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Contents

Dushan Bikov, Risto Popovski, Zoran Panov PROTOTYPE SYSTEM FOR MONITORING THE DEFORMATION AND STABILITY OF DIFFERENT TYPE OF CRITICAL CONSTRUCTIONS	4
Tena Sijakova-Ivanova, Ivan Boev MINERALOGICAL AND CHEMICAL CHARACTERISATION ON STIBNITE FROM ALLCHAR LOCALITY, NORTH MACEDONIA	11
Ivan Boev, Trajce Nacev MINERALOGY OF A STONE TOOL FROM THE PALAEOLOGIC STATION UZUN MERA VILLAGE MUSTAFINO BY THE SEM-EDS TECHNIQUE.....	19
Bekim Selimi NEW AND UPDATED GEOMAGNETIC REPEAT STATIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO.....	27
Petar Namichev, Ekaterina Namicheva-Todorovska TYPOLOGY OF HOUSING UNITS IN THE REGION OF OHRID.....	35
Andrijana Sokolovska, Petar Namichev THE INFLUENCE OF ITALIAN SOFA DESIGN ON MACEDONIAN FURNITURE PRODUCTION.....	42
Anita Trajkova, Petar Namichev IMPACT OF NEW LIGHTING TECHNOLOGIES AS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE INTERIOR.....	48

THE INFLUENCE OF ITALIAN SOFA DESIGN ON MACEDONIAN FURNITURE PRODUCTION

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Abstract

Italian designers are known for their use of reclaimed materials to create a unique atmosphere. Their designs are creative, inspiring, and innovative, with a blend of humanism and technical prowess. The production of a sofa is quite a complex process in which all the elements in the production of a sofa should be covered. Italian design influences sofa production very much, as it offers many types of models on the market that meet all the standards of the buyers. Each sofa has its own characteristics, but the Italian sofa is very different from the Macedonian sofa; first of all, it differs in shape, color, stages of production, and functionality, and other minor characteristics such as materials. The paper lays out the main differences and similarities between the Italian design and the Macedonian one regarding the sofa as a main element in the interior.

Key words: *materials, color, furniture, form, details.*

INTRODUCTION

Italian design refers to all forms of design in Italy, including interior design, urban design, fashion design and architectural design. Italy is recognized as a world trendsetter and leader in design: the architect Luigi Caccia Dominioni claims that "Simply, we are the best" and that "We have more imagination, more culture and are better mediators between the past and the future". Italy today still has a huge influence on urban design, industrial design and fashion design around the world. In general, the term "design" is associated with the time of the industrial revolution, which arrived in Italy during the previous unification in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies [1]. In this paper we are laying out the characteristics of the Italian furniture design and its influence on the Macedonian design, more accurately in the design of the sofa as the main element in the interior.

Italian furniture designers

The production of a sofa is quite a complex process in which all the elements in its production should be covered. A sofa consists of a frame, a base and a cover. The frame is usually made of wood, but it can also be made of steel, plastic, or laminated boards. Sofa bedding is made of foam, feathers, fabric, or a combination of them. Covers are usually made of soft leather, corduroy or some specific covers that give a nice decoration that shows the Italian sofa design. The materials from which the structural elements are made can be wood, steel, chipboard, etc. These elements occupy different positions in space. By combining and connecting these elements, complex beams are obtained, the degree of complexity of which depends on the connections in the nodes (articulated, rigid, partially rigid). The basic conditions that construction systems should satisfy are: reliability, purpose, balance, stability, load-bearing capacity, durability, aesthetics [2]. The optimal construction should be stable, solid, functional, economical, and economically justified. Italy is a country that is recognized as a world trendsetter and leader in design. Italian design encompasses all forms of design including interior design, urban design, fashion design and architectural design [2].

Italian designers are known for their use of reclaimed materials to create a unique atmosphere. Their designs are creative, inspiring and innovative, with a blend of humanism and technical prowess. A number of important names succeeded and alternated over the years from the end of the 19th century

to the present day, taking the example of their work from the tradition of Italian craftsmen and from the rules of the Bauhaus, to create unique objects known and appreciated all over the world. The development of the most significant characteristics of designers is very important. They have a big role in the design of the sofa, they try to show us how important architectural design is and are themselves actors in the science of design. Each designer has his own characteristics that are different from all other designers [3].

