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Citation for published version:

Nixon, N, Pitsaki, I & Replie, A 2014, 'Curating as a Brand Design Tool in Creative Organizations', *Economía Creativa*, vol. 2, no. otoño 2014, pp. 16-26.
<<https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5649274>>

Link:

[Link to publication record in Heriot-Watt Research Portal](#)

Published In:

Economía Creativa

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Curating As a Brand Design Tool in Creative Organizations

Natalie Nixon, Irini Pitsaki and Alison Rieple

Today the role of curating extends beyond the museum field: websites are curated, commercial firms establish functional roles entitled “curator”, and individuals in the creative economy use social media platforms to curate their lives and cultural product as brands. Curating has been extended and elevated today because design has become a more critical and integrative factor in brand development on both the organizational and individual levels (Kennedy, 2012). Curating is one way to manage the brand’s meaning. It is a chaordic system (Hock, 2005; van Einatten, 2001) that situates the complex process of editing, merchandising and documenting the brand’s offering in co-created situations with the customer. Yet, the literature is lacking in explicitly exploring and documenting how curating is used in branding.

Building on the perspective of Mark & Pearson (2001) that brands are about managing meaning; and the work of Gloppen (2011) and Lee, Chung and Nam (2013), this paper extends the brand touchpoint wheel and the designable touchpoints model as a heuristic to explore the ways in which curating is a methodology used by creative brands to operationalize the brand experience. The research methodology used is a series of interviews with curators in three creative organizations. Ultimately the authors propose that intentionally curated brands establish a strategic means to scale the brand and extend its scope. The paper will explore the role of curation in two fashion brands and a not-for-profit arts organization and identify significant shifts in branding within creative markets.

Keywords: Curate; brands; design; creative organizations

What is curating? Historically, curating has been relegated to the art and museum world, and its function was concerned with preserving the physical artifacts of an institution (Bank, 2008). There have been wide ranging definitions of the word. The traditional focus of curating has been more about acquiring, documenting and protecting physical objects. Today, the word “curate” has expanded beyond cultural and art institutions, and beyond the physical realm, to denote a creative documentation function in companies, specifically as it relates to brands. Websites are curated, firms establish functional roles entitled ‘curator’, and individuals in the creative economy use social media platforms to curate their lives and cultural product as brand (Lemos, 2013; Graham and Cook, 2010). I define “curate” as the process of co-creating meaning between user and producer for strategic development purposes. More brands today have built in the functional role of ‘curator’ because the word indicates the activity of establishing and sustaining guidelines about how to communicate and invigorate the DNA of the brand. This has become increasingly important as consumers have gained access to more diverse purchasing options because of the digital platforms upon which brands are sold. Simultaneously, design has attained a more elevated function in firms and in the market’s consciousness. The customer expects a level of transparency; an exceptionally curated brand can deliver that transparency as well as an emotional connection to the brand.

Literature Review

The brand management literature has focused on consistent delivery in the customer’s brand experience (Aaker, 1996; Allen et al, 2008; Berry, 2000; Montana, et al, 2010), but curation has not been recognized as an overt or covert tool towards this end. Meanwhile literature on curation has primarily focused on the curator in its relationship to a wider socio-political context and network systems that do not include business strategy (Lemos, 2013; Paul, 2008; Krysa, 2006; Putnam, 2001; and Zan, 2000) This paper posits two ideas: 1) that curating is a strategic tool in brand development; and 2) that curating as used in brand de-

velopment is a chaordic system. It is dynamic, not static, and allows for structure and flow. Chaordic systems stems from a view of the organization that is cybernetic-systemic in orientation, and rooted in chaos theory from mathematics. It is an outgrowth of the literature on complexity in organizations (Stacey, 1991; 1992) and is a useful way to research experiential services in terms of their processes, systems and behaviors. The word “chaord” evolved out of Dee Hock’s (founder and former president of VISA International) observations that self-organizing and adaptive systems in nature were able to emerge on the edge of chaos with just enough coherence and structure to result in order. The chaord is

defined as “Any self-organizing, adaptive, non-linear, complex organism, organization or community whether physical, biological or social, the behavior of which harmoniously blends characteristics of chaos and order” (Hock, 1996:13; van Eijnatten and van Galen, 2002).

Curating as Managing Meaning

The major shift in how curating is operationalized has been away from that of gatekeeper of a collection to that of a catalyst and an active producer of meaning (Bank, 2008; Hirsch, 2014; Kennedy, 2012; Rosenbaum, 2012). This shift to curating being an adaptive and active producer of meaning is key to positioning it as a chaordic system. There has been some interesting thought leadership around commercial brands’ role as curators of art collections in an effort to have cultural impact - e.g., Restoration Hardware’s opening of an art gallery space in the Chelsea neighborhood in New York City— and therefore impact users’ lives in new ways (Hirsch, 2014). However, we are extending commercial brands’ use of curating beyond investments in the art and design world, and more into the function of catalyst and manager of meaning for strategic business purposes. What remains the same is that the curator is the intermediary between various stakeholders. In the art world those stakeholders are collectors, artists, and dealers; while in a business context, those stakeholders are the end consumer, designers, distributors and retailers.

