

THE ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT

In 17th century Great Britain great changes were occurring. For hundreds of years—since the beginning of civilization really—people were only able to access tools and household goods from inside their own communities. However after many years of community good sharing things began to grow. Certain individuals began building companies from their humble mom and pop shop operations. The companies grew into large monopolies controlling the mass manufacturing of consumer goods, tools, and energy. This extraordinary time in history known as the Industrial Revolution—which began around 1750—gave way to the invention of incredible feats of technological advancements such as the steam engine, the flying shuttle cotton mill, and advances in the harnessing of steam and coal energy. Despite the industrial revolutions benefits, craftsmen and people in general did also suffer negative consequences of society's growth and mechanization.

The Arts and Crafts Movement was born out of craftsmen's disdain for mass manufactured goods and the negative impact that this and

other attributes of The Industrial Revolution wrought on people's everyday living and happiness. The movement was founded around the middle of the 18th century by theorists, architects, designers, and craftsmen who were strongly against industrialization and all mass manufacturing. Many proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement were disgusted by the way industrialization was affecting the quality of goods, work, and daily life in general and wanted to see beauty, simplicity, and utility return.

Mass manufactured goods were typically made with cheap and or synthetic materials. Because of these cost cutting measures—imposed by wealthy capitalists trying to scrape together as much profit as possible—new products were quite lacking in durability as opposed to the handmade goods of the middle ages and the renaissance era. During the middle ages, also known as medieval times, fabrics were made from hand woven woolen cloth, fur, linen, cambric, silk; tools were smithed from iron and wood; and platters and bowls were thrown clay and fired in a kiln. The Arts and Crafts movement supporters longed to return to this “simpler” time.

One of the most influential Arts and Crafts movement advocates, William Morris, once said “The past is not dead, it is living in us, and will be alive in the future which we are now helping to make”. What this means to me is that Morris

saw the value in keeping craftsmanship and the values from the middle ages in mind when society makes technological advancements. William Morris went on to found the Kelmscott press. The press grew out of admiration for the design and traditional craftsmanship of manuscripts from the Middle Ages and early printed books. The Kelmscott press only used the blackest natural inks and handmade paper made solely from linen rags and without bleaching chemicals. Morris also made the three most notable typefaces of the movement: Troy, Chaucer, and Golden type.

This is the Golden type.
This is the Troy type.
This is the Chaucer type.

People living during the Industrial Revolution saw a transition from apprentices finding joy in their work to becoming just another cog in the machine. Workers were now instead plopped in front of a machine for long hours to complete a set of menial, mind numbing tasks; to have the machine remove almost all real handiwork and craftsmanship from the process. Workers being able to learn at the feet of a master smith or shoe maker or printer was a thing of the past. Individuals and entire communities livelihoods were uprooted and almost effectively destroyed when industrialization allowed for quicker, cheaper production of goods on a larger scale. Handicraft workers such as printmakers, typesetters, typecasters, paper and ink makers were largely driven out of business by large

wealthy capitalists and their companies. The Arts and Crafts movement sought to keep craftsman tradition alive with craft guilds and companies that would create handmade goods and pass down the knowledge to the next generation of craftsmen. One of the most well known craft guilds was The Century Guild. The Century Guild contributed several handmade publications, called The Hobby Horse to The Arts and Crafts Movement.

The Arts and Crafts movement's philosophy was to return beauty to work—work that had been rendered mundane, gray and joyless due to mass manufacturing during the Industrial Revolution. This beautification involved relaxing, natural, luxurious colors such as what we would call today Briquette(Red), Mother Nature(Green), Scotland Road(Blue-Green), Thick Chocolate (Brown), Honey Butter (Yellow), Amphibian (Blue-Gray). These colors allowed people to feel as though they were at one with nature while in the comfort of their craftsman homes and in the workplace.



Warm Red U



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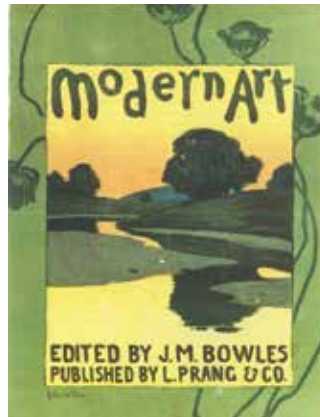
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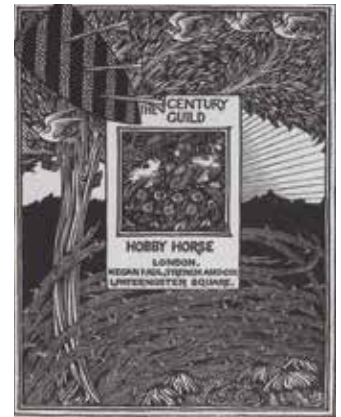
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As a whole The Arts and Crafts movement began to die out around the early beginning of the 20th century due to the paradoxical nature of making high quality handcrafted goods. The paradox being, in order to have the high quality goods be accessible and affordable to larger groups of people in other places, some form of industrialization and mass manufacturing ended up being required. And because followers of the movement had such distaste for these practices their, business and guilds would usually die out after a few decades.

Ideals from The Arts and Crafts Movement still somewhat live on today. Entrepreneurs starting their own businesses making handcrafted goods—clothes, jewelry, furniture and the like—are able to reach people through the magic of the internet. Personal websites, larger sites like Etsy and forums like Facebook marketplace allow independent creators to practice a craft they love and make money from providing affordable high quality handmade goods to people all over the world. Our society is very industrialized but we also made room for craftsmanship and some authenticity in our working lives, our homes, and our hearts.



ACM style book Cover



The Century Guild



Vase



Stained Glass



Artist's Chair



Tapestries

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