Review | Revisión

The keys to the lack of identity in Spanish industrial design | Las claves de la ausencia de identidad del diseño industrial español

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Abstract

Throughout history, the development of industrial design in Spain has been a complex process that has made it difficult to define a distinctive identity. In other words, Spanish industrial design has lacked a clear identity and has faced challenges in establishing a coherent success strategy, similar to what has happened in other countries.

This study highlights the importance of national identity throughout history, focusing particularly on the 20th century. It examines the development of design in Spain and compares it to successful strategies adopted elsewhere to understand why it is challenging to define an identity in the field of Spanish industrial design. Finally, the work presents a series of reflections that invite discussion about the identity of Spanish design, its evolution and its potential use, emphasizing the need to forge its own design culture and taking advantage of diversity and its eclecticism.

Keywords: IIndustrial design, case study, Spanish design, identity, design identities, design theory.

Introduction

The development of industrial design has been linked to historical stages and periods from which design movements or trends have emerged, such as Modernism or Pop Design. This development has also been influenced by the needs of specific locations, as reflected in American Styling or Russian Constructivism (Dormer, 1993). This historical and geographical association generates characteristics in design, marking a style, an identity. In fact, as Guy Julier (2010a) asserts, an identity is shaped by all the circumstances that influence that matter; in this case, design is directly influenced by geography, culture, politics, or the economy. This same author proposes discussing design cultures beyond a simple visual culture, asserting that design needs its own culture. Julier (2006) refers to this concept in the following terms:

"It is a term that, for me, defines how designers think and work through different media. Different approaches and thought processes, but with a common goal: to communicate. Design is a way of life; it is in everything around us. We should all strive to do things better."

Through this term, the author emphasizes the importance of the role of design in the creation of identities, consumption habits, and lifestyles, conceiving it as a cultural practice that has economic value. Thus, design cannot be understood from an individualistic or isolated point of view, but as the result of national and international movements, with their flows and identities. Furthermore, he distinguishes three historical moments in the creation of national identities in design (Julier, 2010b): (1) 1890-1910: Assuming the role of the industrial revolution in the manufacturing industry, there is a search for national characteristics of design within the international framework of Art Nouveau and its national variants; (2) 1945-1980: After World War II, nations undergo reconstruction after six years of conflict, enhancing the need to return to the everyday aesthetics and localized practices; (3) 1980-1990: Modernity arrives in a context of reclamation where the intention to express the purity and naturalness of the local through design can be identified, through the transmission of traditions, heritage, and customs.

In this same text, Julier reflects on the importance of the emergence of design cultures:

"We must look at design beyond borders and at the same time pay attention to the local conditions of visual cultures, as it is an ideologically constructed practice that includes the observation of everyday life."
On the other hand, the term design culture suggests a double interpretation. Firstly, this term is attributed the interpretation of multiple contexts that structure the form and expression of design. Secondly, it reflects a new sensitivity and a new position for the practice of design. Guy Julier (2010b) suggests a model for design culture in which the following factors are involved:

- 1. Value. The designer's role in creating value.

- 2. Circulation. Design moves considering a series of elements that influence productive processes; from available technologies to politics and economic fluctuations.

- 3. Practice. Individuals as bearers of collectively performed practices

Leaving aside the term design culture, the concept of style, among its different meanings, implies the signification of a set of characteristics that individualize the artistic trend of an era. Usually, a style can have a geographical and temporal origin, and thus is inherently influenced by a particular culture and circumstances. On other occasions, a style can be directly associated with the work of one or several authors. For instance, British design, specifically in the 1940s and 1950s, aims to achieve public appreciation of good design and good taste (Dormer, 1993).

Once a style has been established and socially accepted, the phenomenon of stylistic recognition occurs, through which people can identify its distinctive characteristics and even form a visual image of works that belong to that categorization. Similarly, the ability to categorize a work and assert that it belongs to a particular style emerges. When this happens, it can be said that a work or creation corresponds to an identity, meaning it has a set of unique features that distinguish it from other works, defining and promoting different identities. This categorization occurs in many areas surrounding human life, and throughout history, artistic, literary, and architectural styles have been defined in this way. Similarly, in the recent history of industrial design, many styles have also emerged, leading to the categorization of design (Bürdek, 2002).

Analysis

The use of national identity as a competitive element

With the mention of the construct "Scandinavian design," a person with minimal knowledge of industrial design can enumerate some of its characteristics and its scope (in this case, geographically linked to the name itself). According to the literature, it can be said that its hallmarks are pure forms, the use of laminated wood, experimentation with the flexibility of this material, and the search for elegant lines (Fiell and Fiell, 2003). Additionally, its emergence highlighted the modernity of Scandinavian society at the beginning of the 20th century.

