

*Handmade Online:
The Crafting of Commerce, Aesthetics and Community on Etsy.com*

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PREVIEW

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PREVIEW

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ABSTRACT

HANDMADE ONLINE: The Crafting of Commerce, Aesthetics and Community on Etsy.com (Under the direction of Dr. Katherine Roberts)

Etsy.com is an online marketplace for the buying and selling of handcrafted objects. As a part of the independent/DIY craft subculture, Etsy.com offers a unique glimpse into the world of contemporary, independent craftspeople. Though only three years old, Etsy has been exceptionally successful in creating a unique space for craftspeople to interact with peers, as well as sell their objects to an ever-growing customer base. Beginning with an analysis of the website's technological and socio-cultural precursors, I interrogate Etsy's self-presentation as a company interested in both commerce and community. In turn, sellers maintain high expectations for what the website can and will help them to achieve. I explore the aesthetics of the objects promoted on Etsy with particular attention to the traditionally gendered nature of craftwork, reconfigured notions of labor and leisure, and the perceived benefits and drawbacks of individual artists working inside a private, for-profit company.

DEDICATION

To my sister Marsha for her tireless support.

Thank you also to my parents and Chris for their patience
and generosity throughout this project.

PREVIEW

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the last three years, craftspeople across the United States (and the globe) have been communicating, sharing and selling their work through a new e-commerce venue. As a digital marketplace, Etsy.com offers buyers and sellers a user-friendly platform with which to make transactions. Etsy has built its company on a reputation as a voice box for the ‘handmade revolution,’ privileging handcrafts over mass-production objects. Through its site design, Etsy has built not only a system for the sale of crafts but has also encouraged a sense of community among crafting entrepreneurs and hobbyists. As part of the independent craft scene that has emerged in the last decade, Etsy offers opportunities for expressing individuality, rebellion, pleasure, and economic freedom within the context of a global industrial marketplace. Etsy can be seen as a long overdue chance for craftspeople to empower themselves in a economic system built upon the industrial revolution, however, this is not to say that Etsy does not have its theoretical or practical problems. In its current form, Etsy seems to desire to be both centralized and decentralized, mission-driven and neutral, and visible and invisible as intermediary between buyers and sellers. The stated intentions of the owners and employees of Etsy, the interests of craftspeople using Etsy to see their work and consumers using Etsy to purchase handmade items are not always directly aligned. In my thesis, I address this discord, as well as position Etsy within the cultural history of do-it-yourself/independent craft culture, third wave feminism and aesthetic trends of crafted objects.

Given Etsy’s relatively young age² (the site is only in its third year of existence), my goal is to shed light on the ways that Etsy is (and may in the future be) understood by craftspeople and consumers of handcrafts. This undertaking is from a position of situated

²The site is in its third year of existence.

knowledge. If folklorists, academia and the broader public — particularly those with an interest in handcrafts — can become savvy to Etsy as an alternative venue for the sale of crafters' goods, we can help craftspeople find new markets and generate greater income from the sale of their crafts. My hope is that ultimately, makers will be able to utilize Etsy as a means of finding financial success in a field where too few see the monetary rewards of their skills, while understanding the ideological underpinnings that inform the structure and success of the Etsy website.

Etsy Rhymes with Betsy

My interest in the independent craft community began in 2005, but my relationship with crafting, like so many people interested in handmade objects, started much earlier. Like many crafters, I learned how to draw, paint, sculpt, sew, and knit from my mother with an occasional bit of help from a few particularly inspiring art teachers at school. My mother had learned these skills as a young person because of financial necessity—crafting was a way to make what she didn't have the money to buy. For me, crafting was a creative and artistic outlet. It is a pleasurable activity done during leisure time rather than out of necessity. Like many, I find deep satisfaction in the process of making things with my own two hands.

In my early teen years, crafting took on a different connotation. My history with crafting is not without moments of adolescent rebellion. As a younger person, I scoffed at the possibility of handcrafts as an alternative to consumerism. After all, brand name items were *de rigueur* to middle school fashion. “Why buy it when we could make it?” my mother would say as we perused the storefronts of the local mall. She said it so often, in fact, that it became a sort of running joke in my family. Though I argued against it at the time, this message was not lost. In later years, I would find myself saying the same thing, and even telling myself, “I could make this, and I could make it better, and it would be one-of-a-kind.” But as I grew into adulthood, my feminist anti-domestic sentiments and the lack of shared aesthetic among crafters kept me at bay from crafting, even as an art student in my undergraduate college years.

