

The continuous rise and spread of globalization has correlated profoundly with a rise in mass tourism and mass production. The ever-changing market conditions have created both positive and negative effects on artisans, whose success depends on a demand for their products and their ability to fulfill said demand. The industrial revolution, which changed the face of the travel and industry game, posed great new obstacles to these artisans who often struggle to keep up with the modern market. Artisans and their craftwork provide a tremendous value to society, and their slow but sure disappearance from the Western world is and will continue to be devastating. The question is forced to become not how do we *save* artisans, but how can we increase their visibility in an increasingly globalized world? The answer comes down to adapting to the ever-changing market by raising awareness of their services and products where their specific group of clientele will be looking for them.

The first part of the problem one must delve into is to define the artisan. “Artisan” is a complicated word, as it can apply to a wide range of people under a wide range of occupations, being anything from an electrician to an encaustic artist, depending on how one defines it. The Merriam-Webster dictionary offers two definitions, the first being “a worker who practices a trade or handicraft,” and the second being “a person or company that produces something (such as cheese or wine) in limited quantities often using traditional methods” (Merriam-Webster, 2021). For the purposes of this essay, we will be using the second definition, as it specifies three key aspects of artisanal practice: the first being that it is an individual or a group of individuals generating a product, the second being that said product is not being mass produced, and the third being that the approach of production must incorporate some aspects of tradition. A focus will be maintained on those artisans which are being most impacted by globalization, such as carpenters, ceramicists, frame-makers, et cetera.

After the industrial revolution, the appreciation for true authenticity declined as purchasing items produced on a mass scale became more affordable and more convenient. For example, while at one point in history a consumer's best option for purchasing furniture was their local carpenter, today, stores like IKEA garner more customer attraction. People have grown familiar and comfortable with the idea of massive department stores like Walmart and giant warehouse clubs like Costco. At these one stop shops, all it takes is the one stop to find everything you need and more at competitive prices. The attractive pricing and easy shopping effectively desensitizes people from all that goes into a purchase. One is not required to consider where the material came from, who actually built the item, and why the item can be priced so low when all it takes to buy something is driving a couple of miles and tapping a credit card. When desensitized people go abroad, they find less incentive to purchase from an artisan and would rather spend that money on a fun night out. Since they have never had to consider the



historical and cultural significance of where they spend their money, artisan products turn into a sort of luxury, a status symbol which only those who have enough money to not have to buy cheaper, mass-produced items purchase. As tourists flood the bars and restaurants, they earn more money and become more attractive tenants to landlords. This dynamic allows the landlords to increase rent and forces those who cannot afford it to move out, something which has had a grave impact on artisans. On the other hand, when tourists do find the appreciation, it actually works in the favor of preserving artisanship.

Tourists come to cities seeking magnificent views, delicious food, bustling nightlife, and more. While the globalization and mass commodification that is brought on by the booming tourism industry may help satisfy the requirements of someone's dream vacation, not everyone feels a similar sentiment of positivity. In Western cities in particular, the rise of mass-tourism has spiked gentrification. As tourists crave the image of authenticity yet dialectically crave comfort, familiarity, and modernity, it creates a complex dilemma for many countries where on one hand, they must offer some degree of tradition to satisfy the tourist's appetites, while on the other hand, they must keep up with modern travel necessities such as night clubs and restaurants. In particular, Italy faces this issue as tourists provide Italy its definition based on the idea that it is a static amalgamation of its heritage. The expectations of Italy become stuck in time, while the cash flows towards modernity. The true victims here are the artisans, whose specialized works do not tend to bring nearly as much income as major brands and big-shot restaurants. As rent in popular neighborhoods increase exponentially, few are able to keep up and artisans are forced to leave their shops.

Rome provides a fantastic example of this unfortunate truth where tourists come seeking authenticity but spend their money on modernity. The idea of Rome being an "eternal city" is a fallacy most tourists are unwilling to acknowledge. This misnomer has been gifted to Rome dating back to the 1st century by the poet Tibullus, who claimed it as *urbs aeterna*, using the expression to note the Empire's mighty bound which could seemingly conquer time. Despite its eventual fall, most tourists are likely to believe they are coming to cities like Rome for an authentic, traditional, historically rich experience. However, in most cases, tourists will not be inclined to put their money where their mind is. While they may be happy to drop some bills on a Colosseum ticket, visiting the traditional artisans who are keeping Rome's eternal image alive typically does not make the bucket list the same way that visiting Gucci and Prada may. Italy is a country with attractions coming from every end; whether one is fascinated in the remarkable Roman history, tremendous religious value, or the overabundance of dazzling views, one can find it all in Rome. It is true that some aspects of the city, such as the romantic style architecture,



