality. We actually engage aesthetically with design solutions that are perceived to be simple or elegant because they are successful functional solutions. In Forsey's conception, that eventually leads to the construction of the main aesthetic value of design in terms of beauty alone. That view forces us to leave aside other scenarios in which different aesthetic properties could define the design object—such as being cute, ironic, or garish—and also to dismiss unfitting appearances when perceived as aesthetically valuable beyond the analysis of a perfect functional form.[39] Forsey's analysis characterizes design as immanent, mass produced, and mute. These features are compatible with a functional conception of design that explains the significance of the aesthetic dimension in terms of its practical presence in our everyday lives.

[38] Parsons and Carlson (2008) suggest the same meaning.

[39] This criticism is found in Freeland (2014) and Parsons (2015). I will say more about this view of functional aesthetic appreciation in the next chapter.

2.2. The Functional View of the Aesthetic Appreciation of Design

In the past, much weight has been given to how appreciating functionality enters into the aesthetic appreciation of design objects. For many authors, functionality is not just relevant for aesthetic appreciation, it also plays a normative role in determining the aesthetic value of a designed artifact. They argue that an object's functionality can contribute to its overall aesthetic character. Thus, the main functionalist view highlights the role that, for example, knowing that a chair serves to support us or that a coffeepot serves to make coffee has for how we appraise and value these objects as design. In this section, I will explain in more detail how some of the main accounts of design referred to in the previous section interpret the significance of functionality for the aesthetic appreciation of design.

2.2.1. Form and Functional Appearance

What does it mean to appreciate an object as functional? How can the appearance of functionality be aesthetically valuable? Functional aesthetic accounts have developed a framework for the appreciation of functional objects[40] that involves perceiving fittingness in form. I will briefly introduce the function-based appreciation model in order to see how this model answers these two questions.

A functional aesthetic model holds that accurate aesthetic appreciation of a functional artifact involves perceptually grasping an intimate link between its form and its function. Thus, a main aspect of the aesthetic appreciation of functional objects concerns how the form of an object is perceived in light of the function it serves. That means that one needs to be aware of how function gets translated into the appearance of the object. This is what is involved in perceiving a form as functional. Once we attend to an object's form in this way, we are able to assess that form in terms of fittingness.

When a form appears to be functional or shows in its appearance its function, we say it possesses fittingness. Thus, fittingness is a property we can perceive an object as having when it appears to be apt or well-formed for the functional category the

[40] For some authors, such as Parsons and Carlson, all objects of appreciation—be they artistic, natural, or designed—can be approached as functional. However, I will consider their analysis mostly as it applies to design objects.

object belongs to. Fittingness is an essential notion in functional aesthetic appreciation. It provides a way to capture functionality as a perceptible feature. Thus, we come to grasp a particular functional achievement in an object's appearance; for instance, that a coffeepot seems to make good coffee or that a pair of shoes seems to be comfortable to wear. In other words, when our understanding of an object's form is coloured by knowledge of its functionality, that gives us access to a particular kind of aesthetic value that depends on an evaluation of both form and function.

Some functional aesthetic accounts define the property that expresses the rightness or appropriateness of a form or an object's functional success as functional beauty. The basic idea is that of "a thing's function being integral to its aesthetic qualities, or a thing's aesthetic qualities emerging from its function or something closely related to its function, such as its purpose, use, or end" (Parsons & Carlson, 2008, p. 46). Accordingly, an appreciative function-based account will involve two claims. The first claim is that the awareness of an object's purpose conditions our perception of its form as being more or less fit for that function. Given that condition, our perceptual experience of an object's form is inseparable from our knowledge of how that form serves a particular purpose. We perceive that a certain object's form is fit for its function.

The second claim is that our grasping of functional form is also aesthetic. As Parsons and Carlson (2008) explain, aesthetically perceiving a form as functionally beautiful involves more than identifying the object's function. It also requires that we perceive how this function is achieved. This involves some knowledge about how the object functions and about the suitability of that form for that particular function. It is only when a form appears to make an object more suitable for a functional task—when it looks especially apt for carrying out its function—that it can be contemplated as functionally beautiful. Thus, awareness of function underlies notions of well-formedness or fittingness.

This model argues for an evaluative analysis of form. At a basic level of appreciation, this simply means perceptually approaching the form of an object with the object's purpose in mind. Paris (2019) notes that the different attitudes we can take to a form depend on whether we pay attention to it in relation to a particular function. He argues that when we describe the form of an object without taking into account the purpose the form is meant to serve, we pay attention to the object's figure, arrangement

of colours, and shape and not to these arrangements in relation to the function that the object's form is meant to satisfy.[41]

The functional form model also endorses a further evaluative claim according to which there is a particular way of perceiving form that involves assessing how it accomplishes a certain function or purpose. By grasping how well that form realizes the purpose of the object, we evaluate that form from the point of view of its functionality. Accordingly, an evaluative functional model of form appreciation states that a form's value is determined by how it accomplishes a certain function or purpose. Thus, a form's functional appreciation involves both a cognitive and a contemplative dimension. The cognitive dimension—in the sense of the concepts that guide our perception and appreciation of an object's form—is given by the consideration of the object's function such that the way a form realizes a particular purpose is part of how that form is perceived and evaluated.

2.2.2. Fittingness or the Property of Looking Fit as an Aesthetic Property

In the framework of appreciation defined by the relationship between form and function, fittingness consists of the perception of a form's suitability for its function or functionality. Fittingness operates as an evaluative notion. But fittingness refers to something more than functional success. Parsons and Carlson (2008) consider it to be a perceivable aesthetic quality. They claim that this singular property emerges when something's form is perceived as performing its particular function in an optimal way. For example, we perceive that the particular length and curvature of a fork's tine make it more efficient or apt for the function of picking up food. These particular features are perceived as perfectly fitting the task the fork is meant to perform. We grasp a form as fitting or as looking fit when we perceive it as adequately fulfilling the object's function. Therefore, the functional aesthetic account of Parsons and Carlson emphasizes the significance of looking fit to the point of considering it a principle governing aesthetic appreciation.

First, Parsons and Carlson endorse the view that an object's appearance is to be perceived in accordance with its functional category. For them, functional

[41] We do not describe the form of the object by merely discriminating the internal relations between its elements or features (Budd, 2003). Instead, we comprehend the complexity of the structure of an object's form by relating the parts to the whole. See Paris (2019).

categories work in the same way as Waltonian categories of art (see Walton, 1970). They operate by fixing which exact set of features identify an object as belonging to a certain functional type or class. Furthermore, perceiving an object as belonging to a certain functional category involves recognizing which features are responsible for the object's functionality. Being able to discriminate certain features as related to the object's functionality allows us to perceive that the object looks fit for purpose. We can judge features to be standard, nonstandard, or neutral when perceived in relation to the conventional appearance of the functional category of the object. For example, a back and four legs are standard features of the functional category chair, whereas having nails in the seat is perceived as a nonstandard feature of a chair's form. The form of chairs is expected to contribute to their stability or comfort. The features of a chair that make it stable or comfortable can be singled out as indicating the object's functionality. But the quality of looking fit becomes manifest in the appearance of an object when certain features clearly indicate its functionality. An object's appearance is perceived to look fit for its function when we perceive that its form is clearly conducive to its function.

For Parsons and Carlson, looking fit can be thus an aesthetic quality that emerges from our awareness of how an object's form conveys its function. When form is perceived to lack irrelevant features, we point to a distinctive aesthetic appraisal related to a form's simplicity or economy and we see the object as graceful or elegant (Forsey, 2013).[42]

But according to the perceptual framework provided by functional categories, more than standard features are relevant to an object's functional aesthetic value. For Parsons and Carlson, the phenomenology of functional aesthetic appreciation includes other aesthetic qualities. An object is perceived as unfit when its form appears to be unsuited for its functional task. For instance, an object can look unfit because it is damaged or poorly constructed. But in other cases, a sort of visual tension is perceived in the object's form when some features of the object look as if they enable the object to perform its function while other features are at odds with its functionality. In these cases, form is perceived to be surprising or vibrant. Thus, it is remarkable that perceiving visual tension in the appearance of an object does not lead to any negative

[42] Forsey's account of the aesthetic appreciation of design is partially limited by her primary concern with simplicity or elegance. It ignores other aesthetic qualities, such as being witty or flamboyant, that also appear to have a central role in determining the aesthetic character of some designs.

aesthetic quality. Unexpectedness does not necessarily make the object seem unfit. In other words, the appearance of the object is not perceived as aesthetically poorer.[43] Thus, perceiving visual tension sometimes enriches our aesthetic experience of the object.

On the other hand, expectations embedded in functional categories seem to play an important role in our understanding of an appearance of functionality. While functional categories generate expectations of particular functional appearances, these expectations also have a role in our appreciation, for they help us distinguish which features of the form of an object are more functionally appropriate or apt. We have experienced many different solutions for a particular function and we have properly identified them as functional. Habit and custom are important in this respect. The case of a chair with four legs is more frequent than, say, the case of a hanging chair. We appreciate certain forms as being surprising, moving, innovative, flat, or faulty, and so forth when our expectations regarding form are challenged or frustrated.[44] Thus, an appearance of functionality can become aesthetically meaningful in a particular way when the object's form beautifully challenges our expectations about it. As Parsons and Carlson underline, that circumstance accentuates the idea that the functional aesthetic value or beauty of an object lies in how it looks when that appearance is perceived as fit.

2.2.3. The Normative Role of Looking Fit in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Design

Functional aesthetic accounts hold that functionality is not only key for the aesthetic appreciation of design; it also plays a normative role. A designed artifact will be better or worse aesthetically depending on whether it possesses fittingness. Hence, the functional aesthetic account considers fittingness to be a sufficient condition for functional beauty or aesthetic value.[45]

[43] I will develop this point in the next section.

[44] Sauchelli (2013) emphasizes this idea by pointing to the central role of designer's intentions when determining an object's functional beauty.

[45] Remember that the pleasure-and-form formula constitutes the Kantian notion of dependent beauty. It accounts for the beauty of functional objects qua functional objects. But a Kantian analysis centers on the intentional aspect of the function. See Davies (2006) and Forsey (2013, 2015).

The property of looking fit seems to catch the distinctive pleasure experienced in contemplating an object's well-formedness given its function. Returning to our previous example of a common chair, consider a chair with big foam cushions. It may look fit partly because that feature gives it a comfortable or cosy appearance. The pleasure we experience when perceiving the object's fitness for purpose comes from the fact that we are not just concerned with how something looks; we are also appreciating the fact that an object's appearance is fit or well done.[46] For the authors who promote functional aesthetic accounts, the functional look is pleasurable. A key point is that the source of that sort of pleasure does not come from the utility of the object or from an evaluation of the appearance based on some ultimate benefit or utility for us. Within the functional beauty account, pleasure is based in the functional appearance per se. In this sense, the pleasure that comes from grasping the aesthetic property of looking fit is considered an aesthetic pleasure because it grants a disinterested sort of experience.[47]

Summing up, in Parsons and Carlson's account, the notion or fittingness grounds the notion of functional beauty. An object is functionally beautiful when its design looks fit for its function. Thus, for example, if a chair's design looks fit for its purpose as a chair, then, it is functionally beautiful. This is a normative consequence of Parsons and Carlson's account. They think that functionality can be characterized as an aesthetic property and that looking fit necessarily contributes to the functional beauty of an object.

However, the functional beauty account faces some difficulties that could threaten the normative role attributed to looking fit as a singular aesthetic property. First, as Rafael De Clercq (2013) demonstrates, fittingness and looking fit can come apart. As explained, functional aesthetic understanding involves appreciating how

[46] Within that sort of apprehension of the object's appearance we are positively judging the object for how it looks as it –functionally—should regarding that in itself pleasurable. But note that this normative perspective seemingly blurs the distinction between a determinant judgement and a (proper) reflective judgement about the object's aesthetic value.

[47] That point subscribes to the idea of beauty founded in Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790/1978) as the kind of affective response expressed by "disinterested pleasure". That traditional notion of disinterest preserved in contemporary aesthetics has recently been challenged by Riggle (2016). He argues that the state of valuing that is proper of the act of finding something beautiful is directed at ourselves and our lives as well as to the world in itself. Beauty involves an awareness of self- or life-shaping values. Furthermore, in his view, a nuanced meaning of disinterestedness could be better founded in the expression of personal—or aesthetic—ideals that explain how aesthetic pleasure is rationally grounded.

some features in form are highlighted as expressions of functionality. Some properties that contribute to a car's appearance of speediness—like fins in a Studebaker—are more important to its aesthetic value than, say, brilliant red paint. In that way, functional properties are appreciated for how they are translated into form.[48] However, the same features that are highlighted as indicative of functionality for a certain object can be instantiated in a non-functional counterpart or copy (as, for example, in the case of a fake watch). That means that any functional translation into form refers to our expectations about how features are connected to a high degree of function. Thus, perceptions of fittingness do not always match an object's actual functionality since they respond to epistemic ideals. While acknowledging this, Parsons and Carlson maintain that they are not really concerned with the actual functionality of things but with how they look when they are considered to be functional. Thus, the sufficiency of looking fit as a condition of functional beauty seems unchallenged, at least for the definition specified in the functional beauty account.

One concern about this model has to do with the alleged aesthetic character of looking fit. Does looking fit truly capture something aesthetic about the object? Why is looking fit an aesthetic property at all? Many critics have questioned whether fittingness is aesthetic (Budd, 2008; Davies, 2010; Stecker, 2011; Shiner, 2011; De Clercq, 2013). Consider a simple can and assume that its form is fit for its function. In what sense does perceiving its fittingness constitute an aesthetic experience or perception? If all we have to do to ascribe the aesthetic property of looking fit is perceive how form realizes function, it seems that most functional forms will be beautiful in a rather simple or trivial way. Except in clear-cut cases of dysfunctional form, almost any form of can seems to look fit for its function. As Budd (2006) claims, we can grasp fittingness without perceiving it as beautiful in any significant respect. Consequently, the aesthetic indifference we can feel for some objects in spite of their fittingness or well-formedness somehow leaves us at an aesthetic impasse.

The functional aesthetic appreciation model has also been criticized is for its argument that functional knowledge permeates aesthetic judgement. There are cases having functional knowledge about an object does not contribute to our aesthetic

[48] A challenging point about how we can perceptually grasp this translated content as an aesthetic content is known as the problem of translation in functional beauty accounts. For a criticism about the psychological aspect of looking fit as an aesthetic property see Scruton (1979).

understanding of an object.[49] Malcolm Budd (2006) claims that not all knowledge about an item—including knowledge about its function—is necessary for properly appreciating the item.[50] Sometimes, as he shows in the case of our aesthetic appreciation of nature, it makes no difference at all.[51]

Besides, beyond the ideal of genuine pleasure that comes from a proper recognition of functionality, no real argument has yet been offered for why attending to an object's form as an expression of its functionality is supposed to have any aesthetic value.