I had no interest in the patterns and designs being sold at the big-box craft stores.

It seemed that my taste and lifestyle did not fit with the crafting style to which I had been exposed. Despite this, I kept searching, hoping to discover people like me, seeking the solace and the feelings of connectedness to a community that I could embrace. A decade later, I began to encounter people who shared my specific craft aesthetic and a particular do-it-yourself (DIY) sensibility. Around the year 2000, a new breed of crafters, rooted in do-it-yourself punk subculture and riot grrrl ethics of the 1990s came to my attention. Like the riot grrrl movement, DIY/indie crafters could be seen as operating from a position of third-wave feminism. In fact, the term ‘new domesticity’ is now sometimes used to refer to indie crafters who operate from a decidedly feminist position. These groups seek to empower individuals (predominantly women) through the creative act. By taking up the activities that have traditionally been associated with women’s work as voluntary pursuits, the act of crafting is re-envisioned as empowering rather than confining. Removed from its burdensome history, activities such as sewing and knitting have taken on new life for some contemporary feminists, particularly where so many women (and men) spend their working hours away from tasks that involve their hands. Alongside the growing popularity of crafting among young, often urban, women, websites like craftster.org, which began in 2003, opened:

as a repository for hip, off-beat, crafty DIY projects. People who have crafty urges, but who are not excited by cross-stitched bunnies and crocheted toilet paper cozies, can show off their current craft projects, ask advice on future projects and get inspiration for new endeavors.³

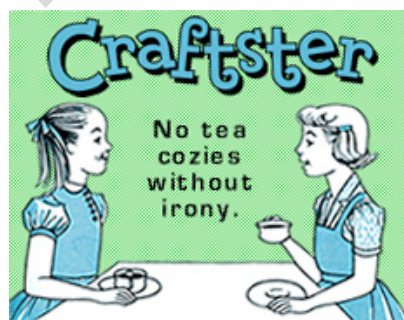


fig 1. homepage, craftster.org

Shortly after it opened its virtual doors in July of 2005, I discovered Etsy.com, a website designed as a venue to buy and sell handmade goods. I had been a long-time

³“Craftster.org – About Craftster,” available at <http://www.craftster.org/about.html>; Internet; accessed 30 September 2008.

computer user at that point, having educated myself by way of chat rooms and websites. I was familiar with the way that people were using new media to interact, communicate across sometimes vast geographic distances. I had certainly encountered many craft sites before it, but Etsy seemed to be doing something unique. Though Etsy buyers and sellers (also known as Etsians) covered a wide range of aesthetics and styles, I encountered a thriving community of people like me whose objects were the product of the DIY/indie craft and new domestic movements, informed by a mix of pop culture, traditional craft methods, new tools and media. I became enchanted by cross-stitch sampler kits that featured phrases like “Bite Me,” “Irony is Not Dead” and “Is That All There Is?,” clothes made from refashioned Goodwill finds, and many other projects that challenge stereotypical domestic or women’s crafts.

