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GLOBAL AUTOMOBILE DESIGN CULTURE: THE PEUGEOT CONCEPTS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The need to properly document the efforts and contributions of the people Automobile of Nigeria has become imperative, impart from acknowledging its roles toward the development of Automobile design, there is need to bring to limelight unfamiliar background in the design of cars. This paper therefore offers the basis for an in-depth studies of vehicles of this industry with a view to opening a new vistas for design as a field of academics in Nigeria and the world at large. The dogged determination and perseverance with which Peugeot Automobile pushed on to improve on design and technology provides for a great deal of competence and determination to succeed. Hence design practice of Peugeot speaks eloquently of her immense contribution to mordent car design scene in Nigeria. This paper also examination some historical facts on the development of Automobile design and the concept of design as it concerns the production of Peugeot cars.

Keywords: Automobile design, Peugeot, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

In the developed and developing world, manufacturers of all types of goods are increasingly recognizing and implementing designs as an essential means of reaching new international audiences while gaining competitive advantage. More than ever before, the products of design are shaping the world through material culture and impacting such positively on the quality of our environment and daily living.

The importance of design, therefore, cannot be overstated, for not only has design come to encompass an extraordinary range of functions, techniques, attitudes, ideas and values, it also has the attitude of influencing our experience and perception of the world around us, but the choices we make today about the future direction of design will continue to have a significant and possibly enduring effect on the quality of our live and the environment in years to come.

The task of the designer is to create a design that communicates the nature of the product, connecting it emotionally with the customer. No doubts, design will play a more important role in our live in the future. Certainly, it will play much bigger role in large companies like Peugeot Automobile Assembly of Nigeria (PAN).

The term design regularly enters our vocabulary to describe some of the most common aspects of our everyday experience. The definition of design acknowledges two primary meaning found in the oxford English dictionary. The first refers to the element of a work of art and an awareness of order and arrangement of those elements. In his sense, the design of a writing table consists of the size and proportion of its individual parts, the texture, grains, colour, or the characteristics of the material used, and the motifs or patterns. Thus an analysis of design can reveal the intricacies or the ease of construction, addressing issues of use such as durability, efficiency or convenience. It also considers the exploration and transformation of materials and the relative e complexity or simplicity of the arrangement of such forms.

A second meaning of design refers to the concept of the form of an object, a model, or a set instruction that are in consonance with the process that leads to a final product. In some cases artists execute their own designs while in other instances, they experiment directly with material and processes in the creation of prototypes. Again these could be produced and modified. Good example is when we purchase a car we presume to have the entire frame work as mechanically mass produced not considering that the distinctive inputs of the creative artist is inclusive. As in the first meaning, the conceptual stage in the development of a finished work is common to all of the visual arts. Design raises a whole range of questions; of how to create something when all that is available are materials and procedures for transformation these materials. Designer looks forward to give added meaning or beauty to functional objects that are rooted in real social contexts from initial conception to production. They are involved in dialectics of ideas, materials and specification on a formal aesthetic dimension as a result of their input. By combining usefulness, durability, aesthetics, designers add value to objects. This is why in today's' product world, it is very difficult to distinguish between functional objects and that which is wholly aesthetic, in order worlds, what is useful and what is beautiful. The design of an object is the result of a creative process, a synthesis between form and function which also applies to industrial objects. Its emergence coincides with the evolution of the industrial revolution after the Second World War. A combination of social, economic and production factors then led to the unprecedented rapid industrial development. Design realized its full potential when utilitarian production was enhanced with aesthetic values that design brought. This was able to meet the demands of industrial production. It then found its way into the area of domestic appliances, motor vehicles, furniture and electronics, where its aim was to reconcile attractiveness and usefulness both in planning and practice. Design became a real player in the social stakes as an active element in the production and marketing of goods in other to enhance sales.

This project therefore brings to limelight the functionality, aesthetics and the evolution of the design concept of Peugeot Automobile of Nigeria (PAN) in the design and products of their product from from 1960-2010.

Industrial arts is the study of technology. Technology is the sum total of all that man knows and does with materials. It is the basis and effectiveness of all our industries that makes it possible for us to have automobile, airplanes, boats, trains, television and radio. it provides food, clothing, building and all of the many goods and services we need in our daily lives. Technology has contributed to high standard of living for people in today's world.

Industrial art which leans on technology have also propelled the automobile industries all over the world; today we can see a good number of automatic and manual automobile with classical designs that one no longer ask of functionality and durability. Global production of automobile has taking a new dimension, for those who can not stand the design competition are almost packing up from the world market of automobile.

