

(hand)Made in America *

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Abstract: This article analyzes a Ford Motor Company advertisement that nods to a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) subculture. It explores how the “handmade” is valued and defined in the context of mass culture. The article offers a reading of the advertisement in the context of contemporary marketing trends to consider how ideas of mass culture, counterculture, and traditional culture shape concepts of fabricated objects. The idea of the factory-produced Ford is not in contrast to the handcrafted object as much as it is in dialogue. How do we categorize and value certain modes of production over others to construct our understandings of cultural identities—national, community, and individual?

[Keywords: *handmade objects*; *do-it-yourself projects*; *material culture*; Do-It-Yourself (DIY); craft theory. Keywords in italics are derived from the American Folklore Society Ethnographic Thesaurus, a standard nomenclature for the ethnographic disciplines.]

Hand woven designs, handcrafted coffee, artisanal pickles, and local art cooperatives: in the recent past, these objects and labels identified a creative American subculture, but now infiltrate popular American culture. Documented in Faythe Levine’s *Handmade Nation*, an underground, do-it-yourself (DIY) movement in the late 1990s and early 2000s led to subversive craft practices and alternative economies that advocated handmade, local, and sustainable lifestyles (Levine 2009). In just over a decade, the movement went mainstream. The Renegade Craft Fair, which began in Chicago in 2003, by 2014 had expanded to seven cities, operated a brick-and-mortar storefront, and partnered with the reigning queen of corporate craft, Martha Stewart. Mega-stores like Crate and Barrel, Anthropologie, and West Elm emphasized collaborations and partnerships with handmade artists to suggest individual intervention on mass-produced objects. In 2010, the Ford Motor Company drew from the DIY fervor in an ad series titled “Ones to Watch.” The company featured hip Brooklynite Chrysanthe Tenentes in its ad campaign to share her suggestions on the trends “soon to be sweeping the nation:” handmade clothing, unique map quilts, a community art space where you could learn from peers on how to make just about everything by hand, and the Ford Edge vehicle. Whether or not people read advertising campaigns such as Ford’s as reliable sources for future trends is suspect; however the multiple meanings this ad communicates are fascinating as it juxtaposes corporate culture with the DIY movement. The advertising campaign is now defunct, but the processes of appropriating craft to consumer trends—what Jenni Sorkin refers to as “craftlike”—is worth examining (2015). In this article, I use the advertising campaign as a representative snapshot in time to consider how popular culture created value and defined the “handmade” in the context of mass communication. How does mass culture categorize and value certain modes of production over

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others to construct understandings of cultural identities—national, community, and individual? I will briefly explore DIY practices, as presented by Ford and in a larger commercial context, before deconstructing “the handmade” as an idea evoked in advertisements and popular culture.

Ford, seeking to appeal to a younger demographic often labeled “Millenials,” launched its campaign “Ones to Watch” to promote the 2011 Ford Edge sports utility vehicle. I came across the campaign in the fall of 2010 when I saw a print advertisement in *The New Yorker* that featured a list of five trends suggested by Tenentes, followed by a listing for the Ford Edge (Figure 1). The print advertisement pointed me to their online campaign. “Presenting insider trend reports and videos from bloggers who live on the cutting edge in the worlds of beauty, fashion, health and wellness, tech, and culture,” read the campaign’s blog (Ford Motor Company 2010b). Hosted by Conde Nast’s digital “storytelling” (promotional) site, the blog’s design and content resembled popular magazines targeted primarily to twenty-something, middle-class women (Figure 2). Owners of the vehicle, Ford suggested with its campaign, would not only drive the Edge, but could live on the cutting edge. Under the subheading of “culture,” Ford pointed us to Brooklyn. A *New York Times* article published in December 2010 (Stern 2010) referred to the ad in a story on the branding of Brooklyn as a DIY model for food production. The article stated, “small restaurants and large companies, like Williams-Sonoma, are lining up to hitch their wagons to Brooklyn’s DIY chic, as though the borough offers something missing in mainstream food culture, maybe in culture in general” (Stern 2010). To classify DIY as “chic” suggested that its culture, or the ideas, products, and people associated with the DIY label, had become popular, mainstream, and even elitist.