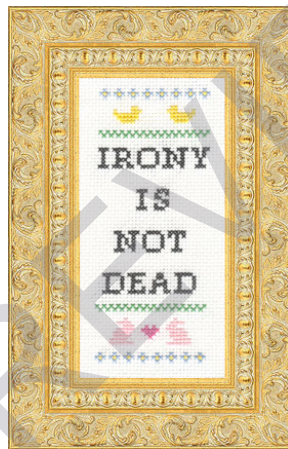


fig 2. cross-stitch kit available for purchase at subversivecrossstitch.com

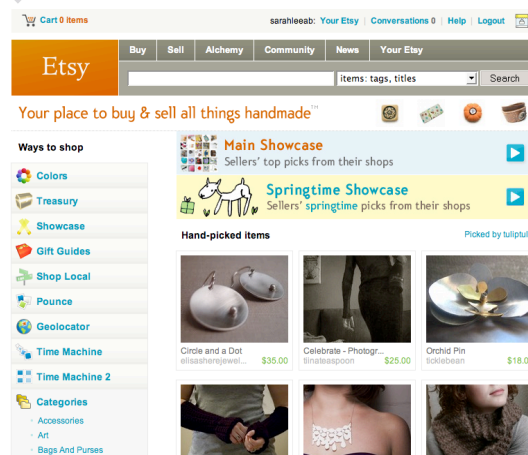


fig 3. Screen capture of the Etsy.com homepage

The user generated wikipedia.com includes an entry for Etsy that defines it as a “site [that] follows in the tradition of open craft fairs, giving sellers personal storefronts where they list their goods for a fee. It has been compared to ‘a crafty cross between Amazon and eBay’ and ‘your grandma's basement.’”⁴ The site functions as an extension of a series of Internet platforms for individual artisans and craftspeople to sell their goods. The successor of galleries, fairs, consignment shops, trunk shows and catalogs, Etsy describes itself as “an online marketplace for buying & selling all things handmade” and yet, the structural design of Etsy implies a certain ideological agenda. Etsy promotes itself both as a venue and a place/space. The Etsy platform is not value neutral, it is a space that aligns itself with particular aesthetics and ideologies. Through the presence of online forums for communication and conversation, local street teams and seller groups, collaborative projects, contests, and educational sessions in specific craft skills as well as business guidance in planning, pricing and tax preparation, Etsy has purported to create a virtual and physical community of participants who share a core belief in the symbolic and commercial value of the handmade. Many users champion Etsy for offering craftspeople a simple, easy-to-establish virtual storefront:

I love Etsy! It's style, ease of use, creative searches, the people, the way it pushes me to be better at my craft, and just for making it all possible!⁵

I think etsy has been an amazing vehicle for crafters. It's the best online venue for selling your work. I love how cheap it is. You can tell that the people who started it are trying to make money but are also concerned about the crafters and making it affordable for them. I love that you get your own shop, and I think it's very easy to navigate.⁶

Etsy is so incredibly good about supporting its vendors, it's ridiculous. They are constantly coming up with ways to streamline the use of their site, all the while providing us with invaluable tools to make each of us a success. It's a give-and-take environment. If we are successful, so are they; so they do all they can to keep that cycle in motion. And the sellers love them for it. I know I do. I wouldn't be even considering making a go of all this if it weren't for an avenue like Etsy, and thousands of others would likely be in the same boat as well. It's made having a home-based

⁴“Etsy – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia,” available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etsy>, 1 October 2008; Internet; accessed 3 October 2008.

⁵Camille Marie Weitzel. Interview by author. Conducted via E-mail, April 13, 2008.

⁶Lindsay Keating. Interview by author. Conducted via E-mail, March 17, 2008.

business and lifestyle completely possible for those like me who otherwise wouldn't know what to do.⁷

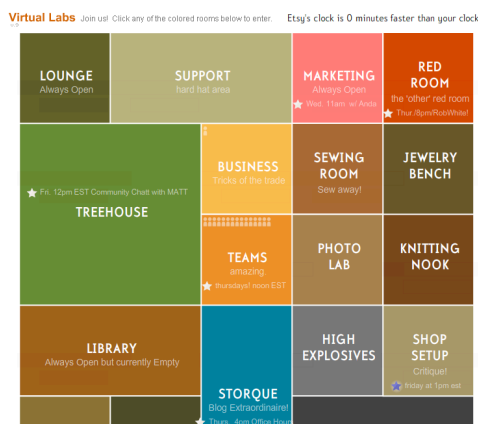


fig 4. A screen capture of the Etsy.com virtual labs spaces. Each area contains its own workshops and tutorials are offered.⁸

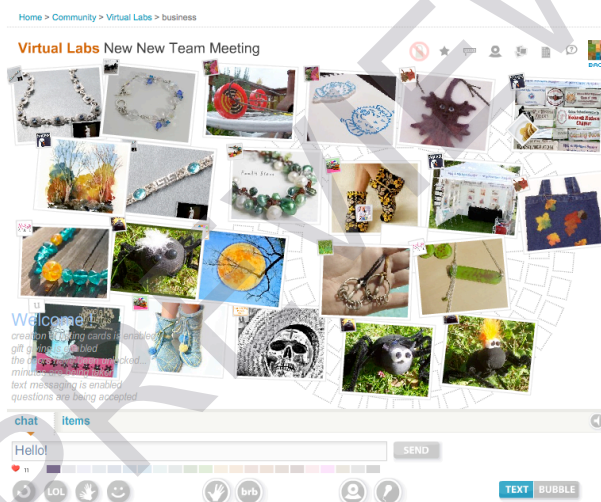


fig 5. A screen capture of a virtual labs room called 'New New Team Meeting.' The virtual labs and the chat area of Etsy is where users may create and participate in electronic conversations with peers.