Every year new brand name keeps coming into the world market, given old names very strong close competition. An interesting thing is that the old name keeps strong in the world of competition. In Nigeria for example, name like ford, Toyota, Honda, Mazda Mercedes, land rover, Mitsubishi and Peugeot have continued to make sales and also having strong patronage form private companies and garment agencies.

This thesis therefore is intended to document historical development of Peugeot brand of cars and her design concepts beginning from 1960 to 2010 and also to highlight how standards have been maintained in its design format despite the challenges of design competition in automobile companies like kia, Tata, Hyhunda and other with classical design concepts that come into the market every year. The new world today speaks of design and less functionality, and durability, but Peugeot have been carrying along all these in addition to artistic outlook in Nigeria.

2. Historical Development Of Car Design

According to Newson (2003) an attempt to find a locomotive power to replace drawn horses takes us back to 17th century. Steam power design was the most promising but not until the end of the 18th century that a degree a success was recorded.

The oldest surviving self- propelled vehicle, a three wheeled artillery tractor designed by French engineer Nicolas Joseph Cugnot in 1770, was interesting but of limited usefulness. This was followed by even less practical vehicles from French, America and British engineers. According to Watts (1999), An America inventor, Oliver Evans obtained his first patent on a steam carriage car in 1789, and in 1803 he built the self- propelled vehicle to travel on American roads.

In Europe the Cornish mining engineer Richard Trevithuk designed the first successful steam car in 1801, which led to his London carriage of 1803. He did not perfect this, but improvement in the steam engine design and vehicles continued. This was especially so in Britain where the period 1820 to 1840 was the golden age of steam road vehicles. These were of advanced design, made by skilled Engineer like Gurney, hancock, and Macerone. Watts (1999) noted that two

German engineer, Eugn Langen and August Otto design a gas engine and in 1876 Otto designed for-cylinder engines, which was to be the basis for nearly all subsequent internal-combustion engines. The significant mating of engine was designed in 1885 and 1887 when first Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler introduced the first successful petrol-engine cars. The Benz vehicle was much the superior, as it was designed as a whole, using the new technology of the bicycle industry. Daimler's carriage was no more than an adapted horse vehicle. Benz went into limited production of his three-wheeled carriage in 1888, which gave rise to the modern motor industry in the world. A crucial event in the history of the motor industry was the 1889 Paris world Exhibition. According to Elwood (2000) it was there that the French engineer Renc Panhard and Emile Leavssor saw the Daimler engine. They obtained the right to make this engine in 1890 but, seeing no future for the motor car, granted to the Peugeot Company the right to use Daimler engine in self-propelled vehicles. Peugeot Company can claim to be the first series manufacturer in the global car industry making 5 cars in 1891 and 29 in 1892, in 1893 Benz emerged also as a vehicle maker. In the United States pioneering car designers were active, in 1891 America's first petrol driven car was designed by John W. Lambert, according to Elwood (2000), Lambert was one of the first visitors to Peugeot car company in France and that he carried a close study of France car technology, that gave him general understanding of the development of car in 1895 which saw the first American designed car.

3. The Place of Peugeot Car Design in the Automobile Industry

In sub-Saharan Africa Nigeria with a population of about 150 million represent the largest consumer economy and has witnessed a significant growth in vehicle ownership amongst its people. Relative to other countries in the region, Nigeria therefore represents the largest regional market from the individual members of the public, corporate (including International Companies) and Nigeria Government departments represents the major customer segments in the country. The companies and the government operate large sized fleets of Peugeot cars.

According to Robert (2009) Peugeot Automobile of Nigeria made a remarkable contribution towards the development of the automobile industry, in 2004 a new brand of design was introduced to the Nigeria market which leads to increased in sales.

Recently the Nigeria Government announced a pilot project of consumer car finance designed to encourage purchase of locally made cars. It is intended for the military and police whose numbers are around 10,530. An amount of 12 billion Naira was expected as contribution from five parastatals namely Nigerian ports Authority, National Maritime Authority, Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria, Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation and Petroleum Technology Development fund. Three Nigerian produced Peugeot brands are involved in the scheme. The country has six car plants in different locations. The government has a shareholding participation in all the plants but is trying to privatize the sector with a view to generate private investment and improve prospects of local production and exports.

