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Question 2- define skill in the context of your own practice and the work of two artists/makers/designers from the lecture series.

In my essay I will be looking at the skills that I will need to develop to be a surface pattern designer in which is my practice. I am going to be looking at two artists that link in with my context which will be William Morris who plays a big part of the arts and craft movement where they wanted to bring handmade art back and to stop the industrial revolution from taking over artists jobs and the beauty of hand craft. I will also be looking at Desmond Paul Henry who created drawing machines in the 1960s. By looking at my chosen artists I then can get a better understanding of the skills and also where the skills come from. I think it is important to look at skill as a designer so that I can get an understanding of my skills and how I could use them in my project and how I could learn from my mistakes to make them into skills for future projects or jobs.



Figure 1

In figure 1 it shows a drawing done by machinery created by Desmon Paul Henry that was created using mechanical pen and drawing ink.

Before I start talking about the arts and craft movement, I want to talk about the industrial revolution which created us artist more skills by using different techniques to create and we now have a variety of skills to take us forward as we can now design digitally and also manually whenever we want, this then helps us create and produce work quicker.

I was looking at Desmond Paul Henry that created three electromechanical drawing machines in the 1960s, just from analogue bombsight computers that was used in WW2. By looking at Henry and how he was influenced by technology, he created a machine that now can draw for you and this can help people who want to become designers but cannot draw so now you can have a machine draw for you. The disadvantage is that it will be no longer hand drawn art and will not really have any meaning and you cannot call it your own work if it was drawn using a machine. There will be less artist or drawers as they will rely on technology to draw or design for them. The positive effect the industrial revolution has on surface pattern designers like me is that we can now use technology to design and create with computers, their software, digital printing, laser cutting and much more. These have created skill that we have, and it makes it easier for us to create a design. I can create a repeating pattern just by

using technology which is a useful skill to have. As a surface pattern designer, I have to work with technology through-out my life and even have to rely on it to get my designs finished. By learning all these skills, it would help me become better and also expand my knowledge and understanding of my skill and practise. I also like the idea of making things out of other products, waste and reusing them for a different purpose, instead of disposing the item. It takes a lot of skill and practise to make a mechanic working machine that works to draw for you. He would not be able to make this machine if the industrial revolution never happened because he would have never adapted this skill to make moving mechanics, so the industrial revolution paved the way for new skills to be discovered and to be used to make new creations.

“By focusing on creative, responsible and sustainable management practices, leaders and academics require the necessary skills and imagination to develop and make use of innovative technologies as well as to understand the impact of these technologies” (Fields, Bucher and Weller, 2019, p14). We use our skills to adapt to new technology to produce new ideas and we make sure that we use them to the best of their ability but also keeping the handmade art alive so that it does not die out and that technology will take over.

“The first industrial revolution emerged in the 1780s with steam power, making humans more productive. Then in the 1870s the second industrial revolution emerged with the development of mass production and electrical energy. The third industrial revolution emerged with the development of IT and electronics, which enabled more efficient production.” (Gleason, 2018, P2). The industrial revolution has helped create IT skills which is important to me as a surface pattern designer because I now can use the computer to create my designs on Photoshop and illustrator. I can also scan in my hand drawn designs to my computer so that I can digitalise it. Also, one of the things I can do is draw on the computer using a Wacom or any other drawing tablet. I can even use a digital printer which prints my designs onto fabric. I think the best creation as a surface pattern designer is the Sewing Machine as it helps us produce sewing faster than you would not do by hand but also, we have lost a skill because we are relying on the sewing machine to do the work instead of doing it by hand. We also have 3D printing so that we can see our designs come to life just by printing from a machine. We now have digital screen printing which was created in the 1970s which helps produce screen prints faster for production.



Figure 2

In Figure 2 it shows a wallpaper design by William Morris. By looking at this image you can see the level of care and detail that has gone into this design by hand. This then would be printed by hand. All the steps to making this wallpaper is produce by skills that have been used for years and it still alive now thanks to the arts and crafts movement. I think if the arts and crafts movement never happened, we would have been overrun by machines, doing our jobs for us.

By looking at the arts and crafts movement it helps me understand the skills I have today like screen printing by hand, drawing, making things by hand and how it stopped the machines from taking over artists and their skills. The other artist that I am looking at is William Morris who made this movement very popular. This then created and kept hand- made skills alive today.

“... I mean that side of art which is, or ought to be, done by the ordinary workman while he is about his ordinary work, and which has got to be called, very properly, Popular Art. This art...no longer exists now, having been killed by commercialism. But from the beginning of man's contest with Nature till the rise of the present capitalistic system, it was alive, and generally flourished. While it lasted, everything made by nature is adorned by man, just *as* everything made by Nature is adorned by her. The craftsman, as he fashioned the thing he had under his hand, ornamented it so naturally and so entirely without conscious effort, that it is often difficult to distinguish where the mere utilitarian part of his work ended, and the ornamental began. Now the origin of this art was the necessity that the workman felt for variety in his work, and though the beauty produced by this desire was a great gift to the world, yet the obtaining variety and pleasure in the work by the workman was a matter of more importance still, for it stamped all labour with the impress of pleasure. All this has now quite disappeared from the work of civilisation. If you wish to have ornament, you may pay specially for it, and the workman is compelled to produce ornament, as he is to produce other wares. He is compelled to pretend happiness in his work, so that the beauty produced by man's hand, which was once a solace in his labour, had now become an extra burden to him, and ornament is now

but one of the follies of useless toil, and perhaps not the least irksome of its fetters.” (Morris, 2008, p188). By reading this it made me realise the importance of handmade and how making a successful product can make the artist and the buyer happy. Also, how precious and meaningful the product is by being handmade. William Morris rebellion towards the Industrial revolution has saved all the handmade industry and also creating more skills for us artists. By him doing this it has kept screen printing by hand which I do in my practice and also weaving and all other techniques. We also can render patterns by hand and create metal work by hand. By looking at William Morris it shows how he had saved the skills that would probably be gone by now, which is creating products by hand and not relying on technology.