Curating has been extended and elevated today because design has become a more critical and integrative factor in brand development on both the organizational and individual levels (Kennedy, 2012; Wurtzburger, 2014). Curating is one way to strategically manage a brand’s meaning. Making meaning (Diller et al, 2006) is a logical and timely evolution that has become important in today’s economy because of the need to more deeply understand consumers who have a heightened sensitivity to design’s power, and embrace a more collaborative practice among industry peers. Consumers are not necessarily distinguishing among firms in their quest for brands that contribute to their lifestyle on the whole. Transparency is important all the way through to the consumer because the consumer has the ability to design her life at multiple points and brand herself via websites and social media tools: she can post her process of getting dressed for a party or putting together a dish for dinner on Instagram. Because individuals are branding themselves, the brand must meet her where she is. Curating brands is one way of doing this.

Curating brands is about making meaning in the consumption and transaction of services and products where usability and functionality are key components (Mark and Pearson, 2001). The word curating is spreading through the business community as branding and design have evolved over the past decade

(Diller *et al.*, 2006; Wurtzburger, 2014). This reflects that customers relate to services in ways beyond their functional value. Customers bond with brands based on how they evoke meaningful experience. The process of designing meaning into experiential brands is an iterative one. Experience-centric services can drive customer value; thus deliberate design choices are required in order to engage customers in memorable and meaningful ways that are central to the service offering (Voss *et al.*, 2008). Novelty, memorability and sustainability of experiential content contribute to customer engagement. Curating an engaging experience is a means to support the brand, differentiate service offerings and build new types of business models (Voss et al., 2008). One example of where we see brands strategically curating meaning is in the ways that consumer products firms such as Dove and Chipotle have produced short films and distributed them on YouTube focusing on the meta-values of their functional product. In the case of Dove it is less about soap, and more about women’s self-perception of beauty. In the case of Chipotle, it is less about selling burritos and more about expressing a value for sustainable food systems. These brands strategically design meaning into their brands’ value by curating short films to which users can connect in meaningful ways. The chaordic systems view illuminates the balance between structure and creativity in an organizational system and lends itself to the dynamics of order and chaos present in curating: the structures in place (the YouTube platform) to discern patterns among users are the counterpoint to randomness allowed for user input (viral dissemination of the short films by users with comments inserted on YouTube).

Methodology

Qualitative research methods were used including interviews with all three organizations and participant-observation methods for two of the three cases (The Painted Bride and Anthropologie). As this is a preliminary examination into understanding how brands in creative industries use curation, the sample size is small in order to demonstrate proof of concept. Thought leaders from each of the respective brands were interviewed by telephone and engaged in a series of semi-structured interview questions to prompt them to articulate a) what curation means within their creative organization and b) the process undertaken to curate. The data unearthed by these interviews and participant observation sessions is presented as mini-cases. Qualitative research is more attractive for our purposes because it lends itself to a reporting method that is rich and in depth with quotes and vignettes to illuminate points. The case study method is especially valuable in its specificity which is relevant in research areas that are new and where secondary resources are limited (Stake, 2005). An intensive review of the “Brand Touchpoint Wheel” as developed by Gloppen (2011) and Lee, Chung and Nam (2013) led to applying it as a heuristic to understand brand curation as part of a chaordic system.