Peugeot's facility in Kaduna is the largest operator that manufactures three of its models (504, 306 and 406) locally, with a production capacity of 30 units per day. The facility utilizes 37% of its requirements from Nigerian companies. France Peugeot has a share holding of 40% in this

facility with the government owning 35% and other local institutions the balance. The company has been in operation from 1972. The prospects of the company have been recently enhanced by its exports to Cameroon, Senegal and Ivory Coast. Nigeria's automobile industry is one of the continents fastest growing sectors, but it lacks the necessary technology to fully harness its potential to contribute to growth and development. This state of affairs, has according to Ken (2002), ensured that investing in the sector has become the preserve of just a few foreign companies in the automobile manufacturing industry, largely based outside of the continent.

But all this may change as recently improved profits and investment returns from auto manufacturers in Nigeria and other Africans countries are set to put investment inflow into other African countries.

Despite policy initiatives by most other countries in Africa to open up its automobile sector, the sectors performance has not been that encouraging. Most countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon and Cote d' Ivoire concentrate today on importing completed units for sale in the local market with mere emphasis placed on after sales service. This really cast doubts on ability of African countries to sustain any improvement on the performance of their manufacturing sectors. In the 1970's Nigeria enjoyed a good boost in the automotive industry. The innovative engineering work in the country then resulted in car assembly plants in the country making more money in export revenue. Peugeot is one of the most popular brands in the country and the success of the industry ensured that the country enjoyed good returns from the export of Peugeot cars to neighboring countries like Ghana, Sierra- Leone and Liberia.

4. Design Element's in car Production

Today, industrial design has been applied to practically all consumer products, notably to home appliances, such as air conditioners, irons and washing machines; office equipment, such as type writers, Dictaphones and duplicating machines; electronic communication equipments, such as radios, television sets, phonographs and tape recorders; bathroom and lighting fixtures; furniture; hardware and tableware; automobiles and photographic equipments.

The industrial designer must be concerned not only with product design but, the marketability of such products. This simply implies that people no longer see products as something that will not be durable but something that is equally beautiful. Design has taken over people's way of life. William (2010) noted that the design of Peugeot 505 Evolution car which was introduced into the Nigerian market in 1989 made him to forgo the brand of Toyota he had in mind. This he noted was as a result of the body, interior, space and executive touch given to the model, the price notwithstanding, but the pride and respect commanded by the use of Evolution model of Peugeot.

Kevin (1998) also noted that the price of a car determines the level of high technology involved, he is of the view that current trend in car manufacturing has gone too digital that the operation and driving of such a car has become a very big problem for the less educated persons. Cars are designed today to have keyless locks, navigational instruments, and automatic alarm systems given signs of wrong functions.

The most interesting thing in car design recently, is the development of fuel economy which the Peugeot automobile have successfully mastered its technology. A lot of car users were running away from Peugeot brand due to lack of fuel economy but since they have been able to perfect this technology most of their customers have regained confidence in the performance of Peugeot brand of car with respect to fuel consumption.

5. Peugeot Cars and Creativity

Since the introduction of Peugeot cars into the world market in 1882, Peugeot cars have always maintained high standard in creating classical car designs, despite strong competition. They have been able to prove to the world that they are the first in car design and manufacturing of all types of motor cars. Peter (2000) gave a strong commendation on the types of sports cars designed by Peugeot, he noted that the strong nature of the sports cars contributed in no small way towards winning all the European car race in 1985, He also observed that the launch of the 309 brand of car in the Guangzhon agreement was responsible for the official approval to establish a Peugeot plant in China. It should however been known that it was the creativity found in Peugeot 309 sports car that made the World Sports Rally Championship (WRC) in USA in 1985 a world event.

In May 1987, Peugeot unveiled ten versions of its stylish 405 Saloon cars simultaneously (Peugeot handbook 2006). It was a world breaking event, a mark of high creativity and advanced technological break through. In November of the same year, Montbehard a car marketing company in US hosted an exhibition of contemporary art and automobile, a landmark in design.

According to Newson (2003) design and creativity will play a more important role in our lives as consumers are now aware that design is ruling the world and that choice will largely depend on design and creativity. People will only go for a product not because of its durability but its state of creativity and beauty. In May 1934, Peugeot introduced to the world designed model 601 of her brand of cars, a top of the range six cylinder models which is the first car that was built with folding roof the model whose name is Eclipse. This was first created in collaboration with the designer Paulin the Peugeot Concessionaire Darlmat and the Pourt out Body Construction firm, results in the standardized production by Peugeot of one of the most original car in production worldwide.

This idea was picked up by Ford in the 50s and Mercedes – Benz in the 90s and then reinvented by Peugeot to suit modern taste in 1998 with the 20 cars shown at the Geneva car Show in 1999. In October, was the launch of the 401 at the Paris show and adoption of the “beaver tail” type of body across the range. The design and creation of the 515, a 500cc motor bike, breaks three world records.

