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Souvenir = Authentic+sustainable

—a guide for designers

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Abstract

The designer explores how to improve souvenir design in the real market by questioning the issues of authenticity and the need of sustainable strategies. It takes the city of Växjö as a start point for a touristic place and analyses different categories. Through observations and interviews, the issues are confirmed and a design brief is made. Based on theories of product semantics and emotional design, the result from the investigation summarised to suggest guide for souvenir design. The guide is illustrated in a series of videos meant to anyone working in the souvenir industry.

Keywords

Souvenir, authenticity, sustainability, emotional design.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Personal motivation

When traveling I usually try to find a souvenir to remember me later of the place, but I find very often that the type of souvenirs offered are not good enough.

My expectations are to find something genuine, produced locally and made of traditional material from the place; to my disappointment many souvenirs are built on stereotypes and clichés, come from mass production and what is worse, are made in far places with no connection to the actual place I am visiting. Besides, every souvenir shop sells the same souvenir or similar ones based on one or two well-known local symbols. This motivated me to study souvenirs deeply and find how to improve souvenirs from a design perspective.

1.2 Aims and purposes:

The aim of the study is to improve souvenir design through informing other designers and related stakeholders how to make better souvenirs according to what is necessary to think in order to achieve both authenticity and sustainability.

As a product, a souvenir’s emotional value is more important than the practical value. The emotional value is presented to owners when souvenirs remind them of a memory associated to the experience in a certain place. (Nyffenegger, F. K., & Steffen, D., 2010). From the perspective of product semantics and emotional design, whether and how souvenirs are valuable to its owner can be analysed. Moreover, the emotional value is considered the most important aspect to relate when thinking of the perceived authenticity of souvenirs. Thus, to understand what makes a souvenir authentic for tourists is a purpose of this study. Besides, as souvenirs have a big impact in the industry around touristic places’ sustainability because of this industry is creating concrete material culture; to make a souvenirs sustainable is also a purpose as well.

A first research question is:

How can souvenirs be authentic and bring emotional and narrative value for tourists? In addition, what is necessary to improve in souvenir products in the real market to support authenticity?

Thus, the second research question should be:

How can design help stakeholders working in the souvenir industry to make better souvenirs?

The result of this study is to provide souvenir designers and related stakeholders working in the souvenir industry of a guide containing principles to create authentic and meaningful souvenirs for tourists. The guide includes several suggestions from different aspects.

1.3. Current souvenir industry

Nowadays, souvenirs are a major component of the tourism retailing system, relating to production, distribution, sales and economy in tourism places (Blundell, 1993; Cohen, 2001; Connelly-Kirch, 1982; Evans, 2000; Markwick, 2001; Morbello, 1996; Moreno & Littrell, 1996; Ryan & Huyton,
1998; Smith, 1996). A wide variety of products are bought by tourists for utilitarian purposes and for gifts so souvenirs reap economic benefits for the hosts in the fields of design, production and sales (Timothy, 2005; Brennan, L., & Savage, T., 2012).

Tourists’ demand has led to an emphasis on quantity rather than quality, resulting in a loss of unique designs in souvenir industry (Timothy D. Et.al., 2005) which is unsustainable to the touristic place’s culture. According to the author’s observation in souvenir shops in Växjö, souvenir producers put emphasis on other aspects instead of what consumers can perceive as authentic. This is discussed specifically in the chapter of the current souvenir market.

1.3.2 Current souvenir design

Research of souvenirs in the design field still remains limited (Nyffenegger, F. K., & Steffen, D., 2010). Design studies have not yet explored product semantics regarding souvenirs and the contexts of souvenirs in depth; theory-driven reflections are lacking (Nyffenegger, F. K., & Steffen, D., 2010).

Many literatures discuss souvenirs involving design but they focus on other aspects. For example, the study made by Ady Milman (2015) indicates the influence of the souvenir vendors to the socio-cultural authenticity of the host communities in Chichen Itza, which is a study from culture and economy aspects. Zhang Q. & Liu H. (2011) discuss low-carbon tourism souvenirs from an environmental perspective.

1.4 Needs from design perspective

There is a need of understanding emotional design, product semantics and authenticity from the design perspective, combining sustainability to analyse and enhance souvenir design. Besides, although the aim is to improve souvenir design, factors such as market and production are concerned as well, to make the outcome, a guide for making of souvenirs, fits a realistic situation.

2. Theoretical and Methodological Framework

2.1 Theory and classification of souvenirs

2.1.1 Concept of souvenirs

Things that people regard as souvenirs can be very varied. Owing to its presence, tourist’s fleeting, transitory experience is extended to eternity (Gordon, 1986). Maintaining evidence that they have been to a touristic place, is therefore psychologically important for tourists (Anderson & Littrell, 1995). Moreover, the evidence that the souvenir comes from the place marks its authenticity and facilitates to recall the experiences as true and meaningful.

