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Mudam Luxembourg  
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Grand-Duc Jean

# PRESS KIT

**NEVER FOR MONEY, ALWAYS FOR LOVE**  
**DESIGN CITY 2014 - LXBG BIENNALE**

**03/04/2014 - 15/06/2014**

# NEVER FOR MONEY, ALWAYS FOR LOVE

## DESIGN CITY 2014 – LXBG BIENNALE

### PRESS KIT

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## Press release

# NEVER FOR MONEY, ALWAYS FOR LOVE

## DESIGN CITY 2014 – LXBG BIENNALE

Thirteen designers from Portugal and Luxembourg present original projects that are all possible responses to issues concerning the manufacturing process, sustainability and the preservation of environmental and human resources. An exhibition on the social role of design that gives new meaning to the discipline.

Mudam is presenting the exhibition *Never for Money, Always for Love* as part of Design City 2014. Conceived as a platform for exchange between Luxembourg and Portugal, it brings together thirteen designers who incorporate a critical and responsible approach in their design practice. The exhibition is the exact opposite of consumerism and examines traditional design production methods in order to meet the challenges of the contemporary political and social context.

The title of the exhibition comes from the Talking Heads song "This Must Be The Place" and draws on Anselm Jappe's theories which denounce the relationship between means of creation and production in today's consumer society. The philosopher does not hesitate to use the term "design capitalism" to explain how design has captured all aspects of life as never before : food, video games, sound, architecture, lifestyle, etc. By surpassing its function, design has become an end in itself and is the true object of purchase. The "hyper-design" that predominates today is at the heart of the empty logic of the commodity, according to Jappe, and its objects have no meaning because they were not created to cater to existing needs.

In line with this social critique of design, the designers presented in *Never for Money, Always for Love* have developed projects in which "creativity is at the service of a social consciousness based on concepts of sustainability, interaction and participation", as Bruno Carvalho and Anna Loporcario, the curators of the exhibition, explain. "We now realize that technology has not solved our problems but has instilled radical changes in our lifestyle and social and family behaviour. Furthermore it has had a dramatic impact on the environment. The return to traditional methods may be the road to salvation. The 'slow' movements that have recently appeared are good examples of reactions to overproduction and planned obsolescence. In this sense, craftsmanship strikes the right balance between skills, time and resources used. Although we have entered a postmodern era, we may be witnessing a return to ancient craft values in the production of objects."

The projects, some of which were produced specifically for the exhibition, focus on the core issues for a new type of design, issues such as the development of innovative and sustainable strategies with available resources ; the recontextualization of objects and traditional know-how ; the promotion of limited (or even one-off) production and the involvement of social work in the development of projects.

**Special: guided tours in Portuguese on Saturdays, 19 & 26 April and 3 & 10 May at 3 pm**

## NEVER FOR MONEY, ALWAYS FOR LOVE

### DESIGN CITY 2014 – LXBG BIENNALE

#### Exhibition

from April 3 through June 15, 2014

#### Opening

April 2, 2014 from 6 pm to 8.30 pm

#### Curators

Bruno Carvalho, Anna Loporcaro

#### Designers

Ana Rita António, Bruno Carvalho, Bernardo Gaeiras, Gilles Gardula, Anne Genvo & David Richiuso, Anne-Marie Herckes, Les M Studio, Maurice + Paula, Daniela Pais, Rui Pereira, Lynn Schammel (Socialmatter), Susana Soares, João Valente

#### Opening hours

Wednesday - Friday: 11 am - 8 pm

Saturday - Monday: 11 am - 6 pm

Closed on Tuesday

#### Entrance fee

Adults	5 €
Under 26 years, groups	3 €
Under 21 years	free
Students under 26 years	free
Wednesdays, 6pm-8pm	free
Mudami card (valid 1 year for 2 persons)	50 €

#### Mudam Luxembourg

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#### Images

Available on request

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During the exhibition Mudam presents the short film *White Sheep Black Dream*, by designer Alexandre Humbert at the Auditorium of the museum.