Faythe Levine’s (2009) documentary film and accompanying book, *Handmade Nation* (2008), tracked the DIY movement’s beginnings to 1994, with several publications marking a shift in crafting practices. Amy Schroeder’s *Venus Zine*, *Bust Magazine*’s “She’s Crafty” column, and Jean Railla’s *Crafty Lady* created links between punk ideologies, creative expression, and traditional craft. Levine writes in the preface to her book, “our handmade goods were influenced by traditional handiwork, modern aesthetics, politics, feminism, and art. We were redefining what craft was and making it our own” (2008, ix).

While Brooklyn, New York, emerged as an urban hipster center for the movement in popular media, it by no means defined DIY. *Handmade Nation* (Levine 2008; 2009) illustrates a number of individuals, collectives, businesses, and markets across the country that shaped its identity, suggesting a national scene that drew from ideas of localness to emphasize community, creativity and anti-consumerism. Dennis Stevens saw DIY emerge from Generation X (individuals born between 1965 and 1981) as an aesthetic, as well as political expression:

The DIY craft movement makes a conscious effort to avoid crassness, but DIY craft is unquestionably about style, irony, and sometimes a touch of kitsch. It is about wit and humor and it is about being “in the know” from a young person’s perspective, but it is about the choices that we make as consumers. [Stevens 2011, 50]

Kurt Reighley classified the DIY ethos slightly differently, characterizing it as a “new American roots movement” (2010). He writes that young urban populations, whom he termed “modern

Advertisement

Ones to Watch

Some of the country's top movements start in Brooklyn, NY. Chrysanthe Tenentes of Brooklyn Based forecasts trends soon to be sweeping the nation.



For Chrysanthe's full trend report and to view a day in her life, visit FordOnesToWatch.com.

While you're there, enter for a chance to win the *Ford Ones to Watch* sweepstakes.

SERIOUS COFFEE

The morning cup of coffee in New York has moved past the simple deli takeout cup. Many shops, like **Oslo Coffee**, now have their own roasting equipment; some even brew each cup individually.



GOURMET CANNING

The new urban homesteading movement harks back to your grandparents' days. Small-batch jams and pickled vegetables, such as **McClure's Pickles**, are filling up local food enthusiasts' cupboards.



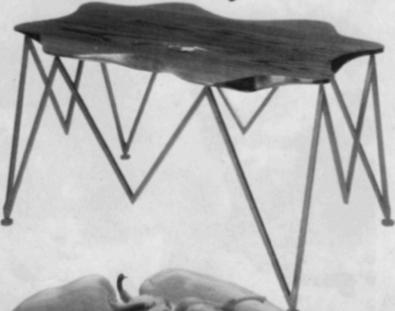
MAP DESIGN

This trend is all about showing your local pride. Whether it's on a stylized poster, chic city tote or custom-made **Haptic Labs** Softmap quilt, maps as a style statement are all the rage.



TRADE SCHOOL

People are finding teachers among their peers in boutique schools like **3rd Ward**, where they learn skills including furniture making (like this *Amoeba Table* by 3rd Ward members David Siegel, Roger Benton, Dario Giminez and Doug Werner) and music theory for next to nothing.



THE ART OF URBAN FARMING

Our obsession with sustainable food is stronger than ever as more urban farmers plant on rooftops and artists incorporate agriculture into their work.





Drive one.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. To enter and for full rules, go to www.fordonestowatch.com. Starts 12:01 AM ET October 5, 2010 and ends 11:59 PM ET December 30, 2010. Open to legal residents of the 50 United States/D.C. 18 years or older, except employees of Sponsor, their immediate families and those living in the same household. Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. Void outside the 50 United States/D.C. and where prohibited. A.R.V. of prize \$4,900. Sponsor: Condé Nast.

Driving while distracted can result in loss of vehicle control. Only use mobile phones/MyFord Touch™/other devices, even with voice commands, when it is safe to do so. Some features may be locked out while the vehicle is in gear.

FORD EDGE

One of the most stylish trends this season is the **2011 Ford Edge**. Its beautiful grille, sculpted tail lamps and available spoiler captivate. Inside, you'll find sleek design born of expert craftsmanship. And with available MyFord Touch™, the Edge understands up to 10,000 voice commands. Plus, the 2nd-row legroom guarantees that you and your passengers will be sitting pretty.



Figure 1: Ford Edge advertisement from *The New Yorker* (Ford Motor Company 2010a).