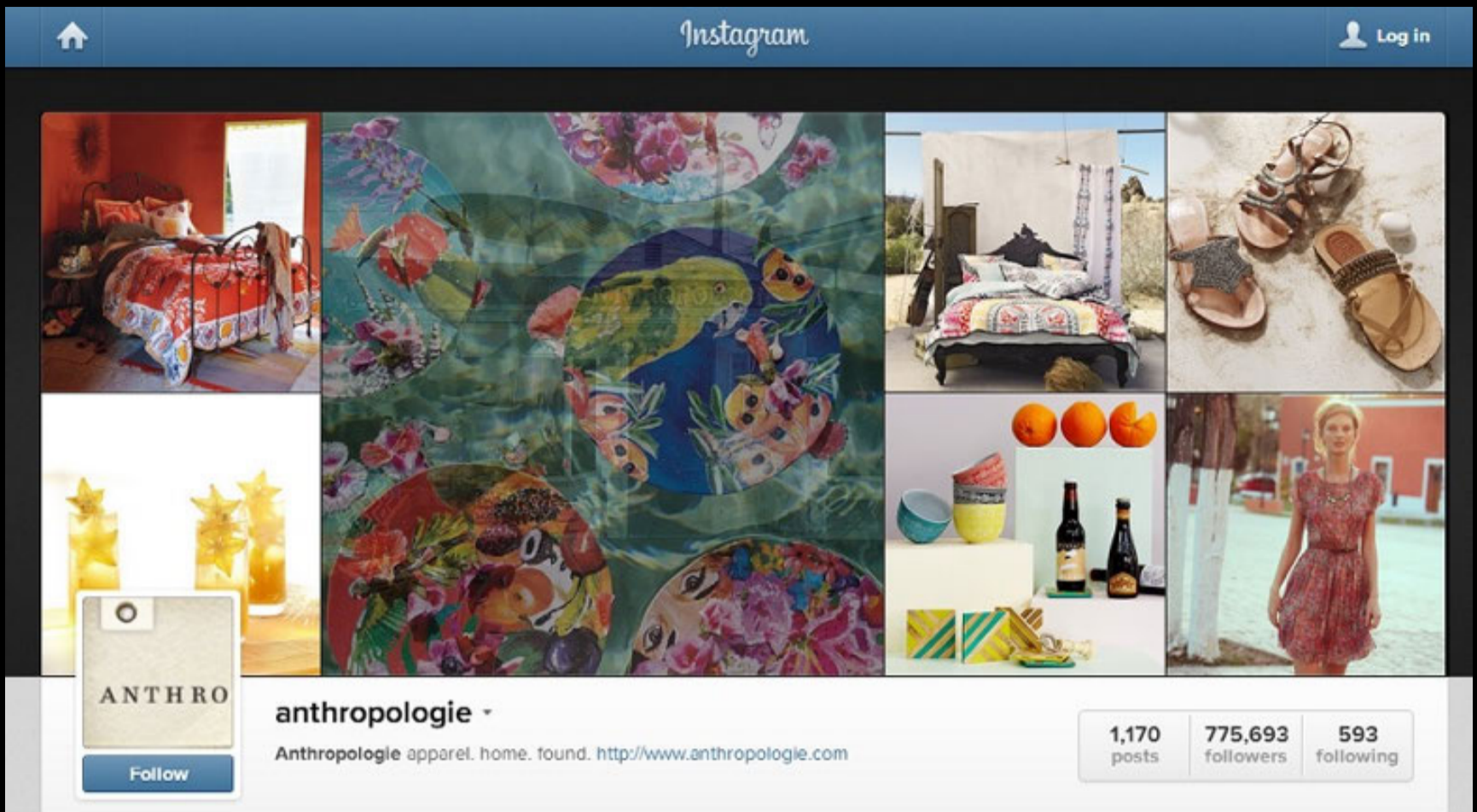


Figure 1 Example of an Anthropologie Instagram Page, May 24, 2014. Source: <http://instagram.com/anthropologie>

In the following sections we look at three examples of creative organizations (Anthropologie, PopInShop and The Painted Bride Art Center) that have incorporated brand curating for strategic goals.

Brand Curator 1: Anthropologie

The Anthropologie fashion brand began twenty years ago as a direct-mail business and then expanded into brick and mortar retail outlets. A daughter company of Urban Outfitters, Inc. this women's lifestyle brand generates over \$1 billion USD in annual revenues and is known as a lifestyle brand whose mission is "to be a destination for women wanting a curated mix of clothing, accessories and décor that reflects their personal style and fuels their life's passions, from fashion to art to entertaining." (Anthropologie website).

Anthropologie's direct incorporation of curation has been pointed out; for example: "Anthropologie is a moderately upscale American retail chain that curates an assemblage of various brands for a decidedly feminine lifestyle" (Manning-Schaffel, 2009). So intentional is curating that Anthropologie has become quite successful at developing a shopping experience for its users, such that

its shoppers remain in-store longer than other chain shoppers, with an average stay of 1 hour and 15 minutes (Manning-Schaffel, 2009). Anthropologie applies curation as a methodology in order to be an experience design retailer.

About five years ago, the Anthropologie brand integrated curation into its core business because it was attempting to build a process and a competency for procurement, merchandising and marketing. A curating team was developed to surface patterns and develop a strategic flow of scalable relationships among galleries, shops and artists to "champion emotional components of storytelling that will influence the customer" and integrate the work of the merchandising, design and retail teams (Wurtzburger, 2014). One of the learnings that surfaced from this process is that internally the curating role helped to make guidelines clear to other divisions in the brand, as well as to explore best practices for preserving Anthropologie's artisanal heritage. Externally, the curating function helped champion ideas that would create an emotional component to the brand's core strategy. This was about "storytelling outward to the customer" (Wurtzburger, 2014). Indirectly, a new type of merchandising was being explored, where different systems could be applied



Figure 2 PopInShop Advertisement, July 2013.
Source: <http://www.artstarphilly.com/old-calgary-popinshop/>

to a range of business functional areas. This manifests at Anthropologie in the way that a consumer can begin her shopping experience at the online website, view a “look book” from a particular collection, then (for example) click on photos of the design team’s recent inspiration trip to Mexico City and view photos of the home of architect Luis Barragan; she can then gain more insight about the design team’s development process by going to the Anthropologie Instagram page. This may ultimately lead to an in-store visit, enhanced by the ability to physically interact with the product and be enlivened by the sensorial experience that is set up by the in-store vignettes popular at Anthropologie retail destinations. This customer journey may be meandering, but the various touchpoints are intentionally curated using story.