In the last three years, Etsy has grown significantly. In February 2008, Etsy reported a total of 612,641 individual items listed, a seven percent increase from the previous month and a 312% increase from January of the previous year. In addition, they noted 75,458 new users, an 11% increase from January 2008 and a 236% increase from

⁷Tina Jett. Interview by author. Conducted via E-mail, March 12, 2008.

⁸"Etsy :: Virtual Labs," available at http://www.etsy.com/virtual_labs.php; Internet; accessed 3 October 2008.

January 2007. As the Etsy community has seen record growth, Etsy Incorporated and its sellers have also seen significant monetary success. Overall, 349,092 items were sold in the month of February 2008 alone, an 11% increase from January 2008 and 273,043 more than in January 2007 and \$4.8 million dollars worth of goods compared to January 2007 sales of approximately \$1 million.⁹

As the visibility of Etsy grows, fueled by press coverage in *The New York Times* and segments on television shows such as *The Martha Stewart Show*, it remains to be seen what ultimate impact Etsy will have as a model of sales for craftspeople around the world. It is clear, though, that Etsy has hit a nerve with a growing cottage industry (defined as home-based rather than factory-based production) composed of individuals who are interested in pursuing their ‘home-made’ handcrafts as a means to economic freedom. This is aligned with Etsy’s mission statement of “[enabling] people to make a living making things, and to reconnect makers with buyers... to build a new economy and present a better choice: buy, sell and live handmade.”¹⁰ Despite Etsy’s earnest goal to provide an alternative to the trappings of big-box shopping and consumerism, Etsy buyers and sellers maintain a very wide range of reasons for using it as their platform. Not all Etsians are interested in the concerns of ‘buying local’ or even ‘buying handmade’ but rather see Etsy as a space where they can pursue their desire to establish themselves as wholesalers and/or retail chain store suppliers. For these individuals, their goal is in direct opposition to Etsy’s core mission of conscious consumerism. In addition, Etsy Incorporated’s business interests, namely, generating a profit from listing and sales fees, complicates their proposed ethical mission. And yet, Etsy has provided many with an opportunity for greater exposure than almost any individual craft fair or brick and mortar shop can offer. Etsian Laura McConnell writes, “I owe a lot to Etsy for allowing me to gain the exposure to so many people that my web site and doing art shows alone

⁹“Etsy.com. February 2008.” *January 2008 Survey Results*, available at http://www.etsy.com/storque/media/article_images/Survey_-_For_Storquel.pdf; Internet; accessed 12 March 2008.

¹⁰“Etsy :: About,” available at <http://www.etsy.com/about.php>; Internet; accessed 3 October 2008.

could not do.”¹¹ Supported by the resources that Etsy provides, craftspeople using the system express feelings of empowerment. The strength of this sentiment is perhaps best expressed in the response I received when I asked what Etsian Blake Lindey liked about Etsy:

The entrepreneurial spirit on etsy is like a raging bonfire. A vast fire raging bright, lighting the sky and burning a new way of life! We are burning down the contemporary way of living as we know (the 9-5, rat-race, working for the bank)... and when we're finished all that will be left oh how we once lived are embers. And with those umbers will be rich soil to grow anew. And that rich soil combined with our capacity for vision and creativity as our guide will aid us in building a way of living in accordance with the natural laws of life! And instead of building buildings and bridges, we'll be cultivating hearts and souls!¹²

For folklorists and students of material culture, this work proposes a new chapter to conversations about contemporary artistic production and circulation. As a venue for craftspeople, Etsy offers makers a relatively simple way to sell their objects and increase their profile/visibility on the Internet to buyers around the world. Etsy is a young business, particularly by academic terms, but Etsy has developed a devoted following and continues to rapidly increase its visibility and presence as a resource for craftspeople and artisans.