It is necessary to assess the importance of a product responding to a specific identity, as an agent or reason for consumption in the design industry. A clear example is precisely the so-called Scandinavian design, for the cultural and economic exploitation of its identity (Saarela, 2000).

One of the key factors in the germination and flourishing of a style is geographical and cultural influence. Therefore, tradition, climate, landscape, and Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and Finnish folklore are determining factors in defining Scandinavian design. In the words of Ettore Sottsass (1998), "(...) design follows a path that encompasses archaic things and traditional burdens, because we are tradition, antiquity, ... and the strangest emotions."

Similarly, in Germany in the first half of the 20th century, universal solutions in the world of design were sought, combining two styles known as functionalism and rationalism. The Bauhaus, following the phrase "Form follows function" proposed by architect Louis Sullivan, worked with steel, glass, and tubular structures to create functional furniture and buildings (Fiell and Fiell, 2011). Thus, with functionalism, Germany can be identified as one of the most representative regions. Likewise,

speaking of radical design, Arts & Crafts, or constructivism, one associates these with countries like Italy, England, and Russia, respectively.

This association or stylistic recognition highlights the existence of an originating component in the emergence of a style. That is, a link or nexus between the characteristics that configure said style and its geographical area of activity (Pasini, 2005).

An in-depth analysis of each of the aforementioned styles would reveal that culture, social moment, resources, ideology, and tradition of a territory are the factors that have shaped these styles, and that these identities are also marked by the values and feelings of society. This link is precisely what the concept of design culture proposed by Julier suggests.

Therefore, design is an important agent in the creation of identity, consumption habits, and the lifestyle of a society, but on the other hand, it cannot be understood individually, as an isolated element. The way in which design is carried out, considering the surrounding circumstances, generates the creation of a design culture that transmits a specific local narrative.

It's worth noting the reflection carried out by Gil (2002) regarding the dehumanizing evolution of consumer products. Since the onset of the industrial revolution and thus the consumption revolution, products gradually adapted their characteristics to achieve increasingly industrialized manufacturing, thereby losing the artisanal aesthetic and disappearing the personalized component in the conception and manufacture of objects. This premise became one of the maxims of the Bauhaus, generating objects that expressed an aesthetic close to the machine, setting aside the aesthetic component. However, this premise also sparked debates and opposing views. According to architect Frank Lloyd Wright: "Form follows function - that has been misunderstood. Form and function should be one." In other words,

function and form should go hand in hand since one cannot consider a function without the aesthetics suggesting it, and vice versa. This aspect emphasizes the need to imbue a product with a certain identity.

In the middle of the form-function dilemma, industrialization has led to the neglect of certain aspects related to the human being. Despite industrial production, a product must meet human needs and relate to the user. Furthermore, the term design culture proposed by Julier emphasizes the importance of products communicating with users, conveying an identity. Therefore, it's not only necessary for a series of values to exist in the conception of a product, but it is vital for these to be detected by recipients, the users (Chaves, 2006).

From the British Arts & Crafts movement to the phenomenon of Italian design.

Today, it is relatively easy to identify the design carried out in countries like Italy or the United States throughout the 20th century. Different cultures have prevailed over others, meaning that certain identities have been promoted over others. We can affirm that throughout the 20th century, in the field of design, a series of national identities have been consumed, directly linked to geographical areas, but beyond a specific style, they responded to broader characteristics: to a society and a culture (Sparke, 2010).

The success of national identities throughout the 20th century does not rely on a single strategy, but precisely these identities have been influenced by the design environment itself, which varies in each case. As Guy Julier (2010a) argues, the success in promoting identities - individual, corporate, or national - is related to the existence of a design culture in each case. Therefore, understanding the different strategies and foundations

in each particular case will serve as a reflection on the creation of an identity and its promotion.

Thus, the nations of the United Kingdom, especially England with its large cities, were pioneers in showcasing their material identity, thanks to imminent industrialization. The way to showcase the advances of their identity was through universal exhibitions, forging an identity around the movement that would be called Arts & Crafts. The association was simple, Arts & Crafts meant British. With William Morris as the standard-bearer of the movement, the aim was to value the functionality of objects, but without disregarding their ornamentation and final decoration, as the pursuit of beauty could not be abandoned (Parry, 1996).