Now I will turn to the question of whether the centrality of the functional principle is fair for some common ways that functional designed objects possess aesthetic value.

2.3. Is a Functional View of Aesthetic Appreciation Correct for Design Appreciation?

Given that any functional object would possess functional beauty when it looks fit or is well formed, functionality becomes, via the notion of looking fit or fittingness, a *pro tanto* reason for the aesthetic value of functional objects and design objects in particular.

The determinant character of looking fit for the aesthetic value of functional objects can be understood in at least two ways. The first, weaker sense of functional beauty refers to a kind of beauty[52] or aesthetic value that it is grounded in how well

[49] De Clercq (2013) exemplifies this point with the case of sawdust. He argues that there is no perceptual difference relevant to our appreciation between knowing that one type of sawdust is intentionally made to be used in amusement parks and common sawdust obtained as residue, which has no function at all. However, that perception can be penetrated by cognitive processes is not strictly speaking a necessary requirement for a general theory of functional beauty, as Sauchelli (2013) remarks. We can remain sceptics about the possibility that knowledge of categories influences what we perceive but accept that it influences the character of our experience of a certain object. That is, what it feels like to (aesthetically) experience it by virtue of having an improved account of knowledge.

[50] That central role that knowledge plays in appreciation appears to be excessive for the case of design if we understand, as Pérez Carreño (2021) remarks for the case of nature, that our main aim is not to scientifically know the object. One can appreciate the evocative power of nature independently of any knowledge that one may bring in correctly experiencing it. Knowledge per se does not constitute a sufficient condition for right appreciation. Instead, a more pluralistic position can explain the subjective—that is, situated, contextual, and non-detached—aspect of the aesthetic appreciation of nature (see also Brady, 2009).

[51] For more about this key criticism of cognitivist theories of aesthetic value, see Alcaraz León (2010).

[52] Understood in this way, functional beauty is on a par with moral beauty, for example.

the object's form suits its purpose. Understood in this way, functional beauty is just a kind of aesthetic value functional objects can possess, but it is not the only aesthetic aspect we can rightly grasp in appreciating them. Other aesthetic qualities that are not strictly dependent on the relationship of fittingness between form and function can be also grasped and can contribute to the overall aesthetic experience of the design object. Following this, an object can be functionally beautiful but at the same time overall aesthetically neutral, uninteresting, etc. For example, a screw can be functionally beautiful but be rather bland aesthetically.

The notion of functional beauty can also be understood in a stronger sense. This understanding refers not to a particular kind of beauty but to a general view of the aesthetic appreciation of functional objects. In this interpretation of the scope of functional beauty, the aesthetic value of functional objects is determined by whether or not they look fit. This second, more robust interpretation of the principle governing the appreciation of functional objects may be more problematic. There are two main arguments against the necessary and sufficient conditions of looking fit and the normative role of this property in Parsons and Carlson's theory of functional beauty.

The first focuses on how functional beauty accounts rely on the notion of functional categories to perceive fittingness. Robert Stecker (2011) argues that the key to any aesthetic property is its dependence on the features of an object's form that are not functionally necessary. For example, in the case of a common cup, some superficial ornaments—flowers, coloured patterns, design elements, etc.—are considered part of its form. Functional beauty accounts cannot properly account for the aesthetic contribution of these variable features because they are neutral with respect to their functional category. In fact, it seems hard to establish an exhaustive list of features of any particular functional category. Therefore, the way functional beauty accounts understand the role of functional categories tends to idealize the standard features of a functional category at the expense of other less functional features that may be aesthetically relevant.[53] This analysis overlooks an object's aesthetic properties unless they contribute to or are related in some way to the object's functionality. That means that there is no way that, for instance, a flower pattern or

[53] Stephen Davies (2010) also points to the failure of Parsons and Carlson's implementation of Walton's method of distinguishing between standard and variable properties. He argues that in their view, variable properties are sometimes seen as contributing to function, whereas according to the original proposal, variable properties seem to have no direct connection with category membership.

ornamental symbol can count in appreciation unless they contribute to the object's functionality. Thus, functional beauty accounts reject the aesthetic significance of some elements that are neutral with respect to the object's functional form. Hence, the main worry is that the functional aesthetic model undermines features that are aesthetically significant.[54]

Budd (2006) makes this point about the functional beauty account. For him, there is no reason to prioritize a particular set of features as better suited for achieving a function because there is no way to know which features will count as functional. Therefore, the criticism seems to be that functional beauty accounts cannot offer a comprehensive picture of what is relevant and what is not when appreciating a functional object aesthetically. For Budd, the functional beauty account is too narrow to capture any notion of beauty.

The second argument against the sufficiency of looking fit as a definition of functional beauty can be drawn from the aesthetics of dysfunctionality. We have seen that the aesthetic principle of looking fit implies that a form's fittingness always contributes positively to the aesthetic value of a certain functional object and, conversely, that an improper or damaged form should detract from the aesthetic value of a functional object. In light of that normative constraint, objects whose form is not fitting should be regarded as aesthetically poorer. However, there seem to be some examples of dysfunctional objects, such as ruins or fashion items (high heels, for example), that, in spite of possessing a dysfunctional form are typically experienced as possessing positive—even great—aesthetic value. Some dysfunctional objects please us aesthetically and they appear to be appreciated and valued as beautiful objects. How can the normative analysis of functional beauty deal with these cases? A common way that the functional aesthetic model tries to solve this problem is by arguing that when we appreciate an object, we do not always attend to functional beauty and sometimes bracket out functional considerations to appreciate only aspects of form such as colour, shape, or pattern. According to this criticism of functional beauty, it is not only that dysfunctional objects look unfit but fail to displease us; rather, they do not look unfit at all because, in appreciating them, we suspend considerations of functionality.

[54] Stecker (2019) argues that the decorative elements of the object are the main bearers of its aesthetic value.

Moreover, a further contentious point arises when focusing on some paradigmatic cases of ugliness in successful functional objects. Many things are designed to shock, scare, or disgust and can possess a fitting form. In principle, since they are perceived as being well formed, they should be experienced as beautiful. An instrument of torture or a pornographic movie are examples. How can we explain—within the limits of the functional beauty account—that despite their fittingness they are not seen as beautiful? According to Paris's interpretation of the functional beauty principle, "either [functional beauty] is false, or it turns out that, on [functional beauty], positively unpleasant objects can be beautiful, the uglier or more disgusting they are—which is, effectively, a *reductio*" (objects are unappealing precisely because of their well-formedness for their function) (Paris, 2019, 5). In that case, the original meaning of looking fit appears to be insufficient to grant functional aesthetic value.

Paris (2019) claims that the reason that many different objects can be aesthetically unappealing or ugly despite their apparent well-formedness or fitness—he thinks of cases such as condoms or *The 120 Days at Sodom* by the Marquis de Sade—is that they are cases in which no beautiful function is at stake. In fact, the functions of these objects can be considered to be bland or disgusting.[55] However, it seems that the burden of the proof has been moved here. After this move, we are no longer assessing a form's fittingness to a particular function, but the appropriateness of the object's function. Paris is stepping out from the relationship between form and function and adopting an evaluative perspective on functions as such. In that regard, Paris's approach changes the subject, for the central question is whether forms are supposed to have aesthetic value when perceived as expressing function.

In a nutshell, we can perceive fittingness without perceiving beauty. For instance, a functional desk that is an ugly colour will show how its fittingness is insufficient. Or a torture tool that looks fit but is not judged as beautiful (even if agreement exists about the appropriateness of its function). On the other hand, something can look unfit and be beautiful when judged within the correct functional category (for example, a ruin that is unfit but is usually judged as beautiful). Thus, fittingness is not necessary.

[55] Within his revisited account of functional beauty, Paris states that competent judges can grant the normativity that proper function provides in aesthetic appreciation if they take pleasure in an object *in so far as* they experience it as well-formed for its function.

2.4. Is a Functional View of the Aesthetic Appreciation of Design Enough?

One virtue of the functional account of beauty is that it endows our understanding of the aesthetic appreciation of design with a certain unity and comprehensiveness. While granting that the functional aesthetic model might be right in claiming that some functional concerns are involved in the aesthetic appreciation of a functional object, some criticisms favour the idea that looking fit is not enough to give us a comprehensive account of design's overall aesthetic character. One reason for skepticism concerns the fact that the functional beauty account leaves us with a narrow aesthetic understanding of what it means to engage with a functional form. I will begin to justify that central point by presenting two examples that will help me illustrate the deficiencies of the functional aesthetic account for the aesthetic appreciation of design.

My first example is Ricola's production and storage building in Mulhouse-Brunstatt, designed by the architecture firm of Herzog & de Meuron (see appendix, p.134). The Ricola building has an elaborate appearance. It is a simple large, grey concrete building that presents a design façade composed by a repetitive image of the leaf of a herb. It is attractively illuminated by green, fluorescent light that colours the building with a halo that figuratively refers to the freshness of mint and that is also the colour of the plant's sap. However, the building's appearance is conceptually more complex. The pictures of leaves that decorate the facade of the minimal concrete building do not represent the actual herb used in Ricola's production; they represent a plant that, ironically, happens to be unpalatable.[56] This element does not seem at first sight to fulfil any essential function of the building. However, as I will argue, it plays a central role in the aesthetic understanding of the building. It functions as an expressive feature that integrates the façade and, in doing so, it might be seen as contributing to the building's primary function. In a certain way, it seems that it makes the experience of working in that building more agreeable. This is due in part to how light is filtered through the leaves so that when it gets inside the main building it reproduces the patterns of the leaves. That kind of lighting contributes to the

[56] These pictures are borrowed from Karl Blossfeldt, an artist-photographer, so they may have artistic value themselves (see appendix, p.132).

agreeableness of the environment, thus enhancing the main overall experience of the place for workers, clients, and visitors.

In the conception of the aesthetic appreciation of functional form just seen, this non-functional element would be either neutral or nonstandard, thus diminishing the building's aesthetic value as a building. That singular feature does not seem to be perceived as contributing to the building's appearance of functionality and, thus, its presence seems to be something that needs to be stripped off or at least ignored or suppressed when appreciating it as a functional object.

If we want to give enough room to this feature's contribution to the aesthetic appreciation of the building, it seems that we need to look beyond mere functionality to fully appreciate it. Note that this does not exclude taking into consideration the main functional role of the building. If the analysis is correct, not all features that are responsible of the object's aesthetic value are limited to features that make it perceptually appear (looks) well-formed for its function(s) to competent judges, despite Paris's revision of the notion of functional beauty. These features seem to be aesthetically relevant but do not contribute to the building's appearance of functionality.

A second example is Irma Boom's books. One exceptional aspect of Boom's creations is the way she imbues books with a sculptural character, thus reflecting on them as tridimensional objects. Apart from many of their technical achievements, these books have an unusual graphic narrative that calls for a more meaningful relationship with the object as such and not merely with the object as a way to get to the printed content.[57] Boom's book *Sheila Hicks: Weaving as a Metaphor* (see appendix, pp.112, 127), for instance, demands that we explore its crafted pages to properly grasp the topic of the book. The book is about "weaving as an art", and exemplifies through its very design this idea as an artistic achievement, in this case, in the works of art of Sheila Hicks.[58] One can apprehend that meaningful connection through some curious features of the book, such as the edges of the pages, which have a handmade, frayed appearance. In this case, appreciation is not just restricted to sight. These crafted pages

[57] This concern for the materiality of the book and the responsible relationship that we establish with it as an object is a central idea in the artistic legacy of Willian Morris due to the more "democratic" engraving methods and techniques that he developed. See Parkins (2010).

[58] Within the book, there is an essay by Arthur C. Danto (2006) that argues that weaving can be considered as an art practice. In this particular example, typography is creatively modified by emphasizing sizes and line spacing to simulate a sense of movement, thus evoking this idea of inclusion.

can be also appreciated through touch. They embody the feeling we associate with weaving pieces (soft, homey), and through this quality, they also metaphorically convey its meaning.

If we stick to the functional aesthetic framework for aesthetic appreciation, it seems difficult to perceive how that distinctive feature in any way can contribute to the book's aesthetic value as a functional designed object, for it does not seem to make its appearance more functional in any clear way. These examples show that the aesthetic meaning of form is not limited to considerations of functional form. Thus, considerations of fittingness alone cannot be sufficient for determining the aesthetic value of a design object. If that is the case, it hardly seems that they can account for other more complex types of functional artifacts, such as artworks, for which the notion of practical function is less central. Therefore, although the functional analysis was originally conceived as a general explanation of the aesthetic value all functional objects have, it seems that, in the case of design at least, it can only account for the aesthetic value of a limited number of functional objects.

We can conclude that first, although an object's function can be relevant for the way we perceive and appreciate it aesthetically, it is not the only aspect that enters into the aesthetic appreciation of designed objects. Second, grasping the property of looking fit is one way, although certainly not the only one, that our understanding of an object's function can become part of the content of our perception of the object. Given that the sense of fittingness involved in design appreciation seems to be broader than the one captured by the actual notion of looking fit, we can hint at an alternative appreciative model. In the next chapter, a broader picture of how design appreciation works will be offered in order to do better justice to the richness of the aesthetic character of design.

2.5. Conclusions

I began this second chapter by presenting the functional account of design and its origin in a modernist endorsement of a principle of functionality. I moved to analyze the current functional aesthetic account of appreciation with the ultimate aim of revealing its problems and limitations as a proper model for the aesthetic appreciation of design. I had arrived at the following conclusions.

First, I have maintained that both monistic accounts of function that identify the purpose of the object as being seamlessly tied to the designer's plan and accounts that identify the purpose of the object as being tied to its causal history limit appreciation of functionality. Proper function is important, but other functions mediate our true appreciation of an object. That is because a design artifact can have multiple purposes. Our perception of the artifact as belonging to a certain functional type does not exclude the possibility of taking into account other alternative functions or purposes that the object performs—and that can emerge in certain social interaction and/or private uses—and their relevance for their nature as design. Thus, I endorse a pluralist approach that is open to casual or unexpected functions when approaching the functionality of design objects.

Second, I have endorsed a critical approach to current design analyses because they privilege the functional aspects of design over other less functional ones and because of the weight they attribute to functional features in the aesthetic appreciation of design. After the influence of modernism, normative functional accounts of design separated design from its full expressive capacity (which traditionally derived from the decorative elements of the object). In my view, this movement assigned an overriding role to functional aspects at the cost of rejecting possible deeper significance of the form of design objects. These approaches promote a negative meaning of the muteness condition of design. Parsons' rational conception of design and Forsey's defence of design's functional aspect as exclusive to that kind of object lead to the aesthetic belief that design can be appreciated as beautiful when it looks functional. Yet, I pointed that it is precisely because design has a further aesthetic dimension that the functional aesthetic perspective falls short of appreciating the full aesthetic value of design.