In the larger context, Etsy is indicative of the increasing speed of which new technologies have affected every aspect of life, even among craftspeople who characterize themselves as practicing distinctly traditional and non-technological artistic skills. As a discipline, Folklore must stay abreast these changes and make every effort to understand how websites like Etsy.com effect contemporary craft practices. It appears that the presence of the Internet has been more readily acknowledged in studies of music cultures, but less so among studies of material culture. It is necessary, for folklorists in particular, to take up the subject of material culture and new media, with particular regard to how it affects community formation and maintenance, the promotion of particular aesthetic values and the process of gift exchange. Etsy's affiliation with the independent/DIY craft movement makes it ripe subject matter for scholars interested in contemporary forms of craft culture. In addition to this analysis of Etsy providing fodder for discussions of folklore and new media, it also may serve as an entry point for conceptual discussions about the independent/DIY craft movement. This movement represents a new phase in the

¹¹Laura McConnell, Interview by author. Conducted via E-mail, March 24, 2008.

¹²Blake Lindy, Interview by author. Conducted via E-mail, March 12, 2008.

popularity of craft and deserves to be both acknowledged and analyzed as it is connected to the Arts and Crafts movement of the turn of the century United States and Europe, the DIY/Punk and Riot Grrrl scenes of the 1980s and 90s and the third-wave feminist movement.

Methodology and Format

My research for this project led me down various paths. First, I interviewed (in person and via email) a number of Etsy sellers. Second, I observed and participated in forum dialogues, chat sessions, and unofficial (off-site) Etsy discussions. Third, I established my own Etsy account as both a buyer and a seller. Fourth, I became a faithful visitor to the Etsy website, one might even characterize it as compulsive, keeping up to date on site changes, official Etsy blog posts, aesthetic trends and listing types over the last year and a half.

Online systems or websites have always made for difficult research methodology. On the one hand, Etsy has been available to me at any time of the day, from any location with Internet access. On the other hand, from a researcher's perspective, I worried that I was spending too much time online compared to the face-to-face work that I had done for this particular endeavor. Ultimately, in the process of this project, I realized that the lack of face-to-face contact was a major component of the experience for the vast majority of Etsy users. To over-emphasize the in-person connections would be a misinterpretation of the way that so many Etsians use the website. In scheduling interviews, I found that the Etsy sellers I contacted were typically far more willing to respond to questions via email than to speak in person or by the phone. This reaction was not unfamiliar to me. In fact, one of the initially appealing features of Etsy to me personally was the idea that I could engage with the indie/DIY craft community without leaving the confines of my home, without having to brush my hair, and without having to participate in many of the etiquette rules of face-to-face social interaction. For those of us who find social interactions stressful, the Internet offers a way to interact without having to 'face our fears' of forgetting someone's name, misspeaking or the discomfort of awkward silent pauses in conversation.

These personal anecdotes aside, the Etsy website has become a familiar part of my everyday life. The daily process of signing on, checking my shop statistics, reading mail, forum messages and blog posts for the purposes of this project has given me intimate knowledge of the experience of the Etsy user. This regular use, though seemingly mundane, has been most beneficial in offering a deeper understanding of Etsy, the company, its users and the objects bought and sold. While Etsy.com lacks a physical place where users convene en masse, its format allowed me access that would have otherwise been unfeasible.

The content of this project includes three chapters, each of which addresses key aspects that differentiate Etsy.com from its peers and predecessors. The broad topics of these chapters are: origins and context, community, and aesthetics. Taken together, these analyses shed light on the changing forms of marketplace, which simultaneously utilize and claim to undermine capitalism. As Internet technologies become increasingly relevant in the day-to-day lives of Americans, we must consider the impact that this will have on craft in future generations.

The first chapter gives a brief overview and history of the Etsy company, and positions the creation of the website in socio-cultural context. As one of the newest markets for craft professionals and those interested in pursuing crafting as a means of primary or supplemental income, the structure of Etsy is modeled on both virtual auction sites like eBay and shopping websites, like Amazon.com as well as social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook, and Flickr. I also explore how Etsy Incorporated and its founder Robert Kalin have reconciled the use of venture capital funding with the ethical underpinnings of its mission. Kalin's self-fashioning as figurehead of the Etsy organization, as scrappy, young entrepreneur, philosopher and craftsman is central to this image.

Etsy's roots are located in two distinct socio-cultural movements: the turn-of-the-century Arts and Crafts Movement and the riot grrrl/DIY punk scene of the 1980s and 1990s. By aligning itself in increases in telecommunications (including the Internet) and home working, as well as the contemporary ecological movement, Etsy broadens its user base. Most significantly, Etsy has aesthetically and ideologically aligned itself with the DIY/indie craft and new domestic movements (linked to particular threads of

contemporary feminism) of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Etsy benefits from the emotional and psychological depth of resistance to corporate hegemony.

