

## **Design and Pathos**

***Koray Malhan,***

***Brand and Design Director of Koleksiyon***

**Quote: “The creative faculty of the human mind sheds light on how we communicate through language, music, art and all our societal behaviour.”**

*The most universal quality of human is its diversity.*

*Michel Eyquem de **Montaigne** , 1533*

I would like to start by proposing to delete, the *co-* before the *creation*, and revisit the idea of creation altogether, by a deep acknowledgement that all creativity in human history is a collaborative process as an inherent value.

Yes, there are of course the creative masters throughout history, be it great artists, musicians, poets, or innovators changing the course of human progress as we know it. However when we adhere to the historicist discourse, we can easily point out that none of those inventions were mere personal achievements, but rather built upon the success and work of many generations before, thus enlightening the path of the coming generations who will yet create and advance in further achievements.

So I think the main question and concern focuses on the idea of *creativity* and how we actually define it. The creative faculty of the human mind sheds light on how we communicate through language, music, art and all our societal behaviour. This is very much linked with how we are mentally constituted , as creativity in this sense, seems to be species specific.

Having said all these, we can also consider the socio-cultural dimension, to how we approach creativity. The era of the lonely genius, detached from rest of the society has had its time. *Co-creation* in this respect is an invitation to envisage alternative perspectives by diverse thinking minds. Dissolving the boundaries of our disciplinary compartments and to come together around a topic to solve problems through diverse thinking methodologies can be a great hope to solve the seemingly unsolvable.

The roots of the idea that, creation is freed from the domain of a master creator, can be traced around the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. We can see the first signs of collaboration among great artists from very different disciplines, befriending each other, thus creating an enormous impact on each others work.

Such are the friendship of Gustav Mahler with Walter Gropius for example, or Claude Debussy with Mallarme, or the historical collaboration among Sergei Diaghilev, Igor Stravinsky and Pablo Picasso, to change the perception of music and staging forever. The close friendship between Arnold Schoenberg and Wassily Kandinsky is also worth noting in this respect.

We can carry on with the collaboration of Late American Modern musicians from the New York School, Earle Brown with one of the most eminent figures of contemporary music, Pierre Boulez and with Alexander Calder, who has deliberately changed the scene for modern sculpture and musical performance. Calder's collaboration with the architect Jean Prouve is worth noting as well.

The list cannot be exhausted, especially if one were to consider all groundbreaking works by memorable masters of the near age. One can even go further to say that the collaboration was silently embedded in all historical works even, that it is so easy to find solid traces of Mozart's work in Beethoven's memorable pieces, note by note even, or from Bach, nevertheless all are original and belong among the master pieces of the classical cannon. Same tracking can easily be done in literature, art and of course in all sciences.

The great leap in 20<sup>th</sup> century art and music is that it has this quality of involving the viewer as the active participant into the creation process. So how about this for co-creation ? This dramatic change that marks the modern period is best analyzed by Umberto Eco, in *Opera Aperta, 1962*, I wish therefore to quote him to summarize the process in his own words;

*"A work of art, therefore, is a complete and closed form in its uniqueness as a balanced organic whole, while at the same time constituting an open product on account of its susceptibility to countless different interpretations which do not impinge on its unadulterable specificity. Hence every reception of a work of art is both an interpretation and a performance of it, because in every reception the work takes on a fresh perspective for itself.*

Today design is handled more than just as an issue of aesthetical offering to product solutions. Sensitive minds easily hint at a social collapse, and the seemingly endless growth of centralized wealth is creating a global disturbance. It is critical to realize that we are now in a stage where we face complex problems concerning humanity, that are of geographical, political, economical and cultural origins. For all these eminent reasons design is called into action in new formations, such as Design Management, Design Thinking etc... The idea is to utilize the creative patterns of problem solving, in design thinking, also in other areas of business decision making.

Co-creation is therefore a very critical call for humanity beyond the profession itself, for addressing a wide spectrum of problems, through a collaborative approach of **diverse** experiences and talents. Today design as a profession cannot be isolated from

this historical reading of creativity as a human faculty and be detached from the contemporary reality of Pathos.