In order to explain this, I showed that the way of perceiving form that gets translated into form as looking fit can only justify an evaluation of a form as functional but not as an aesthetic form. I illustrated that idea with cases in which aesthetically attending to the object's form involves more than grasping properties concerning the function that the object's form is meant to satisfy. It also involves attending to other aesthetic and expressive properties of the appreciated object. Thus, I came to the key assumption that the form of a design cannot be appreciated only for the way it exhibits the object's functionality or fulfils a proper function, although I maintained that key considerations about functionality can enter into the aesthetic appreciation of design.

Third, I have defined two main senses in which the functional beauty account can be understood. Within a narrow interpretation, functional beauty refers to a kind of beauty that functional objects can possess when their form is appreciated in relation to their function. As we have seen, this way of understanding the notion of functional beauty is compatible with grasping other aesthetic properties that are not derived from functional considerations. In contrast, a broad understanding of the functional beauty account involves a general view of the aesthetic appreciation of functional objects according to which the overall aesthetic value of functional objects is primarily derived from functionalist considerations. I claimed that this more robust interpretation (endorsed by Parsons and Carlson and Paris) is problematic, especially with respect to the normative role that attributes the notion of looking fit to functional aspects of an object. Some problems that should be considered are 1) the account relies on the notion of functional categories that have been shown to be inadequate for the aesthetic understanding of the form of design; and 2) there is no aesthetic reason to prioritize a set of features of form based on how they successfully achieve a function. No cognitively rich notion of aesthetic value establishes that appearances are pleasurable because they display functionality. From these objections, the functional principle that emerges from functionalist aesthetic accounts is inadequate to account for how design objects possess aesthetic value.

Fourth, I argued that functional aesthetic accounts cannot offer a comprehensive picture of what is relevant and what is not relevant when appreciating a functional object aesthetically, since looking fit is insufficient when accounting for cases of dysfunctionality and conceptual design. To properly appreciate dysfunctional objects, we need to separate their forms from considerations of functionality and appreciate aspects of form such as colour, shape, or patterns. This involves, paradoxically, leaving aside the functional concerns that were reclaimed for appreciating the object as one belonging to a functional type.

Fifth, I have opened a door for explaining the aesthetic value of design in a way that reconciles functional concerns with the deep comprehension of a form as an expressive and aesthetic one. Thus, there is much room to think about the aesthetic value of the design object—its meaning and the aesthetic properties it displays—not just beyond its functional performance but also taking into account its usefulness as a worthy candidate for aesthetic appreciation.

Chapter III.
An Enriched Appreciative Account of Design: The Interactive Aesthetic Model

Introduction

In this chapter, I will develop an alternative model of appreciation that questions the idea that fittingness plays the normative role that functional aesthetic accounts attribute to it. I will offer a broader, enriched picture of what design appreciation consists of that is capable of doing justice to the richness of the aesthetic character of design. I will show that patterns of use play a key role in grasping the proper aesthetic character of design. By focusing on how particular uses frame aesthetic appreciation, I can explain how a variety of aesthetic properties become salient as a result of our interaction with the design object. Hence, I will offer a new interactive aesthetic model for design appreciation according to which design's proper aesthetic understanding requires taking into account what I will refer to as form in use. This involves going beyond the assessment of fittingness provided by functional aesthetic accounts without forsaking the significance of functional concerns.

This chapter is structured in the following way. In section 3.1, I will provide a general account of patterns of use and will show that such patterns are related to the aesthetic character of design, for they make available aesthetic properties of the design object that would not be graspable without a particular interaction with the object. To support this claim, I will argue for a pluralist understanding of the role that use plays in appreciation. In section 3.2., I will advance the appreciation model that follows from emphasizing interaction with the object as the paradigmatic scenario for aesthetic appreciation. Within this model, I will approach aesthetic value from an affectivist model that combines comprehensiveness and affect for proper aesthetic judgements of design. In section 3.3, I will examine the suitability of the interactive aesthetic model and delimit the agential dimension implied in our everyday aesthetic experiences.

From this, I will offer a characterization of the interactive act of appreciation and I will clarify the normative aspect that patterns of use bring to proper aesthetic appreciation. In section 3.4, I will present some of the advantages of the interactive aesthetic model as a model for the aesthetic appreciation of design. In particular, I will focus on the expressive dimension of design and its material condition. In the last section, I will summarize the main conclusions of the chapter.

3.1. Patterns of Use and Their Role in the Appreciation of Design

What are patterns of use and what is their role in aesthetic appreciation of design? Taking into account patterns of use allows us to notice how certain aesthetic properties emerge from—or become available in—interaction with the design object. Thus, a design's overall aesthetic value is dependent on the practice or activity in which we are immersed. Second, I will claim that attention to the role of patterns of use requires a pluralist position regarding how some functional concerns affect our appreciative responses to design. Thus, aesthetic sensibility about common contexts of interaction can better explain why designs are also appreciated for how they enhance our everyday activities and daily practices.

3.1.1. What Are Patterns of Use and How They Are Related to the Aesthetic Appreciation of Design?

In everyday interaction with design objects, the default way of approaching the object involves using it. A pattern of use is a way of interacting with an object that implies performing a particular function embedded in a time-sustained relationship with an object.[59] Within that definition, any recurrent practical act that we perform with the design object may constitute a particular pattern of use. For example, we can create a pattern of use with our little solar lamp by switching it on to read papers in bed at midnight. Or by dressing our bed in the mornings with a grey Iberia's blanket from the '90s. I want to show that patterns of use impact our appreciation of design because

[59] The notion of patterns of use can be understood in line with Dewey's notion of acts as transactional, the notion that we act with things as well as on them (Dewey, 1934). The notion of patterns of use is also inspired by the Wittgensteinian notion of "patterns of life".

they can reveal some particular aspects of the object that would be overlooked or opaque if we merely adopted the assessment conditions stipulated by the functional aesthetic model. Because of the revelatory role that patterns of use can play in our appreciative engagement with design, we can recognize new aesthetic properties that may not be available simply by adopting a functional criterion of assessment of form. To illustrate this point, we can proceed by analyzing the following design cases.

Let us first consider an everyday object like a red umbrella with a corkwood handle. It has no brand logo on its fabric. Within the appreciative context of patterns of use, we realize that it is made with a kind of fabric that produces perceive a characteristic sound that is agreeable or delightful when it gets wet in the rain. It could even be suggested that that feature invites me to go out on rainy days. In this case, I am appreciating a special aspect of the umbrella that is graspable beyond features related to its capacity to keep me dry. Indeed, I am not merely appreciating or valuing the activity of going out in the rain as such (which is considered to be the proper aesthetic object of appreciation in everyday aesthetic accounts), I am also appreciating the object's uniqueness and delicacy and the way it aesthetically enhances a particular activity.

This role of patterns of use as partly determinative of our appreciative activity can be illustrated with another case of design. Consider the case of a bench with a simple shape. It is a block with minimal lineal contours covered in ceramic grey tiles. It might be easy to claim that that appearance maximally fits the function of a place to rest—even though benches with a more anthropomorphic shape commonly are considered more functional when measured in ergonomic terms. Additionally, its polished surface and its neutral colour give it an austere appearance. We realize the austerity of that piece of urban design when perceived in its setting of long green grass in front of a calm lake. Its pronounced edges contrast with the vivid spontaneity of the natural forms of the landscape. The same bench could be "unnoticed" in the aesthetic sense specified in chapter one if we imagine it to be in the middle of Times Square. It would be masked between buildings of similar grey colour and linear geometric shapes.

There is nonetheless a significant difference once we appreciate the aesthetic character of the bench in a pattern of use. For instance, if we come to a particular use of it at different seasons of the year, we realize that the bench acquires a more serene appearance, that is, beyond the one that we initially perceived as austere. In the

autumn, its pale tiles take on the tone and colouration of the orange and brown leaves that fall and surround it. It is thanks to the bench's polished surface that they become reflected in it. They create a kaleidoscopic stamped cover. The same happens on stormy days, when its surface reflects and intensifies the grey rainy atmosphere. It appears to evaporate in the form of a spectral mountain. When I am seated on it, I can feel that I am immersed in a more vivid experience of the place, going with the flow of the lake's water, even as I notice the firmness and weight of the object. Therefore, grasping that ephemeral expressive quality of the bench somehow invites us to consider its character as serene in light of its pattern of use.

Whether that could be an intended point of the design or not, what we appreciate of the bench is that chameleonic aspect and the kind of immersive action it can grant us. That point allows us to relate differently with the environment and to understand more acutely the natural landscape in which is set. It can bring us close to the mood of the location. Thus, the bench's aesthetic character is explained by aspects that go beyond its function. How my experience of the place gets intensified or changed by the design object is what enriches and sets the proper appreciation of its aesthetic character as I come to grasp its serene aspect as valuable in a pattern of use.

These examples show that other expressive, relational, and contextual properties that the design object possesses are significant to its main aesthetic value. This role that patterns of use play in our aesthetic appreciation of design allows us to perceive and appreciate form in use and consequently more features of the object, including those that reveal the object to be from a particular designer or design tradition, style, and so forth. For example, consider a tea towel by designer Christien Meindertsma that is made from natural and organic Dutch linen. The pattern of the cloth depicts an actual Google Earth image of the area where the linen was produced (which is a vivid cultivated landscape in Holland; see appendix, p.125). Incorporating some reference to the origin of the material used in her designs is a characteristic of Meindertsma's work. Also, this object is especially good at performing its function: the quality of the natural material favours drying very fast. This makes it very suitable for drying dishes. And the natural smell that it spreads is not disagreeable at all. It is not too far-fetched to claim that Meindertsma's explicit commitment to the origin and care of materials and for the methods of production are expressed in this particular design, as they are in many of her designs. Moreover, its natural texture and colour contrasts nicely with the polished metal surface of many modern appliances and its

squared patterns make the moulding on kitchen cabinets stand out. Moreover, given its beautiful patterns, one can think about wearing it as a headscarf or even wrapping a gift with it. These new uses enrich our aesthetic appreciation of the features of the object.

The key point is that these features are not appreciated as deriving solely from the fulfilment of the object's function. Our habitual acts with design are centred on objects that somehow acquire aesthetic meaning through their use, a meaning that is not identified by their intended function alone. For example, consider the case of wearing a Balinese necklace with a vivid multi-coloured pattern in combination with a pale linen blouse. Perhaps it serves as an adornment that express a personal form of dress or style, but it is appreciated in that pattern of use when it is removed from performing its intended social function.[60] In the next section, I will explain how adopting a particular pattern of use allows us to grasp aesthetic properties of the design object that derive from our practical engagement with it.

3.1.2. Particular Uses and the Aesthetic Properties of Design

Paying attention to patterns of use requires us to shift our focus towards common contexts of interaction with design instead of focusing merely on the relationship between form and function. Specifically, this new approach includes a grasping of a design object's form in use. In the previous section, I argued that our mundane and routine interactions with design objects affect our aesthetic appreciation of them. The main question is How does a particular pattern of use reveal some aesthetic properties? What are the characteristics of appreciating a design's form in use?

First, some aesthetic properties appear to be perceived or revealed only as an object is used in a particular way. For example, when I wear a dress, I perceive its finesse, say, in the gracefulness of how it moves as I walk. Second, the use of an object bestows some aesthetic properties—as, for example, the aesthetic quality of *wabi-sabi* that is connected to deterioration. These features were not originally in the object but appear as we establish a use relationship with them. They emerge when the object is

[60] Stephen Davies (2014) refers to the original function of ornaments and adornments as having a beautifying function for the native Balinese. In his view, the functional efficiency of these adornments is not incidental to their aesthetic character.

used.[61] For example, after a fireplace has been heavily used, it acquires black soot that confers depth and quality to the stone and charm to the room it services.

Imagine another case, a pair of pearly white slippers made of fine vegan leather with visible seams. They have a stylish classic look with a delicate form. When I wear them, they fit very well on my feet. They also feel soft and warm. No practical defects affect their functional aesthetic appearance. Still, the more we engage with them in use, the better we will come to know about their aesthetic character. In our common interaction with them, they acquire a mark of the passage of time and reveal aesthetic aspects that go beyond their functionality and are intimately entangled with the attention we pay to them as we interact with them.

Frequently use may also have a clear impact on these slippers and their aesthetic qualities. For example, signs of use can be perceived in the folds that appear on their leather surface. Likewise, their soles can become shaded. In our aesthetic appraisal of the slippers, the patina of age (*solera*[62]) not only records a certain weathering but also reveals a particular habit (linked to a certain corporeal movement). Hence, part of their expressive dimension is realized in a particular physical deformation that embodies a personal gesture. In a certain way, they acquire a more vivid appearance. They become expressive of a life of use.

Thus, taking into consideration the expressive properties of form allows me to say that the slippers exhibit a homey character that is highlighted when I take them along when I spend a night in a hotel room or on whatever other (special) occasion. Moreover, it is in that light that they have a serene presence. Many designs are also aesthetically appreciated for their presence or solemnity in our daily scenarios. But the main point is that in some conditions of interacting with the slippers, their aesthetic character changes. Familiarity with how the slippers are experienced and appreciated when worn in certain friendly, calm, or even memorable moments can permeate our experience of them as homey (for example, they are more graceful in my mother's confident and

[61] That point differs slightly from when the purpose of a design is that of being used. This is the case with the Teeter-Totter Wall in New Mexico by Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello with Colectivo Chopeke, which won the London Design Museum's best design award in 2020. In that design, it is the act of having fun by playing or balancing a form of political and social activism against Donald Trump's migration security wall.

[62] '*Solera*' is a Spanish word that refers to the traditional characteristic attributed to a thing, use, or custom in the everyday life of a group of people. It derives from 'sol' which means 'sun' and thus invokes the idea of aging in the sun or as a result of being exposed to the sun. It also refers to the quality that some alcoholic drinks like wine acquire when they age.

carefree walk). We also identify ourselves with the appearance of certain objects. Many design objects, especially fashion items, often communicate something about our identity and the kind of aesthetic values we share as part of a community.

In sum, we can notice that the relation between these two answers to how patterns of use make certain aesthetic properties available—patterns of use that reveals aesthetic properties and patterns of use that produce some aesthetic properties—do not need to be mutually exclusive. For example, we can realize the robustness of a yellow-green ceramic mortar when preparing a *picada* while at the same time appreciating the fact that it is decayed by the use that your grandmother made of it. Its imprinted appearance confers a more expressive dimension. In all of these cases, aesthetic properties are dependent on an object's placement in our lives and with the patterns of use and appreciation in which they are embedded. This analysis of the role of pattern of use introduces a dimension of aesthetic appreciation that stresses the active and subjective dimension of aesthetic experience. That contrasts with the normative role attributed to proper function in current functional aesthetic appreciation models. In what follows I will present any misunderstandings about common use(s) as reliable indicators of the aesthetic value of design more generally.