Despite the eclecticism of British populations, there is still a direct association between Arts & Crafts and the United Kingdom today. When broadly defining the identity of British design, the association with craftsmanship, the delicacy, and dedication of creators - makers - in unique pieces still predominates, adding great added value, respecting functionality, but without renouncing ornamentation and decoration with meaning.

On the other hand, in the case of France, this nation prefers to advance by creating an identity without discarding or rejecting its own native tradition, being a country, during the early stages of the 20th century, with strong mercantile activity and a strong culture of consumption (Frauly, 2002). French design continues to focus on the luxury industry, with refined jewelry and furniture works that will become the material culture of the moment. For this reason, Penny Sparke argues that France is one of the first examples of understanding material culture revolving around opulence and luxury.

It cannot be overlooked that from early stages, French design was aimed at wealthy social classes and the upper echelons. Even after periods of war, creations continued

to target an increasingly reduced and aesthetically conservative elite (Torrent and Marín, 2005). Such was the rootedness of French design in its origins that variations in its style were minimal past the first half of the 20th century, where French design oscillated between glamour and kitsch.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Germany sought a national identity and a design ideology through which to express itself (Heskett, 1986). Observing the Arts & Crafts movement, it quickly adopted this model and became one of the best examples of the union of art and industry, harnessing the momentum of training policies carried out by schools such as the Deutscher Werkbund (German Association of Work), founded in 1907 with the aim of applying art to industry. Unlike what happened with the Arts & Crafts movement, this organization focuses on supporting industry rather than keeping its focus on the realm of art, pursuing the goal of improving the design and quality of German products. Under this discourse, Germany managed to be the reference point in the field of design during the first decades of the 20th century.

Another basic aspect in the formation of German design identity is the commitment to the application of rationalism in mass production, seeking free action without market pressures, something that is no longer possible today. Despite the passage of time, contemporary German design still responds to the identity proposed in its early stages of industrialization, highlighting the importance of origins and society's response to an identity. Thus, today companies like Bosch and Opel still refer to German reliability, their technological tradition, or their consistency over time; essentially, they continue to use their country brand.

Unlike the previous cases, in the United States, it is complex to find a recent or proprietary material culture at the beginning of the 20th century, let alone to inquire about its roots in relation to craftsmanship. In its early days,

American design oscillated between populism, elitism, beauty, technological advancements, and exclusivity (Antonelli, 2008).

The American material identity is based on a life facilitated by technology, distant from traditions. Thus, the American proposal was entirely modern, perhaps becoming the first example of a consumer society, as its material culture would be shaped according to the needs and demands of the market. As Penny Sparke argues in her book "Design and Culture," "consumers are the true Americans," thus giving rise to the birth of the American Way (predecessor of what we now understand as a consumer society).

In addition to the automotive industry (one of the earliest examples of implementing mass production), it is important to mention the significance of aerospace advancements, as well as the utilization and conversion of the war industry into an industry dedicated to manufacturing consumer products. This aspect highlights the importance of the industrial vision of design in the United States, as well as the importance of its evolution linked to technological development.

On the other hand, Scandinavian design has been one of the benchmarks in the history of design, reaching its peak in the mid-20th century. Even today, it is easy to imagine the characteristics that define it. Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland are a core group of countries that, despite their differences, find a common identity around industrial design as a promoter of culture. The foundation of Scandinavian design is based on a democratic approach, continuously seeking an ideal society with a better quality of life through technology and affordable functional products (Fiell and Fiell, 2003).

In the case of Scandinavian design, there is a clear influence from the Deutscher Werkbund, pursuing values such as social democracy and the transition from craftsmanship to industrial production.

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However, the Scandinavian model prefers to prioritize a softer, more humanistic, and domestic decorative style over German rationalism (Demargne and Hervy, 2003). In its success, it is also worth noting that from the 1950s onwards, the distinctive label "Scandinavian Design" is established, and it is promoted through traveling exhibitions under the name "Design in Scandinavia."

In the case of Italy, the identity of design is forged in the wake of the economic boom experienced by the country during the 1950s. Taking advantage of this period, architects and designers focus their efforts on trying to understand and exploit the technological advances of the time. If anything distinguishes Italian design from this period - and perhaps today as well - it is its investigative and innovative character, always in search of new possibilities (Bosoni, 2008). Companies like Kartell, founded in 1949, have been betting on exploration from the outset, and in this particular case, on obtaining products made of polypropylene, a material unknown or little used up to that time. Designers and architects, who were less known at that time (names like Ettore Sottsass, Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Vico Magistretti, or Marco Zanuso) seize the opportunity offered by technological advances by launching completely innovative products onto the market.