historical sites, and churches seem to be timeless. However, the soul of a city does not lie in its physicality's. The energy of a city comes from its residents: a sense of community and local identity is what truly gives a city character and value. As gentrification pushes said residents out of their home and pushes artisans out of their work, the character of Rome deteriorates. Without character, what is eternal? Can one really crown Rome *the* eternal city if the essence of the region has long been lost? Can any Westernizing city genuinely claim they appreciate tradition and heritage if mass-tourism is leaving said appreciation overshadowed and under looked? This example proves the cultural value of artisans, who are an essential part of a community's identity and are what gave Rome its eternal name

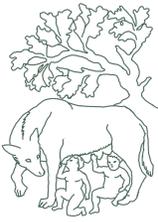
When the typical, Western tourist travels, they first seek out four things: shelter, food, transportation, and shopping. While at first each of these may seem to only bring positives to the environment they are in, such as increased global economy, giving business to local stores and restaurants, and a good travel experience to the tourist, the correlation between all these subjects and gentrification is one that cannot be ignored. The need for shelter has often caused a tanking of local identity as affordable apartments and housing must compete with hotels and Airbnb's. One example of how the tourist action of simply finding a place to sleep can ravage an area is with the Trastevere neighborhood in Rome. This region underwent a socio-economic transformation starting in the 1970s, going from a place where artisanship thrived to being almost completely commodified. A neighborhood which once boasted all sorts of artisans has gone through a metamorphosis due to the stark escalation in rent fees. In the article, "The Commodification of a Local Identity," authored by Farro Trabalzi, data is cited showing that "from 1951 to 1971, Trastevere, by then the second most inhabited *rione* lost about a third of its residents passing from 51,000 to 21,000."¹ He also includes that within that same time span, the "historical center as a whole lost about 54% of its resident population."² The drastic difference between the numbers representing the residency and the relatively massive percentage depicting the population loss illustrate the harsh reality that gentrification and mass commodification have offered. Another example of gentrification in Rome is the street Via Margutta in Campo Marzio. At one point in time, the narrow street was filled with practicing artisans, in particular craftsmen and artists. Art shows were held with pieces hanging from the walls, studying artists would live and work in the palace, and people would come to shop and spend money on the them. Now, it is slowly becoming gentrified as rent makes it next to impossible for artisans to work there, as can be seen by there only being about three workshops left standing. Apartments were not the only one's affected by the increase in rent; restaurants have suffered greatly as well. De Augusto's is one of the oldest traditional Roman restaurants left, competing now with a new, visibly upscale



establishment next door. Their neighbor is understandably more attractive to tourists with its lush cloths and finely set tables and lack of a grouchy owner. Few authentic restaurants are able to compete in this sort of situation which is becoming increasingly more common. Restaurants like Donkey Punch, a place which even sounds American, who can offer commodities like free Wi-Fi, cheap hot dogs, student discounts, and special promotions like buy eight get one free, pose a fatal level of competition to artisanal restaurants whose often lower customer numbers disallow them from hosting similar promotions. The conflict has infiltrated plenty of industries, all of which are forced to try and find solutions where there seemingly are none.

While gentrification poses a massive obstacle to many industries, few are hit as harshly as those practicing artisanship. How can a traditional seamstress compete with Zara? How can a woodworker creating handmade furniture compete with IKEA? The most obvious answer is for artisans to simply put themselves out there. With the introduction of modern technology into ancient forms of traditional craftsmanship, artisans are faced with a plethora of venues to establish their identities on. The rise in globalization has allowed viewers and consumers on a global scale to see and purchase items produced on a local scale. If one takes the Trastevere neighborhood mentioned earlier, which was once bustling with artisans and has now succumbed to being another neighborhood filled with nightclubs and trendy restaurants, artisans do not necessarily *need* to live in this place anymore. As discussed in an interview with Farro Trabalzi, as rents increase exponentially for ground level real estate and it becomes incredibly difficult, or at times impossible, for them to stay in their original buildings, they have the ability to move (F. Trabalzi, personal communication, July 13, 2021). At one point in time, moving to another neighborhood may have shocked sales. A Statista report in 2020 showed that “over 80 percent of consumers across the globe shopped online.” It noted that the most prevalent regions were South America and Asia, with North America holding the lowest percent. It also noted that the online store most frequented was Amazon.com, a massive corporation specializing in the online selling of just about everything (IMI International, 2020). Online selling platforms such as Etsy, Amazon, and Ebay are all viable options for artisans looking to take advantage of the global market. This is the way to beat gentrification: who needs a shop in a popular neighborhood when you can reach customers from across the world with just the click of a mouse? As discussed in the interview with Trabalzi, the artisan world has no choice but to meet the market. No matter how talented of an artisan one may be, one will fail if one refuses to adapt.