Mass production of souvenirs became a global phenomenon after World War II when tourism movements started. The once a privileged of the well-off become a privilege of the middle-class in
the western societies (Lasusa, 2007). A whole industry evolves, transforming small idyllic spots into
places of mass consumption of touristic experiences, such a landscape, a sunny strand or even a
pilgrim place. Before, souvenirs were what the tourist gathered or bought to remind later of the
place, and as no industry existed to fulfil that need, the local product fits the need. The
transformation into huge touristic places, create an industry of souvenirs. A wide variety of products
are bought by tourists for utilitarian purposes and for gifts so souvenirs procuring economic benefits
for stakeholders in the fields of design, production and sales (Timothy, 2005; Brennan, L., & Savage,
T., 2012).

2.1.2 Classifications of souvenir

According to Gordon (1986), souvenirs can be classified into five categories.

(1) Pictorial images

“Pictorial images” are the most common type of contemporary souvenirs. This category includes
picture books, drawings, photographs and other graphic products. The whole started with the
invention of the photographic camera and it has evolved to the culture of selfies. Still, the graphic
form is expressed mostly through the postcard, which serves as a gift or as a souvenir, with a given
motive the tourists recognize.

(2) Piece-of-the-rock

This category is literally part of the destination, the touristic place. They can be not only pieces
directly taken from a touristic environment but also manufactured products with local material by
the local people. ‘Piece-of-the-rock’ souvenirs become significant icons with all the power of the
associations made with its original environment when taken out of their ordinary environment and
brought back by tourists (Gordon, 1986). They have no more function than be emotional.

(3) Symbolic shorthand

They tend to be manufactured items in the form of miniature of typical items from the place where
they were bought. Nowadays they are often mass-produced, mostly in other countries and can vary
in their quality. Cheaper alternatives are not environmental friendly and the conditions of their
production can be an issue for social sustainability. This kind of products endanger also the social
sustainability of the touristic place as the big exploitation of tourism impacts the other industries
aimed to maintain the local economy of the inhabitants.

(4) Markers

These souvenirs have no real reference to a specific place, person, or event, but are inscribed with
words and logos that mark the very destination in place and time (Timothy, et.al, 2005). The marker
in this case does not only make evident that the tourists have been to the place but that they have
taken part of the very culture of the place. An applied logo of New York, Berlin or another place on
t-shirts, coffee cups, etc. changes the meaning of the product from functional to emotional.

(5) Local products

This category are utilitarian products made by local people for local people. Sometime they can be
modified by redesigning some parts to become a souvenir. Local products’ possibility to become souvenirs depends on factors such as unique local lifestyle or renowned industry. The once a practical function is now substituted by an emotional one.

2.2 Design theory

2.2.1 Emergent authenticity

Authenticity is an important aspect as souvenirs bring authentic experience for its owner. Spooner (1986) proposes that acquisition of authentic products contributes to feelings of self-conceptual uniqueness which linked with a narrative of identity.

As a term, authenticity contains various meanings towards varied usages and contexts (Golomb 1995:7). To clear this ambiguous term and make sense for the context of souvenir design, this thesis quotes the definition of emergent authenticity proposed for the field of souvenir by Cohen (1988). According to Cohen (1988), emergent authenticity is a gradual development of a relationship between the tourist and the host culture. The authenticity of souvenir depends on the subjective representations of tourists (Littrell et al., 1993). Littrell et al. (1993). According to the research, it is also clarified that authentic souvenirs have certain characteristics such as: “uniqueness and originality, workmanship, cultural and historic integrity, aesthetics, and function and use” (p. 204).

Shen, M. J. (2011) considered that many comparable levels of authenticity can be arranged on a continuum in terms of tourists and souvenir category. Authenticity has three important levels: high level, intermediate, and low level of authenticity. Different people require different levels of authenticity as tourists are different in many aspects. Factors such as intention of tourism, divide tourists in different categories with different requirements level of authenticity. For example, serious tourists tend to adopt vigorous authenticity whereas the pleasure-seeking tourists are less concern with authenticity. Furthermore, even the serious tourist will only adopt intermediate level toward the commercial souvenirs. Curators and ethnographers always employ the strictest standard to distinguish authenticity from fake while pleasure-seeking tourists will delightfully accept the low level of authenticity (Shen, M. J., 2011).

Thus, in the perspective of authenticity, the meaning of a souvenir is not fixed. It varies based on owners’ cultural and social background, as well as life and travel experiences (Nyffenegger, F. K., & Steffen, D., 2010). Souvenirs are evaluated by the owners’ personal criteria. A design should convey a souvenir with identifiable authenticity, but most of all, a souvenir needs to be considered to be authentic to the destination so that it can become a bridge, linking the owner with touristic places and experiences.

2.2.2 Emotional design

The objects in people’s lives are not only material possessions created by designers and provided by manufacturers but also personal components that bring meanings to owners’ lives. The emotional
side of design may be more important to a product’s success than its practical elements, such as material, the manufacturing method, cost and practicality; and whether the product is easy to understand and use (Norman, D. A., 2005).

Emotions can change the way of thinking and guide people to act appropriately. Cognition enables people to interpret and understand the world while emotion enables quick decisions as it is connected to the human senses. Thus, humans usually react emotionally to a situation before they assess it cognitively. Moreover, emotions are a necessary part and are inseparable from cognition though the common tends to pit cognition against emotion. Every behaviour and thought of humans is tinged with emotion, much of it subconscious and including several senses, even if the visual sense is the most prominent. There is evidence that aesthetically pleasing objects make you work better while usable designs are not necessarily enjoyable to use.