Furthermore, Italian design was supported by the creation of magazines such as Domus, Abitare, or Casabella, which provided a constant dialogue about design (Sparke, 1988). Around design, events began to emerge such as the Salone del Mobile or the celebration of the Milan Triennials, which served to spread the benefits of Italian design to society. In this way, Italy became the world's epicenter of design, reaching its peak in 1972 with the exhibition "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape" held at the MoMA in New York.

Some pillars of national identities

After reviewing the national identities in design that emerged throughout the 20th century, it can be observed how their formation can be achieved through different strategies. As a summary, the following parameters can be identified as susceptible in achieving identity:

- - Importance of industrialization and the emergence of new industries.

- - Economic strength of companies and consumers.

- - Promotion and sustained support over time for values of quality, innovation, and added value that design brings to business and the economy.

- - Sustained communication of these solid design values both internally to society and externally in the image of the country, its companies, products, and designers.

- - Utilization of major events such as World's Fairs.

- - Emergence of world-class designers or companies that exert leadership in design and identity creation.

- - Promotion of design schools and their educational models.

- - Support and promotion of a culture of innovation.

Taken together, these parameters can be summarized as the pillars for the construction and sustained support over time of the unique design culture in each country.

In the present day, while it is easier to talk about Italian or French design, in other countries, the exercise of creating identity is being considered. This is demonstrated by works such as Özcan (2009) or Chung (1998), which propose the design of specific

territories as a strategy for achieving modernity and development. An example is the Dutch design's commitment to the concept of open design, referring to the openness of its society; an image promoted by the government and various cultural organizations (Calvera, 1998). In this context, it is worth questioning the development of this field in the case of Spain and analyzing the possible achievement of an identity, as well as the factors conditioning the development of a unique design culture during the 20th century.

The lack of identity in Spanish design. Turmoil and eclecticism

Industrial design in Spain has historically lagged behind the leading European countries and North America. This lag has been reflected throughout history, driven by delayed industrialization and a tumultuous historical development.

From the wars endured, through the period of dictatorship established between 1939 and 1975, to the economic boom and cultural explosion experienced in the late 1970s and the 1980s. As a result, industrial design is born and grows as a discipline lacking its own discourse and hindered in its expansion by the mentioned events.

Historically, Spain receives styles, movements, and trends with delay. Moreover, a large part of the sector (designers and producing companies) introduces novelties from other countries without questioning their origin, motivations, and without analyzing the discourse implied by their acceptance (Martínez, López, and Cataño, 2015).

After the fall of the dictatorship in the late 1970s, and despite the profound economic crisis worldwide, Spain experiences an impressive cultural flourishing, expected to have a positive impact on the development of industrial design in the country. However, instead of continuing with the foundations

proposed in the 1960s, when Spanish industrial design found its main attribute in cultural value (Galán et al., 2010), the majority of Spanish designers align with the radical movement that emerged in Italy in response to the Bel design of the 1960s in that country. Spain simply adopts its aesthetic code without embracing its ideals. According to Capella (1998), the term "design" quickly depreciates, and this discipline begins to be associated with aesthetic whim, lack of functionality, or discomfort in some cases.

This political rebellious character turns into a boom in the 1980s (Torrent and Marín, 2005). During this decade, events unfold that will change the course of this consumer discipline, such as Spain's entry into the European Community or the implementation of the European single market. At this moment, a mismatch is generated, seeking greater visibility instead of continuing to bet on being a cultural capital (Narotzky, 2000).

In the 1980s and early 1990s, with the Barcelona Olympic Games and the Universal Exposition of Seville, in addition to the aforementioned events, design begins to be talked about in Spain, to the point of coining expressions like "Do you design or work?" (Zabalbeascoa, 2011). However, today in the same territory, it is complex to understand industrial design, and promoters still emphasize explaining what we mean when referring to design and try to convey to companies and manufacturers how beneficial it would be to add the design component to their companies.

In summary, two starting points can be appreciated that have characterized the way design is understood in Spain:

- 1. First, the understanding of industrial design and its origins from the world of decorative arts, with this discipline being developed hand in hand with the field of fine arts in its early stages, and later with architecture. Therefore,

the understanding of an autonomous discipline was slow and gradual.

- 2. On the other hand, it is important to highlight the strong roots of craftsmanship, due to slow and almost non-existent industrialization in the early stages of the industrial revolution, establishing significant differences with the rest of the European continent. Additionally, within the Spanish territory itself, this industrialization was more successful in certain areas such as Catalonia, the Basque Country, or Valencia.