Duration: 28'. Production: Maurice + Paula, Mudam Luxembourg

Information and showtimes: [www.mudam.lu](http://www.mudam.lu)

The exhibition *Never for Money, Always for Love* is organised within the framework of Design City 2014 – LXBG Biennale



With the support of: Burel Factory, Fonderie Massard, Sofalca, Vista Alegre, Villeroy & Boch



#### MUDAM THANKS

Mudam thanks all the donors and the sponsors, and particularly



as well as

Arendt & Medernach . PwC . Delfin Sàrl . UniCredit Luxembourg SA . Deutsche Bank Luxembourg SA . Banque LBLux . Prefalux .  
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Les Amis des Musées d'Art et d'Histoire Luxembourg

Mudam is financed by the Ministry of Culture



## ANA RITA ANTÓNIO

Born in 1980 in Portugal, lives and works in Bergen (NO)

Ana Rita António's presentation is part of her final project of her Design studies and an additional chapter in her ongoing project *The Poetics of Miss Understanding*. It is a systematic demonstration of the designer's task of finding creative problem-solving strategies for a real everyday situation. The deficiency, here the absence of a table leg, sets an imaginative improvisation process in motion and leads to practical results, although some are more practical than others.

### Work presented in the exhibition

*14 Ways of Replacing a Table Leg*, 2013

Table leg, tabletop, plant, 4,000 blank sheets,  
books, spindle chair, lamp, rubber boots,  
cardboard boxes, paper roll

13 photographs

30 x 40 cm each

Courtesy the artist

Production Mudam Luxembourg



Ana Rita António, *14 Ways of Replacing a Table Leg*, 2013

© City of Bergen - Department of Visual Arts, photo: Audun Alvestad

## BRUNO CARVALHO

Born in 1978 in Portugal, lives and works in Lisbon

Bruno Carvalho transformed a confessional box, an item of furniture which was originally subject to an extremely strict social code, into a design object made of cork, a typically Portuguese material. He thus underlines in a profound and complex manner, the way in which new communication technologies combine reality, virtuality and even spirituality, and how much we now take it for granted that the image we see on a screen is a true image of reality.

### Work presented in the exhibition

*iConfess*, 2013

Cork, wood, tablet computers

151 x 145 x 60 cm

Courtesy the artist

Project realised with the support of:



SOFALCA



**Bruno Carvalho**, *iConfess*, 2013

View of the exhibition at the Biennale EXD'13 Lisbon/Travessa da Ermida, 2013, © Fernando Piçarra

## BERNARDO GAEIRAS

Born in 1982 in Portugal, lives and works in Lisbon and Amsterdam

With his project *Revolution*, Bernardo Gaeiras reacts to the blatant overproduction of consumer goods – but not by merely refusing them, instead he extends the designer's core task of giving form to things and applies it to the area of illusion and non-objects. Gaeiras created the purely decorative lines of a set of tableware which largely consists of light, but nevertheless completely fulfils its aesthetic function.