Through any design, there are three different dimensions interwoven: visceral, behavioural, and reflective. Visceral design concerns itself with appearances, relating to aesthetic or attractiveness. Behavioural design considers the pleasure and effectiveness of use. Reflective design takes into account the rationalization and intellectualization of a product, which determines whether owner can tell a story about it. It is important to note how these three components interweave both emotions and cognition.

Particularly since a souvenir is a type of product necessarily providing emotional and narrative value with dispensable practical function, emotional design offers a suitable theoretical approach to the field. Emotional design explains how people’s emotions and recognition generate when seeing a product and how people react based on that.

The three dimensions (visceral, behavioural and reflective design) are considered together in the analysis process to interpret interview answers and summary result. Then, to describe guidelines that enable souvenirs offering pleasing emotions and cognition, they are used to make a clear explanation.

2.2.3 Product semantics

A product can send messages to its user via a part of language structures that deal with meaning, called semantics, regardless of how a designer use colour, shape, form, and texture in designing the product. Designers are committed to design artifacts for use by others who may experience the same designs quite differently (Krippendorff, K., & Butter, R., 2008). This requires designers not only know the messages they wish to transmit, but also recognise the type of responses from the symbols and attributes forming that language can be expected from the user as receivers.

To design artifacts for use by others is to design them to be or to have the chance to become meaningful to others – not merely in their designers’ terms, but according to others’ own and often, diverse conceptions (Krippendorff, K., & Butter, R., 2008). Thus, the term ‘meaning’ is used for ‘experience’ since it connects the design of artifacts –not to a psychological construct, but to how others feel, see, describe, and interact with in ways that are different to how designers relate to them. Here the theory of emergent authenticity correlates, as a designer can specifically work on the meanings that construct the sense of authenticity as is postulated by Cohen.

People experience artifacts by interacting with them. This indicates that designers should concern
how people interact with them, and when designing a souvenir, the more the form connects to the experience, the more the emergent authenticity.

According to emotional design, people successively generate emotions and cognition to a souvenir in the actions they take while interacting with it. Product semantics explain in a theoretical way that souvenir sends messages to people who see, feel, describe and interact with them and create meaning based on the touristic experience. The way of interaction between owners or tourists and souvenir is necessary to study to control the meanings sending by souvenirs to the owners or the tourists.

2.3 Research methodology

The methodology is using qualitative methods to assess the perception of souvenirs in a certain context, in this case the city of Växjö as a touristic place. Observation and semi-constructed interview are chosen as research methods to receive general answer about all types of souvenirs.

2.2.1 Observation

Observation is systematic method of a data collection for gathering knowledge of a certain phenomenon. In this case, the use of observation aims to study the phenomenon and human interactions related to the phenomenon, when it addresses a specific research question; it is subject to the checks and balances in producing trustworthy results (Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J., 2015).

The observation as an outsider is a technique that helps investigators to pay special attention to a few things to which others ordinarily give only passing attention. Observations as such also can provide some knowledge of the context or specific incidents, behaviours, and so on. These can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews (Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J., 2015).

2.2.2 Semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview is one of qualitative interview types. When preparing a semi-interview, the researcher need to prepare a list of questions on specific topics to be covered, which is thought as an interview guide. In the interview process, the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply. According to the specific situation, the researcher may ask questions that not completely follow on the plan prepared in advance. In general, all the questions can be asked based on the answer from interviewee (Bryman, A., 2016).

According to Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2011), perceptions and interpretations determined by individual experiences are better analysed in in-depth interviews. Since the research question requires study on tourists’ personal perceptions and interpretation that are influenced by their experiences individually, such as cultural background and tourists experience in the certain places, in-depth interviews are considered suitable. This study needs to collect an amount of data regarding wider conversation topics. In this situation, semi-structured interview format was considered more appropriate (Berg, 1998).
3. Application of research method

The researcher studied souvenirs in Växjö as an example, in order to explore general guidelines for souvenir design. In this situation, Sweden is the touristic place and all souvenirs collected in the research are souvenirs of this area. The researcher chose three souvenir shops in Växjö for both observations and interviews. The observation is also conducted online. After that, even potential customers of souvenirs are interviewed.

3.1 Observations

At beginning, the researcher’s observation is carried out in souvenir shops. Then, the online part is conducted, benchmarking the existing market. The online observation is conducted by searching Swedish souvenirs on “Google”. The observation provided a chance to confirm the concepts and know how current souvenirs in the market correspond to classifications of souvenirs.

When observing in physical stores, the researcher put emphasis on the category of souvenirs and each souvenir’s stimulus point, combining the concept of souvenir and the design theories.

At the same time, the observation is also a preparation of interviews with souvenir buyers and photos of different types of souvenirs are taken for the interview.

3.2 Interview

The aim is to explore in which way souvenirs attract the tourists and in which way the touristic places become meaningful for the tourist through the acquisition of a souvenir, during the interview they are shown presumptive souvenirs, upon they can express their opinions.

There are four main questions:

(1) Generally, when you travel, do you buy souvenirs?
(2) Which souvenirs among all would/would not you like to buy? Why do you like/dislike these souvenirs?
(3) Do you think, among all preselected souvenirs, one or more are, or not, connected to the destination?
(4) If you have chance to redesign these souvenirs, which souvenirs will you redesign and what will you change their design?

