

CONTEXT

— JULY 2009 —

INTRODUCTION

The creative process needs a defined context in which to operate, objectives and orientation aligned with the contemporary reality.

The contemporary reality are the ideas and values that define our environment and our client's environments.

What are the desires of the affluent western market? What are the new values the mexican growth of the last decade? What does luxury mean in 2009? How is the ecological and economic crisis redefining luxury?

MARKET

An approximation to the global and mexican markets of 2010



In 2009, we breathe crisis everyday day. From the editorials of our favorite newspaper to the latest Soderbergh movie we hear about the crisis everyday but, what does it mean?

The credit crisis, just like terrorism or climate change, scares the west and it has become a collective mythological horror on its own. And just like any myth, it has mythological representations that haunt us for our sins. Just like the monster of Frankenstein represented the punishment for the dehumanization of the industrial revolution. We have the climate change that punish our careless lifestyle and an economic crisis that punishes us for our greed and materialism.

Cheap energy, careless consumerism, superficiality and low interest rates. In one way or another, we feel like we deserve these punishments. These mythical monsters may be real but the guilt is real too.

If we assume that all these premises are true, it is just natural to assume that the slogan for the new generation is "change" although, what "change"?

CRISIS

La catharsis of an age



Damien Hirst created "For the love of god" in 2007. A real human skull covered in diamonds with a production price of 13 million pounds and sold that very same year for 50 million pounds to a anonymous collector. This sale defeat Jeff Koons and his Michael Jackson statue as the most expensive piece of art sold by a living artist.

An icon of the old ways



This crisis marked the definitive mainstream acceptance of various social, cultural and aesthetic trends that were, up to this point, uncommon. Ecology, sustainability, just commerce and the redefinition of success as an emotional experience have become mainstream.

In 2003 president Bush climbed down an F18 representing the triumph of the pre-crisis cultural and economic model. One year later the new president Obama watches an NBA game dressed all in black and drinking a beer and it marks the beginning of a new post-crisis paradigm.

NEW MODEL POST/CRISIS

A new mentality



After a decade of Hummers, Lamborghinis and SUVs, the IT-car is an electric car with popular ambitions and a price tag of 60.000\$. In a recent interview in Wired magazine, a dot com millionaire said this about the fact that a plug-mini might cost as much as a second hand Lamborghini: "Who wants a Lamborghini?"

The new IT-car



Cheap & functional

Medium

Hyper luxury



Cheap credit allowed the middle classes to access the luxury segment. Now the money becomes real again and luxury is hard to reach. The medium and entry-luxury markets are depopulated and there are only two markets that matter, cheap and functional (where the old middle class now lives) and hyper luxury.

The old middle classes now buy cheap and functional but they have lived "upstairs" for a decade so they expect much more, they expect everything! That means that in the new economy, consumers are accustomed to more expensive products and they expect the same experience.

POLARIZATION

The up markets



*Vertú Diamond
special edition*

VS



Iphone 3GS

In 1998 Vertú appears. A new mobile phone brand aimed at the pre-crisis culture. Forced exclusivity and "bling". Vertu's most representative model (covered in diamonds) is launched in 2006 with a price of 85.000\$. Smartphones start becoming mainstream and Vertu is at the brink of bankruptcy. Even rich people love iPhones. Value over price? maybe

Tech for a new era

NEW MODEL

Post-crisis ideas



The Peter-Pan syndrome seemed ubiquitous when 30 year old teenagers bought 400\$ sneakers in Tokio.

The reaction to an overdose of superficiality has happened and it was truly needed. We've rediscovered masculinity and the past, the pleasures of local products and artisan made products that last a lifetime, vinyls and we have switched permanent irony for an intimate wink.

Although when we say past, we just mean the good bits. We've rediscovered the best of the past and mixed with high tech, post-racial and global values. We love vinyl but we didn't forget about mp3, we are not more conservative, we just understand that, sometimes, taking things slow can be a good thing.

The new retro is eclectic, global and high tech. It mixes the best of the past with the best of the present.

BACK TO CLASSICS

Recuperar lo mejor del pasado

Friends
and food &
Palma &
Buenos Aires
and GOOD books
& smart business



If we understand luxury as the unnecessary necessities that made life worthwhile for a class smart, curious and sophisticated professionals, luxury is still alive and in good shape. If we understand luxury as spectacular status symbols for over indebted people, luxury is dead.

The new luxury gains back its classic role. Men recovers its masculinity from metrosexuality. Women are as independent as ever but they don't watch Sex and the city anymore and the enjoy the occasional display of chivalry.