In chapter two, I attend to the concept of community in relation to Etsy. I examine the origins of the term community and its broad romantic associations in modern parlance. Using the writing of sociologist Suzanne Keller and folklorist Dorothy Noyes, I consider the ways in which Etsy does and does not appear to function as a community. Through this exploration, Etsy is conceived as a network, with its members engaged in performance of both their individual identities and their understanding of the Etsy platform. Feelings of community are evoked through the emergent practice of actors on Etsy and are re-iterated in the language of Etsy marketing. For Etsy Inc., the notion of community becomes a powerful selling point and strategy to attract users and sales.

Chapter three, on the aesthetics of Etsy, investigates the designs, styles and motifs of popularity on the website. The two-dimensional format of the computer screen informs Etsy's tendency to favor visual features of their objects. By examining a range of specific aesthetic features evident on Etsy, one can see that the creations bought and sold on Etsy must be understood contextually, often playing with notions popular and traditional culture. Objects tend toward a tactile softness, smallness in size and whimsy in subject matter. The concept of 'rejuvenile,' or, the adult consumption of childish things is also discussed in the context as objects that challenge traditional conceptions of safety/comfort and danger. In theorizing the aesthetics of Etsy more generally, it is possible to see the website is once again indebted to the DIY/indie craft movement. Among its largely female population, this aesthetic is affectively powerful in challenging traditional gender stereotypes of feminine domestic culture. Ultimately, though, the objects lose much of the affective power when they are reduced to commodities of novelty in the (privatized) Etsy exchange system.

As we will see, the ideological premise of Etsy is a compelling one for users. Etsians are often the company's best salespeople, touting the virtues of Etsy to family, friends and peers. Part of the Etsy marketing strategy has been to align itself with the indie/DIY craft movement. Though the company's affiliation to the indie/DIY craft movement may be seen as a superficial one, some makers on Etsy have a connection with the movement that is much deeper. These individuals draw meaning into their creations by

injecting them with sentiments and the styles that favor political action, ecology and irony. A close analysis of the aesthetics favored on the website reveals that objects indicate the tension between consumer fashion and coding which challenges dominant power structures and stereotypes.

PREVIEW

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT: SOCIOLOGICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ORIGINS

In this chapter, I will explore the major technological precursors, as well as the socio-cultural movements that informed the creation of Etsy.com. By reviewing the contributing innovations in Internet technology, I will place the Etsy website in a timeline of systems for electronic commerce and distinguish the ways that Etsy differs from other e-commerce sites including eBay and Amazon. I also explore the importance of PayPal and social networking to the Etsy system. In addition to these technological players, Etsy is also tied to a number of historical and contemporary socio-cultural movements, which are each, in their own way, tied to crafting. Etsy is indebted to both the Arts and Crafts movement of Britain and the United States at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries and the DIY movement that grew from the 1980s punk subculture are both particularly relevant to analysis of the ideological foundation of Etsy.

For the purposes of this project, the Arts and Crafts can be described as a campaign by artists and designers that extolled the virtues of handicraft in response to the growing mechanization of production processes. The DIY movement can be characterized by a rejection of the consumption of objects produced by dominant culture in favor of creating the items one needs and desires on one's own. In both cases the objects of mass production are viewed as 'soulless,' without quality and devoid of uniqueness. The process and product of the handcrafted is seen as a way to recover power from the tethers of machines and corporations. While the Arts and Crafts movement focused its attention on objects categorized as 'decorative arts' (ie. architecture, furniture, printmaking, ceramics, interior design, jewelry-making, textiles, etc), the DIY movement of the 1980's and early-to-mid 90's focused on music and creative writing with a particular visual aesthetic that favors collage and kitsch. Both movements, and their respective styles, have informed independent contemporary craft and Etsy.

These movements brought forth a desire to challenge what participants considered rampant industrialism, commercialization and consumerism. Third wave feminism has also played a part in challenging traditional notions of domesticity and feminism, resulting in a changed understanding on how crafts and the domestic arts in general might fit into the life of the 21st century woman. The third wave feminist movement's re-appropriation of the traditional domestic skills of sewing (knitting and embroidery), cooking for personal pleasure and political statement functions as a noteworthy conceptual underpinning of Etsy and the independent (or indie) craft movement as well. In total, all of these movements: the Arts and Crafts movement, the DIY movement and the third wave feminist movement have served as sources from which Etsy draws its social relevance.