3.1.3. A Pluralist Appreciative View Regarding Proper Function and Patterns of Use

As I showed in section 2.1., the main reason why the functional aesthetic account is so attractive as a model for the aesthetic appreciation of design is that it recognizes the role of proper function. That makes the functional beauty accounts especially suitable for the case of design as a paradigmatic functional object. In this section, I argue that there are no good reasons to embrace a monist model about proper function when aesthetically appreciating design. Instead, we can embrace a more pluralistic model concerning the role proper and novel functions play in design aesthetic appreciation.

When they look at the meaning of proper function, monistic accounts of functional appreciation claim that proper function is an essential feature of the object that grants normativity to design's aesthetic appreciation. However, their exclusive focus on function seems problematic. Many intermingled notions of function operate simultaneously when we assess an object's functional aspect. Some are practical, but others are symbolic or historical. This makes it unclear which function should be

considered as the main or even the only source of normativity. Monism concerning an artefact's function has been defended in many ways. Some evolutionary (or etiological) models hold that historical facts and successful uses of an artifact determine its essential function (Parsons & Carlson, 2008; Eaton, 2020), whereas others maintain that the purpose of an artifact should be better aligned with the designer's intention (Zangwill, 2007; Forsey, 2014).

According to these models, we should be exclusively concerned with the type of aesthetic appreciation derived from the object's proper function. They do not consider any other functions be relevant. These approaches disregard the aesthetic significance of alternative or personal uses that results from the establishment of patterns of use. Indeed, they reject the notion that these uses can provide normativity to our aesthetic appreciation—unless, as the evolutionary view maintains, they pass the test of time and become proper functions themselves. However, in my view, these theories do not offer a sufficient reason for not paying attention to some other aspects of design that can be aesthetically relevant when attending to all the ways we can interact with the object.

I argue for a pluralist view that expands our understanding of the aesthetic appreciation of design.[63] This can do better justice to how functional considerations are part of aesthetic appreciation. That is possible in the following sense: our creation of patterns of use can follow both the prescriptive use of an object and alternative or complementary uses. Both types of use account for the aesthetic aspect of design. However, while the functional beauty account strictly limits appreciation to the aesthetic value of the object as functional, my account of use provides room for establishing more meaningful patterns of use with the design object. We need to pay attention to how a particular design affords opportunities to interact with it during use.

From this perspective of appreciation, it is not appropriate to characterize common alternative uses as accidental, for the user intends them. In my enriched analysis, these uses become integrated into a certain pattern. They are planned or more intentionally established than other fortuitous uses of the object. Once settled, patterns of use promote a time-sustained relationship with the object that permeates our appreciation of them. A pluralist view allows for a more complex way of responding

[63] Here I mean which kind of functional concerns are relevant to aesthetic appreciation, although that approach can be embedded in a broader account of pluralism about how appreciation is informed by senses, imagination, emotions, or knowledge.

to the aesthetic character of design. It allows us to include unique, social, or collective uses of design objects. In the next section, I will introduce how an interactive appreciation model can help us account for our aesthetic appreciation of design.

3.2. An Interactive Appreciative Account of Design

In this section, I will present a model for the aesthetic appreciation of design based on an interactive approach. The key aspect of the interactive appreciation model is that how we use a design object allows us to grasp some of its aesthetic properties that would not have been available if we had not engaged with it in that interactive way. Thus, some aesthetic properties that would have been overlooked become otherwise salient or noticeable. Within this view, patterns of use are a necessary condition for the proper aesthetic appreciation of design. Now I need to explain how our aesthetic appreciation of design changes as we make use of the object—when we perceive a form in use. This will show why attention to particular uses is the proper context for grasping the full aesthetic character of design.

3.2.1. Appreciating the Aesthetic Character of Design

Aesthetic appreciation of design is an activity that is typically part of our daily, ordinary encounters with design objects that grounds and expresses how we respond to the aesthetic character of design.

There are two views about aesthetic appreciation. The first one holds that in appreciating a particular object, we are cognitively engaged in an act that involves grasping certain aesthetic properties that the object exhibits or possess. Thus, in order to get to a design's aesthetic value, we need to be guided in our appraisal and understanding of its particular form by the object's purpose (Parsons & Carlson, 2008; Levinson, 2009, 2016; Lamarque, 2009; Carroll, 2016; Paris, 2019). Let us call this approach the cognitivist view.

An alternative view of appreciation maintains that appreciation is inherently linked to a feeling of pleasure or displeasure afforded by our contemplation of the object's form. Thus, appreciation is seen in terms of the production of a value judgment and is understood as an exercise of taste.[64] That can be called the affectivist

[64] See Hume (1965) for a full characterization of the exercise of taste as a process that explains the

view (Iseminger, 2004; Budd, 2008). These approaches to aesthetic appreciation offer different conceptions of what it is to aesthetically appreciate an object. While the first one focuses on perception and is understood mostly as a cognitive state, the second emphasizes the noncognitive character of value judgment.

Carroll (2015) supports a cognitive appreciation model. In his analysis, whether we can perceptually discriminate the formal, expressive, and aesthetic properties an object displays depends on whether we recognize its structural properties because they are manifest in the object's aptness or appropriateness for a particular purpose. According to Carroll, when we appreciate an object, we pay attention to the relevant choices the designer made in order to realize the design's point or purpose. Aesthetic appreciation involves attending to how the work works, "sizing up the work". For example, in appreciating a vase we should pay attention not only to its weight, shape and size but also to these properties in light of its function—for example, as a container of fragrant flowers. In this model of aesthetic appreciation, properly appreciating an object requires both critical evaluation and interpretation. Judging a form as right or adequate to a particular function is part of appreciating the object. In that sense, the aesthetic value of an object is considered as a kind of achievement value. Therefore, an achievement analysis of aesthetic appreciation requires certain perceptual expertise and training of our cognitive abilities so that we can detect the aspects that ground the aesthetic content of our experience. Aesthetic attention consists of and is exercised by perceiving the aesthetic properties of an object. Appreciative activity is conceived in terms of aesthetic understanding.

Carroll's analysis of aesthetic experience characterizes appreciation as a matter of detecting properties instead of as a judgment about the aesthetic value of the object. His account of appreciation is neutral from the point of view of value. For him, subjective or affective involvement is not required for our perception of the object's aesthetic meaning. Indeed, many criticisms of Carroll's account protest that aesthetic experience becomes a sort of cognitive critical affair rather than one grounded in the perceiver's exercise of taste. For Carroll, there is no role for taste in the activity of appreciation, for aesthetic properties explain by themselves the object's aesthetic value

attribution of aesthetic properties to an object when a certain sentiment naturally arouses in the subject caused by that object. For any sensible subject that feeling of approbation or affective response is experienced under normal conditions.

and aesthetic judgement becomes dispensable. In fact, many cognitivists, like Carroll, disapprove of the affectivist model by arguing that no pleasurable experience is needed in order to reach a critical assessment or judgment. Taste need not be consulted.

In contrast, the affectivist appreciation model is traditionally inspired by a Kantian account of aesthetic judgment.[65] Some aestheticians, such as Goldman (2004), Iseminger (2004), or Budd (2008), support this alternative conception of aesthetic appreciation. In Budd's view, aesthetic appreciation involves evaluation grounded in an experience of disinterested pleasure (Budd, 2008). In this view, there is a sort of affective receptiveness in our valuing of the experience as an aesthetic one (Goldman, 2004). This view defines the aesthetic appreciation model as one that takes into account that the object's intrinsic value is different from its instrumental value (Iseminger, 2004). Thus, judging an object aesthetically cannot be merely a cognitive state or achievement; evaluation must be also involved.

Now we will see which conception of the aesthetic appreciation of design follows from each of these models. Following a cognitivist account, the aesthetic experience of design consists of a special kind of perceptual activity in which we grasp some aesthetic properties of an object. The aesthetic appreciation of design consists of judging the object on the basis of our affective response to its appearance. What is more, the affective content that is proper to our experience of aesthetic properties relies on a sort of perceptual sensitivity or discriminative power that is characteristic of aesthetic appreciation (Sibley, 2001).

I have presented both conceptions of aesthetic appreciation. How does commitment to the idea that design is properly appreciated in a certain pattern of use affect the aesthetic appreciation of design? What kind of model of appreciation of design will make room for the role attributed to particular patterns of use? In what follows, I will elaborate some aspects of an interactive aesthetic model and describe the appreciative act we perform with design objects.

[65] To extend into Kant's characterization of the judgment of taste and the concept of the aesthetic see Zangwill (2003).

3.2.2. The Interactive Aesthetic Model of Design Appreciation

An aesthetic appreciation model for design should provide an account of what it means to properly appreciate design from an aesthetic point of view. As I have claimed, patterns of use play a significant role in the aesthetic appreciation of design, making available aesthetic properties that would otherwise remain inaccessible or unnoticed. These patterns of use structure our experience of appreciation and give it an interactive dimension. Aesthetic appreciation, thus understood, occurs in particular contexts of use and is partly determined by them. This means that there is an intrinsic performative aspect of our appreciative engagement with design that requires a view of aesthetic appreciation that can emerge from the merging of the cognitive and affectivist views.

Any proper aesthetic appreciative account of design should meet at least two requirements that are commonly accepted concerning aesthetic experience in general: the acquaintance principle and the autonomy principle. According to the acquaintance principle, one cannot make an accurate aesthetic judgement unless one has a direct first-person experience of the object's primary or structural features. The principle of autonomy in appreciation implies that our aesthetic judgement needs to be grounded in our affective response to the appreciated object.[66] No testimony, argument, or deduction can establish an aesthetic judgment, for conclusions need to be drawn from our own faculties.

An interactive appreciation framework should meet these principles and be understood in a way that accommodates the central intuitions of the cognitivist and the affectivist accounts of appreciation. As the cognitivist approach does, the interactive appreciation framework considers that grasping certain aesthetic properties as a result of understanding the object in its pattern of use is part of what we do when we engage appreciatively with a design object. As the affectivist approach does, we not only register that the object possesses such and such aesthetic qualities; we also judge whether the design is aesthetically valuable in the context of a particular pattern of use.

Carroll's cognitivist approach has the advantage of granting certain experiences of comprehensiveness or aesthetic understandings of the object. Having a right aesthetic experience of the object involves grasping its aesthetic properties when considering the design object appropriately; that is, as the kind of functional object it

[66] For a full characterization of the principle of autonomy, see Wollheim (1980), and for the autonomy principle, see Hopkins (2001).

is.[67] And so we make up our minds about whether the object's form is aesthetic. This approach moves us away from taking the activity of appreciation as a kind of reactive or passive phenomenon. However, while I can agree with the cognitivist appreciation thesis that some cognitive elements are necessarily involved in our appreciation of design—true comprehensiveness and understanding of an object's functionality is desirable—this approach conceives aesthetic appreciation mainly as an epistemic act or achievement, a matter of perceiving certain properties. Carroll's cognitivist approach dispenses with the evaluative response that is characteristic of aesthetic judgment.

The cognitivist view incorrectly assumes that perceiving an object in its right category is sufficient for grasping its main aesthetic properties or intrinsic value.[68] Although this may be a necessary condition for correctly perceiving an object, even when we are in a position to correctly appreciate something, there is still room for the subject of appreciation to make up her mind about the aesthetic value the object possesses given the aesthetic properties that she has perceived. Cognitivists do not offer a definitive argument that establish that mere perception of the aesthetic properties of an object exhausts what it is at stake when experiencing it aesthetically. But for the cognitivist, the kind of judgement we make about the object is just a perceptive-cognitive judgement rather than an aesthetic judgement proper, when an aesthetic judgment proper is conceived as expressing a particular evaluation.

In light of this concern, I argue that aesthetic appreciation is not just a matter of grasping or perceptually detecting aesthetic properties it is also a matter of aesthetically judging the object. According to this, although the appreciative experience of design is partly constituted by cognitive aspects, it is different from a cognitive experience. The aesthetic experience of design involves making an aesthetic judgment about the design object when appreciated as design. Within this perspective, the appreciative interactive view leaves room for the role played by the judgment of taste.[69] We can use the idea of the affectivist appreciation view that what is

[67] That is a view that follows a Dantonian definition of aesthetic appreciation in which the constitutive purpose of an object is identified with its meaning or content.

[68] Note that the sense in which cognitivism is used here refers to a previous step in our mental evaluation of an object's appearance under a certain category.

[69] This approach is inspired by the notion of aesthetic taste that Schellekens (2009) promotes. For her, aesthetic taste is "understood both in terms of our rational skills and our affective dispositions. That is

characteristic of appreciation is that it facilitates an affective experience through the sort of aesthetic engagement we enjoy when setting up a pattern-of-use relationship with the design object. This concept emphasizes the hedonist aspect of aesthetic appreciation. The value is determined in relation to a specific sort of feeling.[70] Therefore, an appreciative interactive approach involves a commitment to aesthetic judgement, understood as centrally involving merit (Gorodeisky, 2018).[71] In addition, the interactive appreciation model allows us to emphasise the agential sense of the aesthetic judgement as something we actually do in order to get to a proper aesthetic experience of an aesthetic object (Alcaraz León, 2019b).

Thus, we can preserve the gist of both the cognitivist and aestheticist views: comprehensiveness and affect are necessary to any proper aesthetic account of appreciation. Although a purely cognitivist model risks turning appreciation into an epistemic and perceptive affair, it offers the aesthetic comprehensiveness of functional objects, like design objects, that is necessary for integrating its practical aspect into the assessment of its aesthetic value. The classic aestheticist model can explain the affective side of our aesthetic experience with design by giving a central role to taste. An interactive aesthetic model will preserve these aspects and explain some features that are special given that the object of appreciation is a designed functional object experienced in a pattern of use.

In the next section, I will explain how individual experiences of design appreciation can become shareable through patterns of use despite their idiosyncratic aspect.

3.2.3. Interactivity and Fittingness in Use

A key aspect of an interactive aesthetic appreciative account is that the role that patterns of use play in our aesthetic appreciation of design does not only facilitate a richer understating of design's aesthetic character, but it also explains the active character of aesthetic appreciation. In this sense, a pattern-of-use account emphasizes

to say, aesthetic taste is best conceived as a kind of discernment that depends both on cognition and feeling in order to yield its 'evaluative assessment'" (p. 740).

[70] Lopes (2018) offers a nuanced definition of aesthetic appreciation. For him, this means *feeling* the pleasure to which the value stands in constitutive relation. That is what differentiates appreciation from a pure attribution of aesthetic value.