As emphasized by Anna Calvera (1998) in her essay "Antecedents" on Spanish design of the 20th century, from the early stages of design, the shift from decorative arts and craftsmanship to industrial design and industry respectively was a challenge. Despite the distance, Spain still experiences these differences in industrialization in its geography today, being a country with highly differentiated regions. For this reason, it is not necessary to seek a definitive Spanish design style (Julier, 1991), but rather an eclectic design prevails, composed of diverse styles and opinions.

The fact that the Spanish territory is very diverse from a cultural standpoint complicates the extraction of fundamental traits that characterize Spanish design, that is, the establishment of a grounded identity. However, there are certain patterns that, through analysis of the main bibliographic references, emphasize various core aspects of Spanish design. Juli Capella (2005) characterizes it as imaginative, daring design that plays with irony and humor, always mindful of the versatility of its use, emphasizing that products concentrate all their potential in a unique form. Similarly, Quim Larrea (2002) agrees in affirming the strong emotional, nostalgic component and the attachment to our memories, resulting in designs that seek to communicate with their recipient. These two authors emphasize that Spanish design seeks to modernize some popular elements by playing with them to bring them up to date, thus emerging as an important regional substrate. Following this line of argument, Enric Satué, national design award winner in 1998, highlights the subconscious influence of culture, with design functioning as a transmitting agent (Arias, 1996).

However, other authors affirm that these characteristics are not extrapolable to the totality of Spanish design. Emili Farré Escofet affirms the nonexistence of a Spanish identity and the presence of a design with a marked Mediterranean character (Arias, 1996). Another argument against identity definition is the relentless globalization, which forces us to renounce a geographic identity. Coinciding with Guy Julier (1991), Spanish design is then characterized by a marked eclecticism, as this activity is individual and not identified with certain styles.

On the other hand, professional studies or designers such as Emiliana Design or Jaime Hayón, highlight the importance of the Spanish character in design approaches, speaking of freshness, vitality, audacity, or risk (Sánchez, 2012).

It is important to highlight that, as several authors mention, Spanish design is strongly linked to the world of craftsmanship and handmade products. Companies are small, technologically limited, but they know how to overcome these limitations with creativity, innovation, and the contribution of added value (Burkhadt, 2005). As Santiago Miranda states in Arias' work (1996): "Others can provide technology since Spanish design stands out in the field of ideas and culture for design".

So, Bravo (2005) considers Spain as a country especially endowed for creation. Similarly, Alberto Corazón adds that Spain possesses transformation techniques and raw materials that are particularly unique, and through design, the Spanish product is capable of standing out and competing globally (Arias, 1996).

The dynamism in production, the use of innovative techniques, as well as the utilization of native raw materials are other characteristics that make Spanish design, despite limitations, agile and competitive in small-scale work (Sánchez, 2012). Furthermore, precisely based on these productive characteristics, the habitat emerges as the sector in which industrial design has left a greater number of creations (Zabalbeascoa, 2010).

Lastly, globalization has also affected the internationalization of Spanish design, with an increasing number of studios and designers orienting their creations towards new markets (Galán et. al., 2010). This fact necessitates understanding the philosophy of the producing companies in these countries, which can cause some disconnection or detachment from national identity.

Despite the gathered opinions, it is complex to characterize the identity of Spanish design. Sometimes the views of the main authors are refuted by members of the sector, with perhaps eclecticism being the attribute on which all agree, or at least not rejected. Tachy Mora (2010) explains this eclecticism as the essence of Spanish design, because the principles and characteristics are very different and varied among themselves.

On the other hand, the consulted documents focus on particular analyses and explaining the virtues of Spanish design as a creative activity, with virtually no comprehensive treatments of the subject that would allow deciphering its identity. This complexity is mentioned by Juli Capella in his book, "Los objetos esenciales del diseño español" ("The Essential Objects of Spanish Design"), where he indicates that due to the variety of styles and the designers' efforts to distinguish themselves from others, a specific Spanish design cannot be precisely defined. It is precisely in this search for common attributes, rooted in origins and heritage, that the exhibition "From Spain with Design: Identity and Territory" emphasizes, touring since 2022

to vindicate creation from different parts of the Spanish geography.