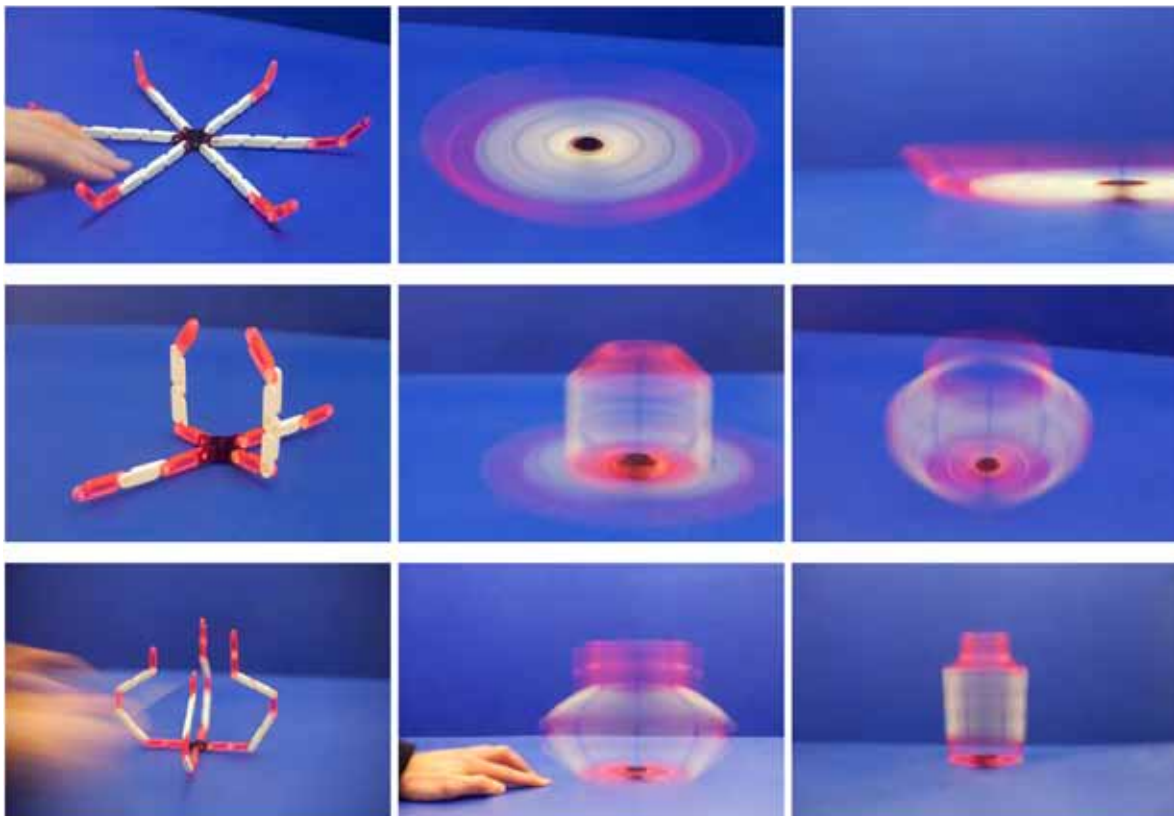
### Work presented in the exhibition

*Revolution*, 2014

Acrylic, polycarbonate screws, electronic devices, engines

Various dimensions

Courtesy the artist and DAR, Lisbon



**Bernardo Gaeiras**, *Revolution*, 2014

© Photos: Bernardo Gaeiras



## GILLES GARDULA

Born in 1984 in Luxembourg, lives and works in Ehlerange (LU)

Gilles Gardula has designed a symbolic but functional object in which he seeks to express both the relationship between Luxembourg and Portugal and the value of manual craftsmanship. The extremely economic heating dome has an insulating base of Portuguese cork, an iron heating element produced by Portuguese immigrant workers in the Massard foundry in Luxembourg and a glass body produced from the typical Portuguese balloon bottles.

### Work presented in the exhibition

*Leys*, 2014

Cork, upcycled wine bottle, recycled cast iron

190 x 190 x 300 cm

Courtesy the artist and Gdesign Studio, Luxembourg

Project realised with the support of:



Gilles Gardula, *Leys*, 2014  
© Gilles Gardula

## ANNE GENVO & DAVID RICHIUSO

Anne Genvo: born in 1992 in France, lives and works in Rennes (FR)

David Richiuso: born in 1975 in Belgium, lives and works in Luxembourg and in Bruxelles

The project *Copier/Couler* which Anne Genvo presents in collaboration with David Richiuso, is an anti-design project which explicitly refuses to use the processes which are otherwise normal in the industrial production of standardised mass products, proposing instead a simple copying process by which individually shaped plates (or other flat vessels) can be produced in plaster, concrete, clay or similar materials.