To adapt to the new market, utilizing modern technology is essential. Older generations of artisans may find it difficult connecting to younger generations of consumers. Access to social media is crucial for modern day businesses to communicate and advertise on a global scale, and those who cannot manage may quickly fall behind. The internet allows communication between



practically anyone who has access to it, the key is finding and targeting the right audience. The issue of artisan visibility and marketing to a target audience is precisely what the Classical Roman Arts Foundation is tackling with their new project: creating an Artisan Map. This map aims to serve as a guide to allow individuals to identify and locate various artisans across all genres of craftsmanship. The map creates a platform on which each artisan will have their business name, contact information, specialty, and address. The map will then be distributed to an assortment of interested parties, including but not limited to interior designers, curatorial departments of museums and universities, antique dealers, and auction houses. This map will prove to be incredibly helpful for those who take advantage of it. For the interior designers, they will have access to an array of artisanal craftwork from a range of periods which would likely prove to be helpful to clients with interest in classic Roman style furniture and artwork. For museum and university curators, the map will demonstrate its usefulness when there is an interest in creating a display or exhibit on artisanal Roman craftsmanship. Furthermore, it can help tourists and visiting students who are seeking an authentic experience in Rome to find artisan shops. This sort of project is exactly what one would hope to see for increasing artisan visibility. Not only does the map create a cartographic pinpointing system to accurately discover what one seeks in an artisan, but it furthermore provides a social media like arrangement which allows the viewer to learn about the practices and professions of the Roman artisans. This is a brilliant substitute to social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook which are saturated with pages on end, making it difficult for users to locate specifically what they are seeking. This alternative provides power to artisans who are given a voice to express exactly what they would like for their potential customers to hear from them and are given choice in how they are portrayed on the map. Organizations like the Classical Roman Arts Foundation provide a stage for those who want to make a change to be able to do so.

Stephanie Malia Hom wrote a relevant essay titled “Consuming the View: Tourism, Rome, and the Topos of the Eternal City,” in which she discusses the grave impact that the tourism industry has borne. She takes an interesting point of view of tourists, claiming that they feel a certain anxiety regarding modernity and use travel as a means of finding some sort of real, authentic experience which “has not been corrupted by the industrial age” (Hom, 2010, p. 91-92) While humans love modernity for its convenience, affordability driven nature, and entertainment value, a sense of resentment breeds as the yearning for tradition remains. This is proven in the tourist attraction to cities like Rome. The tourism industry has taken advantage of this anxiety and has framed Italy in a manner where authenticity, a genuine sense of living history, has taken over the identity. Italy is thereby introduced as a country of leisure; a place where the clutches of the industrial revolution have yet to dig in its claws and disturb its solace. People feel alienated



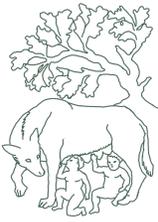
from their barbaric, animalistic side: the side of ourselves seen only at this point through the lens of history. Once one has fallen victim to the industrial revolution, there is no going back, there is only fantasy and travel. Artisans provide a window into the soul of the “eternal city,” they offer a window into cultural history. These are typically people who have been in a family business for generations, perfecting their craft with time. In this sense, artisans have actually found some benefit from the tourism industry. Those with the resentment of modernity who are willing and able to invest in destructing said resentment are inclined to spend money on artisanship. In an interview with Farro Trabalzi, he discussed how globalization “can be both a tragedy as well as an opportunity” (F. Trabalzi, personal communication, July 13, 2021). Artisans who are able to take advantage of globalization are able to achieve prosperity. For example, on the Amalfi Coast, Limoncello has become a staple product for tourists. Small producers of the alcoholic drink benefit from global tourism as the rediscovery of local items sparked an interest in purchasing the artisanal product. Artisans and the shops which carry their products have learned to speak English and advertise shipping opportunities to reach a significantly wider audience than just the local market. If one is able to reframe artisans from being simply stuck in time to being able to adapt to modernity while at the same time holding on to their traditional practices and characteristics, one will encourage tourists to invest in artisanal products.