[71] For more about how reasons can work to justify that singular feeling, see Gorodeisky (2019).

the agential character of the appreciator. First, because the pattern of use requires us to consider our experience of the object in a pattern of use scenario; that is, it requires us to pay attention to how we interact with design objects. Interactivity is a key concept of the enriched appreciation model. Interactivity is the dynamic and reciprocal relationship established between a certain object and a competent user of that particular object.[72] That analysis of interactivity is already recognized in some appreciative accounts of art. A proper experience of an artwork involves "interacting with [the work] in whatever way it demands if it is to be understood" (Budd, 1995, p.4). In this way, we can be aware of all the properties of the work that are important to its aesthetic value. Following this normative understanding of the aesthetic experience with artworks, a common interaction with the art object seems to be primarily mediated by the established conventions that regulate the artistic practice in which the object is located as the kind of artwork it is.

By contrast, it seems that in defining our proper interaction with design, patterns of use demand that we go beyond the established conventions of practice. In other words, our habitual interaction is not so regulated in our practice with design. For example, using a fork as a comb demands that our appreciation be freer and more creative than with the example of art but also more physically demanding in engagement. Thus, the focus on the meaning of interactivity justifies the active condition I endorse for aesthetically appreciating design in the right way. After interacting with the design object in a certain way, a particular aesthetic experience takes place, thus providing the grounding for an accurate aesthetic judgement. Thus, I take interactivity to mean a relation in which both aesthetic appreciation and the evaluation of design occurs.

I think that current functional aesthetic accounts of design have overlooked the role of interactivity in design aesthetic appreciation. This is especially noticeable in their undermining of alternative uses of design as suitable or valid scenarios for the aesthetic appreciation of design. Their commitment to the normative role of proper function in aesthetic appreciation has excluded patterns of use. The sort of interaction I am appealing to here cannot be explained merely in terms of appreciating the functional aspect of the object.

[72] At this point, I will use the notion of interactivity in a broad, nontechnical way.

As I have already shown through many design examples, aesthetically appreciating design requires going beyond the perception of fittingness. Thus, the interactive appreciation model invokes a broader type of appraisal of design objects. It includes a richer understanding of the aesthetic appreciation of design. For example, it acknowledges that certain features of form satisfy other symbolic or secondary functions. Many common design cases, like perfume bottles or billboards, clearly exemplify this dimension of functionality. Furthermore, this view accommodates a broader sense of aesthetic approval of design in terms of how a particular form makes sense from an aesthetic point of view. To illustrate this notion of "making sense" from an aesthetic point of view, consider the case of a sofa that fits particularly well in a room, even when many other sofas could provide the same function. Some of my reasons appreciating the fittingness of the sofa are not functional. Moreover, as Wittgenstein suggested, our judgments of the aesthetic value of functional objects require us to take into account a whole form of life—that is, what in a certain moment or culture is considered to be relevant, significant, and so forth.

Thus, the sort of interaction I propose as the proper framework for appreciating design goes beyond considerations of the functionality of the object. The interactive model can accommodate fittingness in use, for example, when we consider that a can opener is functionally beautiful. It has a sculptural and ergonomic form, like the wing of a butterfly. Its colour is solid but gorgeous. The blade is made of silver stainless steel. After we use it, we realize how easily our fingers seem to fit with its curved forms. Among many of the kitchen tools that it could be, I guess that this is a can opener that one may be pleased to show and encourage others to try.[73] But my appreciation also has room for other aesthetic properties or values that are not strictly tied to the functionality of the object—such as the expressive properties of design's form. This view of aesthetic appreciation allows for a richer dimension of our aesthetic experience. Finally, while taking into consideration the aspects that functionalist accounts commonly foreground, it offers a more holistic view of aesthetic appreciation and of the aesthetic value of design.

[73] I am referring to Normann Copenhagen's 2015 design of a can opener (see appendix, p.110).

3.3. Suitability of the Interactive Aesthetic View for the Aesthetic Appreciation of Design

In this section, I will argue for the suitability of the interactive appreciation model as a model in which the design object is appreciated through a certain pattern of use. The main point will be to show that the aesthetic experience typically available in patterns of use meets the normativity that characterizes proper aesthetic judgements of design.

I will point to how an enhanced interactive aesthetic view not only entangles the participation of alternative uses but can be properly defined by some unique features that structure appreciation, such as repetition and habit. Second, I will argue that there are two relevant aspects of aesthetic normativity and that both can be grounded in appreciating design objects in the contexts provided by patterns of use. Finally, I will point to the main advantages that our interactive aesthetic appreciation view has for an accurate characterization of the aesthetic judgment of design.

3.3.1. The Interactive Agential Dimension in The Everyday Experience of Design

As I have already explained, an interactive aesthetic view locates our appreciative response to design in a distinct context of interaction given by a particular pattern of use. Aesthetic experience is defined in terms of an aesthetic interaction that happens in everyday life. However, two challenges emerge when considering the interactive context as an everyday aesthetic context. One concerns the issue of how the mundane character of design causes some significant features to go unnoticed as aesthetic features (Forsey, 2013). The other points to the fact that in everyday interactions we tend to see the aesthetics of things as secondary or transient because we are more engaged with our everyday activities and practices than we are with attentive acts of appreciation. Therefore, it seems that precisely because design is appreciated in ordinary contexts of use, no special attitude, response, or pleasure constitutes the aesthetic appreciation of design (Parsons, 2015).[74]

[74] Many contemporary theorists of everyday aesthetics have engaged in a long debate about the paradoxical nature of the aesthetic appreciation of the ordinary or everyday (e.g., Saito, 2007; Melchionne, 2011; Leddy, 2012), for it seems that aesthetic appreciation and value are the opposite of the unnoticed. In addition, many paradigmatic aesthetic experiences tend to occur in a more stable appreciative framework, which seems to be contrary to a more dynamic and active engagement with

These conditions become problematic in light of how many aesthetic accounts of the everyday define the interactive agentival dimension of the appreciation of the everyday (Saito, 2007; Irvin, 2008; Leddy, 2012; Melchionne, 2013). In most views of the aesthetic appreciation of the everyday, the traditional aesthetic model of appreciation is inappropriate for accommodating the aesthetic experience of the everyday and everyday objects. Two aspects of the aesthetic experience that do not fit well with some of the characteristics of design: 1) the traditional model of aesthetic appreciation does not include interaction with the object; and 2) the traditional model of aesthetic appreciation conceives of the experience as a reflective one that could amount to an over-intellectualization of the ordinary. Thus, we need to preserve both interaction and ordinariness.

According to the first reason, design boundaries cannot be defined from a typical artistic framework, for it seems that when design is approached artistically, it is ripped out of its quotidian character. In the context of the second reason, the sort of reflectiveness that characterizes appreciation as an intellectual affair favours a distanced and contemplative approach to the aesthetic object that eventually dismisses the significance of—and transforms—the aesthetic experience of design into a sort of denaturalized experience.

Another concern is that adopting this everyday appreciative framework appears to erase the boundaries that demarcate the object of appreciation, making it more difficult to determine what exactly one should focus on.[75] The main criticism of the problem of not having a definite 'object' of everyday appreciation can be found in Parsons and Carlson (2008) and Forsey (2013).[76] However, the more pressing question still is how design appreciation happens in a practical context (in a pattern of use) and in ordinary circumstances (in contrast to more extraordinary ones).

All of these characteristics—the practical interaction, the ordinary character of design, the lack of determinacy concerning the object of appreciation—are seen as

design. If this paradoxical condition obtains, then, to the extent that it is also a condition for the aesthetic appreciation of design objects, it would extend to the characterization of the aesthetic experience of design.

[75] The critical point here refers to the frameless character of the everyday object when approaching it from an aesthetic point of view.

[76] Following that point, an engaged aesthetic account seemingly cannot explain what makes our attachment with design unique, for most analyses of the everyday treat design as part of the everyday background.

endemic conditions that are proper to the aesthetic experience of the ordinary. Thus, assuming that design is part of the everyday, aesthetic agency melts into the quotidian experience of daily life. So the real challenge for any everyday aesthetic account is to explain how our aesthetic experience of design remains a distinctive experience in the flow of everyday life. To explain that, the everyday appreciation view encourages us to engage with everyday objects by adopting a more participatory approach.[77] This view rejects the conventional spectator view that is characterized by distant, contemplative attention in favour of a more active position.

Indeed, an engaged aesthetic view argues that we are usually involved in multisensory interactions with countless everyday objects. Therefore, senses that are not normally the focus of attention in aesthetics—such as smell or touch—acquire a more predominant role in these accounts.[78] They all emphasize together with the practical aspect the transitive and free character of the aesthetic appreciation of design and that there is no singular or specific way to appreciate a particular design. Several forms of interacting with the object may be appropriate and there are no constraints on which aspects of the object can be the focus of our aesthetic engagement with it. In other words, there is no obligation for us to aesthetically attend to a specific set of properties. This feature derives from the interactive nature of the pattern-of-use account of appreciation I am proposing.

On the other side, it can be claimed that the advantage of adopting an engaged attitude is that it explains our aesthetic response to design objects better, for aesthetic experience does not seem to be independent of our experiential immersion with them. The engaged account of aesthetic appreciation understands aesthetic attention in a way that makes salient the condition of everyday objects as immersed in patterns of life. Within the daily contexts in which we set up personal interactions with design, familiarity becomes a key aspect of our everyday experience of the aesthetic (Haapala, 2005).[79] Because design objects are in the background in our domestic or quotidian

[77] For instance, Robinson (2012) points out that in an engaged aesthetic view, richer aesthetic experiences of architecture must be informed by the sort of bodily engagement buildings demand when inhabit them.

[78] This account has its roots in Dewey's pragmatist model of aesthetic experience, but it has been developed in Arnold Berleant's (1991) approach.

[79] Haapala (2005) has pointed that having a relationship of familiarity with an object can positively contribute to its aesthetic appreciation. Within his phenomenological approach, many tools for living that we initially ignore or characterize as annoying, such as a building in our natal city or even a car park can become at some point aesthetically pleasant to us when they become part of our common

environments, aesthetic appreciation is characterized by a feeling of comfortability that comes from creating long-lasting and accustomed interactions with those objects. Saito (2018) claims that a more personal and creative engagement with design objects—what she calls a "craft of use"—explains why many consumer products can be more cherished in our everyday lives because they are considered to be beautiful.[80]

Now that I have briefly explained the key points of the engaged aesthetic view concerning design appreciation, I want to clarify some aspects of the aesthetic agentival dimension of everyday aesthetic accounts that is important for an enriched interactive aesthetic account of appreciation. In the first place, despite the fact that the paradigmatic context of the aesthetic appreciation of design is the ordinary, practical, quotidian one, design can also be appreciated from an artistic perspective. Adopting that perspective involves the fact that some features of a design object can be perceived as aesthetically enhanced when perceived in relation to some artworks or as artistic achievements; that is, when seen in light of the history of an artistic tradition, style, and so forth. In these and other typical occasions, we realize that a certain design object has a sort of artistic merit that, when considered as a design merit, turns to be dull or uninteresting (or vice versa).

For everyday aesthetic accounts, adopting an artistic perspective when engaging with design can obscure rather than enhance some of its aesthetic properties. As Saito (2007) has noted, adopting that sort of artistic (historical) attention undermines the appreciator's capacity to engage with the aesthetic properties of the everyday objects in a proper way. Adopting an artistic perspective involves removing design from its natural context. In other words, attending to design as art miscategorises the object. Parsons and Carlson (2008) made this same critical point, for they claim that proper appreciation of design involves appreciating everything in its place. The proper appreciation of a functional object is not detachable from the context or environment in which the object performs its function, and its overall

routines or habits; they become part of our daily patterns of relating to the world. Furthermore, they make us notice the ways we are present into the world.

[80] She emphasizes that everyday aesthetic value can derive from the association of a story with a consumer product because that association works to develop our aesthetic sensibility in a double sense: first, in our life with it and, second, because stories make us care more about the life/existence of the product (she argues that some aesthetic properties can change our vision of it as disposable). In her view, we urgently need to reexamine as consumers our aesthetic interaction with industrial products or designs as part of a certain material culture. The topic of the aesthetics of the familiar has been previously developed in Saito (2017).

aesthetic value can be grasped only in that context. Forsey (2013) makes the same point. For her, proper aesthetic judgements require us to understand a design object in its right functional category and context of use. These theorists all agree that perceiving design as if it were art leads to a failed aesthetic appreciation.

These worries are easily resolved in an interactive appreciation view. We habitually adopt an artistic gaze when we use everyday design objects. Hick (2019) notes that there seems to be a difference between using something as art and treating it as if it *were* art. In his analysis, using something as art involves attending to the object's decorative or historical function, conferring an aesthetic function to the object. He offers as an example the case of an old apple peeler that he now uses to decorate his kitchen. What is more, using something like an apple peeler as art does not mean that it necessarily changes its condition as design or as a mere real thing.[81] Indeed, a main point is that an interactive aesthetic account focuses on appropriateness in our broad uses of design objects. Design shares an aesthetic function with art and crafts, and this makes it legitimate to approach design from an artistic perspective in some circumstances. In my view, acknowledging this possibility does not undermine the typical appreciation of design. As pointed earlier, and as in Budd's pluralist view, many different aspects can be included in our appreciation of something as what it is.

In the second place, defenders of everyday aesthetic accounts have considered that attending to an object's features in a quotidian way is incompatible with a more intellectual or reflective way of attending to aesthetic value. They think that this way of engagement, which is characteristic of a traditional conception of the aesthetic experience of art, has no room for personal or localized experiences of the aesthetic in the everyday. The kind of immersion that quotidian scenarios favour and that is proper to everyday experience seems to be at odds with a more distanced or reflective attitude. But I think that the conditions that are proper to the aesthetic experience in everyday contexts are compatible with the reflective nature that the aesthetic experience possibly has in ordinary contexts of appreciation. So we should rethink both the notion of aesthetic reflection and its exclusive relation to artistic appreciation.

A key aspect of the interactive appreciation view is adopting a richer view of the notion of aesthetic agency by conferring major aesthetic credit to patterns of use.

[81] For an argument that working definitions of art versus real things can be made on the basis of contingent function, see Gaskell (2020).

That involves reinforcing the sense and value of appreciation as an aesthetic act.[82] Because the interactive aesthetic view includes analysis of the performative aspect of aesthetic experience, our appreciative act can be embedded in an ordinary action or can be compatible with a more practical/functional relationship with the object. In tune with this, Puolakka points that "not all forms of more direct attentiveness to objects and environments can be excluded this straightforwardly from everyday consciousness. We simply are not as blind in our everyday dealings as this response assumes. It is perfectly possible to appreciate the design excellence of a pen *while* writing and the comfort of a shoe *while* walking. This does not even require any sort of laborious multitasking or division of attention. As the appreciation of design objects is tightly incorporated into everyday activity, the experience of their excellence and beauty can be very much part of everyday life" (Puolakka, 2018). Thus, the interactive aesthetic view demonstrates that distinguishing between passive and active appreciation becomes obsolete.