Luxury is a cultural constant that will always be an essential part of enjoying the best in life.

The new luxury means enjoying traditional mexican food in a high tech bistro in Monterrey. It means, trading show-off luxury for mature luxury.

THE NEW LUXURY

Luxury is not dead, it matured



Why are the Google founders NOT driving ferraris?

http://men.style.com/details/features/landing?id=content_9418

Price is demodé now more than ever. The consumer wants to differentiate himself through choices but something else took the place of price when it comes to exclusivity.

The new value that defines luxury is authenticity, quality and emotion.

Cultural status is now more important than economical status and here, authenticity becomes paramount. The new affluent don't pay for a gold watch, they pay for a front row seat in a TED conference.

The old aspirational consumer bought a Porsche and wear Armani, the new aspirational consumer restored a house in Menorca and values his independence.

AUTHENTICITY

Virtuous consumption

FOOD

Aesthetics and values in food culture

Molecular gastronomy is still the frontier of innovation in gastronomy but is well practiced by so few cooks that is not yet relevant to consumers.

The bastard child of molecular gastronomy and new gastronomy has been fusion gastronomy. A badly understood concept degraded by pre-crisis cooking culture that meant been over charged for terrible food in a over hyped restaurant in an artsy neighborhood.

Fusion became the pretext for an overpriced and spectacular restaurant where we could imagine ourselves rich. Today consumers want and expect value. This is the time for substance over form.



¿Fusión?

<http://www.fancyfastfood.com/>

SKEPTICISM OVER THE NEW GASTRONOMY



Gastronomy aficionados have always known that good food is cooked in the market.

When the consumer wants value he becomes a connoisseur and raw materials return to its prime role.

The presentation of a meal has to speak about its ingredients, about its origins. It has to show a respect for the quality and origins of the ingredients.

TRUE QUALITY

More authenticity, less processing

When we see global leaders talk about social responsibility and ecology it seems ordinary but we should not forget that in historical terms, it is still revolutionary. But after 40 years of green movement and globalization and 10 years of global warming, we can affirm that sustainability has permanently permeated the psyche of the western society.

Gastronomy has been transformed too by the sustainability ideals. The new consumer asks for social responsibility, sustainable production and an ecological mindset when it comes to what he eats, even at his favorite luxury restaurant.

A contemporary restaurant should integrate these values as part of its identity and discourse.



SUSTAINABILITY BECOMES MAINSTREAM

SPACES

Aesthetics of the new gastronomy



Big ephemeral restaurants that fill the pages of cheap design coffee table books. Spaceship restaurants that offer nothing more than what a theme park offers. That was spectacle and pantomime and it was a fun time we don't deny that but it's time to move on. A 15 million restaurant with average food doesn't make any aesthetic sense anymore.

The new gastronomy isn't really new, it is just a reorganization of the values that define a good restaurant. We still love a nice setting but this is not a theme-park, food comes first, everything else is just noise.

THE AESTHETIC OF PANTOMIME

The dead of spectacle and the designer as rockstar

Design has been too many times sold as a magic varnish that can makes anything desirable after it was set and done. You have surely suffered an overpriced restaurant with a terrible service (albeit cute and young) and decoration so flashy that it seems is trying to distract us from the food.

Good design, as luxury, is not dead however it is badly understood. Properly understood design is not an adjective, it is a verb. It is a process that ties everything together so that nothing distracts the customer from the food. A process that makes everything work at the right volume so that the customer can understand the result but it would be hard for him to say what makes the restaurant work so well.

Good design acts on every detail to make the whole experience relaxed, beautiful, relevant and authentic.



DESIGN IS A VERB



Good design and tasteful functionality



Good design and good products



Good design bathed in light



Cascette (Berlín)

<http://www.cascette.de>



Tom's kitchen (Londres)

<http://www.tomskitchen.co.uk>

A RECAP

THE CRISIS MARKS THE END AND THE BEGINNING

PRE-CRISIS

=

EXCESS, SPECTACLE, SUPERFICIALITY
AESTHETICS OVER QUALITY

POST-CRISIS

=

GOOD LUXURY, BACK TO CLASSICS, AUTHENTICITY
QUALITY BEFORE AESTHETICS

PRE-CRISIS

=

FUSION CUISINE, DESIGN AS AN ADJECTIVE

POST-CRISIS

=

GOOD PRODUCTS, BACK TO BASICS, DESIGN AS A VERB