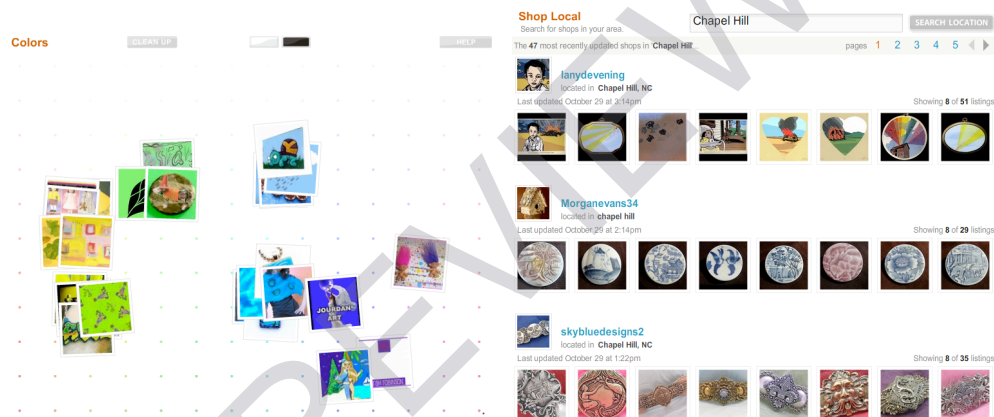
In the growing craft industry, fueled in no small part by the re-emerged popularity of crafting among young people, Etsy has given craftspeople a new type of venue for exposure and the sale of their goods. Because Etsy is an inexpensive and easy way for users to sell their crafts, both professional and hobby crafters are afforded an opportunity to enter their handmade items into the market. Etsy has also benefited from the growing popularity of home working and specifically, a segment of home workers known as 'mompreneurs,' Etsy has become a popular platform. When browsing Etsy.com, it becomes evident that these movements are not only present but essential to how Etsy works.

Technological Precursors

In order to fully understand Etsy and how it functions, one must consider its major technological predecessors as well as the socio-cultural landscape of the early 21st century into which it was born. As a website which deals in the sales of handcrafts, Etsy is an extension of larger trends in Internet use. The popularization of the Internet radically affected the way many people communicate and consume. The brainchild of three New York University students (who also happen to be computer programmers), Etsy is indebted to four major trends in interactive media on the Internet: e-commerce, social networking, blogging and the newest form, an amalgam of the three, web 2.0. With the advent of shopping on the net, users are no longer restricted to goods they can find locally.

The web functions as a global marketplace, reconfiguring consumers' relationships to the items they buy and people they buy them from. Internet shopping allows the consumer to avoid navigating traffic-filled parking lots and long lines at the local suburban shopping mall. Nowadays, if a consumer wants something, it is likely that they will seek it out online. Unlike a local shop, the Internet is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Users can shop from anywhere if they have a computer, Internet access and the time to use it. In addition, Web shopping has made bargain hunting and price/product comparison faster and easier. Recent advents in security and payment methods have made e-commerce even more appealing to consumers.

Shopping in a virtual space affords the consumer new and different means of sorting, viewing and evaluating products.



figs 6 and 7. Etsy offers a number of innovative search mechanisms for buyers, including searches by item color and location of the seller, allowing users the option to 'shop local.'

Through the search tool, the experience becomes user-driven— a consumer can seek out a specific item or range of items based on their own criteria, instead of physically roaming the aisles of a store. Thus, the consumer has much greater control over what he or she looks at (and what he or she bypasses) while shopping. One of the groundbreakers in the area of e-commerce, and arguably the best known, is Amazon.com. As part of the dot-com boom of the 1990's, Amazon.com was founded by Jeff Bezos and launched online in 1995.¹³ Initially, Amazon.com sold only books, but soon expanded to movies, music and other electronics. Amazon.com now functions as a veritable general store, selling

¹³Jason Er. "E-commerce – Amazon – History and Development," 9 September 2004; available at http://wiki.media-culture.org.au/index.php/Amazon_-_History_And_Development; Internet; accessed 8 June 2008.