In summary, it is observed that many and varied traits are used by leading authors to refer to Spanish design, which reflects the aforementioned eclecticism. However, although eclecticism can be beneficial from the perspective of diversity or globalization, it dilutes stylistic recognition and therefore the rational value of identity, complicating its emergence process, thus explaining the possible absence of identity in the case of Spanish design.

Conclusions

The use of identity in industrial design has been important in the social and economic development of different regions. Furthermore, achieving this identity is inherently related to obtaining and understanding a culture of design among various actors - designers, companies, and countries. From a historical perspective, beyond not achieving an identity for Spanish industrial design, the development of this discipline has not managed to penetrate business culture. In other words, a solid design culture has not been achieved, still in the process of consolidation today.

On the other hand, when characterizing design done in Spain, no common pattern is observed. Despite the existence of good examples internationally, it is not possible to list traits with the ease that occurs, for example, in the Scandinavian case.

It can be concluded that this happens because Spanish design does not share those premises that have allowed other countries to enjoy identity. Thus, the following reasons are proposed to underscore the absence of identity in Spanish design:

- - The historical development of the country has imposed a mindset that hindered the culture of innovation and design in particular. Consequently, there has traditionally been a low level of awareness among companies regarding

the value of innovation in general; in products, processes, and services. The creation of identity and business value through innovation and the consequent contribution of rational, cultural, and experiential values to the product (largely intangible values) have not been sufficiently present in the minds of companies. Therefore, throughout the 20th century, there has been no culture of innovation in general or design in particular.

• - There has been inadequate communication of design values. At times, the message that has reached society has been even negative, giving a superficial image instead of highlighting the contribution of design to the competitiveness of companies; as well as its economic value and the values of quality, functionality, and comfort transmitted to the user. The message has not been correct or sustained both internally and externally.

• - The much later and weaker industrial development, with the exception of some regions like Catalonia. There has not been, in general, a strong industrial bourgeoisie with its own companies to drive innovation and design. The industrialization of the second half of the 20th century was generally due to the establishment of foreign companies, which designed from abroad. Thus, there has not been a strong locomotive effect generated by domestic companies.

• - There have been no periods of sustained economic prosperity during the 20th century. The situation has reversed in the last decade and the early years of the 21st century, however, these outbreaks have been thwarted by a very deep crisis. This has not promoted either industrial development or domestic consumption of design.

• - The contribution to identity from rational values (tangible) has been scattered, and except for exceptions, there has not been sufficient valuation

of these. Thus, eclecticism turns out to be the common denominator which comes to be the opposite of stylistic identity; however, it could well be considered a style in itself characteristic of Spanish design.

• - The enormous wealth of multiple cultural identities available in Spain (from the arts, literature, history, gastronomy, sports, traditions, the variety of cultures and peoples, or the legacy of one of the most spoken languages in the world) has not been exploited by companies when providing multiple positive, clearly identifiable values to their products and their identity as brands. In addition, Spanish design has never been linked to the identity of the country (the country brand has not been used).

• - Until a few years ago, there was no tradition of design schools. The incorporation of this discipline into the University itself has been very recent, so its creator and transmitter role of innovation is just beginning. For the same reason, the designer's vision as an integral product manager, communication skills, and strategy were simply limited by their training. As an addition, entrepreneurs did not have sufficient training and awareness - culture - about the use and importance of design.

• - Despite the important work of the so-called pioneers of Spanish design in the internal development of the discipline, there have been no world-class figures in the field of design and artistic avant-garde who, with their own success and that of their products, would have championed Spain's image as a design country.

• - The impulse of design from institutions throughout the 20th century has been erratic and inconsistent. Efforts to promote design have been made by the professional collective or by certain productive sectors. This lack of impetus is still notable today, with the absence of state public bodies

that oversee the interests of design, following the disappearance of the DDI (State Society for the Development of Design and Innovation).

These aspects have hindered the creation and dissemination of a design culture in Spain and therefore of its own identity in the field of design. Beyond small similarities and common aspects (formal or temporal), Spanish design shows an absence of identity and therefore does not enjoy its benefits.

In the current context of a global society, the benefits of using identity as a competitive strategy cannot be ignored. The task ahead is to propose the most successful strategy in the case of Spanish design, understanding the positive aspects of its eclecticism and diversity.

In summary, the best way to approach an identity will be to start by promoting design and by fostering this discipline in Spanish companies, taking as a reference the development of the discipline during the 20th century. Identity must go beyond stylistic recognition, and therefore its achievement is associated with the achievement of its own design culture.

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R. M.-Ro: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, and writing of the article.
P.F.-G.: Conceptualization, writing of the article, and preparation of materials.

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