Italian design, as a leading home style, places the greatest emphasis on furniture and interior design, unlike all other types of design. Italy can boast of a large number of artists who have allowed the country to be one of the best and most highly developed in the field of design. The focus of designing is placed exactly on the furniture for the home style, or rather the designers were concentrated on designing furniture for interior interiors. The most recognizable are the large comfortable sofas and chairs that are widely used in the home. Some of the most famous Italian designers are Franco Albini, Gio Ponti, Carlo Imonino, Giorgio Grassi, Aldo Rossi, Vittorio Ducrot and Ernesto Basile Dulio Ciambellotti, Ernesto Basile and the Bugatti brothers, Franco Albini, Ignazio Gardella, Luigi Caccia Dominioni, Vico Magistretti, Ettore Sottsass, Marco Zanusso, Achille and Pergiacomo Castiglioni and the BBPR Group (Banfi, Belgiozoso, Peresuti, Rogers), Mario Bellini, Vico Magistriti, Gae Aulenti, Angelo Mangirotti, Enzo Mari, Rodolfo Bonetto, Marco Zanusso and others (Figure 1 and 2) [4,5].



Figure 1. Franco Albini – sofa from series T33



Figure 2. Gio Ponti - An elegant sofa designed by Gio Ponti, manufactured by ISA, Italy in the 1950s, in gold Dedar fabric.

The influence of Italian design on sofa production

Italian design influences sofa production very much, as it offers many types of models on the market that meet all the standards of the buyers. Postmodernism is a style of art and architecture that is both incredibly complex and perfectly simple. Italian design is very different from Macedonian design as they have more decorations, different and specific shapes. Especially in the production of the sofa, we can immediately recognize what kind of design it is.

Colors used to be strong and emphasized in these designs used for sofas. However, later, color became less important, and playing with form and function gained more emphasis. Today, the postmodern color palette includes a mix of natural and retro hues like avocado green, mustard, orange, turquoise, and even metallic tones.

The materials and textures used in the postmodern style are an imitation of non-traditional combinations. Leather, glass, plastic, and laminates are examples of this look. The key to defining textures in postmodern design is layering. The use of asymmetry increased during the postmodern

period, while at the same time straight lines gave way to odd angles and ambiguous shapes. Materials are found in different segments of our lives, which is why it can rightly be said that our everyday life is influenced by materials. Materials have to meet certain requirements to define their application. With further development, it was established that materials could be modified by adding certain ingredients and by heat treatment [6].

Italian design places greatest emphasis on furniture and interior design, unlike all other types of design. The focus of designing is set precisely on furniture for the home style, or rather the designers are concentrated on designing furniture for interiors. The most recognizable are the large comfortable sofas and chairs that are widely used in the home. Interior design consists of seven separate, but equal, key elements: line, shape, color, texture, size, direction, volume, and space. These seven elements and the way they closely interact with each other make the overall design composition.

Composition in the Italian design, on the other hand, can be illustrated by nine basic design principles: contrast, gradation, rhythm and movement, proportion, harmony, unity, balance, categorical, and function. The elements represent basic factors, basic modules that build the form. At the same time, elements are universal components of content, generally applicable spatial parameters, which explains any random visual observation / phenomenon, thereby converting it, bringing it to the level of clarity and comprehensibility, without contradicting the assumed complexity or incomprehensibility of the idea. On an elementary basis, the elements in a furniture composition are much more specific than the objects they represent, certain combinations and complex spatial relationships and structures. Freedom in spatial design, introduction of new elements in the form of furniture, concentration of values in smaller or larger structural concepts. Elements in the structure of the appearance process are necessary components of spatial-visual perceptions. Although they exist as a continuous creative study, each of them has an individual value in the arrangement, although it is only part of the concept in the creation of the furniture. These elements are usually a kind of exhibits of a more intensive design expression, but their placement in space has mostly a functional meaning [7].

Influence on Macedonian sofa design

The sofa is often used in Macedonian production (it is often called a sofa, a hidden bed, a sofa-bed, a sleeper sofa, or a pull-out sofa). It is usually a sofa or couch that has a metal frame under its seat cushions and a thin mattress that can be spread or opened to make a bed.

In Macedonia, the sofa has a variety of production characteristics, as it is used for several purposes. Mostly sofas and sets are made in 100% natural, Italian, calf leather or in several types of quality microfiber or fabric. Sleeper sofas are widely used in our country and are ideal in many homes, they offer practicality in everyday usage and transform into an extra place where they can be used for all purposes.

Although most sofa beds use shorter mattresses measuring 60cm, other common sizes include 58cm, 54cm, and 52cm. The average thickness of a sofa bed mattress is 4.50cm which is a good standard mattress. Sofa mattresses can be made from many different materials, most on the market being made of foam [7].

Each sofa has its own characteristics, but the Italian sofa is very different from the Macedonian sofa; first of all, it differs in shape, color, stages of production, functionality and then other minor characteristics such as materials. One of the main design elements used to produce an Italian sofa is the line.

