

ПРАКТИЧНА КУЛЬТУРОЛОГІЯ

УДК 008.74+1:712

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MATERIAL CULTURE AS A METHOD OF URBAN DESIGN RESEARCH: MODERN CHALLENGES

Article discusses material culture as one of the thorough ways to determine the methodological basis for the cultural study of design, design practices and, including urban design in the world and in Ukraine. The article turns to the researchers who initiated the actual exploration of material culture outside of archeology and cultural anthropology, which will eventually lead us to modern views on material culture as a relevant approach in culturological analysis of the design of objects, objects of urban space – in particular.

The article provides the actualization of this issue in the application to the culturological study of urban design itself, taking into account its specifics. It outlines some compelling arguments as to why the discourse of material culture is becoming increasingly relevant in the study of urban design and culturological research in particular. A number of approaches is shown within which this combination becomes relevant. Especially given the design of Ukrainian cities and its cultural research, where the need to overcome the dichotomy of spiritual and material culture has long been ripe.

Key words: artifact, material culture, objectification, urban design, value.

Formulation of the problem. Urban design research is a topical field of cultural intelligence that emerges at the intersection of design research and urban studies. Culturology is gaining new opportunities in the study of modern culture, turning to the design of the city, the public environment, the sphere of everyday life of the modern citizen, his daily experience of using things, space, interaction with other residents. Cultural studies is aided by the actualization of methods from related sciences (cultural anthropology, archeology), in particular – the method of material culture, which since the 1980s and still develops and rethinks in view of the emergence of new problematic research topics.

Analysis of research and publications. Material culture as a method of research finds its roots in the French school of anthropology (Lucien Levy-Bruhl), the French sociological school (Marcel Moss). The key representatives of substantiation of material culture as a method are Jules David Prown and Daniel Miller, as well as Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau, Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard and Gilles Deleuze. The actualization of the method of material culture in the framework of modern design research has contributed by Arjun Appadurai, Judy Attfield and Tim Dant. Among modern researchers who analyze design and urban design in different contexts with the help of material culture, it is worth noting Rafael Cardoso, Toke Riis Ebbesen and Susann Vihma, Kjetil Fallan, Marinella Ferrara and Chiara Lecce, Christopher Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Küchler, Michael Rowlands And Patricia Spyer, Mattias Kärholm and others.

Purpose of the article. The purpose of the article is to analyze the history of the origin and development of the method of material culture, which is now actively used in applied cultural studies, in particular in the study of urban design. Identify opportunities for the application of this method in the study of Ukrainian vernacular urban design. Identify the main trends in the introduction of material culture in modern design research.

Exposition of the main material of the study. Material culture is one of the thorough ways to determine the methodological basis for the cultural study of design, design practices and, including urban design in the world and in Ukraine. And it is in this methodological guide that the issues of culturology and applied aspects of research design intersect. To begin with, we must turn to the researchers

who initiated the actual exploration of material culture outside of archeology and cultural anthropology, which will eventually lead us to modern views on material culture as a relevant approach in culturological analysis of the design of objects, objects of urban space – in particular.

It is worth starting with Jules David Prown, who wrote the work "Mind in Matter: An introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method" (1982), where he singled out material culture at the intersection of cultural anthropology and archeology, emphasizing the importance of complexity of the human as a subject, especially in the context of cultural and historical dynamics. Based on this picture, Prown focused on the artifact as an object of design and as a basic form of material culture. Looking at the artifact in a new way, Prown was able to see in it the cultural context of its production and use, which has a lot to say about people of a certain time and space, their relationships, social constructs and more. And, most importantly, Prown's goal was to determine values, precisely through the study of artifacts: "Material culture is the study through artifacts of the beliefs – values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions – of a particular community or a society of a given time. ... Material culture is comparable to art history as a discipline in its study of culture through artifacts" [9, p. 220].

An artifact in material culture is referred to by Prown as an object created with a special human attitude and has been or is in it. If a person or people of a certain time valued this material object. Here is a whole hierarchy of values of the artifact: "In addition to material and utilitarian values, certain objects have aesthetic value (art), some possess spiritual value (icons, cult objects)..." [9, p. 222]. Such systematization of values leads to the discovery of "cultural expression" of a material object, i.e. opportunities for its cultural interpretation. Compared with historical, archaeological, sociological data, data on the cultural value of the artifact are the most expressive and revealing, because they allow through utilitarian things, life, everyday life to reach the level of analysis of his spiritual life. But such a qualitative transition is possible only due to a clear methodology for the study of material culture: "The analysis proceeds from description, recording the internal evidence of the object itself; to deduction, interpreting the interaction between the object and the perceiver; to speculation, framing hypotheses

and questions which lead out from the object to external evidence for testing and resolution" [9, p. 224].