The interviewees are asked other questions as well. At the beginning of the interview, interviewees’ culture background is recorded to find the possible relation with their view of souvenirs. When talking about prepared preselected souvenirs, interviewees did not know the price in the case this could influence their opinion inadvertently. Interviewees’ knowledge about destination is concerned to understand their criteria of authenticity.

The research takes place in Växjö so the preselected souvenirs are products sold in a handicraft and
souvenir shop in Växjö, and preselected, they are shown in photos of the real souvenirs. The souvenirs material characteristics, such as structure, size and material are clear for interviewees. The interview is planned to have non-Swedish interviewees to ensure the accuracy about answer about authenticity.

4 Result and analysis

This chapter includes results and analysis from the observation and interview.

4.1 Contextual analyses – souvenirs in the market

The results from the observations and interviews in the three shops are summarised as contextual analysis.

After observations in the three souvenirs shops, the researcher found examples that match each classification of souvenirs. Compared to souvenirs from the other three types, “marker” and “local products” usually include utilitarian functions.

(1) Pictorial images

As shown in the photo below, the tourist information office in Växjö sells ‘pictorial images’ including postcards and stickers with the Swedish flag, and some having the silhouette of an elk. It has the limitation that all the information delivered by souvenirs is only in a graphic way, then the main emotional concern is the visual. The graphic form tends to recall the country and its symbols, like the national flag, or famous examples or indigenous flora and fauna. In Sweden, the elk is such an icon. The products are all printed and the sense of authenticity is less due to the material is found everywhere and not part of a particular local place.

Even if the souvenirs relates most to Sweden as a touristic place, here are found examples that relates directly to the city of Växjö –namely the Växjö cathedral and its two towered shape, and Småland, the region and Swedish landscape.
In this classification, the local materials the souvenirs are made of, are themselves narratives of touristic places. ‘Piece-of-the-rock’ can, sometimes, be of other classifications, the symbolic shorthand, which is also made of local materials but with the intention to recall local artifacts, such a tool or a characteristic building. For example, the small wood house is both a ‘Piece-of-the-rock’ and a symbolic shorthand. It has traditional appearance of a local country house – a “stuga”, and it can also be disassembled to wooden sticks. It is a souvenir of Växjö connected with the forestry and the landscape as well as wooden building tradition in the Småland region. This type accounts for a small percentage of the local souvenir market.

“Symbolic shorthand” uses local motives characterized as typical symbols of the touristic places. They are supposed to be mostly instantaneously recognizable by the tourists, such as examples of famous architectures existing in a given touristic place. Some souvenirs found in the shops are shorthand of elk, the Swedish moose, and the Swedish style house, the red “stuga” with white corners. Souvenirs of this type usually has complicated shapes and they are usually used as
decorations. For the research it can be distinguished that some of these products are local made by handcraft, which enhance the grade of authenticity compare to other mass produced souvenirs. It is noticeable too that this kind of souvenirs relates most to Sweden as a touristic place than the city of Växjö or Småland, but the authenticity is recalled by the local production.

![Image of souvenirs](image)

*Figure 3: “Symbolic shorthand” in the souvenir shops*

(4) Markers

“Markers” are easy to be manufactured in mass production, such as a bottle opener with a picture inserted as a pattern. Because of that, “markers” in the shops are cheap. Besides, any product that can hold a printed pattern with a label can be a “marker” so they usually are products with practical functions labelled with a local pattern, the name of the place or a text that is resuming something typical of the place such a certain culture phenomenon like FIKA in the Swedish cultural context. FIKA is coffee drinking but associated to socialization. Swedish people invites to FIKA to interact with each other. FIKA is used to socialize with the tourists too, if they have the opportunity, otherwise the coded concept remains unrevealed.

Many “markers” link to a touristic place only with the marker. The Swedish wooden butter knife is found all over the country but marked as local with engraved patterns. The word FIKA can be applied to almost anything, especially to items that are used in the kitchen or for aimed for beverages. The grade of authenticity can vary as the mass produced items can come from abroad, but the emotional aspect remain articulated in the use, as these souvenirs have a practical function and are also meant to be used, connecting to an emergent authenticity by daily interaction.
(5) Local products

In the Växjö souvenir shop, there are some glass products manufactured in the Småland region, well known as the Glass Kingdom, where companies such as Kosta Boda and Orrefors have become famous for the quality of the glass products for domestic use. These glass products are the most popular souvenirs in the souvenir shop located in the Småland museum, a local museum dedicated to Glass. Other products included are socks, blankets, kitchen suppliers, all connected with Swedish lifestyle. The common feature in this classification is that they have practical functions for both local people and tourists. It is important to mention that the researcher could not always discern if the patterns used where local or Swedish—the examples showed contained pattern from other areas of Sweden (the Dalarna horse) or from Finland (the Mumintroll).
4.1.2 Souvenir industry

Souvenirs of any category are either produced by large companies or made by artisans. In the current industry, the place of production can be situated in both touristic places and other countries. Among all sorts, “symbolic shorthand” and “marker” are more common to be produced from these companies. The range of products is wide in the category of markers as these products can be of any kind and transformed to souvenirs by marking.