Comparison between the two designs

A sofa is an element of furniture that is used for sitting. The need for sitting occurs in many segments of life. Regardless of what the sofa is intended for, it should provide perfect comfort and stability during its use. An uncomfortable sofa tires the body. The sofa, as an element of furniture in the modern interior, has achieved the greatest development in terms of construction, form, function, and manufacturing materials. According to the research, we can state that in the Italian sofa style we have wooden and iron according to the method of construction, while in the Macedonian production system we have mostly wallpaper machines, a mix of flat lines with slightly rounded details, and in the Macedonian one we have machines for cutting fabrics; in the Italian one it is chipboard, in Macedonian it is a sponge; then the legs in the Italian construction are of the joining type, the armrests may or may

not be there, while the seats are mostly made of chipboard, upholstery as well as woven hemp, all these differences point to the different design in the construction of sofas (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Comparison between the construction methods between the two designs

Comparison in characteristics		
<i>Italian sofa design</i>		<i>Macedonian sofa design</i>
Construction method	wooden and iron upholstery	upholstery machines
	mix of flat lines with slightly rounded details	tailoring machines on fabrics
	plywood	machines for sponge processing
	time period of production	machines for rectilinear and curvilinear cutting the sponge
	time period of production	machines for grinding and assembly of synthetic materials

Table 2. Comparison between the features of the two designs

<i>Features of an Italian sofa:</i>	<i>Features of a Macedonian sofa:</i>
Laminated beech frame with separately molded teak plywood for seat and back elements	Basic material - sawn timber: beech or ash for the construction, while chipboard is used for the seat
- Wooden and metal frames	- Wooden construction
- Chipboard seat	- Chipboard seat
- Upholstery: latex foam and polyurethane	- Upholstery: sponge, fabric furniture, leather and eco leather
- Laminated bent frames – for armrests	- Laminated and wooden plywood
- The backrest is rarely at right angles	- The backrest is rarely at right angles
- Modular components	- Individual, one-off product
- Light colored wood	- Light wood – ash, beech
- The materials are mostly from the region itself	- The materials are from Macedonian forests
- A small degree of painting, more frequent treatment of the material with special oils	- Painting to protect the wood, either in color or just varnished
- legs	- legs



Figure 3. Rivoli sofa bed (Left) and Macedonian design from Mebel Vi company (Right)

Figure 3 is a classic Rivoli sofa in fabric. Comfortably supported by a solid poplar frame supported by steel springs. Coating in polyurethane foam, with the possibility of using fireproof rubber. Cushions are available with feather inlay, polyurethane or 100% goose down. A high level of craftsmanship ends with profiles that define the division of the backrest. Companies in Macedonia that produce sofa models produce high-quality models of sofas, two-seaters, beds, etc., according to the Italian furniture production standards, and thus meet the needs of consumers when choosing furniture.

Italian design is very different from Macedonian design, considering that they have a variety of decorative elements, different shapes, especially in the production of the sofa, we can immediately recognize what design it is.

CONCLUSION

In Macedonia, the sofa has a variety of production features, as it has multiple uses. Mostly sofas and sets are made of 100% natural, Italian, calf leather or in several types of quality microfiber or fabric.

Italian design influences the sofa production very much, as it offers many types of models on the market that meet all the standards of the buyers. Italian design is very different from our design considering that they have more decorations, more different shapes and a specific shape, especially in the making of the sofa, we can immediately recognize what kind of a design it is. The key to defining textures in postmodern design is layering. Shapes can be defined by their color or by the combination of lines that form their edges.

According to the research from this paper, we can make a conclusion about the differences and similarities between the two sofa designs. In the Italian sofa style we have wooden and iron materials according to the method of construction, while in the Macedonian production system we have mostly paper machines, a mix of flat lines with slightly rounded details, and in the Macedonian one we have machines for cutting fabrics; in the Italian one it is chipboard, in Macedonian it is a sponge, then the legs in the Italian construction are of the joining type, the armrests may or may not be there, while the seats are mostly made of chipboard, upholstery as well as woven hemp. All these differences point to the different design in the construction of the sofas.

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ВЛИЈАНИЕТО НА ИТАЛИЈАНСКИОТ ДИЗАЈН НА МЕБЕЛ ВРЗ МАКЕДОНСКОТО ПРОИЗВОДСТВО НА МЕБЕЛ

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Резиме

Италијанските дизајнери се познати по нивната употреба на рекултивирани материјали за создавање уникатна атмосфера. Нивните дизајни се креативни, инспиративни и иновативни, со спој на хуманизам и техничка моќ. Производството на треседот е прилично сложен процес во кој треба да бидат покриени сите елементи во производството на софата. Италијанскиот дизајн премногу влијае на производството на треседот, бидејќи нуди многу видови модели на пазарот кои ги исполнуваат сите стандарди на самите купувачи. Секој тресед има свои карактеристики, но италијанскиот тресед е различен од македонскиот, прво се разликува по формата, бојата, фазите на производство, функционалноста, а потоа и други помали карактеристики како што се материјалите. Трудот ги изложува главните разлики и сличности помеѓу италијанскиот дизајн и македонскиот во однос на софата како главен елемент во ентериерот.

Клучни зборови: *материјали, боја, мебел, форма, детали.*