Thus, in the history of science, the tragic contradiction between the branches of the cultural and the material has been overcome: materiality has become one of the fundamental dimensions of the cultural. Overcoming this and similar dichotomous structures of scientific thinking, material culture has emerged as a new type of humanitarian research, which is carried out by focusing on distinction and its analysis in order to identify important structures and characteristics of culture in its material expression: "...material culture studies might be regarded as an academic manifestation of characterizations of our contemporary cultural condition as 'postmodern', involving indeterminacy, immanence or becoming, ambiguity, heterodoxy and pluralism" [6, p. 1].

This is confirmed even by the interpretation of the very concept of "materiality", which has evolved from "substance, something comprised of elements or constituents, of variously composed matter" to "something of value" [6, p. 3]. When the discussions of material objects started, they were usually contrasted with the human as a subject, her experiences, values, connections, and so on. But gradually, along with the change in the perspective of material culture, materiality began to carry a value, a subjective component: a thing – not just an object, but above all a carrier of certain benefits for a person, status, lifestyle, identity: "Material culture studies in various ways inevitably have to emphasize the dialectical and recursive relationship between persons and things: that persons make and use things and that the things make persons" [6, p. 4].

Daniel Miller, another classic of material culture of the 1980s, relied on a study by the French school of anthropology, including L. Levy-Bruhl's idea of the complexity of human relationships and everyday things within pre-logical thinking. This applies to magical thinking, fetishism, totemism, and so on. In any case, a material object in almost any culture carried for its owner a set of not only functions but also values that sometimes even determined his destiny and life: "In many societies, the clothing, ornaments and tools belonging to an individual may be considered so integral to him or her that to touch or do harm to these inanimate objects in considered indistinguishable from taking the same action against the person" [8, p. 235].

Another important source for building the theoretical foundations of material culture was the French sociological school, and in particular M. Moss and his concept of exchange. Based on these powerful concepts, Miller formulated the socio-cultural issues of subject-object relations and their value aspect, which had its social, economic and political perspectives: "Personal property is best linked with communal rather than private property, such as state or kin-held property, since it is a statement of relative inalienability, such that the social subject, individual or collective, associated with the object retains control over the conditions under which it may be alienated" [8, p. 237].

Famous French philosophers of the second half of the XX century allowed to reveal material culture for various applied cultural, social, philosophical and political studies: M. Foucault through systems of surveillance, approved by cultural norms, M. Certeau writing about the material culture of the urban environment and the practice of walking in the designed city, R. Barthes, J. Baudrillard and also G. Deleuze who critiqued consumer and material culture systems composed in European society.

But contemporary researchers Toke Riis Ebbesen and Susann Vihma emphasize that it was the American anthropologist Arjun Appadurai who was able to disrupt the discourse of material culture in the direction of design research in the work "Introduction: commodities and the politics of value" (1986): "He states that demand can manipulate both production and consumption. Evidently it happens by means of design, among other things. These (design) concepts put design right in the centre of cultural production, in our view" [3, p. 2].

Other key researchers in this field were the British authors Judy Attfield (feminism and design studies) and Tim Dant (sociologist). Exploring the physical characteristics of design objects in historical, social and cultural contexts, Attfield focuses on the attitudes of different subjects to these objects: not only users but also designers. The key concepts in her research are appropriation (which makes Attfield focus on postmodern and post-colonial studies) and objectification, borrowed from Miller, "a concept that aims at describing how objects are used to construct personal identities, memories and emotional maturity" [3, p. 3]. Another important Attfield's idea is the distinction between design and everyday design, where "The second is the kind of design, which all of us produce every day, the 'wild' things of everyday life, the kitschy, the chic, the commonplace, etc." [3, p. 3]. This reasoning leads us to the actualization of material culture in the study of design: because the elements of everyday design, including vernacular, which is an important part of public urban space.

As a social philosopher, Tim Dant emphasizes the social values of material objects, including objects of urban everyday life, clothing, and so on [2]. Initially, in his work "Materiality and Sociality" (2005) he considered these characteristics on a large scale, but gradually came to the question of how the design of an object can build or influence the social relations of the subjects around it, its users: "...the focus has moved (from the abstract value systems) to the meanings that arise from close interaction between users and things. The concept interaction is brought up instead of the concept sociality" [3, p. 4].