Figure 2: Screenshot from “Ones to Watch” website (Ford Motor Company 2010b).

pioneers,” were raising chickens, canning vegetables, and sewing their own clothes in order to return to a nostalgic past in response to the disconnection they felt in “an accelerated world.” For Reighley (2010), craft—from the multiple perspectives of the makers, sellers (not always distinct from the makers), and consumers—referred to an idealized “by your bootstraps” past in the context of a corporate, commodified present; the sentiment was echoed in these handmade movements, whether it was labeled “DIY,” “roots,” “Americana,” or “indie craft.” However, Reighly’s (2010) labels and categorizations can distract from the fundamental link between the groups—their shared emphasis on making. As Andrew Wagner writes, “the term ‘do it yourself’ (or ‘DIY’) as a point of differentiation within the world of craft has always struck me as odd. Aren’t the words ‘craft’ and ‘DIY’ interchangeable? Aren’t all makers, to some extent, doing it themselves?” (Wagner 2008, 1).

In the context of craft (or craft-like objects) in commercial markets, the focus on *doing* plays an interesting role. Objects are often marketed as “handcrafted” or “handmade,” placing emphasis on the human action. Labeling a product as something that has been made activates it as a dynamic object, as opposed to a static object, suggesting a human intervention in a manufactured world. Furniture company West Elm launched a line called “Handcrafted” which emphasized the provenance of its merchandise. The web page describing the program began with this quote from company president, Jim Brett: “there’s a real nostalgia to return to the time of the maker—for a time when people knew who made their products, both here in the US and globally” (Handcrafted, West Elm 2014). Yet when I searched West Elm’s website, I found that the only makers identified individually were the US-based designers who “collaborated” with foreign makers—the US designer conceptualized the product and the anonymous foreign maker executed the design.

The US-based chain store Anthropologie (and Brett's former employer) sold a lamp made from marble and metal, with sleek, modern—some might say “industrial”—lines (Figure 3). The lamp was listed on Anthropologie's website as “Handmade Carrara Desk Lamp,” yet there was no information as to whose hands made the lamp (Anthropologie 2014). The label implied that the material for the base came from Carrara, a town in Italy known for its blue-grey marble, but was the maker from Carrara? This seemed unimportant to Anthropologie (the company name invokes another entirely separate-but-related topic for analysis). The company drew from trends in popular culture in which a connection to ideas of the handmade took on more importance than any actual connection with making. They used the trends or aesthetics of making to promote an object, selling an idea of doing without any actual doing. Your home décor may not have been DIY, but at least it was SDI (Someone-Did-It).



Figure 3: “Handmade Carrara Desk Lamp” from retailer Anthropologie (Anthropologie 2014).

Ford also adapted this generalized DIY culture in its advertisement, alluding to a broad conception of DIY with its small batch pickles and quirky map quilts alongside its automobile to emphasize its own association with the handmade. The advertisement did not promote strictly handmade objects or explicitly state how the objects were made; however, its juxtaposition with these handmade, or seemingly handmade, objects aligned its own product, the automobile, with qualities suggested through an idea of the handmade. In the ad, the American manufacturer emphasized attention to detail and aesthetic quality in the 2011 Ford Edge: “inside, you’ll find sleek design born of expert craftsmanship.” This copy echoed one of many examples in advertising that emphasizes craftsmanship and expert hand skills in products, contributing to a narrative that reinforces value assessments between mass-produced and handmade objects.

In the next section, I consider the influence and importance of the hand in craftsmanship to parse out some of the ways that human intervention increased an object's value. I then examine how

technological processes—using hands and machines—further complicate understandings of the handmade. Placing those processes in specific locations leads to my final discussion of how Ford’s advertisement relies on the values of tools, processes, and localness to imbue its mass-produced vehicle with qualities and values of the handmade.

Hand

Is mass production expert craftsmanship? Examining philosophical ruminations on the hand can elucidate the points of intersection and diversion between human interaction and mass production. According to Howard Risatti, author of *A Theory of Craft* (2007), craftsmanship requires a consideration of the hand. The craftsperson who makes an object by hand considers the ability of the hand to hold the object and interact with the object. He draws from Immanuel Kant to suggest human rationality was bestowed from nature onto physical being, suggesting that the mind extends through the hand to the object: “the hand, as extension of the human body, gave scale, form, and proportion to the things of the world so that they made sense only when understood in relation to the body via the hand” (Risatti 2007, 112). Metaphors of “grasping” and “handling” items emphasized the processes of understanding the world through the hand.