### Work presented in the exhibition

*Copier/Couler*, 2013

Wood, rack and pinion device, plaster, soil

42 x 50 x 35 cm

Courtesy the artists



Anne Genvo & David Richiuso, *Copier/Couler*, 2013

© Photos: Anne Genvo

## ANNE-MARIE HERCKES

Born in 1978 in Luxembourg where she lives and works

In her project *Coco*, the Luxembourg designer Anne-Marie Herckes cooperates with the Burel Factory which has operated since 2010 in the richly traditional wool company Lanifícios Império in the Portuguese village of Manteigas producing textiles and felt goods, thus helping to preserve local jobs, the culture of craftsmanship and social structures. Herckes draws on her established method of combining icons of fashion history to create new miniature forms and ensembles. The silhouette replica of the famous Chanel suit here becomes a felt room divider or a wall hanging.

### Work presented in the exhibition

*Coco*, 2014

Wallcover, wool

350 x 200 cm approx.

Courtesy the artist

Project produced and supported by:

BUREL

PENHAS DOURADAS FACTORY®



Anne-Marie Herckes, *Coco*, 2014

© Photo: Valérie Tholl

## LES M STUDIO

Céline Merhand: born in 1984 in France, lives and works in Luxembourg

Anaïs Morel: born in 1984 in France, lives and works in Rennes (FR)

Les M (Céline Merhand & Anaïs Morel) consider the excessive amount of water used by toilet flushing systems, an area in which Luxembourg currently has one of the highest consumption in Europe. Their project *Balise* is an elegant ceramic buoy which displaces water in the cistern and is at the same time more corrosion-proof and durable than the objects normally placed in a cistern.

### Work presented in the exhibition

*Balise*, 2014

3-D prints, ceramic glaze

11 x 11 x 16 cm

12 x 12 x 19 cm

15 x 15 x 23,5 cm

Courtesy the artists

Project realised with the support of:



Les M Studio, *Balise*, 2014

© Photo: Les M Studio

## MAURICE + PAULA

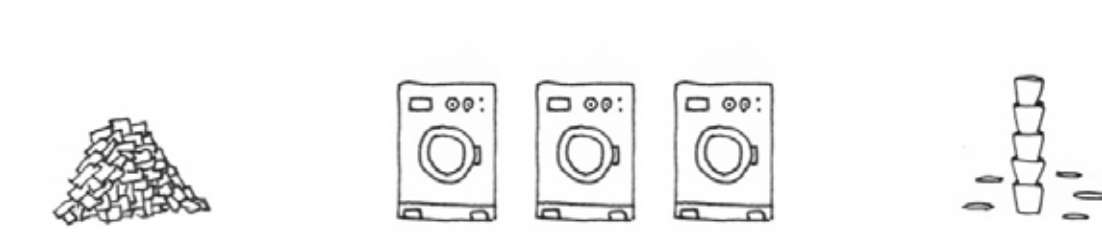
Alexandre Humbert: born in 1989 in France, lives and works in Syren (LU)

Camille Buteau Barreau: born in 1989 in France, lives and works in Eindhoven

Starting from the realisation that the invention of the washing machine had led to one of the greatest social changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (and is still doing so), the design duo Maurice + Paula (Alexandre Humbert and Camille Buteau Barreau) developed a process which uses the washing machine to produce everyday objects – a project which was metaphorical but which actually worked. Continuing its revolutionary social role, the washing machine thus makes an ecological and economic contribution to the reduction of consumerism by creating a way in which everyone can create the objects which are needed in everyday life.