Summing up, I have shown how the engaged aesthetic view advanced in everyday aesthetic accounts falls sort of providing a satisfactory analysis of the everyday aesthetic experience of design. In the next section, I will explain how the appreciation that we perform with design possesses key features such as repetition and habit. Afterwards, I will inquire into the normative constraints of our everyday engagement with design that regulate our experience of its aesthetic value and the production of an aesthetic judgement proper.

3.3.2. The Interactive Structure of The Appreciative Account of Design

In previous sections, I have proposed an account of the aesthetic appreciation of a design object that is not restricted to the functional understanding of the object but that responds to the interactive context in which we create certain patterns of use with it. Two main features characterize the act of appreciation within an interactive aesthetic account. One is the participation of senses such as taste, smell, and touch. In tune with other everyday aesthetic accounts, we interact in an intimate way with design objects by actively using them, that is, by touching, smelling, and tasting them. Therefore, an interactive appreciation approach includes all senses that are involved in any proper

[82] What I mean is that appreciation actually follows from the sort of physical actions that we undertake with the design object.

interaction with design. For instance, we can realize how comfortable and good a rattan chair is once we sit on it, noticing the texture of its braiding, smelling its aroma when heated or wet, admiring the presence of its tannish yellow appearance and how it fits the room's interior design. Use facilitates appreciation by allowing us to have a full aesthetic experience of the object in ordinary life. Therefore, there is no apparent reason to dismiss any information that our senses can provide in our quotidian engagement with design objects.

Another feature that characterizes our appreciative act is that habit and repetition set up a particular pattern of use. A habit can be understood as an acquired disposition to act in a determinate way according to the context or environment in which interaction with an object takes place. In other words, it involves knowing how to (aptly) act with a type of object.[83] Thus, habits tend to facilitate the exercise of our daily activities with everyday design objects. Repetition reinforces and constitutes habit so that certain interactions with an object become fixed or stabilized in a common (aesthetic) practice.

The interactive aesthetic appreciative view explains how habit and repetition affect the aesthetic engagement with design. In order to do so, I will introduce some remarks about aesthetic engagement that will help us understand the contribution of habit and repetition. Following Nguyen (2019), I will consider aesthetic engagement as the process that grounds aesthetic appreciation. As appreciators, we cultivate our attention towards an object by reflecting on our perceptual experience with it. Aesthetic engagement is a process that involves both our affective response and our cognitive participation in properly appreciating the object's aesthetic value. For Nguyen, this is what it means to be truly engaged with the work. In his view, we integrate a form of higher-level cognition of the object (interpretation and recognition of affect) plus a low-level form of perceptual engagement (perceptual distribution and visual coherence) into our engaged view. Thus, aesthetic engagement includes all of the perceptual, cognitive, and affective processes that we actively deploy to make a proper aesthetic judgement. This is not a merely intellectual activity; we also engage in a sort of physical activity with the object.

Given this context, we can assess how habit influences aesthetic engagement. Habit is the tendency to do certain things or to do them in a particular way. Normally,

[83] However, routine is frequently characterized as a form of less mindful behavior.

our interactions with design objects of our environment are habitual. Habits show how we tend to interact with the object. Hence, they are integral to our aesthetic engagement with design. Puolakka criticizes restrictivist accounts of habit—such as those of Saito (2017), Haapala (2017), and Naukkarinen (2017)—because they take habits as actions that are separate from other modes of thought and action. He argues that "in assimilating habits with some kinds of semi-consciously carried-out routines, restrictivists miss that not all habits stand on an equal footing or are of equal value" (Puolakka, 2018).[84] Following this view, a broad understanding of habituation is inherent to the generation of a particular pattern of use and our appreciation of design.

Repetition is often associated with habit.[85] Interacting with the object in a repetitive way—as the pattern-of-use approach establishes—can help us notice certain nuances that are often masked in the overall experience of the object's features. For example, when I take my daily bike ride (a pattern of use), I observe that when I take the road near the sea, the bike's slim vintage wheels leave meandering grooves in the sand that has washed up on the road. I actually like to create these drawings on the way to do errands.[86] In this case, repetition allows me to perceive more fine-grained details or even some accidental ones in my experience of an appreciated object. Acting in a repetitive way can facilitate a more refined appreciation of an everyday design object.

Habits have a participatory role in how we reflect about our aesthetic engagement with design. They allow the cognitive, interpretative, and affective processes that sustain aesthetic appreciation. Acting out of habit in combination with repetition can favour closer relationships with everyday design objects. Moreover, through this form of aesthetic engagement we can create an aesthetic intimacy with them.[87] Therefore, an interactive aesthetic view explains the autonomous personal character of aesthetic experience in our daily encounters and interactions with design.

[84] In light of his criticism, we can say that his view holds for the sort of normativity that I maintain patterns of use offer to appreciation. For an alternative view of habit in everyday aesthetics, see Puolakka (2018).

[85] Dewey (1922) pointed to the risk of associating repetitive or routine acts with the meaning of habit. Within his view, habit has a more dynamic and projective nature.

[86] Notice that the most typical way that some features of an object can be noticed when the object is repeatedly used is when the object malfunctions. We may become aware of how repetitive interaction with an object has changed some of its initial properties, for example. Or we may see the new properties resulting from our interaction with the object as revealing that history of interaction.

[87] On aesthetic intimacy, see Alcaraz León (2019a) and Maes (2017).

Our aesthetic personality—our preferences and tastes—is expressed in the kind of patterns of use that normally sustain our familiar and daily habits. Inasmuch as a proper aesthetic agential account requires habituation and repetition to form particular interactions—for patterns of use are learned and trained in habit and repetition—an interactive appreciative account includes the more subjective character of our aesthetic engagement.

3.3.3. Aesthetic Normativity and Patterns of Use in Appreciation

I have claimed that an interactive appreciation view is a better analysis for the aesthetic appraisal of design because patterns of use allow us to explain common aesthetic experiences of design and their personal or subjective dimensions. We respond to a design object in a particular way by interacting with or using it. But how does this personal engagement fare with the universality ascribed to aesthetic judgments? As Nguyen claims, "We don't simply stop when we have a pleasing response or interpretation of a work; we push on to make sure that our response is sensitive to the complex actuality of the work. Without that drive to correctness, we would be tempted to stop thinking about the work as soon as we were pleased by it" (Nguyen, 2019, 16). In other words, how can the way a particular person appreciates a design object in a pattern of use be considered to be universally valid? How can the experience of those aesthetic properties in a certain pattern of use be considered to be shareable and thus compatible with the normativity requirements of an accurate aesthetic judgement of design?

We can answer these questions by paying attention to the revelatory character that engaging with a design object in a pattern of use has. As I noted in section 2.2.3, we can have access to and acknowledge some of the object's aesthetic properties that were not available when no interaction took place, such as its expressive character or how well the design fits our daily activities or practices. I argued that patterns of use help us grasp the aesthetic value of design because they point to—and make us interact with—different sets of properties that can be important to our appreciative experience of the object in question. Moreover, we can establish different patterns of use in our experience with design that express our personal or intimate uses of the object and generate different aesthetic experiences of it. This leads to a pluralistic view of the

aesthetic experience available in patterns of use, for many different uses of the same design object can be considered to be aesthetically revelatory.

It might be objected that the pluralistic character derived from grounding patterns of use in personal or intimate uses of the object introduces the risk of relativism. How can a particular, personal pattern of use guarantee that the aesthetic appreciation is correct or adequate? It seems that my account renders aesthetic appreciation an arbitrary affair. However, I think that stressing the subjective character of aesthetic experience by taking into account particular uses of design is compatible with objectiveness in aesthetic appreciation.[88] Certainly there may be patterns of use that distort the aesthetic appreciation of the object. Although my approach is pluralistic, it does not argue that all patterns of use are correct. Thus, among the manifold patterns of use that are available in our aesthetic experience with design, the more pressing normative question is how to discern which patterns of use are correct and which ones are incorrect. In other words, how are we to establish the validity of a pattern of use?

One way to answer this concern is to point to the idea that the correctness of a pattern of use can be established by how it fits in a particular form of life. Broadly speaking, when appealing to its Wittgensteinian sense,[89] the term form of life refers to "not a *single* way of acting, albeit characteristic of a group of organisms (such as speaking, calculating or eating animals), but must include innumerable other such shared ways of acting that cohesively form the necessary background or context or foundation of meaning." (Moyal-Sharrock, 2015, p.4). Thus, forms of life must be accepted as given. We encounter them as how our acts are shaped in the first place. But at the same time, they become shaped by how we act in them. Forms of life can be defined as occurring in a cluster or ensemble of social practices that are intertwined. In Rahel Jaeggi's (2018) analysis, they are collective established formations of a habitual character that involve shared attitudes and modes of social conduct that establish norms.

[88] For a sympathetic approach to this view that the normativity of one's responses is established in the subjective side of our aesthetic experience in the case of nature appreciation, see Pérez Carreño (2021).

[89] Originally termed *Lebensformen* in Wittgenstein (1978) (1991).

Once a particular pattern of use fits to a particular form of life[90], our interaction with a design object is constrained by a set of rules and values that we create as members of a certain social group, community, or culture. Although we can appreciate a design object through unconventional uses—that is, there may be new and creative ways of engaging with an object—these uses need to be understandable or shareable with others. The key point is that appealing to the role of forms of life offers us the grounds for establishing a shareable framework in which to set those new, meaningful uses of design objects. Thus, the boundaries of the aesthetic experience with the design object are fixed by the rules of the particular practice in which that experience unfolds. Importantly, when relying on some characteristic ways of relating and interacting with the design object, we establish personal patterns of use that others recognize.

Thus, the validity of a pattern of use can be justified to the extent that it can be subject to intersubjective assessment. My model grants that particular, common patterns of use can be communicable and thus that a proper aesthetic experience and judgement issues from them. Following this understanding of the validity of patterns of use, there is no risk of circularity, for the assessment of the aesthetic value of the object is not dependent on any previous knowledge about the object's aesthetic value or about which of its aesthetic properties are going to be aesthetically significant. The validity of a pattern of use is not set in its epistemic (or perceptual) validity but in its connection to a distinctive way of interacting and relating with the object that is made intelligible to and shared by others. In that respect, shareability can be considered an indispensable feature of any accurate pattern of use that we establish with design objects. Thus, my model guarantees the correctness of our aesthetic appreciation through common patterns of use.

We can tell which patterns of use are more or less adequate for appreciating a certain design object in light of how responsive they are to a particular form of life. For example, a correct use of a wicker basket can be to carry olives from a harvest. But it is also possible that a novel pattern of use facilitates appreciating a wicker basket in a way that can be shared by others and that become illuminating. For example, it can be used as a hanging lamp. In this and many other possible cases, an interactive

[90] In my view, the particular way of using an object and the fact that the object is part of a certain form of life come together despite Wittgenstein's skepticism about appreciation as an open and unattainable notion. He argues that there is no way that we can describe all the circumstances that in imagination pertain to a certain form of language as a form of life. See Marco Rubio (1995).

aesthetic model satisfies our common intuitions about which proper, quotidian, and specific uses can mark our aesthetic encounters with designs. This view solves the major problem regarding normativity: how to share an aesthetic experience as one that is universally valid. My proposal can discriminate between proper and invalid aesthetic judgements of design because we can determine which patterns of uses are correct and which are not. Thus, my model addresses the relativistic worries concerning the validity of aesthetic judgments of design.

3.4. Main Advantages of the Interactive Aesthetic Model for Aesthetic Judgements of Design

The interactive aesthetic appreciation view is a more comprehensive picture of the aesthetic value of design. It pays attention to our ordinary experiences with design objects and to how we interact with them. In this sense, I think this model addresses some limitations of functional and everyday aesthetic accounts. My appreciation aesthetic model ensures, first, a broader understanding of design as design, and second, a more comprehensive picture of the ways we appreciate it aesthetically. These are two key conditions that now I will analyse in more detail:

i) A broader understanding of design

One main advantage of the interactive aesthetic model is that it allows us to acknowledge the significance and presence of design in our lives. That presence is acknowledged when approaching design through patterns of use. We become aware of the relationship between the object and the environment in which it is inserted through experiencing it in a pattern of use. Thus, we come to grasp how an object both fits its function and how it affords a particular pattern of use and, as a consequence, a particular relation with its environment. As a result, we appreciate the design object in a deeper sense and relate to it in a richer way.[91]

At the same time, my approach highlights the impact and significance of the material condition of design objects in our everyday aesthetic interactions. When appreciating a certain design object, we need to attend to the kind of medium and materials used to

[91] That aesthetic account of design further accommodates the view of cultivating our aesthetic interest in design objects for their role as improving human experiential life. For an extended view about what *good* design is and the sort of educational value it grants, see Petts (2019).

make it in terms of how they respond (in a better or worse way) to some personal or social patterns of use. That leads us to care about the types of materials with which a design is made—how the medium is exploited—and the effect they have in our common interaction with the object. What is more, weighing the physical condition of our interaction with the material object also fosters a sense of closeness and intimacy in our aesthetic engagement with the object. And that points to the relationship between aesthetic appreciation and familiarity that some authors, such as Haapala or Saito, have frequently highlighted. Also, grounded in this relationship, the expressive aspects of design become salient to us.

The interactive aesthetic approach also strengthens the idea that we do not appreciate the design object simply for its functional aspect or in purely practical terms. A proper appreciation of design as design demands that we not treat design objects just as a way of reaching some practical goal. Because the design object has more aspects beyond the functional one that are significant to its meaning and value as design, such as its expressive character, my account of its form in use recovers many other expressive and relational properties it can have. This is certainly a key point for the aesthetic appreciation of design that many functional aesthetic accounts are blind to, given their emphasis on functionality.

Another advantage of the interactive aesthetic model is that it allows for an alternative view of the aesthetic significance and eloquence of design. As I have shown with some design cases, there is a sense in which the meaning that design has in appreciation does not derive exclusively from its functional character. Although I share the view that design objects do not normally convey propositional content, there is no reason to undermine other possible expressive or symbolic aspects. Thus, my appreciation model makes room for examples of design that have conceptual, critical, or ironic dimensions that may go beyond their functionality. This is a virtue of the model because it nicely accommodates some disregarded types of design that have a significant role in contemporary design practice.