Having considered the main ideas that emerge at the intersection of research in design and material culture, it is necessary to proceed to the actualization of this issue in the application to the cultural study of urban design itself, taking into account its specifics.

In what follows, we will outline some compelling arguments as to why the discourse of material culture is becoming increasingly relevant in the study of urban design and cultural research in particular. First, Mattias Kärrholm emphasizes the diversity of scales of scientists' approaches to urban design: they are usually accustomed to thinking on a large scale, appropriate to urban and district areas: "Urban design has traditionally been seen as addressing the scale in-between urban settlements and individual buildings, but through its focus on place-making, it also has to acknowledge other scales. ... For example, when Jan Gehl, Jane Jacobs or William H. Whyte are interested in how certain urban design aspects affect social life, they focus on design elements such as benches, specific streets or blocks, doors, pavements, and they seldom contemplate the role of the region or city-like urban morphology nor do they include for example certain clothing, technical gadgets, shoes or bodily aspects, like material culture studies tend to do" [7]. Instead, modern changes in the life of the city, the experience of city dwellers suggest the need to change the scale of the view

to a smaller one, to the scale of one material object, a detailed analysis of which can say a lot about building social relations attention to the diversity and pluralism of this experience: "Place is never produced or shaped at once; it develops as part of different overlapping territorial productions involving all kinds of activities, tempos, durations and materialities, and engages different kinds of professions as well as "civilians". ... Material factors are vital for the understanding of all forms of association and co-existence" [7]. If we apply this idea in relation to the Ukrainian context, then the elements of vernacular design of Ukrainian cities become especially important. Self-made signs, elements of the city's landscape and park system, balconies and other objects that become publicly known tell the culturologist much more about the state of modern Ukrainian society than larger-scale research objects.

Secondly, the use of material culture in design research is relevant and important for designers themselves, because today the world's leading design communities recognize a certain detachment of modern designers from knowledge about materials and their origins, which also has consequences for cultural identity and consciousness of professionals. In order to remedy this situation, the professional communities of designers (in particular, Italian) turn to a new, complex methodology at the heart of their work: "In contemporary time, due to the increased complexity of materials and production processes, the design questions are more complex. Not only common people, but also designer today don't know how things are made and how materials are composed. The more the industrial production processes and materials are sophisticated, the more is the lack of knowledge about materials, thus effectively creates a borderline between designers and production. Bridging this gap represents a challenge to designers and especially to the design schools" [5, p. 490].

And thirdly, according to the idea of the researcher Kjetil Fallan, it is worth paying attention to the dual status of any object of everyday life: after all, it appears as both an instrument and a symbol. He notes that the whole history of design is built around this dichotomy, which is already worth overcoming and revealing the relationship between the two values of the design object, which reveals its dynamism depending on time, space and state of culture and society: "This hybrid nature of things becomes particularly salient in settings where the full range of their potential properties and performances, both functional and symbolic, are articulated. Nowhere is this envisioning of hybrid cultural values more marked than in marketing material, where functional and symbolic aspects merge into a carefully orchestrated vision of what the product might be" [4, p. 140].

Thus, given the preliminary review of the history of the combination of material culture as a method and research of urban design as a problem field, we can see a number of approaches within which this combination becomes relevant. Especially given the design of Ukrainian cities and its cultural research, where the need to overcome the dichotomy of spiritual and material culture has long been ripe: "As the ultimate materialist society, brimming with material culture like none other, we are paradoxically poised to discover the vast importance of immaterial culture – commonly labelled, in a reductive sense, as 'information'– in shaping what we call reality" [1, p. 20].

Conclusion

Culture consists of the social exchanges of people with each other and their interaction with things. Since its

inception, anthropology has evaluated culture – its people (cultural anthropology) and its material manifestations (archeology) – in order to try to better understand human complexity and diversity. One of the most important artifacts of culture, design, as a form of material culture, can tell us about the history of its creators and the cultural state of society found in the artifact.

Material culture is the study of ideas with the help of artifacts – values, beliefs, views and assumptions – a certain community or society of a certain time. Material culture as a study is based on the obvious fact that the existence of a created object is concrete evidence of the presence of human intelligence at the time of manufacture. These studies are the only way to study culture using objects as primary data, but for scientific purposes it can be considered a branch of cultural history or cultural anthropology. Material culture can be compared to the history of art as a discipline in the study of culture through artifacts.