### Work presented in the exhibition

*Never for Control, Always for Dream*  
*The Washing Machine Production, 2014–*  
Washing machine, wool  
Various dimensions  
Courtesy the artists



**Maurice + Paula**, *Never for Control, Always for Dream. The Washing Machine Production, 2014–*  
© Maurice + Paula

## RUI PEREIRA

Born in 1983 in Portugal, lives and works in Milan

Together with the Icelandic design studio HAF and the Japanese designer Ryosuke Fukusada, Rui Pereira developed the chair cover concept *unZIP*, which transforms a mass-produced chair into a new item of furniture using a cover inspired by a specific location and its culture. The chair covers differ in their design and are made of polyester and cotton. The air is expelled to fold them into a space-saving miniature format which indicates the shape of a chair. For the exhibition *Never For Money, Always For Love* and to commemorate the special relationship between Luxembourg and Portugal, Pereira designed a chair cover in the style of the “Lenço dos Namorados”, the handkerchiefs with embroidered love poems that the young women in Vila Verde, a village in the north of Portugal, gave to their loved ones and which they then wore in public if the affection was mutual.

### Works presented in the exhibition

Rui Pereira, Ryosuke Fukusada & Hafsteinn Juliusson  
*unZip, Cadeira dos Namorados*, 2014  
Silk print on cotton fabric, embroidered linen, Ivar chair (Ikea)  
45 x 45 x 80 cm  
Production Mudam Luxembourg

*unZip*, 2013  
Silk print on cotton fabric, Ivar chair (Ikea)  
45 x 45 x 80 cm each  
Courtesy the artist

*unZip*, 2013  
Silk print on cotton fabric, cardboard boxes, plastic vacuum bag  
12 x 12 x 12 cm (folded)  
Courtesy the artist



Rui Pereira, *unZIP*, 2013  
© Photos: Rui Pereira & Ryosuke Fukusada

## SUSANA SOARES

## LYNN SCHAMMEL (SOCIALMATTER) DANIELA PAIS

Lynn Schammel: born in 1986 in Luxembourg, lives and works in Beringen (LU)

Daniela Pais: born in 1978 in Portugal, lives and works in Eindhoven and Lisbon

The project by Lynn Schammel arose in cooperation with the fashion designer Daniela Pais and with Léa Goeders, who is in the care of the Luxembourg Autism Association. The favourite form of expression of this young autistic woman is coloured dots, preferably on T-shirts. In the Medialab, Schammel presents a book which summarises this very personal language and shows many of Léa's coloured T-shirts and a number of videos, including *Elementum* by Daniela Pais, which introduce the beholder to various facets of the means of expression used by autists. Schammel's scenography demonstrates that the repetition of certain gestures not only fits in well with Pais' fashion designs, it can also be interpreted as a form of expression of autistic people. The pavilion also contains three garments from the *Elementum* series by Daniela Pais. They are not only made of recycled Alpaca and Merino wool and dyed with plant pigments – they are also designed to be worn in a variety of individual ways and thus represent a sustainable alternative to the over-consumerism of textiles and the associated ecological and social problems.

### Works presented in the exhibition

Lynn Schammel (Socialmatter)  
With Léa Goeders  
*Autistic Language*, 2011–2014  
17 videos, T-shirts, posters, book  
Courtesy Socialmatter, Luxembourg

Daniela Pais  
*Elementum*, 2007–2014  
5 videos  
Courtesy the artist

Daniela Pais  
Lynn Schammel (Socialmatter)  
*MEIO LONG Elementum meets Léa Goeders*, 2013  
Screen and hand printed circular Jersey fabric,  
100 % organic cotton, GOTS certified  
*Elementum* design: Daniela Pais  
Pattern design: Léa Goeders  
50 x 120 cm each  
Courtesy the artists



Daniela Pais, *Elementum*, 2007–2014  
© Photos: Yoad David Luxembourg



Born in 1977 in Portugal, lives and works in London

In her project *Insects au Gratin*, Susana Soares devotes herself to one of the central problems of humanity, the development of new, efficient and ecologically sustainable sources of food for future generations. Using modern 3-D printing technology, she succeeds in processing the extremely high-protein substance of insect powder and adding other ingredients and flavouring to create aesthetic and attractive foods which thus overcome our cultural reservations.