Finally, including the role of patterns of use in our appreciation of design allows us to take into account genuine aesthetic relationships that go beyond the satisfaction of a function or purpose. The expressiveness of many design objects contributes to building bridges between us and the environment and offers us an enriched, personal experience of quotidian aspects of everyday life. What is more, the model enlarges the concerns of functional aesthetic theories by including the uses of

design objects established by patterns of use. In that way, our aesthetic model resolves the disjunction between the functional and the everyday aesthetic accounts of design.

ii) Advantages of the aesthetic account of the value of design

By approaching design thorough a richer understanding of its form in use, our interactive aesthetic appreciation model has the advantage of explaining a complex set of functions and aspects of the design object. As a result, the model allows for a richer explanation of the overall aesthetic value of design. Thus, our model offers a way of including some functional concerns that are pertinent in appreciating design while expanding the kind of considerations that may be relevant. In previous chapters, I discussed the attempt of functional aesthetic accounts to identify the distinctive type of aesthetic value that design has as design. In contrast to these models, my proposal favours an understanding of the aesthetic experience of design that includes significant aesthetic properties and that goes beyond the aesthetic significance of looking fit. This is a great benefit of the interactive aesthetic model compared to functional aesthetic accounts and everyday aesthetic accounts. Hopefully, my approach has more to say in cases such as fashion, where complex sets of expressive and symbolic features are more often in play. Also, I pointed out that other sorts of design seem insufficiently addressed if we only take into account functional considerations.

I have also discussed the everyday aesthetic accounts, pointing out the problems it presents with respect to the normative aspects that are proper to aesthetic experience and judgement. While the everyday aesthetic view allows for a personal characterization of the aesthetic encounter with the design object that fosters a richer bodily engagement, it seems incapable of offering a full-blown picture of a proper aesthetic experience of design. The reason for this is that everyday aesthetic accounts cannot get rid of certain relativist consequences that are at odds with the normative character of aesthetic experience and judgment. In contrast, the interactive aesthetic appreciative view avoids this problem. Through the establishment of certain patterns of use of design, I offered a way to accommodate the normative constraints that are proper to aesthetic experience.

The last point worth mentioning concerning the benefits of this interactive aesthetic appreciation model is that it deepens what it means to appreciate design. One aspect is that we can cultivate aesthetic attention towards design objects when we are immersed in daily actions and quotidian activities. I claimed that among all the available patterns

of use, the ones that are correct to get us to the aesthetic value of design are those that are fitting to a particular form of life. Thus, the rules and values of the distinctive aesthetic practice in which we are immersed determine the significance that we attribute to a design. The uses we aesthetically rely on in appreciating design can be very varied without challenging the possibility of correctness in aesthetic appreciation because they respond to the different ways that forms of life occur. Another further aspect is that looking at the subjective character of our aesthetic experience with design more deeply creates a more comprehensive explanation of how these patterns of use are eventually shared and recognized in our everyday interactions. The normative response is granted by the move from the personal aesthetic act to the collective aspect of the experience.

3.5. Conclusions

This third chapter presents the interactive aesthetic model of the aesthetic appreciation of design. The originality of that model resides in the account of patterns of use as a way to explain the aesthetic value of design. This model expands the subjective and normative grounds of our aesthetic experience and judgements of design. Within that enriched appreciation framework, I arrived at the following conclusions.

First, I defined patterns of use as any current act that we perform with the design object that can reveal some particular aspect of it for aesthetic appreciation. By attending to patterns of use, the aesthetic dimension of design does not derive solely from the fulfilment of the object's function. I have claimed that our habitual acts with design take place with certain objects that somehow acquire aesthetic meaning through their use that is not just identified by their intended function but is dependent on the founding of a personal relationship with the object in everyday life. Uses settled into particular patterns and this allows us to notice how some aesthetic properties exclusively emerge from—or become available in—a distinct aesthetic interaction with the object. To justify that uses are reliable indicators of design's aesthetic value more generally, I maintained that a pluralistic position is more sensitive to these everyday contexts of interaction. Thus, the knowledge we manage about proper function in appreciating design plays only a background role in our overall aesthetic experience of the object.

I argued that a pluralist view challenges the dismissal of ancillary functions or the accidental uses an object can have because they are not able to provide the expected normativity to our aesthetic appreciation. I argued that creating some patterns encompasses both a prescriptive use and an alternative use of design (where use should not be understood as unintended by the user but as integral to a certain pattern with a normative structure). Knowledge about proper function in appreciating design plays a background or partial role in our overall aesthetic experience of the object. That point gives us the capacity to attend to how a particular design (form) affords us interactions with it in use. A pluralist approach thus enhances design appreciation and allows for a more complex response to the aesthetic character of design. Some unique, social, or collective uses of design objects are thus included in appreciation.

Second, within an analysis of the role of patterns of use, I underlined the active and subjective dimension of aesthetic experience and appreciation, in contrast to the objective normativity of proper function in functional aesthetic accounts. Thus, I first defined aesthetic appreciation as an activity that combines comprehensiveness and affect. I claimed that an interactive appreciation framework that meets the acquaintance and autonomy principles can accommodate the gist of both cognitivist and affectivist views. I argued that while understanding the design object in a pattern of use allows us to grasp some of its aesthetic properties by properly considering it as the kind of functional object it is, our acting is not just a matter of acquiring a belief about the object's properties. It is not merely a cognitive achievement. Within the practical context of the pattern, we judge whether the design is aesthetically valuable or not. Thus, I have argued that there is room for the subject to make up her mind about the aesthetic value of the object and to express an evaluation about the merit of the design. The interactive aesthetic appreciative view stresses the hedonist aspect of aesthetic appreciation because of how the value of design is tied to a specific sort of feeling.

Given this more subjective/personal picture of appreciation, I showed how the interactive approach explains the active dimension of aesthetic appreciation and emphasizes the agentival character of the appreciator. Within that pattern-of-use scenario, I claimed that interactivity is a central concept that helps us understand how we appreciate design in a freer and more creative way and goes beyond the established conventions of art practice. I showed through some design cases that an interactive model sustains a broad aesthetic appraisal. It explains how certain features of form

satisfy other symbolic or secondary functions of design. This further justifies a richer sense of our aesthetic approval that includes how a particular design form makes sense from an aesthetic point of view in the context of a certain form of life. I proved that this analysis offers a more holistic view of aesthetic appreciation and the value of design. It accommodates fittingness and more aesthetic properties because our main reasons for aesthetic appreciation go beyond function.

Third, given how our aesthetic attention makes salient the everyday condition of design as immersed in some patterns of life, I have adopted an engaged aesthetic approach that promotes secondary senses. However, I have shown how the kind of engaged aesthetic view everyday aesthetic accounts offer fall short of providing a satisfactory account of the everyday aesthetic experience of design because it relies on the claim that the conditions of the aesthetic experience with design in everyday contexts are incompatible with the reflective nature of common aesthetic experience. In contrast, I argue that an interactive aesthetic view that gives credit to a pattern of use successfully explains the reflective nature and value of the act of appreciation as an aesthetic act.

I argued that habit and repetition affect our aesthetic engagement with design—understood in both senses as intellectual and physical activities—because they intervene in the setting up of a particular pattern of use with the object. I explained that habits show how we tend to interact with the design object and that an enlarged understanding of them as integrated with appreciation is preferable. I also suggested that repetition allows us to have a more refined appreciation of some details of the design object. Thus, a key argument is that the combination of habitual acts and repetition can help us reach closer relationships with everyday design objects. Proper aesthetic agency is founded in how patterns of use are learned and trained by habitual behaviour and repetition (since most traces of our aesthetic personality show up in familiar and daily habits).

Fourth, in light of my characterization of the particular way a subject appreciates a design object in a pattern of use, I have overcome two main concerns about the normative aspect of our aesthetic experience with design. One normative problem deals with how to attain the universal validity required for an aesthetic judgement after I adopted a pluralistic position about function. That is, many different uses can be considered revelatory to our experience of an object from an aesthetic point of view. The other normative problem derives from how the intimate and

personal nature of all varied uses of an object render aesthetic appreciation an arbitrary affair. In that respect, I have maintained that functional pluralism does not entail that all patterns of use are correct for a certain design. Some patterns of use can distort our aesthetic appreciation. I argue that the correctness of a pattern of use depends in how it fits to a particular form of life (in an account that draws on Wittgenstein). Thus, while our interactions with a design object is constrained by a set of social rules and values, they offer the possibility of establishing a shareable framework of new and meaningful uses of design objects.

My main point is that patterns of use can be assessed intersubjectively because they become embedded in particular forms of life that make them recognizable to others. The correctness of a pattern of use is fixed not in its epistemic or perceptual validity but in its connection to a distinctive way of interacting and relating with the object that can be made intelligible and shared by others. This solves the major problem regarding normativity—how to share an aesthetic experience as universally valid. My last point is about the main advantages of the interactive aesthetic model for proper aesthetic judgments of design. Accordingly, I emphasised an enriched analysis of the material and expressive condition of design and the agentival dimension of the act of appreciation.

General Conclusions

The main aim of this thesis is to provide an appreciative interactive model that accounts for the overall aesthetic value of design. My contribution to the aesthetic view of design objects is that it includes the act of appreciation in terms of patterns of use. My argument follows the claim that aesthetic properties of design get recognized interactively. That view sets main aesthetic reflection about design in the arena of the conventional and the familiar. In this thesis, I have reconciled the role that functional concerns play in the aesthetic appreciation of design with the autonomy of aesthetic value. I have also proposed a normative framework for the aesthetic experience of design that locates our aesthetic judgements in a shared (or shareable) background of patterns of use.

In chapter one, I considered how to make room for an aesthetic view of design that does not reduce its meaning to its purely functional or technical nature but that acknowledges its practical aspect as an object that typically satisfies our human wants and practical needs. I have characterized design objects as intentional, mundane, and accessible objects that have both a functional and an aesthetic dimension. Defenders of an essentialist account of function have emphasized the role that ascribing a function to an object plays for setting the boundaries between design and other sorts of aesthetic objects, such as art or nature. From that perspective, designs are measured in terms of their practicality and efficiency rather than by other aspects, such as an expressive dimension. In my view, this attempt has an isolationist effect. It turns design objects into practical but mute types by restricting the significance of their everyday aesthetic character to function. My main theoretical effort has been to push further into a characterization of design qua design that allows us to understand its mundane condition and how its form is accessible to us. It covers the understanding of design as a way of presenting a thing that is often mass produced with content and expressive meaning. By relying on the quotidian presence of design objects, I accommodate a mainstream view and frame design on an aesthetic continuum with art or nature without denying that practical use can be part of their meaning.

In chapter two, I challenged the functional aesthetic appreciative account of design. In my view, the strict commitment to the role of proper function in design appreciation is problematic because it limits our common aesthetic appreciation of it. In the accounts of Parsons and Carlson and Forsey, the correct appreciative act consists

of an epistemic accomplishment that grasps the object's functionality. These accounts encourage a more holistic (or teleological) aesthetic approach to the appreciated object. They bring into focus the performance the object realizes in its right environment or context. For design objects, this proper context is our practical and quotidian daily lives. But this approach gives no special credit to particular uses of the object as adequate for grounding the sort of functional aesthetic value they distinguish. Thus, given that looking fit only allows us to capture a particular type of functional meaning about the object, I think it is crucial to include other aspects that can only be properly accounted for by paying attention to our interaction with design objects in patterns of use.

Despite its importance, looking fit is neither necessary nor sufficient for a proper aesthetic appreciation of design. I have argued for this conclusion for two reasons. The first is that the grasping of a form as functional has no aesthetic meaning itself. The types of functional categories involved are, by extension, inadequate to determine which features of form are aesthetically valuable. The functional aesthetic account mistakenly dwells on selecting a set of functional properties in light of certain cognitive content or functional achievement. A second reason against its sufficiency stems from that fact. Within a cognitively rich notion of aesthetic value, aesthetic pleasure derives from the perception that an object's look is fit for purpose. The proper function sets the normative standards to which forms are considered aesthetically appropriate and so valuable. However, I observed that the aesthetic value of design is not explained absolutely in functional terms. There are many counterexamples of dysfunctional objects that are nonetheless regarded as beautiful. Thus, that kind of insufficiency cannot be amended by any functional beauty account. For even if we can determine which functions are appropriate for a particular design form, there is no reason to consider these forms as aesthetic just because of how well they express function.

My main aim in questioning the functional aesthetic view of design appreciation was to motivate another conception of the appreciation framework suitable for design objects. In my view, there are more aesthetic and expressive properties of design objects than the functional aesthetic account is prepared to acknowledge. I explored an important objection to the requirement of functional knowledge in appreciating design introducing Budd's arguments. Focusing exclusively on the role that functional knowledge has not only overlooks the real

impact and value of the aesthetic dimension of design; it also diminishes other more pluralistic modes of aesthetic appreciation that may be properly built from an actual use(s) of design.

In chapter three, I offered an alternative model of design appreciation. I showed how an original account of patterns of use allowed for new aesthetic properties that are overlooked in the account based on fittingness. Instead, I explained the aesthetic character of design in light of the meaning of appreciating a form in use. That view requires us to adopt a more pluralistic position regarding the normative role of proper function by embracing the impact that more particular and alternative uses of design have on its aesthetic appreciation. Its key advantage is to explain how forms are freely perceived as aesthetic in a determinate context of use. I am concerned about functionality in appreciation because I have attempted to recognize the aesthetic uniqueness of designs as objects that mediate between us and the world around us; that is, for how they can (aesthetically) enhance our quotidian activities and practices. I have defined interactivity as an intrinsic performative aspect of appreciation of design. This active condition emphasizes the agentival character of the appreciator that is mostly overlooked in functional aesthetic theories. At the same time, it deepens into the subjective sense of what is to experience design aesthetically—how one reflects about the sort of aesthetic experience that grows into a unique pattern of use.

Building on that point, I have offered an interactive aesthetic model of appreciation. I have rejected the idea that having an aesthetic experience with design is limited to perceptually (or cognitively) grasping certain aesthetic properties. Within the context of patterns of use, I have defended a more affectivist view in tandem with comprehensiveness. A genuine aesthetic experience of a design expresses a personal evaluation of the object that is facilitated by its use. That means that we make proper aesthetic judgements of design based on how we daily interact and create relationships with the design object. Setting an interactive aesthetic view in everyday contexts further extends the model of aesthetic experience: we are aesthetic agents practically immersed in daily life and aesthetically interacting with ordinary objects. The appreciative act is best defined as based on habit and repetition. That characterization of properly appreciating design strengthens the condition of being aesthetically engaged with it: it involves all our senses plus the sort of knowledge required to accurately attend to the object in a reflective way. In sum, I have argued that attending

to patterns of use offers us a richer aesthetic account of the aesthetic judgement of design.