6. The Philosophy of Peugeot Car Designs and Usage on Nigerian Roads.

Since the introduction of Peugeot car in Nigeria, there have been remarkable improvements in the technically and efficient performance irrespective of poor conditions of Nigerian roads and driving culture. The Peugeot slogan, “built for Nigerian roads” is an indication that the

philosophical thrust of Peugeot cars is that it is built strong. As the lion remained the major symbol from 1887 till date.

According to Hamza (2007) of all the cars on Nigeria roads, Peugeot cars tend to have the ability to withstand the ruggedness of Nigerian roads He noted that the strong nature of Peugeot cars as reliable vehicles made it possible for the Obasanjo Military Government to recommend its use as Government official vehicle for institutions and governmental agencies. According to him this has cut down on cost and maintenance of the vehicle in Nigeria. The government order as at that time made Peugeot Automobile of Nigeria to face the problem of meeting the demand from Government establishments and the private sector.

According to Jacob (2008) cars that can be used on Nigerian roads for period of two years should be seen as a strong car, It is on record over the years that Peugeot 504 brand has proved to withstand all of this factors which suggest that it is the strongest brand of Peugeot in Nigeria and overseas.

7. The Influence of Peugeot Car Designs On Nigerian's.

Since the introduction of Peugeot cars in the Nigerian market, there has been remarkable influence on the choice in terms of selecting a brand of car they need, not quite long Peugeot came up with a slogan that Peugeot was built for Nigerian roads. That slogan has positioned Peugeot as one of the best cars to be used on Nigerian roads.

According to Mike (2009) Nigerian roads have become a death trap on motorists. He emphasized that the state of Nigerian roads especially the Eastern and Western blocks of the country are becoming unbearable, he noted that the only car that can assess the rural area properly are cars like Jeep and some of the Peugeot cars. His opinion brings to limelight the slogan of Peugeot automobile of Nigerian that Peugeot is built for Nigerian roads. The current design concept of the Peugeot has taken the state of Nigerian roads into consideration, making it the best on Nigerian roads.

All brands of Peugeot cars designed for Nigerian roads are 11 inches above ground level, given it an advantage to other brand of cars. The Peugeot brands have continued to make a remarkable improvement in design and marketability in Nigerian, thereby creating a great influence in the choice of Nigerians in car purchase.

Apart from been road friendly, Peugeot have also made name in terms of being strong and long lasting, this has given rise to patronage by some transport company, individuals and government establishment, notable among them are the Edo Line Transport Company owned by the Edo State Government in South-South of Nigerian. A statement from the top management indicated that the choice of Peugeot was taken since the inception of the company. It is the company lay down policy not to use any other brand of car for transportation, and that there has been a long standing business relationship between Edo Line and Peugeot automobile of Nigerian in supply and maintenance of their vehicles after sales.

8. Conclusion

Nigeria has today been listed among Nations that have embraced the study of design just like Britain, United States of America and other European Countries that have long introduced design as a field of study in fine arts and design.

It is the introduction by the famous department of fine arts design of the University of Port-Harcourt that have given birth to the study of Peugeot car design Nigeria this paper has opened up the idea and importance of design in the study of fine arts and design in Nigeria and Africa in general.

Therefore, the researcher is of the view that much should be done to create awareness on the relevant of design Education in Nigeria.

The University of Port-Harcourt Department of Fine Arts and Design have taken the lead in design in Nigeria by introducing masters and doctorate degrees in the study of design and design history. It is hoped that in the next years Nigeria Universities will appreciate this singular effort of the University of Port-Harcourt.

The idea of using Peugeot as an official car was the best thing the government did as at that time, because Peugeot appeared to be the most accepted automobile by Nigeria's. This was seen as a symbol of richness mostly one with Air-conditioners and other facility like radio, central lock and automatic window glass.

The general philosophy of the production of all brands of Peugeot was to assist Nigerians have a car that will be called a true made in Nigeria, a car that will stand the bad nature of all roads throughout Nigeria.

9. Recommendation

Considering the importance of design this paper has deemed it expedient to make the following recommendations.

1. Design study should be introduced as part of first degree causes like Art History and Art Education in Tertiary Institution in Nigeria.
2. Educational planers in area of arts and design should emphasize the study of design at Primary and Secondary levels, this will enable the children imbibe design culture at early stage of life.
3. Students of design should be encouraged to carry out more studies on historical development of other brands of automobiles in Nigeria.

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