Martin Heidegger’s (1992) writing also connects manmade objects to the hand. He considers the hand as the tool used to activate, reflect, and communicate our inner selves; the hand marks our humanity. He writes: “Things ‘act’ [handlen], insofar as the things present and at hand dwell within the reach of the ‘hand’ [Hand]” (Heidegger 1992, 80). Heidegger (1992) interprets Greek poet Parmenides to consider man as he marks the world with his hand. The marks made by the hand, the actions and the creations, are the essence of his being. To understand the hand as an extension of the human self requires us to consider the role of the *hand* in the handmade. For Heidegger, “the hand is, together with the word, the essential distinction of man” (1992, 80). The hand was the tool by which man expresses himself through handwriting. The handwritten word is not communication; according to Heidegger, it is *be-ing*: “the essential distinguishing mark of man is revealed in the fact that the hand indicates and by indicating discloses what was concealed” (1992, 84). Though Heidegger (1992) considers handwriting as the form marked by the hand to reveal one’s self, I expand this thought to go beyond the textual word to propose a broader conception of handwriting—revealing one’s self with the hand, be it making letters out of graphite or scarves out of yarn. Heidegger, however, is useful for considering the relation of our creations to the self, through the body, raising complicated questions as to how the body represents the self in the forms it creates through the hand.

Risatti (2007) suggests a possibility of how the human intervention of the hand in the object, constructed as handmade, ascribes value to the object:

“Craft” implies a specific way of making an object and a special way of expressing one’s *being* with and in the world. More important, this way of *being* is not restricted to the maker but is open to any and every beholder of the craft object who attends closely enough to the object’s objectness. When this happens, the object reflects back to the beholder a deeper experience of effort, work, and skill, one that links the object to all other human efforts. [Risatti 2007, 322]

The hand embeds objects with a humanness that evokes sentiment, imbuing objects with a mystique that privileges the handmade over the mass-produced. It is not an essential be-ing, as Heidegger (1992) suggests, but rather a *sense* of be-ing. All man-made objects are touched by the human hand and mediated by tools. The degree of mediation helps construct sentiment and value, however meanings were made in the context of the world in which the object circulated. While Heidegger (1992) focuses solely on the creator's hand, Risatti (2007) includes the hand of the object's user. A consideration of the multiple hands that connect with the made object expands the potential for objects to not only ascribe meaning through production, but to acquire meaning through circulation.

Made

Returning to the example of the Ford advertisement, according to its message, the hands that drove the Ford Edge vehicle could be the same hands that made or used handmade objects. In its suggestions to enroll in craft classes, purchase one-of-a-kind clothing from independent designers, or grow a rooftop garden, the advertisement relies on the power of the hand, or even the suggestion of the hand's intervention, to create a sentiment of the handmade that obscures the role of the hand in the production of the vehicle. In constructing some *thing* as handmade, we ascribe value and meaning that refers to creation through the hand. The tools and mediation through machines are often ignored in favor of privileging the hand. The handmade, as constructed in contrast to the mass-produced, was made special—set apart. But it can only be special when the mass-produced exists. The Ford advertisement is not actually creating two separate categories of products—the specialized, handmade in contrast to the mass-produced Ford. The ad draws from these categorizations to appeal to a group who identify with that contrast and suggests that its product, the mass produced, could augment—even make possible—the products and the identities that the DIY community desires. It does not matter whether or not its audience is actually makers, participants of this imagined community. What matters is that they can identify or associate themselves with this community.

Making the *idea* of the handmade is deeply linked to the history of industrialization. Fearing the machine, anti-modern imaginations of made objects suggested power and inherent superiority in the handmade:

[B]efore industrial technology the ability to bring *something* into being - whether an image, sculpture, or a functional object - was a kind of wondrous act because the ability of the hand to wrest a realm of culture from the material realm of nature was limited and limiting; this gave the hand and the handmade special metaphorical qualities that the viewer understood and appreciated as part of a larger worldview. It is these very qualities that the power of the machine undermines (perhaps even destroys) by its unlimited scale of production and its overwhelming power to master material. [Risatti 2007, 194]

Does the *power* of the machine really undermine the handmade, or does it enhance and strengthen the *value* of the handmade?