In order to grasp the importance of increasing artisan visibility, one must analyze what can be gained from doing so. With the climate crisis facing humanity and getting continuously worse every day, finding more sustainable alternatives to our destructively consumption-based lifestyles is essential. According to the EPA, the Industry sector, which “produces the goods and raw materials we use every day,” in 2019, was responsible for 23% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions (United States Environmental Protection Agency, n.d.). This was the product of both direct and indirect emissions, occurring inside and outside of the facilities. Mass consumption and production of goods which is enabled by the capitalistic market most Western states abide by creates an environment where burning fossil fuels becomes a common necessity. People have seemed to stop caring about the ethics behind their purchases. While a sustainably created, artisanal article of clothing may cost slightly more, it is more ethical for a number of reasons than supporting the fast fashion industry. For one, many of the materials being used to create cheap clothing, such as polyester, acrylic, nylon, and spandex, are all made from petroleum, a fossil fuel which is nonrenewable and incredibly destructive to the environment (Simply Enviro, n.d.). In 2019, the House of Common Environmental Audit Committee found that “textile production contributes more to climate change than international aviation and shipping combined.”³ As reported by A New Textiles Economy Report in 2017, just creating the fibers



necessary for these textiles requires about 342 million barrels of oil per year.⁴ These startling facts only begin to put into perspective just how damaging an industry which was once run by local artisans has grown. Beyond the impact on the earth, one must also consider the impact on a human scale. Fashion Checker, an organization which polices brands in the industry for the quality of labor they provide their employees, found in 2020 that 93% of surveyed brands were not paying garment workers a living wage, with 80% of the garment workers being women.⁵ By outsourcing textile factories to countries where labor costs are significantly less expensive, major companies get away with a massive profit while leaving their employees nearly starving. Here we also get into the issue of child labor, abusive working conditions, and more tragic outcomes from the development of fast fashion, all of which is not necessary for individuals to contribute to. Supporting the artisanal textile industry means you are fighting back against the oppressive and destructive practices of the modern-day, major textile industry. It means you are supporting an essential part of the global economy. In fact, in the developing world, artisan enterprises are the second largest employers, behind only agriculture.⁶ People choose to work in the fast-fashion industry because it was the best job opportunity which presented itself at the time. It is likely that work in other industries may pay even less and have even worse conditions. By purchasing from an artisan, it helps create and uphold alternative careers. These careers empower the people and their history from the ground up. If artisanal clothing and textile producers advertise this fact, it can help encourage people to redirect their money and make more ethical purchases. Supporting an artisan not only means emboldening local economies, helping fight gender inequality in these areas by strengthening a field which employs large numbers of women, and backing healthy, sustainable business practices, but it means you are a part of the critical support system keeping the local history and culture alive.

The final question brought up is how this issue impacts the history field. A region is defined by its culture, and in order to study a region, there must be a culture to study in the first place. There is an inherent value in a culture being preserved; a culture alive is one that one can experience firsthand. Being able to physically touch history provides a much more meaningful encounter than reading about it online or in a textbook. Even seeing a photograph or video does not provide the same sense of significance as approaching the topic face to face. Artisans preserve the history in a way that differs greatly from a textbook. Rather than being the writers of history, they are the voice of history. Their work is the representation of generations worth of labor, stories, and perspectives. The field of history is often complicated by how subjective it is, so artisanship gains value in being something one can actually concretely grasp. Furthermore, as



discussed in the interview with Trabalzi, artisans provide us with a diversity in choice. Humankind is creating history with their choices every day, and as artisanship declines and mass production increases, people's perspectives and desires narrow. Artisan products represent uniqueness and creativity, while IKEA products simply represent what a designer thought would satisfy the widest range of customers. The loss of artisans illustrates a future that is unconcerned with curiosity and cultural preservation, something which would change the face of the history field.

Globalization is a complication which is affecting the entirety of the Western, industrialized world and has worked to both benefit and prohibit artisans. As time goes on, the future of the field comes into question, and one is forced to ponder on if and how it can succeed and compete with the growth in major corporations. People can choose to support artisans for a range of reasons, whether it is to save the planet or just because they enjoy handcrafted works. This leads to the conclusion that the only viable solution to the threat of globalization is the possibilities of globalization.