The curating function at Anthropologie reveals the complexity of an organization’s attempts to be a catalyst incorporating meaning into new business models that will serve both the end user and the organization’s internal processes. By making sense of the new, the abstract, and the exciting elements in lifestyle for the customer, and then instilling those thought processes into various functional areas of the firm, Anthropologie’s curating practice serves as translator.

Brand Curator 2: PopInShop

PopInShop is an online platform which “helps early-stage online brands and players with boutique distribution get into specialty

shops” (Brooke, 2014). It launched in 2013 and has been cheekily referred to as an online retail dating site matching emerging brands with smaller scale, specialty boutiques. Those “match” determinants include price point, aesthetic focus and the targeted market. Each brand and store has a particular probability match determined by an algorithm, which improves over time (Berliner, 2014). What co-founder Allison Berliner calls “matching” is essentially the curating function.

It should be noted that in this case, the actors benefitting from the curatorial process are the retailers and the brands that PopInShop serves. Through the use of technology, PopInShop has a mediating curatorial role, interfacing between the brand and the retailer. This contrasts with Anthropologie, the first case, and The Painted Bride Art Center, the third case, where the brands themselves, as curators benefit from the act of curation. Technology is key in the ways that this curating occurs. Berliner realized that while retailers can describe the end user with laser precision- for example, “A cute teen who wants a dress for homecoming” or “A trendy mom visiting the store after yoga class”- that same precision is not apparent between brands and retailers. Thus, the marketing techniques and story that prevail in the B2C environment is absent in the B2B environment; this gap is what PopInShop fills. Retailers need personas and stories for brands that they want to carry in-store, and the PopInShop algorithm helps to develop those personas and stories. Currently, retailers ask brands to explain their core categories, and targeted market, but brands are not asked for a vision statement or a story statement. The need for story has increased in the B2B environment, primarily because the end user responds well to story (Berliner, 2014). The future for PopInShop is to help facilitate that story transfer- to tell that story to the store and for the store to transmit it to the customer. The best case is that the story goes directly to the end consumer and helps to manage the meaning of the brand within the store environment. PopInShop has examined existing platforms for inspiration to fill this gap. For example, StyleSix is a shopping service which uses a subscription model where consumers are shipped clothing on a monthly basis. Such platforms are curating style for the end consumer (Nixon and Corlett, 2013). Berliner explained,

We are working on a brand genome- that would get to clustering. There is a question in retail regarding if you are a dress designer and talking to store owners, they will ask you “Who do you ‘hang’ with?”- i.e. on a rack. That is an interesting algorithmic question to look into. So we are looking into... developing a brand genome project. We are in a testing period. (Berliner, 2014).

This brand genome project will be driven by an algorithm which will uncover “which brands hang together” in shops, based on thousands of data points. Another peer-brand example that has served as a point of inspiration for PopInShop is the online retail



Figure 3 Camille Brown's "Mr. TOL E. RAnce" at The Painted Bride, April, 2014. Photographed by Christopher Duggan
Source: <http://pimgartsmgt.com/?p=483>

platform Of A Kind. Of A Kind has built upon the maker movement and emerging artisans from online distribution centers such as Etsy, to curate featured designers and highlight their work. A key part of the success of Of A Kind is that it tells compelling stories about its featured brands, which has been a key insight for PopInShop. In a physical brick and mortar store, story has been difficult to scale because in-store there is a constantly changing sales force, and inventory turns quickly. Thus, to consistently convey meaning through story is more challenging.

Essentially, PopInShop is serving as a co-creation platform, pulling data from brands themselves so that they have more effective outcomes in terms of quality control, best-match distribution and meaningful messaging in the retail environment. "Curation is part of our strategic growth because what stores want is what customers want." (Berliner, 2014). By serving as a curator, making matches between brands and retailers via technology, stores now have one less task and are free to focus on other retail opportunities. While retailers have always been driven by user feedback, now they have the algorithmic technology to serve both of their stakeholders, the brands and the retailers, effectively and meaningfully.

Brand Curator 3: The Painted Bride Art Center

The Painted Bride Art Center was founded in Philadelphia, PA (USA) in 1969 by a group of diverse artists seeking ways to cooperatively produce and present their work on their own terms, outside of the realm of traditional arts institutions. Today, its mission is to coalesce "artists, audiences and communities while pushing the boundaries of how we create... (and) cultivate an environment for critical dialog and playful exchange to transform lives and communities" (PaintedBride.org).