Today, machines make our everyday items—our dishes, our clothes, our furniture, even our food. Consider, for example, a boxed cake in contrast to a cake made from scratch. The ability to wrestle one's materials from nature, so to say, to use one's own empowered hands, gave the creation heightened meaning over a cake whose ingredients were assembled and boxed on the assembly line. A cake made from the box required an egg, some oil, and water. But the ultimate cake made from scratch required you to gather your own flour, use the eggs from your own chickens, berries from your garden, milk from your milk-share. A cake was already invested with specialness, made for celebratory occasions to express love or friendship. Prior to the boxed cake, the cake was characterized as special because of this purpose or intention. But with the advent of the mass-produced cake, the homemade cake was imbued with new meaning and power. It was special for the effort put into it, for the role of the hand. The specialness of the handmade, I argue here, was heightened, rather than destroyed, in the context of the machine.

In the case of DIY makers, the tension between anti-industrialization and an embrace of technology was often collapsed. Fiber artist Sabrina Gschwandter (2008) discusses the multiple ways in which non-mechanized handicraft interfaces with machines and technology. She writes “it's true that people pick up crochet hooks as an escape from the computer. In the face of everything fast and glinting, they want something real—a reinjection of the artisanal or some sense of the integrity of labor” (2008, 278). But she notes that their flights often lead them back to the computer, to online forums and instruction aids. She contends that “DIY crafters fluidly use technology to market and sell their work and participate in their communities” (Gschwandter 2008, 278).

In some cases, the tools, the devices or implements used to make the objects, could be another person's hands. This was the scenario of the aforementioned Handcrafted line by West Elm, in which a named designer used an anonymous maker, or makers, as his tool. In this context, the unknown hands acted as a mechanized technology used to create the objects. Looking to the fashion industry, using others' labor as a means to execute one's own designs is common practice, Glenn Adamson (2013) writes. He includes the example of the collaboration between fashion designer Alexander McQueen and carver Paul Ferguson in his book, *The Invention of Craft* (Adamson 2013, 34–36). Ferguson executed McQueen's designs, building the molds for shoes and mannequins as McQueen dictated. Though Ferguson felt that McQueen treated him as a collaborator, he was not recognized publicly as such. McQueen, the expert designer, used Ferguson, the expert craftsman, as a tool. How does this tool delineate craftsmanship in the object? In understanding the final product, did Ferguson's hand make its mark? Similar to Gschwandter's (2008) recognition of the complicated interplay between handwork and technology, Adamson (2013) writes of dual (or dueling?) tensions in fashion production: the notability of the craftsmanship in relation to the notability of an individual:

On the one hand, [contemporary couture] embraces the sturdiest of craft values - complex pattern cutting, bespoke tailoring, and the traditional leather-working skills that go into high-end handbags and shoes. On the other hand, this artisanal content is intermixed with new technology, and wrapped in a thick, gauzy shroud of celebrity-anchored brand management. [35]

High-end fashion designer McQueen utilized the cultural and branding power his celebrity status commanded to execute his own production line. The objects, made by individual hands, circulated within a mass market. They were not unique individual objects, they were just marketed as uniquely-made objects within a line of manufacturing. Adamson refers to these methods, also adopted by makers and designers outside of the fashion industry, as methods “in which deep craft and superficial image are bound up in a single, potent gesture” (2013, 36). In this case, the gesture displayed the object: the handmade object obscured the actual hand that made the object.

Handmade crafters’ use of technology—machines, online tools, and production techniques—to create, distribute, and promote products and ideas narrowed the gap between Ford’s presentations of mass culture and DIY culture. Not only did a broad understanding of the handmade enable Ford’s promotional materials to somewhat convincingly replicate DIY aesthetics, the conflation of technologies in processes of making made DIY culture look a little more like Ford. Its association, however, had its limits. Too much human intervention suggests a lack of precision and a potential for error. While valuing the role of the hand in some handmade objects, consumers distinctly did not want their cars to be handmade.