A further goal of the thesis is to account for the normative aspect of aesthetic judgments of design. I have tried to show that this aspect is not fully satisfied by functional aesthetic accounts, since the normativity that derives from fittingness fails to account for the overall value of the aesthetic character of design. Everyday aesthetic accounts also cannot accommodate this normative aspect because they consider that the experience of the everyday is not normatively constrained. I have defended my view against the possible charge of relativism by showing how personal and creative engagement with the object given by patterns of use is compatible with granting certain universal validity to our aesthetic judgements. I have identified how a particular pattern of use can fit a certain form of life. In order to do so, I have relied on the Wittgensteinian sense of the notion to properly fix the correctness of a pattern of use: some uses are more appropriate to a design when perceived as fitting to a way of acting. Thus, by appealing to the shareability of patterns of use, my interactive aesthetic model provides a way to ground the validity of our aesthetic judgements of design. It warrants the kind of intersubjective assessment required for the proper account of the aesthetic value of design.

Finally, the interactive aesthetic model seeks to offer a more sensible and comprehensive analysis of the aesthetic appreciation of design. It seeks to grant the material expressiveness of the object and to encourage a more sustainable, mature, and familiar relationship with it. Thus, design is truly valued as the kind of nature that we built.

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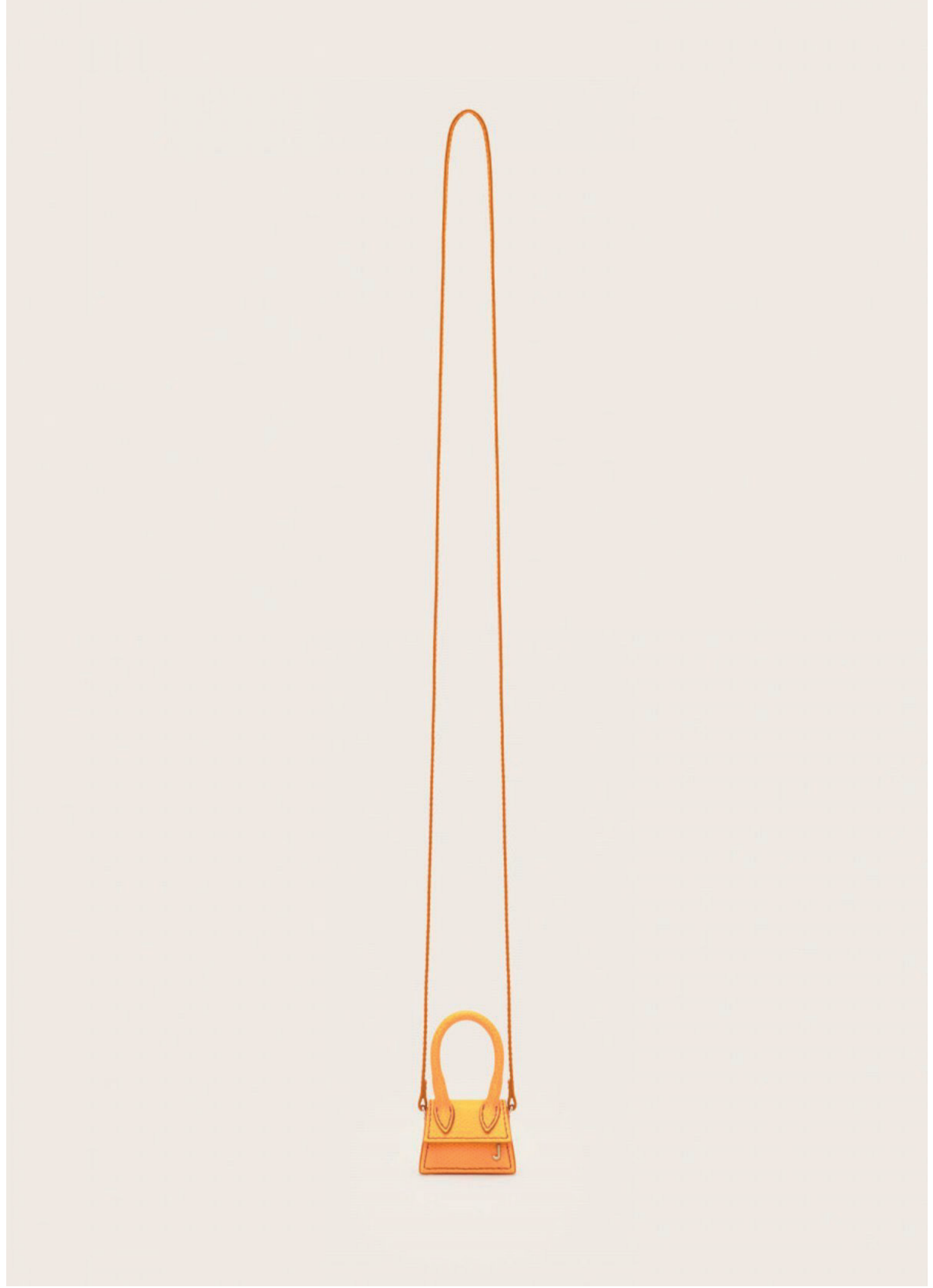
Appendix

Paula Scher, Self-portrait, 1985



Le Chiquito bag, Jacquemus, 2019

Annie Albers, textile artwork, 1957

Spun chair Thomas Heatherwick, 2007

Can opener, Norman Copenhagen, 2015

Hanger, Front, 2007

Sheila Hicks book crafted hedges

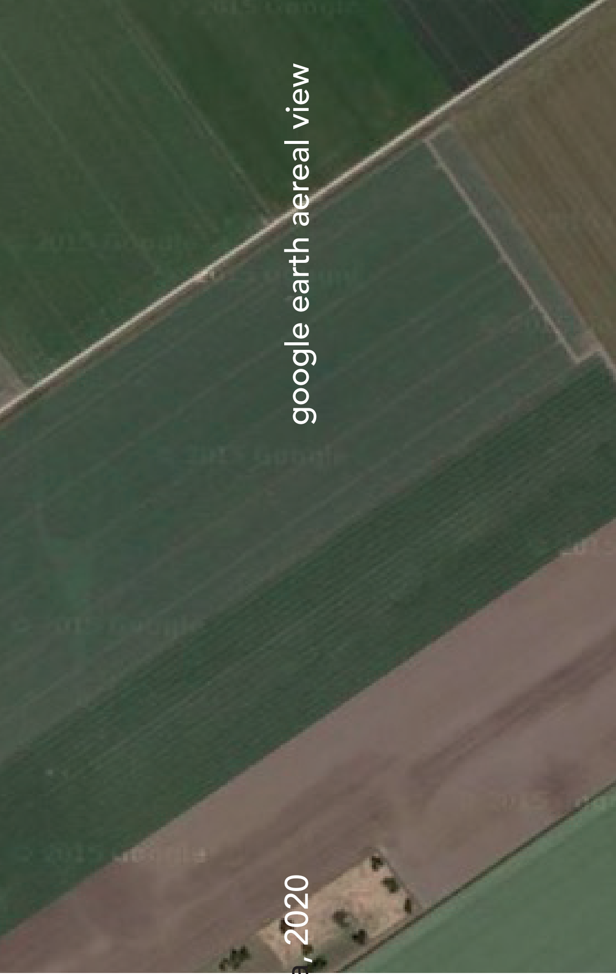
Polished finished of the *Spun* chair

Sint-Niklaas, Belgium, Daniel Ost

Smooth, salt and pepper pots, Eva Zeisel, 1962

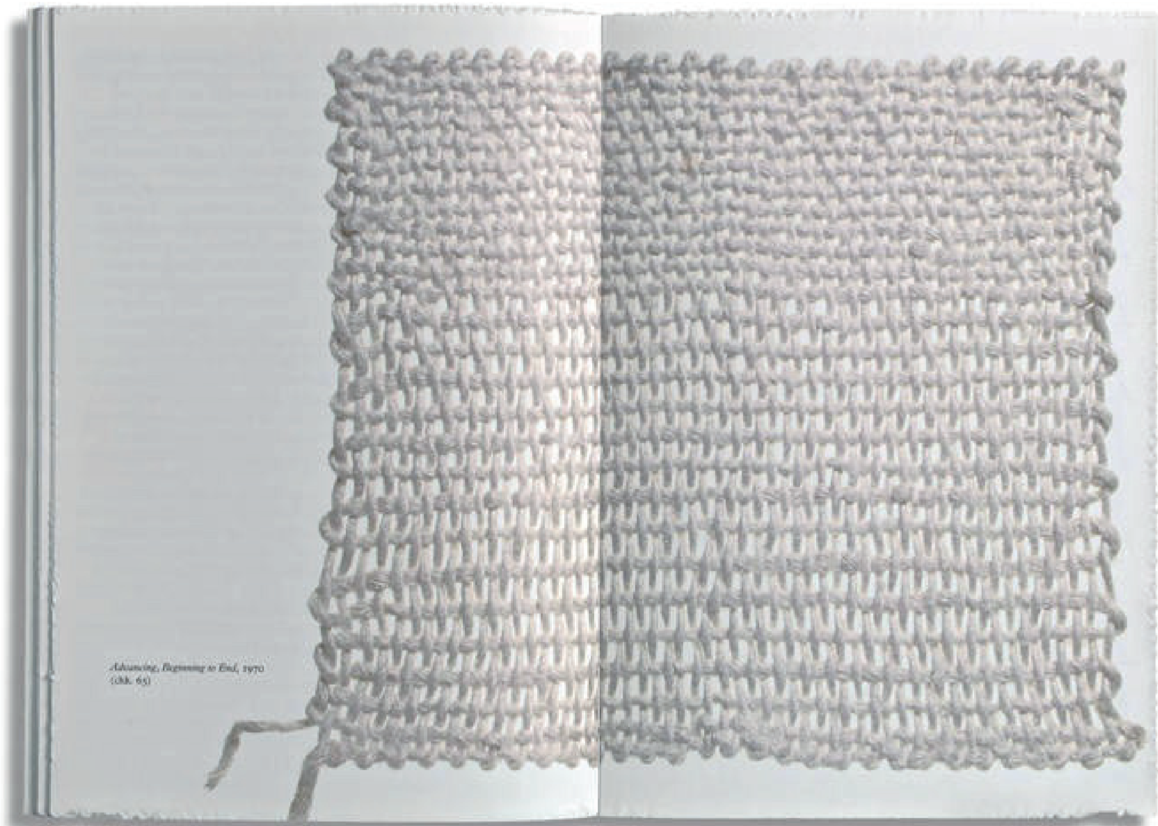
We are all workers, Levi's billaboard, Sagmeister & Walsh, 2010

We are all workers, Levi's billaboard, Sagmeister & Walsh, 2010



google earth aereal view

Flax tea towel, Christien Meindertsma, 2020

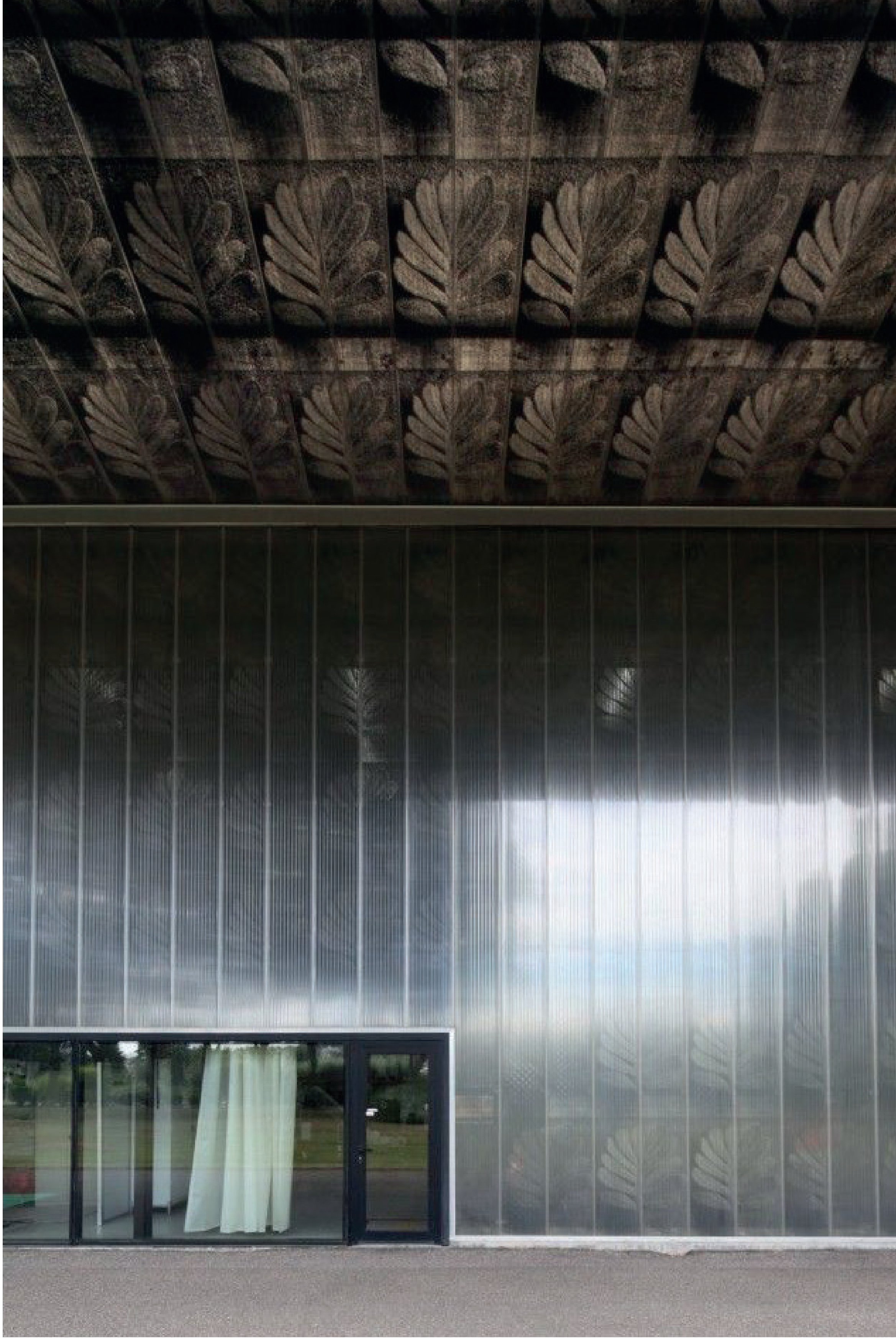

Advancing, Beginning to End, 1970
(Abb. 65)

A *Dombo* cup by Gispen

Sheila Hick's artwork, Irma Boom, 2006

Icefjord Centre, Groenland, Dorte Mandrup Arkitekter, 2021

Karl Blossfeldt, Photography *Achillea* unpallatable



Ricola Europe Factory and Storage Building, Mulhouse-Brunnstatt (France), Herzog & de Meuron, 1993

Double basket lamp, Stephen Burks, 2011

Examples of pendant lamps out of wiker baskets