“But it was after the industrial revolution that people in large numbers started wearing, showing and collecting decorated goods produced by large-scale industry” (Kusamitsu, 1982, p46). As people were buying factory made goods, artists had to find another way to make money using their skills that they have learned. As people buying factory goods, handmade products started dying as it was more popular to get products that were created by the new and exciting machinery and it was also a lot cheaper. This is why the arts and crafts movement were so important for artists to start using their skills again and to make money by using their skills.

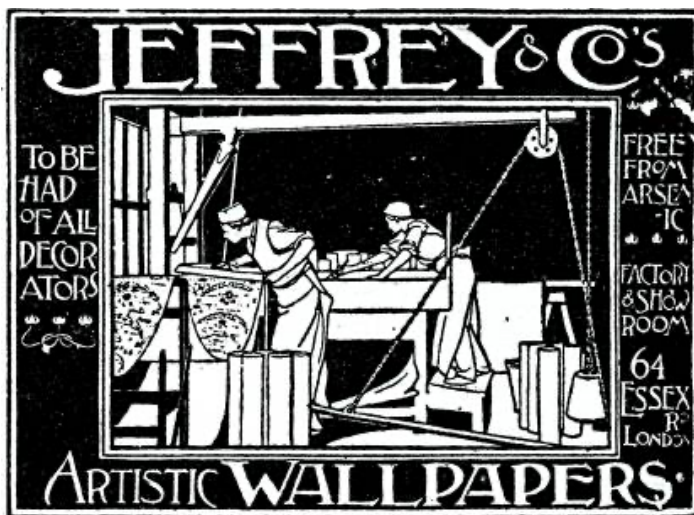


Figure 3

In Figure 3 it shows the advertisement of Jeffrey & Co's wallpaper being printed by hand and not machinery. “The most striking characteristic of this craft is the primitive simplicity of the act of printing. No press is required, and no machinery.” (Fletcher, 2006, p9). It was amazing how they don't need to rely on technology or machinery to do the crafts and they are relying on their skills instead of the technology to do it for them. By doing craft by hand, it becomes very personal to the maker and the buyer as a lot of skill, time and effort have gone through to making the product. In this advertisement it shows two people hand printing the wallpapers. This show the skill and the detail that has been taken to create the wallpaper and also the amount they have to produce by hand and the concentration they must need to make sure the print is perfect and that they don't mess the print up. This shows me that there are different ways to print wallpaper and not just by machines or factory produced.

“As a condition of life,' Mr. Morris says, 'production by machinery is wholly an evil.’” (Sanderson, 2010, p29). Machine at that time was taking over artists and makers jobs. The machines also took away people's skill as a hand craft artist as people were wanting factory produced item as they were cheaper because it wasn't made by hand and it was quickly produced and didn't take up much time to make. This then made people lose jobs as they weren't needed or their skills.

“Thus, the word "artists" in the nineteenth century represented a body of people very different from those understood by the term in the eighteenth century. Throughout this study, the term "skill" occupies an important place. Men have developed countless skills according to the materials they have dealt with. Such skills are fundamental to human existence, not just economic but also social and cultural. Skill is, therefore, a crucial component of the labour process, and a material basis of men's social outlook. The word "art", formerly used in the broadest sense, came, during the course of industrialisation, increasingly to represent only a part of the whole.” (Kusamitsu, 1982, p3). The skills that you learn are important to have because everything you do is reliant on the skills to keep the economy going and running smoothly. Having skills are not only important to you but to everyone and also when you go into a job or projects. You also need experience which is also skills because you know what to do because you have done it before so you can use your experience and skills to complete the job or problem. As a surface pattern designer student, I have abstained skill by practising with materials and also when I am screen printing, I experiment with colour to see what works on different materials so then I will use or will not use that material again.

In conclusion all these past events and movements have changed our skills and also helped us learn more skills. This also made me realise the number of skills that I have and how I am using them in my own practice. These skills that I have learned throughout years of being in school, college and University have helped me with my course and also helped me develop more skills to become a surface pattern designer. I can now do everything by hand and by technology because the movements have given me this choice and variety to design the way I want. Skills are very important to an artist as William Morris thought back the industrial revolution to make sure that hand craft was still alive, and that the skill will not die out and will be used for generations to come. Also, by looking at Desmond Paul Henry I am glad that the industrial revolution created technology and machinery as it has built our economy today. It has also built more jobs for people and more skills for people to learn. If we didn't have these skills I don't know where I would be today. As technology has made a big impact on my subject area and the way we create but it is a good thing as it helps us explore lots of skills by either using technology or using our hand craft skills. I think having the skill to make crafts by hand is very important to me and the buyers as you know that products that have been handmade have been produced to the highest quality and the longest time has been put into it then just factory-made products. It also means more and feels more special and unique. This is what I define as skill in my subject area is having something that is produced to the highest quality and using your skills to the best of your ability in each product you make even if you use your hand skills or your technology skills. I also think there should be a mixture of hand craft and technology skills in the product because this shows the buyers or audience your skills and how you can use them to adapt in this day and age. Experience is also important as it also helps you develop skills and also experimenting is very important as a surface pattern designer.

Figures

Figure 1 – Henry, D.P (1964) untitled Mechanical pen and ink drawing (drawing by machine) England

Figure 2 – Morris, William (1879) Sunflower wallpaper (wallpaper) England

Figure 3 – Jeffrey & co (1838-1915) Advertisement for Jeffrey & Co (hand-blocking wallpaper) England

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