By performing cultural interpretation with the help of artifacts, we can first attract another culture not with our minds, the place of our cultural prejudices, but with our feelings. The culture being studied provides a platform, a new cultural position to look at our culture.

The study of material culture can be seen as an academic manifestation of the characteristics of our current cultural state as "postmodern", which includes uncertainty, immanence or formation, ambiguity, heterodoxy and pluralism.

Prehistoric archeology also uses material culture as the main source of evidence for the human past, and the study of material culture has always been part of social anthropological research that has historically been more or less covered and highlighted or neglected and ignored. Modern material culture seeks to strengthen scientific awareness of the nature of materiality and its consequences for cultural, social and historical knowledge.

Design research must keep pace with the changing material culture of the modern world. One way to do this is to look for new aspects of scale proportionality, that is, how objects at one level of complexity are associated with another level, challenging old, established, and stabilized hierarchies of scale. Traditional cultural studies have led to the fact that different types of material values are too often processed in different discourses depending on their predetermined scale or given function, rather than on their role in a particular situation.

In order to meet the current urban challenges, we need to identify a new perspective of urban design that can take into account the heterogeneity of actors of different scales. Thus, insisting on the importance of integrating material culture perspectives does not mean that urban design should be reduced to mobile objects; on the contrary, it needs to be expanded and incorporated into the broader discourse of material culture and culturology.

This area of research focuses on the idea that materiality is an integral dimension of culture, and that there are dimensions of social existence that cannot be fully understood without it. However, "material" and "cultural" are usually seen as fundamentally opposite, for example, as physical and intellectual. Design research could take on the task of linking these different areas of knowledge, as they work on different aspects of human interaction with things. In particular, when it comes to the study of design objects in urban space, the links between material objects and people are conceived as related mainly to the sphere of everyday life, related to the maintenance of human life through the acquisition and

maintenance of various items. Accordingly, for a comprehensive cultural study of these objects and related processes of human life in the city, we must combine different methods, in particular: research of material culture and cultural studies of everyday life.

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МАТЕРІАЛЬНА КУЛЬТУРА ЯК МЕТОД ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ МІСЬКОГО ДИЗАЙНУ: СУЧАСНІ ВИКЛИКИ

Розглянуто матеріальну культуру як один із ґрунтовних способів визначити методологічну основу для вивчення культури дизайну, дизайн-практик, зокрема і міського дизайну, у світі та в Україні. У статті міститься звернення до дослідників, які ініціювали фактичний аналіз матеріальної культури за межами археології та культурної антропології, що врешті-решт привело нас до сучасних поглядів на матеріальну культуру як відповідний підхід у культурологічному аналізі дизайн-об'єктів й об'єктів міського простору, зокрема.

Здійснено актуалізацію зазначеного питання в заявці на культурологічне дослідження міського дизайну з урахуванням його специфіки. Викладено деякі вагомні аргументи щодо того, чому дискурс матеріальної культури стає дедалі актуальнішим у вивченні міського дизайну та культурологічних дослідженнях. Показано багато підходів, у межах яких ця комбінація стає актуальною, особливо враховуючи дизайн українських міст та його культурологічні дослідження, де давно назріла необхідність подолання роздвоєності духовної та матеріальної культури.

Ключові слова: артефакт, матеріальна культура, об'єктивація, міський дизайн, цінність.

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МАТЕРИАЛЬНАЯ КУЛЬТУРА КАК МЕТОД ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ ГОРОДСКОГО ДИЗАЙНА: СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ ВЫЗОВЫ

Рассмотрено материальную культуру как один из фундаментальных способов определить методологическую основу для изучения культуры дизайна, дизайн-практик, в том числе городского дизайна, в мире и в Украине. В статье содержится обращение к исследователям, которые инициировали фактический анализ материальной культуры за пределами археологии и культурной антропологии, что в итоге привело нас к современным взглядам на материальную культуру, как соответствующий подход в культурологическом анализе дизайн-объектов и объектов городского пространства в частности.

Осуществлена актуализация этого вопроса в заявке на культурологическое исследование городского дизайна с учетом его специфики. Изложены некоторые веские аргументы относительно того, почему дискурс материальной культуры становится все более актуальным в изучении городского дизайна и культурологических исследованиях. Показан ряд подходов, в рамках которых эта комбинация становится актуальной, особенно учитывая дизайн украинских городов и его культурологические исследования, где давно назрела необходимость преодоления раздвоенности духовной и материальной культуры.

Ключевые слова: артефакт, материальная культура, объективация, городской дизайн, ценность.

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Received Editorial Board 08.04.21