#### Work presented in the exhibition

*Insects au Gratin*, 2011–

Printed props, dried insects, insect flour

3-D food printer, video, duration: 3' 32"

Designer and project coordinator: Susana Soares

Designer: Andrew Forkes

Food Scientist (insect flour development): Dr. Ken Spears

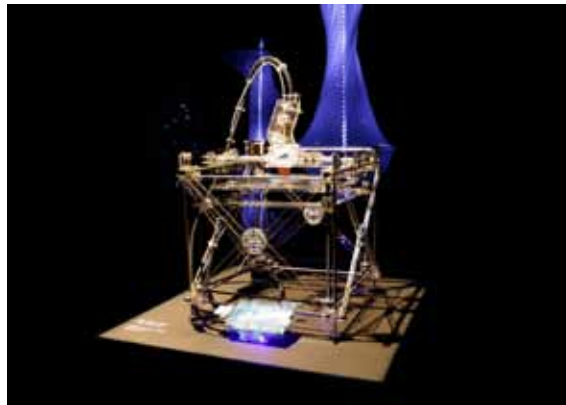
Illustrations: Penelope Kupfer

Collaborators: London South Bank University (Dr. Kenneth Spears and Andrew Forkes),

Penelope Kupfer and Pestival (Bridget Nicholls)

Acknowledgements: Future Food House (Rotterdam), Pestival (London),

Wellcome Collection (London), Science Gallery (Dublin)



**Susana Soares**, *Insects au Gratin*, 2012

© Photos: Susana Soares



Born in 1984 in Portugal, lives and works in Lisbon

With his *Teapot'set*, João Valente goes beyond the Modernist maxim that form should follow function. The focus of Valente's interest is mainly on an honest treatment of the material, which leads to a visualisation of the production process. *Teapot'set* bears witness to a simple and economical use of the material: a single mould is used to produce all of the tableware pieces in a set of crockery, the teapot and other items are simply made by pouring different quantities of clay into the mould.

**Work presented in the exhibition**

*Teapot'set*, 2014

Original mould of the teapot *Sines* collection nr. 5 from *Vistra Alegre*

Porcelain: teapot, sugar bowl, pourer, bowl, cups #1, #2, #3, #4, plate

Various dimensions

Courtesy the artist



**João Valente**, *Teapot'set*, 2014

© Photo: João Valente

Anselm Jappe

## DESIGN, THE ULTIMATE STAGE OF CAPITALISM?

If we were to give another name to the hypercapitalism of the past three decades – a time when commodities have penetrated the individual and collective sphere to an unprecedented degree – we could choose the term ‘design capitalism’, considering that the universal triumph of design has come to characterise these years more than any other single element. Every aesthetic, every culture is put to the service of commerce. Art itself seems to exist merely in relation to design. The most diverse aspects of life present themselves as offshoots of design: graphic design, interior design, food design, web design, landscape design, game design, motion design, sound design, and so forth. There are literally hundreds of design categories – almost as many, in fact, as human activities. When everything can be bought and sold, it means that everything is also subject to design. Architecture itself becomes a sub-category of object design, as buildings are planned without the slightest consideration for context. Museums such as the Guggenheim Bilbao attract visitors mainly because of their architectural design rather than their content. Design has successfully established itself – so much so that it has become an end in itself, something more than just a tool to boost sales; rather, it creates “meaning” and becomes the actual purpose of buying. It reduces “designed” objects to simple carriers of what really matters – design, to be consumed for its own sake. Thanks to “lifestyle design” even the postmodern individual’s daily life is made to obey the laws of design: we choose partners or political opinions as we would choose a sink, and vice versa ...