For the first 30 years of its existence, The Painted Bride approached curating artistic work in the more traditional sense: it facilitated an artistic offering and pushed out programming to audiences in the form of series of performances. In the last few years, the curating function has shifted to become more about facilitating opportunities for re-engagement: "(We) are looking for not only ways to support the artist in realizing and actualizing their vision but move them beyond the performance stage or the gallery walls for opportunities for engagement" (Nelson Haynes, 2014).

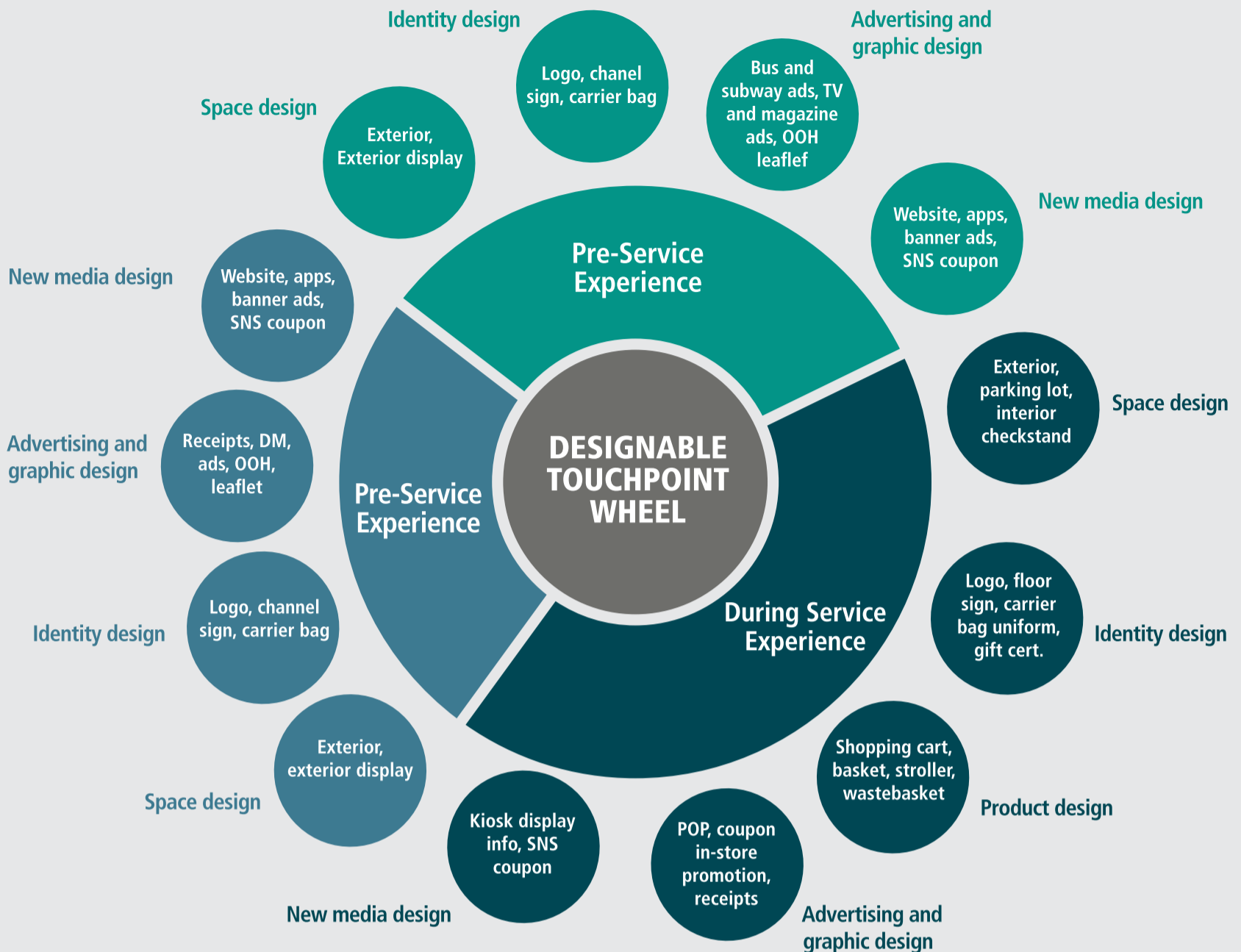


Figure 4 Designable Touchpoint Wheel by Lee, Chung and Nam (2013). Source: DMI Journal, Fall 2013

One example of this can be seen in the transformative moments built into choreographer Camille Brown’s performance at The Painted Bride when she presented her full length evening piece “Mr. TOL E. RANcE” in April 2014. While Brown had danced with the Rennie Harris dance company, and choreographed for the Philadanco dance company, this was the first time she was presenting her own work. The Painted Bride moved her residency beyond the performance stage and brought Brown to college dance students at the University of the Arts- emerging dancers

who would benefit by spending time with a practitioner. Brown also gave a movement workshop for a group of twenty middle school female students. Half of the workshop was spent having conversations with the girls, the other half facilitating actual movement. Brown’s work off-stage, curated by The Painted Bride, “delivered transformative moments” and was just as valuable as her stage work (Nelson Haynes, 2014). Student dancers benefited from the interaction and conversation because it increased their levels of self-awareness.

