

Changing the change

Design Visions, Proposals and Tools

An international conference on the role and potential of design research in the transition towards sustainability

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PROPOSALS

DESIGN CULTURE: FROM PRODUCT TO PROCESS

Building a network to develop design processes in latin countries

Abstract

Design culture is originating and developing in Latin countries around the problems concerning artistic design for industry, in a context featured by the relevant and systematic use by the industrial sector of practices and skills, provided by the system of professional techniques and arts. The contribution of the academies of fine arts and morphological and perceptive research has prevailed and conditioned great part of this culture.

The development of high level training for design in the universities of these countries is relatively young and it is associated to the need to rearrange, adapt to the local cultural and productive system and develop a more systematic and precise knowledge about the design-driven innovation procedures. At the same time, industrial production, primarily focused on raw material extraction and commodities production, is influenced by the risk resulting from the development of Eastern countries (above all Russia, India and China). This obliges us to reconnect design practices to industrial and economy

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management, starting from the development and the possibility to share innovation models that can mainly focus on cultural diversity and on the different kinds of local production procedures.

In this moment the construction and consolidation of a link between university culture belonging to European Latin countries and to the main Latin-American countries seems to be profitable. This interaction is likely to be a vital opportunity to fulfil the big gap in process culture, by sharing the experiences coming from each singular body and the creation of continuous intercultural collaboration platforms and systems.

The target is promoting “the development of design processes as it was a main problem in contemporary design”, by stressing the fact that institutions and culture are now focusing their attention more on process culture than on product culture, starting from a higher number of experiences that each school has been developing for some time towards this direction.

This essay is presenting the results of a survey that has been carried out for the last 24 months where a number of initiatives have been pinpointed by many universities and research centers from several Latin – American Countries, which are all interested in focusing their interest on innovation processes like the designer’s scientific and operational action.

Here below are some examples:

- The development of many specialist training projects integrating economy and management with technology, starting from the involving competence of design;
- The attention for the local and district development starting from requalifying skills and the ones dealing with the enhancement of design identity;
- The increase of scientific contributions in form of essays or in terms of participation in subject conferences whose focus is “design process and metaproject culture”, with case studies and important application and experimental projects in terms of size and investment;
- The development of quantitative/qualitative analysis of the effects of investments on design in industrial and production contexts of various size;
- The existence of metaproject teaching modules in almost every degree course in design;
- The creation of research and development centers (design center) focused on design starting from agreements between universities and companies, both in form of district centers and company departments.

The conclusion of the essay shows the development plan for the newborn network to interchange experience between research and training centers, aimed at developing this culture by experimenting proper processes and methods for cultural-production and social systems in Latin – American Countries, even starting from a higher interest towards these problems from Latin – European Countries.

The idea that is supporting the network is that design culture, considered as a process culture, has got important advantages regarding the way the relationship between production systems and consumption processes is changing:

- Offering design a mediator’s role between the crucial knowledge regarding sustainable development in a Latin country: economy, art/creativity, technology and humanities;
- Democratic role of design to produce a fantasmagoric (the possibility to visualize and share what is immaterial) and sharing (visioning) ability to harmonically develop society;
- The main role of mediation between the interests of the production system and one of the consumption system.

(scheme below)

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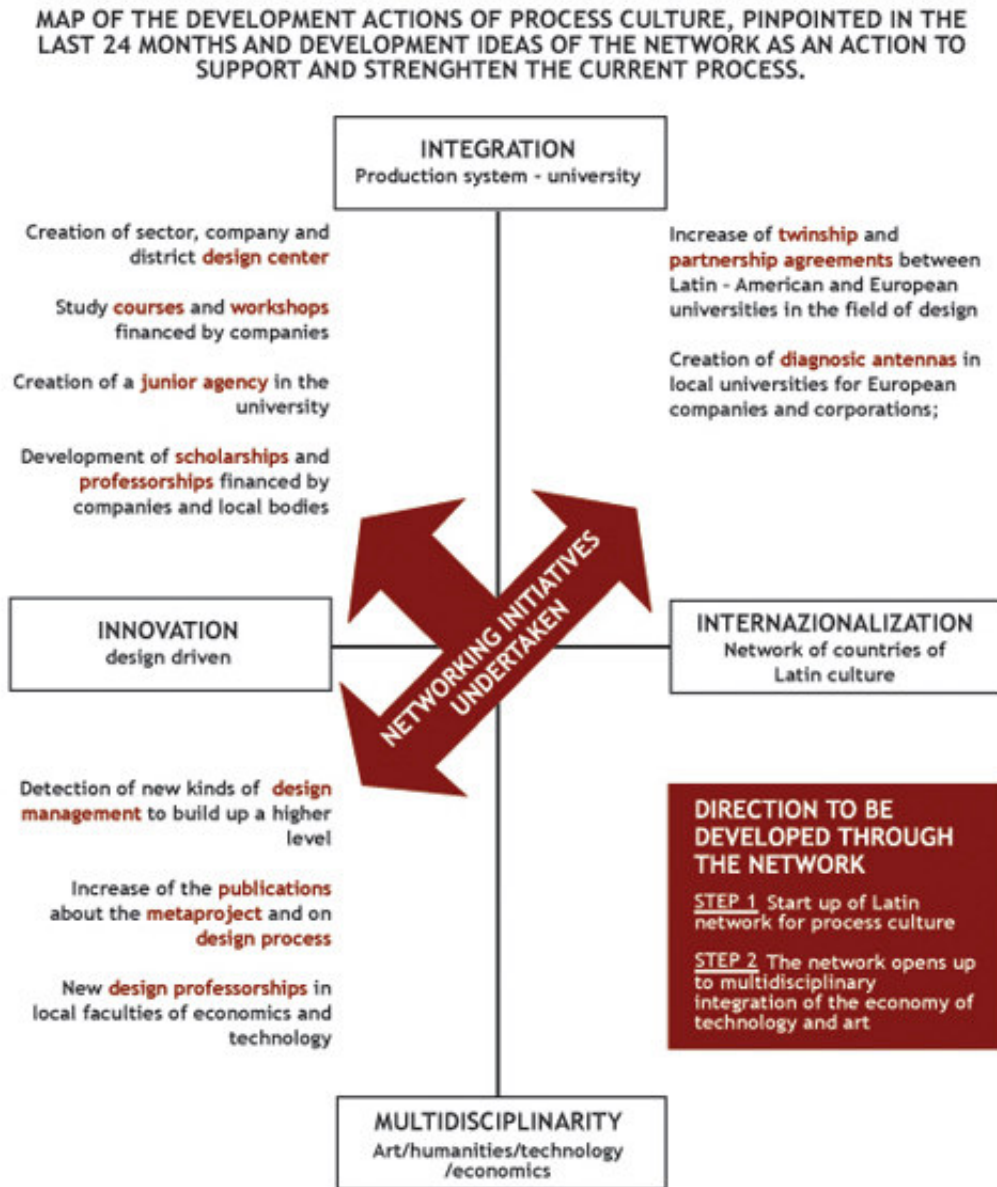


Fig. 1: Key initiatives undertaken by many universities and research centers from several Latin – American Countries in the direction of the network and development plan for the newborn network