



In this context, iconic forms are thus re-evaluated in the light of a transition that places them in a time which is both the sum and the merging of different time-scapes. These shifts in time imply changes, which become noticeable in a re-definition of the meaning of the retrieved form because of a difference in aims characterizing each stage of the continuous sequence.

Drawing upon a few elements I have already touched upon, the following exemplifies that which I see undergoing a re-definition. The turning of knobs of a synthesizer had a particular significance in the Seventies, when Kraftwerk were experimenting with the possibilities of the medium in bringing electronic sound into the limelight. But it certainly holds a different significance right now. It is almost the same with the use of cassette tapes in music distribution; what before was the only way of disseminating the work of bands stands now<sup>3</sup> for something else, which seems to originate in an interest in the past and its iconographic motives that, in many cases, can be either attributable to nostalgia and sentimentality, or just fashion.

But what really is the above-mentioned 'something else'? And where does the difference between these gestures lie?

In these instances, the uses of forms of production or forms per se that parallel former techniques are not anymore concerned with breaking the technological boundaries inherent to the medium employed. But rather, in these examples, the process of re-positioning is seen as a starting point for creating a multilayered relationship between form and content; a relationship complicated by the coexistence of present and past and the reference to a prior context.

Ultimately, what is this *historical present* about?

In this *historical present*, the *then* and *now* are inextricably interwoven. It becomes difficult to clearly distinguish the two to the point that, in some instances, their merging may suggest timelessness - or images of ideas frozen in time, or impressions of a potential (ir-)reality of the *now*. However, as already mentioned, the retrieval of forms, and therefore their migration, entails a change.

And consequently certain cultural forms become understood as a series of variations on a theme; variations which do not propose a flat continuum but a motif that functions by revitalizing a past significance.

This generates an interpretative framework that exists as a network of connections, which require an active participation of the receiver and, at least, a recognition of a previous cultural setting.

*On Simplicity* is the editorial of the second instalment of the online exhibition *Simplicity* (Part Two) featuring works by Francesca Anfosso, Joana Bastos, Erik Bünger, Patrick Coyle, Jamie George, Tristan Perich, Nadine Pütz, James Richards and David Wojtowycz + guest blogger Lorena Muñoz-Alonso; <http://www.or-bits.com/simplicitypt2.php>



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<sup>3</sup> See the record label *The Tapeworm*, which is a recent case in point of the rising interest in cassette tapes; <http://www.tapeworm.org.uk/>