Table 1 Curated Brands’ Designable Touchpoints. Adapted from framework developed by Lee, Chung and Nam (2013)

Service	Dependence on DT	Interaction with DT	Intangibility	Duration	User Motive
Anthropologie	High	High	Low	Discrete	Hedonistic
PopInShop	High	Low	High	Continuous	Hedonistic
Painted Bride	High	High	High	Discrete	Hedonistic

There is an interesting feedback loop which develops that makes this platform a curatorial device for the artist, and ultimately beneficial to The Painted Bride as it helps The Painted Bride with audience development: “Ultimately it is about us making this region more fertile for both artists and constituencies to engage in an artistic experience” (Nelson Haynes, 2014).

The Painted Bride consciously thinks about brand building by incorporating user centered research. Its users are twofold: the artist community and the audience. Such user driven research was prompted by shifts in geography where more arts organizations cropped up nearby to where The Painted Bride is located.

There were changes in our physical space. Fringe (Festival) is now doing year-round programming. The Arden Theater is now expanding their programming to a couple of blocks away. We invested in doing research to help re-define who we are and solidify our positioning. We found that what artists felt was slacking was support of the local artists- these other places were bringing in national artists. So Bride has recommitted itself to supporting local artists- in development of the work and presenting the work. (Nelson Haynes, 2014).

The Painted Bride benefitted from this research almost immediately. They transitioned from pushing out curated content, to co-creating discussions and events that were driven by their stakeholders. One result of these conversations is their “Community Table”—which has allowed artists and community members to use the space in more diverse ways:

For example, last night we had one (Community Table) about the smell sense of food and memory. That is another way for us to build audience and expose them to our space. What do people want to see here and how do they want to use the space? (Nelson Haynes, 2014)

In addition to user centered research, The Painted Bride is able to be more responsive to audience demand because of technology

that did not exist twenty years ago. For example, applications such as Mail Chimp allow it to understand purchasing and website usage patterns and consequently allows The Painted Bride to be more sophisticated in message frequency and content in a more economical way. Concurrently, artists incorporate technology into their work in ways that have spurred The Painted Bride to develop more adaptive platforms for hybrid-work. That is, work that is not strictly a dance performance, but a dance performance that incorporates spoken word and video. The Painted Bride has had to be more explicit in descriptions of the work so that audiences would understand that the work would be a more multi-sensory experience. Such crowdsourced curation is a deliberate departure from The Painted Bride’s traditional ways of developing and presenting artistic and cultural content.

Discussion & Conclusions

Lee, Chung and Nam’s (2013) “Designable Touchpoints” framework makes obvious where it is possible for brand generators to identify design opportunities to interact with the customer (e.g., through graphic design, industrial design or user experience design). Designable touchpoints can happen at the pre-service experience, during the service experience and post-service experience.

Examples are identity design of logo; in-store promotions through graphic design; and space design of the store exterior. There are five key factors to manage “designable touchpoints” in services:

- 1) amount of dependence on designable touchpoints;
- 2) interaction with designable touchpoints;
- 3) intangibility;
- 4) duration of the service delivery; and
- 5) utilitarian or hedonic motive of the service user.

By extension, we examine how those touchpoints can be curated in such a way as to optimize interaction with the customer. Here is how the three cases of Anthropologie, PopInShop and The Painted Bride might look when mapped on the designable

Table 2 Curation Tools to Strategically Develop Brands (Natalie Nixon)

Curation Tool	Anthropologie	PopInShop	Painted Bride
Technology	Builds competency in systems	Matching & clustering (via algorithm)	Digital platforms reveal new opportunities
Co-Creation	Translates patterns & internal relationships	Co-Creation Platform	User Centered Content & Audience Development via technology
Story	Story: inside-out	Story Transfer	Co-Create with artists and audience
Story	Story: inside-out	Story Transfer	Co-Create with artists and audience

touchpoint heuristic: By utilizing insights from the 3 cases previously described, we can examine each of the five factors from a curated perspective.

Amount of dependence on designable touchpoints (DT)

Lee et al (2013) make the point that while a customer's journey through an amusement park is highly dependent on designable touchpoints, the services provided by a life insurance company are not. Similarly, when curating branded services, to be most effective the creators of the brand experience are highly dependent on designable touchpoints. For example, when one of Anthropologie's design teams develops a new collection, it uses its website to test and prototype new looks, its blog to have a conversation with users, and its Instagram, Pinterest sites and store interiors are highly designed and part of the catalyst to generate user experience and collect user feedback.