Souvenir companies then sell souvenirs by customising products for corresponding places. For example, a common product can be printed with an elk to represent Sweden or even Småland just by distinguishing the locality. For another customer, the product can also be printed with a word “Tokyo” to become a souvenir for the city or even Japan. Mass production makes that most of souvenirs from this category are of low quality and therefore cheaper than other souvenirs, like the exclusively local ones, so, in fact, it accounts for a certain amount of market. Customised souvenirs are often produced in China or other Asian countries to reduce costs. Limited by the customisable mode and non-local design, these souvenirs are prone to become inauthentic and stereotypical.

Being a large factor, this situation is difficult to change in a short period of time. In this study, it is concerned as a part of understanding the current situation in order to find what principles could be
applied to guide to a better production of souvenirs.

### 4.1.3 Souvenirs online

After searching, the researcher found that Swedish souvenirs marketed and sold in the internet also correspond to the classification of souvenirs. These souvenirs are compared with souvenirs studied in the stores. All of them use the same stimulus points and have similar forms. Markers as T-shirts and magnets are popular. (figure 7)

![Figure 7: Some of search results online](image)

### 4.2 Why souvenirs need to be improved?

Anderson and Littrell (1995, p. 328) proposed that a souvenir is a tangible symbol reminding of an experience that differs from daily routine. From a design perspective, a souvenir is a stimulus for its owner, being able to evoke the owner’s memory of tourism experiences (Morgan, N. & Pritchard, A., 2005). According to the research of souvenirs sold in the current market, the scope of feature is wide, from concrete items, such as architecture and animals to intangible characteristics, such as way of life and tradition in different forms. Linking the owner to a touristic place, souvenirs then become narrative of owner’s identity, bringing to the owner emotional and narrative value.

Since the forms of souvenirs are changed with the situation of mass production and widely popular tourism, the meaning expressed from souvenirs are not enough or fulfil tourists’ need because of bad quality and inauthenticity. As emotional and narrative objects, souvenirs apply different ways to show the tourism places which can make souvenirs unique but require designers’ ingenuity to give the product the capacity to recall the experience and link to the specific place (Nyffenegger, F. K., & Steffen, D., 2010). Designing souvenirs requires designers to create symbols which are not just given but can take various forms and they arise from creative processes aimed to find and develop those emotional aspects that a souvenirs need to have in order to enhance they grade of
authenticity. (Susanne Langer [23, p. 60-61, 64]; Nyffenegger, F. K., & Steffen, D., 2010).

However, design studies lack theoretical approaches to guide into suitable ways of designing souvenirs. In the current souvenir system, producers, designers and sellers put more emphasis on simplifying production, getting lower cost and doing a better marketing strategy than focusing in the emotional characteristics that can make a souvenirs perceived as authentic to a certain touristic place.

4.3 Result of interview

According to the recordings and notes, interviewees’ same or similar opinions are classified and generalised in four main assessments. In this part, each assessment is analysed according to the theory part. The four assessments are the base of four principles for guidelines.

1) All the souvenirs connect to a destination in different ways. Typical elements in the culture of the destination are widely used in souvenir design. However, in the interview, some interviewees said that they did not understand some of them. For example, the word “FIKA” has no meaning to them as they do not have being part of that specific feature in Swedish culture. As words are unfamiliar to them, they said, they pay less attention on the mug printed with “FIKA” as for them it is merely a mug and nothing else.

There were more interviewees saying that they do not understand why wood and glass materials are representative souvenirs for the city of Växjö. Some souvenirs, such as pictures above (figure 8), are indicated as inauthentic by some interviewees. It is first when they are informed about the wood and glass industry in the region of Småland, they were willing to buy these souvenirs.

In their opinion, if there were an introduction together with the souvenirs, explaining the cultural background, then they are more willing to have them. It is also evident that the explanation makes the souvenirs suitable to send it as a gift for their friend, because it

Figure 8: Souvenirs in the shop –cups and candlestick
assures that the recipient can also understand it and it is also perceived as an additional value that a souvenir can bring new knowledge to themselves or their friends.

Souvenirs can be associated with any sort of typical elements in tourist places, such as lifestyle (candleholder in Sweden), typical industry (porcelain in Jingdezhen), unique material (Dzi bead in Tibet), typical creature (kangaroo toy in Australia) and special food (matcha in Japan) and so on. Since people can only generate pleasing emotions after they understand a souvenir, it is important in the design of souvenirs link the authenticity with the emotional aspect of the souvenir. The tourists get the meaning of a souvenir designers wish to transmit to them when the tourists interact with souvenirs. If a souvenir is connected with a deep knowledge in the touristic place culture, the deeper the tourists can understand them and be participant of emergent authenticity, which is to link emotionally to the place they once visited. To design this kind of understandable souvenirs, different ways can be applied, which are explained in the next part.

2) Marker souvenirs usually bring practical functions and are marked with a place’s name or local symbols. According to the investigation of souvenirs in current market, this type accounts a certain proportion of the souvenir market. However, it is criticized for its incompatible style.

