

Manifesto

1. I am a carpenter.
2. I aim for sustainability in all I do.
3. I create furniture from waste and original pieces.
4. I use traditional carpentry styles.
5. I favour using Japanese carpentry styles and techniques.
6. I attend farming auctions, which are an exciting place for me to be, there are lots of old carpentry tools for me to buy, refurbish and use.
7. I walk through forests and urban areas to make use of storm fallen and dead trees.
8. I aim to use traditional carpentry techniques and original tools

Key Tenets and Principles

Sustainability and Tradition

First and foremost, I am a carpenter and in producing pieces of furniture for the modern world I embrace the history and traditions of my craft in both construction and design. My work is rooted in both western traditions and conventions and Japanese carpentry's ethos and techniques. For the Japanese carpenter wood and woodworking have both a practical and spiritual dimension which draws upon and in its use of traditional skills honours and celebrates the history of the craft (Brown 2021).

The concepts of individuality and uniqueness is central to my work. My manifesto consciously uses the first person singular as unlike Marx in his Communist Manifesto (Marx 1848) or Marinetti's "Declaration of Futurism" (Marinetti 1909), I reject the notion of seeking to create a plurality of vision. I therefore consciously do not aim to speak for any general movement or to change the world or the concept of art by polemic. I simply intend to convey my personal and individual style and motivations.

Each of my pieces is unique and I aim to use reclaimed materials and wood retrieved from nature. As such each of my pieces both use and are shaped by the materials themselves. Unlike Rietveld in his Red and Blue Chair I do not use standard timber and reject his concept of designing and producing works with the aim that they can be reproduced for the mass market. I stress the individuality of each of my pieces.

My pieces use traditional techniques and skills I seek to reflect, what Berger describes as “the essential historical experience of our relation to the past,” because “the entire art” (or in this case techniques) “of the past has now become a political issue.” (Berger 1972). The ongoing loss of traditional joinery and furniture making skills being a feature of the modern capitalist economy that promotes non-sustainable disposable consumerism over the sustainable durability of traditionally made and crafted pieces of furniture. I therefore seek to use sustainable and reclaimed materials and avoid where possible using plastics and other

My pieces of work are unique and handmade, using those traditional techniques and natural materials as Benjamin states “the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition.” (Benjamin 1936). My work retains what Benjamin characterises as the authority of the original and its uniqueness is a political and ecological statement by rejecting the dominance of the mass produced, uniform disposable pieces in which the producer is divorced from its means and method of production. In this way my works embody a rejection of the notion of the value of the piece simply acquiring the transactional quality of a commodity which was criticised by Baudelaire. (Baudelaire 1981: 152-153). My pieces celebrate their own individuality and value of the piece itself with its own identity and link to history.

Summary

In short, I aim to produce individual crafted works that are individually unique and are motivated by concepts of sustainability that celebrates the history and traditions of my craft rejecting the ethos of mass-produced disposability.

References

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