But those who believed this almightiness of design to be eternal – irrespective of whether they greeted or bemoaned this very fact – did not foresee that capitalism itself could exhaust itself. What we are experiencing today is neither a passing crisis nor a conflict about the details of how wealth is distributed or simply the consequences of the financial markets’ “excesses”. Instead we are witnessing the degeneration of commodity, value, work and money – concepts which are in the process of losing their historic function. This development goes hand in hand with new mass poverty and a decline of the middle classes that no one would have thought possible twenty-five years ago. The capitalist mode of production needs less and less human workforce. As it is being replaced by machines, wages, and eventually mass consumption, are dropping accordingly. Remaining jobs often exist mainly thanks to subsidies and “stimulus policies” and are likely to disappear before long. We are increasingly under the impression to be witnessing the end of an entire civilisation (if capitalism may be called a civilisation ...).

Good designers must be part-sociologists or “social seismographers”: they must be in close contact with the needs, desires and fantasies of society. Being less sensitive to ideological discourse and deceptive statistics than professional sociologists, some designers ask themselves what place their activity can occupy in a context of general crisis. The most critical among them even think that austerity may be beneficial to them: freed from the constraints of all-out commercialisation, they will be able to rediscover the creative aspect of their work and return to the – presumably progressive – origins of design such as Bauhaus and Russian Constructivism. Others want to go further back in time and revive William Morris’ Arts and Crafts movement: the designer as author who produces unique works of art. But more than anyone else it is Kurt Schwitters who seems about to become the founding figure of a new understanding of design founded on recycling, natural materials, simplicity and frugality, if not self-chosen poverty. Designers would thus have an opportunity to redeem themselves for their long complicity with the rationale of profit at any cost and to play an active part in the emergence of a new culture attentive to social and environmental issues. Design shall no longer be exclusively geared towards all-out consumption and luxury!

What are the chances for this clean-up act to succeed?

Firstly, times of crisis do not imply the end of luxury. In fact, so long as the crisis continues, designers will be better off designing luxury objects. Indeed, the small part of very rich consumers will always account for a greater turnover than the many potential consumers of the new frugality (whether chosen or not). And while the cake is becoming smaller, it can still be cut into fewer but bigger chunks. It is a safe bet that luxury goods will be less affected by the crisis than basic consumer goods.

And will the new classes of poor people really want "modest" design based on social and convivial values? Or will they rather continue to covet wealth, or at least its appearance, as it becomes less and less attainable? And what if ascetic design is merely a new selling point that fits seamlessly into the Ikea range? A new aesthetic of poverty where, as someone put it, 'hobo' can mean 'boho'?

But the real difficulty in reconnecting design with social usefulness as well as artistic and poetic values lies elsewhere. In its current state of hypertrophy, design is not so much an epiphenomenon than the very essence of capitalism. As a form of life, as the "style" of an era, it is consubstantial to a society based on value and money, on commodities and money.

This has become manifest in recent years, where the economy was dominated by virtual capital and financial markets, as trade and circulation of money detached themselves from "real" production. This spelled the triumph of the simulation, virtualisation and independence of the sign. All-out design – design in which the form emancipates itself from the content and appearance emancipates itself from substance – is the most concentrated expression of this era. Today there are calls to contain the damages produced by neoliberal hypercapitalism and to return to a "moderate" form of capitalism, as witness recent social movements such as Occupy and anti-globalism as well as initiatives in favour of sustainable development, social and solidarity economy, fairtrade or degrowth.

In light of these developments it would appear that some in the design world want to revoke their unconditional allegiance to a profit-driven economy that churns out two thousand different types of design chairs without ever questioning their purpose. But are designers really ready for a world where buying and selling no longer constitute the universal social relation? Are they ready to reach beyond the commodity and the market, and overcome the separation between aesthetics and utility? Will the crisis of capitalism lead to a new culture of recycling, parsimony, austerity, green economy, ecology and social concerns driven by an ethic of responsibility? Are the "third sector", "after-development" and "cities in transition" the playgrounds for a different design?