Interaction with designable touchpoints (DT)

Users' interactions with designable touchpoints can be low depending on the service- and independent of how dependent on designable touchpoints they are. For example, in a movie theater, the user has low interaction with the designable touchpoints because they are passively engaged with watching the movie. From a curating perspective, this can vary. The ability to have a catalyst effect on the user is not necessarily affected by interaction with the designable touchpoint. For example, as The Painted Bride shifted to co-creation, it became more dependent on having its users interact with the space and use it as a platform for co-creation. This is what Nelson referred to in her example of bringing Camille Brown's show to middle school female students. This resulted in layered curation, where the Painted Bride curated artistic platforms for Brown, and Brown in turn curated new user insights for The Painted Bride. On the other hand, PopInShop's emphasis on B2B story transfer has meant that the end user's interaction with its designed touchpoints may be low.

Intangibility

Because services lack the tactile quality of goods, some require a more in depth understanding of usage than others. Business consulting is an example of a service having high intangibility whereas cosmetics retail has low intangibility. In curating brands, intangibility ranges. For example, because Anthropologie is so adept at engaging users on multiple platforms in its "backstory" story and creating in-store vignettes, it ends up having low intangibility. The algorithms that generate data for PopInShop to do story transfer all the way from B2B and ultimately to B2C occurs without users' awareness, and thus is an example of high intangibility.

Duration of the service delivery

Some services are discrete in nature, with a clear beginning and an end- such as a meal at a restaurant; others are continuous, such as a cell phone contract. Curation must be adapted depend-

ing on whether or not the service is discrete or continuous. For PopInShop, the curatorial role is adaptive with the aid of technology; the algorithm that PopInShop has developed helps them curate matches that best serve the brand and boutique in question.

Motive of Service User

Some users are motivated to use a service for utilitarian reasons (e.g., one's car requires more gasoline) while others have more hedonistic intentions (e.g., the desire to indulge in spa services). In all three cases we have discussed, user motive tends to be hedonistic and consequently space design becomes essential (Lee, Chung and Nam, 2013).

Extending the designable touchpoints model, we have identified three "curation tools" used to strategically develop brands: technology, co-creation, and story.

1. **Technology:** The three brands discussed use technology to integrate and facilitate opportunities for engagement. Technology becomes a means to build bridges between complementary competencies as was the case in The Painted Bride and Anthropologie. Ultimately systems can be built between functional areas, as seen in Anthropologie and PopInShop. This systems building reveals the complexity that is inherent to the chaotic nature of curation when used as a brand tool to develop meaningful connections.

2. **Co-Creation:** Brands which embrace co-creation and open-source curation with stakeholders ultimately deliver more meaningful and relevant services. The Painted Bride discovered this when it shifted to co-creating with its users (audiences and artists) and embraced more fluid structures that allowed for flow within structure. Similarly, PopInShop's B2B algorithm which assists brands to connect to retailers through their brand story ultimately helps the retailers to sell the right product, at the right time and place in a more meaningful way. Anthropologie curates more effectively due to its incorporation of user insights gathered at the Pinterest sites and their website. In all three examples, co-creation provides a feedback loop for the brand to more effectively and meaningfully sell products and services.

3. **Story Anthropologie refers to "storytelling outward" to the user.** This is most apparent in their in-store vignettes, their blog and their use of digital media platforms such as Instagram. PopInShop has the laudable goal to develop story transfer on the B2B level. Such application of story requires dynamic push-pull structures that provide co-created opportunities.

These frameworks become more relevant to issues related to curation when we map the brand curation tools of story, technology and co-creation onto the touchpoint wheel as in the following model.

