Amateur design: DIY as resistance

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DIY as Resistance

Prof. Paul Atkinson
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Growth of Maker Culture
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Design Activism
Quiet Activism and the New Amateur

“Terms such as ‘crafting,’ ‘craftivism’ (craft activism), ‘manbroidery,’ ‘counterfeit crochet,’ ‘net craft,’ ‘stich ‘n bitch,’ ‘guerrilla knitting,’ ‘yarn bombing,’ ‘Punk DIY,’ ‘subcultural-,’ and ‘indie craft’ signal a new energy; a will to engage with crafts’ Morrisian/Ruskinian political heritage, and ... a valid and effective means to critique capitalism ... forge alternative identities, communities, and ways of living.”

(Hackney, 2013)
Cigar Box Guitars
Cigar Box Guitars
Nig Richards
Nig Richards
Chickenbone John
Chickenbone John
Rat Bikes
Rat Bike Rally
John
Tony (B&I Engineering)
Tony (B&I Engineering)
Conclusions

• The above findings describe very particular forms of Do-It-Yourself activity; ones where the objects produced form the very core of strongly delineated subcultural communities.

• For both of these groups, elements of resistance to the mainstream and issues of authenticity are central.
Conclusions

• On the one hand, communities of interest based around musical performance that deliberately rejects expensive mainstream musical instrument production and the status associated with high-end equipment, and instead celebrates the immediacy and personality of the one-off, hand-made instrument.
Conclusions

• On the other hand, communities of ‘real’ bikers that share a common lifestyle—a deliberately subversive group opposed to the mainstream consumption of expensive, off-the-shelf mass-produced vehicles that, to them, are commodities that have no character or bear no traces of the owner’s input.
Conclusions

• These two communities quite clearly and openly display alternatives to existing modes of production and consumption, and although they are strongly anti-establishment, each demonstrates a potentially more sustainable and more viable model for the future consumption of designed goods.
Thank You

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