When talking about authenticity, some interviewees pointed out that some souvenirs feel inauthentic due to their form and colour. For example, some said key rings and magnets were almost weakly connected with destination even if they use well-known symbols, such as an elk or a flag. (figure 9)

![Figure 9: Souvenirs in the shop –keyrings](image)

The reason was the uncoordinated design style. The colours scheme and the cartoon style was not related with Sweden or Småland, according to them. If the cartoon figure is
explained as Hälge, a famous cartoon around the vicissitudes of an elk, then the souvenir might have a better connection. Another example was bags in the picture. They were judged as having the wrong style for their bright colours and messy layout. Probably an explanation of Swedish pattern design and the use of local produced textile could have helped to show the authenticity of such products. (figure 10)

![Figure 10: Souvenirs in the shop –bags](image)

Typical items considered in the categories of souvenirs can contain design elements as colour, characters (if used) making their appearance symbols that transmit product semantics. These elements are used for decoration with no relation to practical use, but are obvious so people get the semantics meanings only by looking at them. Thus, wrong styles of appearance can weaken the relevance between the souvenir and the place. Elements used for appearance of a souvenir should be of the destination style. Almost all the interviewees thought Swedish style is a simple style so souvenirs were also expected to be simple according the emergency authenticity. If no explanation of the style is given as an extra information, such as the history of the patterns or the specific style within the Swedish design traditions, then the tourist doubt of the authenticity.

This problem is more common in markers and symbolic shorthand type of souvenirs. This may result from that these two types are usually to be designed and produced by the mode of souvenir company’s templates. Templates are obviously without the local style and already containing uncoordinated elements. Those who are in charge of design may also not be familiar with the destination and the styles existing in there.

3) A place name, such as city name, town name is common in a souvenir.
Many interviewees complain about the overuse of “Sweden” and other similar words in souvenirs. They are printed on cups, bags, T-shirt, etc. as a label. Interviewees particularly hoped not to see them on T-shirts and bags because it was so obvious that they would not use them in practical. This means these T-shirt and bag souvenirs lose their practical value too when handled as a souvenir but without caring of the possible emergent authenticity.

Using words from local language is also thought to be useless according to most of interviewee’s view. Some interviewees said they do not understand that and some said that a word can hardly remind them of travel experience. Some words are well-known even outside the local context (“smörgåsbord”; smorgasbord in found in the English language) but tourists know little about them so they cannot provide tourists of any emotional value. For example, “FIKA” is a word connected to a typical local culture so it is thought to be well-known by tourists. However, in the interview, tourists said they have not learn the culture deeply enough to that degree. They did not have chance to experience “FIKA” and learn this word in a short-time trip.

In fact, when it comes to using words on products, only place names are welcomed from the tourists. One said: “it will remind me that I have been to this place”. Tourists are supposed to know the place name and if these products have a similarity the word applied tend to be not obvious.

Figure 11: Souvenirs in the shop –bottle opener and packet

4) Practical function can make souvenirs more attractive.

More than a half of the interviewees claimed that they were almost only interested in practical souvenirs that have an intended domestic use. They said, generally, they were more willing to buy typical food rather than other souvenirs because food is absolutely useful (eatable) and can be shared with others as a present. If not food, for other types of souvenirs is the practical function also very important for the most of the interviewees.
What is important to be aware of is that decoration was not considered as a practical function in a souvenir. In fact, in the interview, interviewees said that a souvenir cannot be emotionally useful just because people do not have continuous interaction with a decoration. Besides, some interviewees thought choosing a souvenir upon the decorative patterns is very complicated because they need to consider the style of their home and think of where they are going to put the artefact in their homes.

Furthermore, interviewees thought that a practical function related to local lifestyle existing in tourist places was more attractive as long as the souvenirs is still useful in the tourist’ daily life. A usual example is the Swedish wooden butter knives, which are highly appreciated by western tourists in Växjö. This sort of souvenirs combines the emotional function with the practical function.

Figure 12: Souvenirs in the shop –Butter knifes

The conclusions are: for the designing of better and sustainable souvenirs, the main effort should be focused on the narrative latent in each category of souvenirs, considering then best practices to enhance the possibilities to:

a) A better semantics process, creating meaning or reinforcing it

b) Accentuate those features that engage the consumer emotionally, attaching the emergent authenticity and,
c) Consider the life cycle of each product by determining the environmental, social and economic impact from the point of view of the sustainability of the products and its industry.

d) Furthermore, it is necessary to articulate the knowledge of souvenirs to their creator and its industry, whether it is by craft or mass produced.

5. Design Project

This chapter includes two parts – the form and content of a proposed guide for better design of souvenirs. The form refers to the chosen way of presenting the guidelines to a target group. The content describe what recommendations are given in the guide. The design project is based on a simple brief: communicate the insights of what can make souvenirs desirable as well as sustainable fulfilling the concept of emergent authenticity and emotional design.

5.1 Form

In order to successfully convey the guidelines to the target groups, it is necessary to choose a suitable form of media. This part introduces the reasons of applying digital media and the refinement of this form of expression to communicate information.

5.1.1 Selection of form

At the beginning of the visualization of the guideline, different types of media - a book, a website, an application or a series of videos are considered to be feasible. To filter out the most suitable form, two main factors are taken into consideration.

The first is the content. Since the guidelines discuss about product design, it is necessary to explain with both pictures (icons, current souvenirs photos and example of better souvenir design) and text representing a process, thus the digital media gives opportunity to use different effects that support this kind of narrative.

