



Material Oriented Ontology (Photograph by Lucas Muñoz)

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Scarce or abundant, toxic or degradable, cheap or expensive, the use of materials most times supposes an abuse and, despite all actors involved are responsible for it, some of them do significantly come first on the chain of decisions. Most times, there is no material without an ore and there is no ore without a geo-political framework. Furthermore, there is no exploitation without a social framework, as well as there is no material value without a - many times constructed - material scarcity. As it is a given materiality what actually conforms the very structures that create each of our fragile individual contexts, we must not take for granted any given deal in what respects to our relation to those very materials. Starting from the vocabulary that conforms it, with words in process of devaluation such as: ecosystem, ecological, awareness, consciousness, circularity, and so on, not to mention the today so very much commercially abused prefixes eco-, bio- or natur-; continuing with the legal system that allows extraction, processing, manufacturing and distribution of materials to happen, together to all the social consequences it connotes; and, of course including, all material professionals like engineers, architects, designers, artists, etc; all disciplines should have a word in this matter.

“Intention is what counts” goes the saying but, in what relates to our agreement to materials, we need to understand that the room for negotiation with the planet is limited. The world is becoming aware of the necessity for a material consciousness, but the way to globally reach there is still fragile and loaded with confusing market-driven road-signs and commercially-profitable ecological pitfalls. Green washing has many faces and some of them do seem to be very beautiful, but in the end, there is a chain of interests behind all material and, whereas the end receiver is sometimes addressed as the responsible for a wrongdoing, that mistake was actually generated on origin.

This call for papers aims to compile a set of critical voices that can raise some awareness over the very concept of awareness and awareness-rising. The zeitgeist of these days seems to be conjured around ecological consciousness, but maybe we need to surgically define what that actually is. It is well known that is on its early stages of formation when the ethos of a reality is conformed, hence, we must assume the necessity for an improvement on our ecological awareness and it must come from all disciplines, not only from the ones that traditionally use materials. A new material deal must be agreed upon (or perhaps is the first one?), if so, time has come for statements to be made and cases to be studied.

Lucas Muñoz is a Spanish designer and artist based between the Netherlands and Spain. His practice encompasses a conceptual approach to design from an extended understanding. Thus, he has created a body of work that includes furniture, images, video, 3D scanning, texts and sound tracks. Since his first object, the Bic pen lamp, the use of found, recycled or supra-cycled materials is a common factor to many of his designs, nonetheless, this last characteristic is more justifiable by the playful nature of his understanding of the creative process than for any other reason. His work is represented by several design galleries, nevertheless many of his pieces remain inside the context where they were created and, as a conceptual decision, do not reach the market. Lucas is a professor at Design Academy Eindhoven and at the University of Navarra.

The Guest Editor and the Scientific Committee are calling for contributions (see the editorial guidelines) in English or Spanish from architects and scholars up until 1 February 2020. Proposals will be judged on their diversity and the speculative nature of their approach, not to mention historical and critical precedents. Examples of potential subjects are listed below.

Local Architecture vs Global Architecture; Aesthetics and Ethics of Sustainability; Theories and Pioneers of Ecological Awareness. Paradigms, Utopias and Manifestos, Materials; High Tech or Soft Tech Strategies; Technology and Matter; Second Life. Recycling; Economics of the Ecosystem; Design from the Creation of Materials; Design for Disappearance; Zero miles Construction; Construction as a Model of Social Regeneration; Real Valuation of Material Impact; Design for the interaction of varied life cycles; de-construct; Mines and Landfills; The True Cost of our Objects; New Deal on Materials; Semantic Issues in Ecological Vocabulary; Challenges and Threats of "Green Washing"; Planet Earth 2050; Water as the only element; How have we got into this mess?