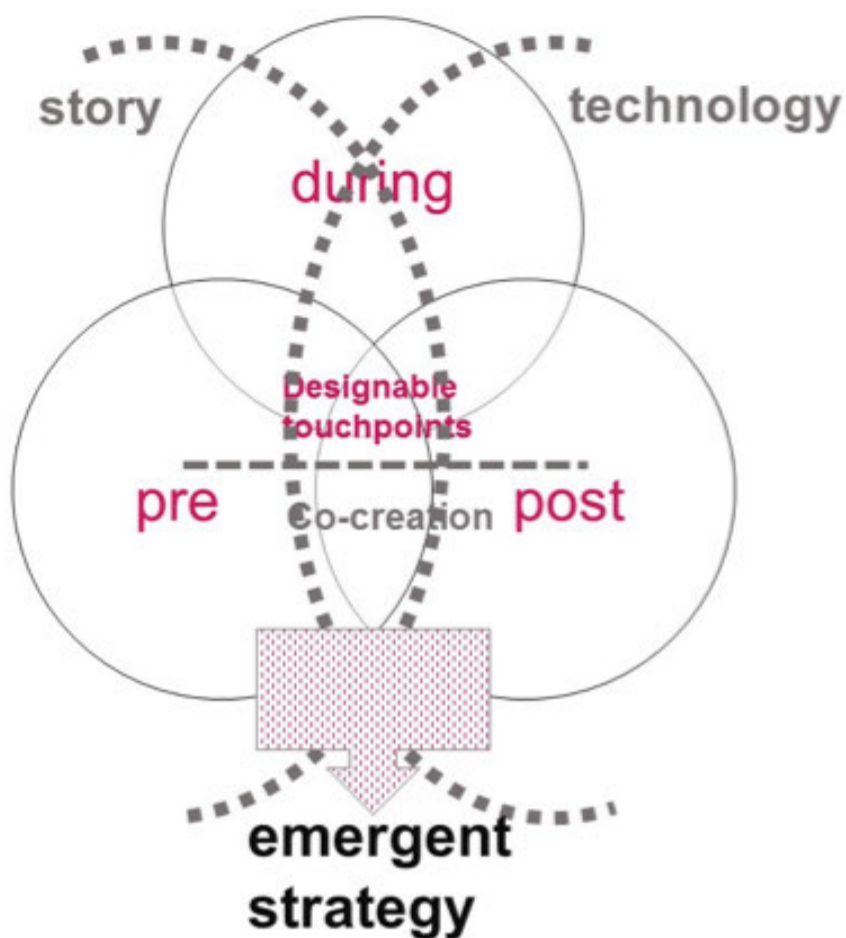


Figure 5 Model for Brand Curation Utilizing Story, Technology & Co-Creation Mapped on Designable Touchpoints (Natalie W. Nixon)

It should be noted that this is not a static model; the tools of story and technology are applied not only in the “during” phased but also in the “pre-“ and “post-“ phases of designing touchpoint interactions with the brand. This is illustrated by the dotted arc lines.

A chaordic system requires elements that provide boundaries and guidelines- the ‘structure’- as well as elements that are dynamic- i.e.,the flow within that structure. The result is emergent strategy that is adaptive, self-organizing and non-linear. In Figure 5, the temporal moments along the designable touchpoints wheel (pre-, during- and post- designable touchpoints) serve as the ‘structure’ elements and the curation tools (story, technology and co-creation) serve as the ‘chaos’ elements in the chaordic system that is brand curation. Figure 5 also illustrates not only the temporal dimensions of the designable touchpoints (pre-, during and post- customer engagement) but also the three inputs from curation —story, technology and co-creation— that launch designable touchpoints to the next level of being part of an emergent strategy. The cases discussed in this paper reveal three key components of curation, —technology, co-creation and story— that must exist for strategic development of a creative organization. These components are not discrete and separate from one another, but in the most effective outcomes are interdependent, as depicted by the intersecting arcs and circles in

Figure 5. For example, The Painted Bride’s brand strategy is most effective when stories disseminate from a post-production event co-created with new audiences who then use their own digital technology platforms to spread their new stories as related to the event. Similarly, when Anthropologie’s customers borrow from Anthropologie’ Pinterest page to build their own visual fashion story they are co-creating and extending the resonance of the Anthropologie brand.

Ultimately, the integration of technology, co-creation and story in brand curation results in emergent strategy. Emergent strategy (as opposed to deliberate strategy) is an important contribution to the research on branding because this perspective restores a sense of proactivity and experimentation among organizational members: it is more spontaneous, intuitive, action-oriented and bottom up (Mintzberg and Waters, 1985; Mintzberg, 1988). Intended, or deliberate, strategy is more future oriented, analytical, planned and top-down. Emergent strategies evolve organically as new realities unfold. This reinforces earlier points made that curation as a brand tool’s position is part of a chaordic system. This emergent strategy is key for all three cases, because it enables these organizations to mimic the experimentation and proactivity that their end users engage in when using their curatorial services and platforms. For example, The Painted Bride Art Center uses emergent strategy as exhibited by their shift to a push-pull methodology of co-creating artistic content and going to the end users, instead of the old curatorial model of pushing content out to its users. As a result, The Painted Bride Art Center has become more present-minded and relevant to the needs of their audiences. Similarly, in the case of Anthropologie, embedding curation as an emergent strategy is divergent from traditional retail strategy which prioritizes quantitative, analytical approaches to making merchandising choices. Thus, a network culture of sorts develops, one that is well positioned within a systems view framework where a feedback loop between organizational actors and end users is dynamic and robust. This paper proposes a new model for mapping three interconnected tools for curating within a chaordic context by utilizing designable touchpoints as the structural component of the chaordic system. The contributions of this discussion are that a) brands that are part of creative organizations have particular guidelines for curating strategically; b) such brands can contextualize their methods as part of a chaordic system; c) this framework may possibly be extended to brands outside of the creative economy, that are looking for new ways to connect meaningfully to stakeholders.

Acknowledgements: *Special thanks to the following individuals for granting interviews for this paper: Allison Berliner, Co-Founder of PopInShop; Lisa Nelson Haynes, Associate Director of The Painted Bride Art Center; and Wendy Wurtzburger, Former Curator for Anthropologie.*

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