In America

“When buying from big-box retail stores, you can guess what person has made it in a foreign country and what that work was like, but you probably don't want to think about it,” Deb Dormody, in *Handmade Nation* [Levine and Heimerl 2008, 10]

Mass production is often synonymous with foreign production, indicated above with an assumption towards unfair labor practices. The label “Made in America” contrasts this, insinuating ethical production practices. The designation may evoke ideas of labor in mass production, but *to make* in America carried meanings beyond the mass-produced. Making in America is imagined and enacted in multiple contexts—in advertisements, products, companies and individuals that produce, as well as the consumers who purchase; all of these elements contribute to ways that made objects are articulated within the American cultural sphere. Whether utilizing tools and technology, objects construed as “handmade,” as I have argued, are imbued with special meaning. In the juxtaposition of the handmade to the factory-made, it is important to look beyond the contrasts to the main similarity: American-made. In this section, I examine the importance of place in assigning value to objects. Made in America designates multiple levels of local: from a national scale to a neighborhood. Consumers may have overlooked the ambiguity of handmade production techniques if the object conveys a connection to local, or localness. Marketing campaigns such as Ford’s often create an idea of localness, both real and imagined spaces that held meaning.

Localness is central to conceptions of DIY and the handmade, as emphasized in Levine’s project, *Handmade Nation* (2008; 2009): where something is made is as important as how it is made. Companies that try to capitalize on the idea of the handmade often attempt to associate their objects with a connection to place. As noted above, Anthropologie wants consumers to consider

their lamp as special, not simply because the company labeled it as handmade, but because the lamp's materials, at least, come from an identifiable location—the marble quarries of Carrara, Italy. The lamp's inclusion of Carrara marble localizes the lamp, but it does not make it local. Or in other words, it created a sense of localness by connecting the object with *a* place, while the object and the consumer, most likely, did not come from the same place. While Anthropologie's marketing of the handmade reifies ideas of the handmade as they circulated in American popular culture, its corporate collaborations with global markets speak more to economic systems and issues of fair trade. A global locale does not connect consumers to their own communities; instead, the objects potentially recall the sentiment stated by Dormody quoted above (Levine and Heimerl 2008, 10). For the socially conscious consumer, materials mined internationally do more to raise questions of labor and sustainable resource extraction than to evoke sentimental ties to one's home. Ford's advertisement, however, emphasizes a localness, albeit a broad national localness. By doing so, it suggested that objects handmade *in* America add another layer of meaning and specialness.

Levine's work recognizes how the US-based DIY community creates a connection to identity through place-based making. Making and consuming local products allows individuals to connect to their own communities while also rejecting the globalized scale of mass production. While many in the DIY movement may have disassociated from a nationalistic identity of "Made in America," they emphasize localness and regional identities of what it is to make in America. Ford, the all-American auto manufacturer, similarly attaches its brand to this emphasis on regional place-making by highlighting a "local" Brooklyn scene in its advertisements. Based in Brooklyn, the Ford advertisement relies on a specific local to convey a national local and amplify a sense of American identity. Take, for example, their ad copy of McClure's pickles:

Gourmet Canning

The new urban homesteading movement harks back to your grandparents days. Small-batch jams and pickled vegetables, such as McClure's Pickles, are filling up local food enthusiasts' cupboards.

Bob McClure and his brother, Joe, started McClure's Pickles in 2006, a company specializing in small batch artisanal pickled vegetables based on family recipes. While the differences between the auto manufacturer and the small canning company seem vast, Bob McClure views his company as part of the same tradition as the Ford Motor Company. They share an American tradition of manufacturing quality goods, both initially building their companies in Detroit (Bob operated sales and management out of their Brooklyn office). The difference between the companies, in McClure's opinion, is the scale and story. While Ford cars are assembled in a mechanized system of mass production, each jar of McClure's is hand-packed with pickles made from the owners' great-grandmother's recipe (Bob McClure, pers. comm.). As McClure and the Ford advertisement suggests, making represented an integral part of America. They use the concept of tradition to denote historically based actions that have endured through time; in America, that tradition is production. As Jonathan Fairbanks writes in *Craft in America* (2007, 269), "American crafts are embedded in American history, an essential part of which is the incredible story of large-scale industrialization: factory-systems, mass labor, and astonishing wealth concentrated in the owners of such enterprises." The idea of the factory-produced Ford is



Figure 4: Martha Stewart’s American Made awards used an image of a hand-stitched quilt to promote its program. An outline of the United States located between her name created a visual emphasis on place-making (Stewart 2014a).

not so much in opposition to the handcrafted pickles as much as it is in dialogue. Though the items and production techniques differ, both the car and the canned pickles, made in America, communicate a national identity of production.

