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Engage the Global, Respect the Local: An analysis of globalisation related to creative industries – paper

Globalisation is a phenomenon with innumerable interpretations. A popular phrase that is often adopted to suit the needs of governments and corporations to substantiate actions in a geographically borderless environment. Equally it is a term adopted by critics of the mechanisms of big business to advocate dissent and the social consequences of a macro economic commercial world.

This paper will address the issues arising within an increasingly globalised world on creative industries with specific reference to the fashion system.

The supporters of globalisation promote opportunities of expanded boundaries, the opening up of communication channels, providing broadened access to the world’s knowledge base. No longer restricted by geographical constraints globalisation has enabled corporations and individuals to see the world as an accessible supply chain of activity. Aided by advanced technology and the efficiency of readily available communication channels, including email and Internet, means that we can be anywhere, anytime to do business. Within the fashion industry globalisation has enabled the consumer access to universal product that is perceived to have general appeal.

In the quest to capture global markets, the fashion industry has enabled an environment of homogeneity. Imitable product appears in diverse cities across the globe, creating an atmosphere of sameness, a concept that strips creative industries of their uniqueness and vitality. A key issue within the paper addresses whether differing cultural contexts are relevant to creative industries Does the concept of a local style even exist? Technology has brought mass production and cheaper prices but it also endorses homogenised processes that have seen the demise of individuality and quality. Potentially the time is ripe for the return of the artisan. A revitalisation of craft and hand techniques that provide creative product with a point of difference. This doesn’t simply mean the plundering of old and traditional knowledge but utilising ancient techniques combined with the expertise invested in technology and modern practice to develop unique propositions.
There is an emerging trend that promotes respect for local skills, knowledge and creative processes. It is important that creators of innovative product analyse the viability of creating or maintaining a local identity within a globalised world. This raises issues related to cultural sensitivities and viability within an international commercial context.

This paper will outline opportunities facing Australian design industries in adopting and adapting global influences to create unique concepts that capture an inherently multicultural Australian ethos.

Karen Webster is the Strategic Leader for Fashion at RMIT University in Melbourne, where she manages the fashion programs, from degree through to PhD.

She is highly regarded in the fashion industry as a consultant and public speaker, her specialist areas of expertise include an in depth knowledge of trend forecasting, consumer analysis, colour trends and design directions.

Karen is the Australian representative for Paris based group; Studio Edelkoort, which publishes trend information under the company 'Trend Union' and creates the publications 'View on Colour' and 'Bloom'.

Karen currently sits on the Board of the L'Oreal Melbourne Fashion Festival, and has served as a board member on many industry related committees and groups.