The second is the target groups. Since both designers and related stakeholders in souvenir industry are target groups, the guidelines should be easy to understand for all of them. Moreover, some of stakeholders in the target groups may have not realized yet current souvenir problems, so to encompass them with an easy explanatory way might be an appropriate method to awaken their interest in improving souvenirs design. Thus, the guidelines should also show the advantages of working for producing sustainable souvenirs, which is not only a must but also an argument to sell. Consequently, videos are thought to the most suitable form. A video is dynamic communication mean, narrating through both in visual and auditory ways. It is easier to understand and efficient to watch, compared to reading a book or other types of text. In addition, videos are digital, not need to be printed, so it is environmentally and economically sustainable.
Nevertheless, a complementary booklet can be acquired by request. The booklet is only a resume of the whole series of videos and focus more on the recommendations.

5.1.2 Refinement of form

After the digital media is chosen, the refinement of this form is gradually completed by incorporating the elements necessary for the narrative as well as the timing and disposition of the narrative using a storyboard, a design method to visualise the sequences of images, information and sound from the perspective of what the customer will interact while seeing it.

5.1.2.1 Structure

The whole structure consists of three parts:

(1) introduction part
   This part introduces the purpose of the whole series of videos. It describes the series of video to come after the introduction and the background as well as the purpose in giving suggestions to improve souvenirs design.

(2) main part
   This part includes five videos. The first video explains the theory behind a souvenir (the concept of souvenirs and how souvenirs provide emotional value). The second to the fifth videos describe four guidelines separately.
   Each video is about 5 minutes. The length is long enough for the content and short enough that maintain the attention of the audience, the videos are online and can be watched in anytime.

(3) ending part.
   The ending is the final video to thank the audience and introduce possible further research.

5.1.2.2 Style

Since the content might be perceived too formal or even too demanding it is important to make the style pleasant and even fun. Thus, in the videos apply a series of bright colours to make them more attractive and interesting.

![Figure 13: chosen colours for videos](image)

The videos use simple style animation which is an efficient way to communicate to large audiences, avoiding images or concepts that can contain complex connotations but are enough to explain the guideline clearly. Animation is constituted by dynamic icons, photographs and small amount of texts and accompanied with talked aside information in English to start. Each motion is designed to match each sentence of the aside to bring a sense of rhythm to audience. The aside talk complement the
images and support the rhythm.

In addition, the titles and texts in the videos should also be interesting avoiding an academic style to make them appealing and exhorting them to action. Since the target group is people working in souvenir industry, they probably see themselves as professional and expect a grade of seriousness in the information. The titles should specifically point out the new knowledge for them in each video.

The videos’ covers are as following:

![Figure 14: Covers of videos](image)

**5.2 Content**

This chapter is about the key point in each part of the structure.

**5.2.1 Introduction part**

The objective of this part is to recommend the audience this series of videos. In order to attract the target group, it is important to point that it is helpful to increase sales and create good impression
for the company because of sustainable actions are connected to the information.

5.2.2 Main part

5.2.2.1 Have you already known souvenirs well

Before four proper guidelines, this video introduces the concept of souvenirs. This puts emphasis on how souvenirs provide their emotional function to tourist which is the base of the guide.

5.2.2.2 Make souvenirs understandable

Souvenirs can be associated with any sort of typical elements existing in a touristic place. To ensure that the elements used in souvenirs can be easily understood by tourists from a different culture is essential and two solutions can be applied. One is to use widely known elements existing in destination culture, such as an elk for Sweden and a panda for China. The souvenirs do not have an explanation because the of the iconic feature of the chosen element. Designers are then exhorted to do research about what are the most typical elements in touristic places from specific countries/areas however, sticking to only this solution may limit creativity while designing souvenirs and increase stereotypes and clichés in souvenir design as long as the designer do not incorporate into the design process deep understanding of why those elements have become or are considered typical. The other solution avoids this problem, while including an explanation of the typical element. The easiest way is to add a small label with introduction of related culture. It can be a well-designed card for tourists to collect as post cards, being both useful and sustainable.

For other specific cases, the solution can vary. For example, food packages can be simple but focus on introducing origin of this food and the making process. Articles for daily use can be displayed in the shop with advertisement also including an introduction.

In addition, designers need to have an idea of what tourists might know about the culture of the destination. Tourists learn about the destination before och during their trip and up to certain level depending on their own life experience in their home culture, except for that, tourists may know destination culture in the whole life experience in their home culture. That means that their culture background plays a role in the way they appreciate their destination.

5.2.2.3 Use coordinated style

The souvenir’s appearance according to semantics are supposed to convey a coordinated feeling of the destination, which means that the souvenirs should follow the destination style. It is necessary to pay attention to the details, such as fonts, colours, layout structure, material, drawing style, etc. For example, for a souvenir in Växjö, indigenous wood is preferable to plastic or other composites, as wood is a typical material in the Swedish culture and in Växjö wood is also associated to the city’s own sustainable image. Wood construction buildings are part of a strategy for the urban development of the city. Designers need to think whether there are typical fonts, colours, layout ways, materials, drawing styles and so on, in the destination culture.