The context is very uncertain. Unrestricted global capitalism can hardly be brought back to a "balanced" state ruled by use value and the corresponding mindset. In every form of capitalism, the satisfaction of needs is merely a collateral effect of the actual finality of production, namely transforming a sum of money into a bigger sum of money. This is not due to the greed of a small group of individuals, but inscribed in the very DNA of capitalism as a mode of production based on the valorisation of value. This is achieved through what Marx has called 'abstract work' – reducing human activity to an expense of human energy measured in terms of time. Yet capitalism will essentially perpetuate its productivist madness in which the superfluous will always be more important than the "necessary". Today's dominant hyperdesign is not an ornamental add-on, but rather lies at the core of the empty rationale of the commodity.

This is the heart of the matter. Capitalism means the victory of quantity over quality, of the boundless over boundaries, of form over content. As pure conceptuality, contemporary design perfectly sums up this indifference towards material and content. It fills a void and gives meaning to objects which, spontaneously, have no meaning because they were not created to satisfy existing needs – a unique situation in the history of mankind.

The hyperdesign of past decades thus appears as the “ultimate stage of capitalism”. It promised beauty in a totally functionalised and de-aestheticised world of commodities. It deprived objects of their innate qualities and encouraged their consumption purely on symbolic grounds by attaching them to values unrelated to their actual nature. By doing so, it was complicit with the actual deterioration of products and their conditions of production. The continuous escapism that characterises capitalism – now dominated by extreme forms – is not the consequence of an aberration that could be ended with an act of good faith, but rather constitutes its only possible reaction to the fact that its engine is spluttering.

So is it vain to reflect on another social role for design? No. The central question is whether it is possible to leave capitalism in good order. This might not depend on design ... but design can make important contributions to help change people's mentalities. Design is linked to daily life, its gestures and objects – and this is precisely the terrain on which profound social changes operate. If, in the past, design has helped to circulate the consumerist lifestyle, it can now in turn prepare the minds to accept a less predatory relationship to our natural and social resources – a relationship where the physical appearance of objects is not continually offered up to value and money. At the same time it can contribute to a more playful relationship to life in which not everything must necessarily be seen under the angle of power, wealth or self-affirmation, and where ‘gift’, ‘sharing’ and ‘free’ are not empty words.

It is highly unlikely that this turnaround will start in the temples of hyperdesign or the realms in which the financial stakes are highest. It is indeed more likely to begin in the margins, with new designers who are concerned with the state of the world (instead of merely their own short-term success), and in places granting them more freedom to distance themselves from today's excesses. The artistic, personalised and artisanal design of the Antwerp School in fashion, for instance, or the approach of the Eindhoven or Sandberg academies seem to have chosen this path, but it remains to be seen whether they will be more widely distributed.

Can Portugal and Luxembourg take part in this movement? In less than three decades Luxembourg has gone from traditional heavy industry to an economy essentially based on “financial products”, with a grossly oversized banking sector and one of the world's highest GDPs per capita – but in the peanut currency generated by the virtual capital of the loan industry. When the global speculative bubble will burst, it will soon become obvious that it is much worse to depend on this banking monoculture than on peanut production. At the same time, the awareness of being exposed to the dangers created by the one-upmanship of capitalism may also prompt society to refute it and seek for alternatives. This is what happened in Iceland, which has rebelled against banks. Could a country such as Luxembourg be at the forefront of a “return to the real”?

Though for other reasons, Portugal might just as well be this country. Craftsmanship and the use of natural materials such as cork have survived to this day in the wider context of a culture of frugality. The mindset needed to articulate a different relationship to objects, based on real usefulness and simple beauty, might still be present in the country. As of yet, the idea of possessing large quantities of useless objects has not really taken root in Portuguese society at large.

The problem is not an excess of aesthetics that needs to be counterbalanced by Spartan utilitarianism. On the contrary, beauty is cruelly absent from our world governed by profit. In pre-capitalist societies, everything had an "aesthetic" form because everything was the result of craftsmanship. Design, in the largest sense, has everything to gain if it sheds its subservience to the capitalist logic and contributes to the creation of a civilisation in which beauty will exist in daily life for its own sake instead of being demoted to a sales point.

Anselm Jappe  
Philosopher and essayist