Martha Stewart’s American Made program also uses localized production to contribute to the national narrative of American production by attaching its brand to makers around the country: “Martha Stewart’s American Made Program spotlights the maker, supports the local, and celebrates the handmade” (Stewart 2017).

The program handed out ten awards in four categories—crafts, design, food, and style, culminating in the American Made Summit, a two-day event that featured lectures and presentations on transforming one’s craft practice into a successful business enterprise (tickets to the summit ranged from \$495 to \$695 per person for the 2014 event). Additionally, conference participants could purchase items from Martha Stewart’s American Made Market: “every day should be inspired by a story. Connect to the makers whose stories, dreams, and passions reflect our own, and whose handpicked products will make their American Dream a part of your home” (Stewart 2014b). On the website, Stewart noted that the trend towards individual makers boosting local economies was at the heart of what it was to be an American. And her American Made Market, according to the advertising copy, allowed individuals to participate in the American story-making, the “American dream,” whether one made the object or consumed it.

In July 2014, Stewart partnered with the Renegade Craft market to sell her American Made line at the traveling marketplace, once open only to independent makers. Stewart strategically connected to the DIY world directly, engaging those who were at the forefront of the movement in its popular cultural context. This kind of partnership, between the DIY-generated Renegade Craft market and Martha Stewart's media empire, reinforced a connection between making objects and making identities. It drew from an idea that to *be* American was to *make* America (or buy *made* America).

(hand)Made in America

As the Ford advertisement emphasizes, making in America extends from hand production to mass production, situated in a local that encompasses specific communities as well as a broad notion of national identity. The juxtaposition of handmade objects to the mass-produced automobile underscores a tension that was heightened through modernization and commercialization. Handmade in America does not just refer to the individual makers, but to the consumers as well. Handmade objects can symbolically ease the ambiguity and disconnection individuals feel in the face of modern production: a hand-felted iPad cover or knitted phone cozy, for example, softens the disconnect and homogenization of a technological world. Ford is not necessarily selling its car to the DIY artist; Ford is selling a car to someone whom they believe, in some way, is nostalgic for an imagined pre-technological past, someone who desires a lifestyle that *looks* like they could be DIY. The nostalgia and desire manifests itself in an aesthetic identity that is visually and textually repeated and re-imagined in popular culture and marketing. At the same time, Ford reminds the consumer that the company itself is an American maker. It calls on the work and production found from DIY makers to connect to its own status as an iconic national symbol of creativity, craftsmanship, and ingenuity. Ford's cloak of nostalgia in its advertisement creates its own quilted cover to soften its machine-made image.

Ford's advertisement does not so much appropriate DIY culture, but rather it articulates it to suggest multiple ways in which its consumers can identify with objects. Tenentes's projections of future trends suggest that she needs the Ford Edge to drive from her friend's rooftop garden to a weekly sewing class. The trending objects are not new innovations; rather they are newly conceived traditional practices. As the Ford advertisement highlighted, Oslo Coffee home-roasted the coffee it brewed by hand; McClure's used a grandmother's recipe to can vegetables; and 3rd Ward provided studio space, classes, and skill shares as part of their artists' collective. The companies fashion themselves as communities, participating in a larger so-called countercultural DIY movement that advocate handmade and local lifestyles. And while Tenentes belongs to this romanticized handmade ideal, she also needs the vehicle, a product of mass culture, as an antithesis to traditional culture.

Does commercial "handmade" rhetoric such as Ford's advertisement pollute the ideas and values of DIY culture and the handmade? Perhaps the proliferation of images and oversaturation of contemporary "hipster" trends, and the subsequent backlash, would suggest so. Ford constructs the idea of the handmade in the context of an American history of manufacturing, and by using mass-production to contrast the handmade, it enacted an understanding of local uniqueness. Many of my own crafting and DIY colleagues have at times expressed disgust—or mockery—of

what they viewed as corporate co-opting. I argue, however, that the Ford advertisement does not affect the *practice* of the handmade, but emphasizes the *idea* of the handmade.

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