5.2.2.4 Language
When using text on souvenirs, those not knowing the local language are excluded to the information; therefore describing the information in different languages can let the tourist have immediate access to the supplementary information that reinforces their emotional connection.

Most of the tourist travelling to Växjö come from Germany, so the language can be constrained to those from the biggest groups, and even if English might be considered as universal tool of communication, just the gesture of finding an explanation in the tourist’s own language is an emotional experience.

Place names are only acceptable on small products. They can be used on small products, which tend to be private, such as a coin purse. Local language is not familiar to tourists. This means that if it is necessary to be used, they should follow the first guideline that include an explanation to this souvenir.

Places names that are difficult to pronounce (Växjö) could have a transliteration in the IPA, international phonetic association or make a transliteration using other languages systems (pinyin). This is not to guaranty the perfect pronunciation of a place but to associate the places closer to the tourists’ background.

Special concepts that are likable to be expressed in written texts can have the same treatment with the supplementary information (fika, köttbullar, midsommar, smörgåsbord, etc.). For flora and fauna can the scientific name – according to Linnaeus taxonomy, gives the sense of universal knowledge to the specific area, thus Älg (English elk or moose) is *alces alces*, elk is the European name, distinct from moose, which is used in North America.

5.2.2.5 Practical function

Designers can search for local product that distinguish certain aspect of the lifestyle to find typical products in daily necessities category. If this sort of products fit foreigners’ lifestyle, the souvenirs combine practical and emotional functions. For example, a wooden butter knife is widely used in Scandinavia and widely associated with Sweden. They are special in many ways as they summarise the Scandinavian aesthetics of the simple and practical, made of the fragrant juniper wood (enbärträ) which is found in many places in the Northern Hemisphere. Since foreigners will encounter the knives in many places this typical souvenir gains an emotional value besides the practical value. Wooden kitchen suppliers in the picture are similar in this aspect.
There are many similar examples. Chopsticks are good souvenirs for western tourists, and the can gain emotional value if the history and the proper use is explained—which means not only how to handle them but also to introduce to Chinese table manners. A teapot from Jingdezhen is a unique piece of artisan craft that also can give access to the Chinese tea ceremony and create emotional value when using it.

5.2.3 Ending part

The main target of the ending part is to invite the target groups to do further research and actions. Thus, this video briefly introduces the limitation of this research and give examples for further research topic, but also gives concrete advice in how to make souvenirs sustainable.

5.3 Process

For each video, visual and audio parts are separately made and put together. The visual part include animation and videos cut from online videos. Firstly, storyboards are drawn for each video. The following is the example of “Make souvenirs understandable”.

Figure 15: Souvenirs in shops
Figure 16: Storyboards

Based on the storyboards, icons were drawn in Illustrator. Some of them are based on existing icons online. Photographs are processed to be prepared to be in the video, assessing their content to avoid negative or complex connotations.

Secondly, animations are made in PowerPoint with icons and photographs. The texts of aside are prepared for each slide. The videos are formed from the lay-outed PowerPoint. Then, the researcher chose and cut videos online and edited it together with animations. Thirdly, the aside is read and recorded. Finally, when the audio and the images are combined, some further sound effects as background music are added.

The following are screenshots:
6. Summary and Discussion

Souvenirs create economic value for touristic places and a large amount of souvenirs will continue being produced in different ways. It is a long way to run to change a whole industry, but instead of contributing with an example of what a good souvenir should be, the intention has been to share knowledge and to engage designers and stakeholders in the souvenir industry to perform better, because of the understanding of what a souvenir is and provoke in the tourists.

At the same time, this thesis aims to create awareness that souvenir design should receive more
attention as a research topic. This research creates a possibility to promote souvenir design in the real market. The use of guidelines meant to bring more authenticity to souvenirs and understand the basic situation of the souvenir industry and market. The improvement of souvenir design can create better sustainability for souvenir industry which can benefit the environment and the local culture. These can be the base of further research or inspiration for other researchers as this field is yet not studied enough.

6.1 Influence and limitation from souvenir industry

The industry of souvenirs is complex, and many aspects are factors that have a negative impact in sustainability. However, it is difficult to change this situation but sustainability should be taken into consideration in order to create and design souvenirs to make the production adequate to the exigencies of a sustainable development. The guidelines does not give any concrete way of doing it, instead it refers to sources that can help. The whole intention is to illustrate that sustainability is nowadays a demand but also can be used as a marketing strategy. Souvenirs in this case convey the acquisition of them to a good business to all stakeholders and with benefits for the planet.

6.2 Limitation of guide in this research

Since the research takes place in Vaxjö and the guide uses the Swedish context as example, the guide is based on an investigation with a small group of people. The result is basic and particular to this place. Furthermore, since the researcher lacks deep knowledge in local culture, this thesis researches souvenirs considered general for Sweden.

Thus, although the guide is designed to be general and embrace different types of souvenirs, it may not fit souvenirs designed for other touristic places.

6.3 Further research

The guide as a result is basic and general, being useful for different types of souvenirs. This research can be a base of further research focusing on a specific type of souvenirs to find more specific guidelines, such as guidelines for “markers”.

In addition, solving the limitation of this research can also be a topic. It can also put emphasis on other touristic places in the world to make the guidelines more general.
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