Introduction

Each issue of the journal tells a larger story about design that emerges from the combination of individual articles. The story in this issue balances several important personalities in design with the elements of disciplined design thinking and design practice. The personalities are diverse. They include Ivan Illich, Julien Hébert, Gui Bonsiepe, Moriya Nobuo, and John J. Graham. Each has made a distinctive contribution to the field based on philosophy, personal vision, and creative energy. For example, Carl Mitcham's memorial to the late Ivan Illich is a careful review of the philosopher's critique of technology and professionalized design practice. For those readers who are unfamiliar with Illich's writings, Mitcham provides an excellent introduction to the range of his provocative thought on the ethical and cultural issues of the field. Teachers, students, and thoughtful professional designers will be challenged by this article to consider the deeper values and goals of design in the contemporary world.

Though it was not entirely planned by the editors, the following articles on Julien Hébert, Gui Bonsiepe, Moriya Nobuo and John Graham are a quiet response to the criticisms made by Ivan Illich. These designers—and a respected design educator and theorist—represent the complex mosaic of design as the field attempts to discover and fulfill its mission in a responsible manner. Despite our distrust and skepticism about the occasional cults of personality that emerge in the popular journalism of design, personal values and preferences play an important role in the development of the field. Each of the articles tells a personal and professional story about an individual who has made a difference in the larger story of design.

Articles on important elements in design thinking and design practice balance the story of personalities. Dennis Doordan discusses materials in the design process. Bruce Hanington discusses the emerging methods of human research in design. David Cabianca provides a comment on a recent debate in the field of graphic design. Cal Swann and Artemis Yagou discuss design in national and international contexts—icons of the Australian bush and the effort of Greece to present a new face to the international community in the Great Exhibition of 1851. These articles represent the complex web of issues in design history, criticism, and theory—as well as one of the signature themes of *Design Issues*.

Richard Buchanan
Dennis Doordan
Victor Margolin

On Materials

Dennis P. Doordan

This is a revised version of a paper presented originally in September 2002, at the Common Ground Conference sponsored by the Design Research Society and published in the proceedings of that conference.

The conference paper was revised while I was the Ailsa Mellon Bruce Senior Visiting Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art.

Design is the process by which abstract ideas assume concrete form and thus become active agents in human affairs. One of the critical parameters in any discussion of designed artifacts is material: what something is made of and how the material employed affects the form, function, and perception of the final design. In a broad sense, the story of materials, their discovery, and subsequent manipulation constitutes a significant thread in the history of civilizations, and often provides a common point of reference for cultural discourse in general. In the long view of history, the degree to which humans were able to exploit different materials has been taken as an indication of the level of technological sophistication achieved by different cultures. We speak of the Stone Age or the Bronze Age as readily identifiable chapters in the human story. In the more compact purview of the history of modernity, the advent of new materials generally is treated as one of the determining factors in the development of modern design. Beyond serving as an index of technological sophistication, different materials have acquired distinctive and widely shared cultural associations. If, for example, I identify a particular period as constituting a "Golden Age" in the history of a civilization, or describe a hero as having feet of clay, the reader understands the judgments expressed in such hoary phrases. The 1967 movie *The Graduate* provides a more recent example of this same phenomenon. When Benjamin Braddock—he is the fresh, young graduate of the movie's title—is offered career advice, the audience recognizes that an entire lifestyle has been devastatingly described with a single word: plastics.

As one moves from the realm of popular perception to the professional domain of design practice and the interdisciplinary field of design studies, the discussion of materials and materiality grows more complex. Materials, for example, can serve as a lens to focus insights derived from different disciplinary perspectives and methodologies. Design research—whether it is directed at the history of design, the refinement of design theory, or the advancement of design practice—often requires that the researcher pursue knowledge and insights embedded in different disciplines. The challenge of interdisciplinary work involves the integration of insights gained from exposure to different disciplinary perspectives. In terms of the argument I am developing here, the first step is to recognize the complex and frankly problematic nature of materiality in the modern era.

In 1956, the Reynolds Metals Company, one of the three major producers of aluminum in the United States, published a handsome two-volume survey of architectural uses for aluminum. *Aluminum in Modern Architecture* included a portfolio of recent buildings demonstrating architectural applications of aluminum, a technical section detailing the properties of the material, and a collection of interviews with twenty-seven architects and engineers in which they described their enthusiasm for aluminum's multiple applications in architectural design. One of the prominent voices included in this section belonged to Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. He began his discussion with a curious warning:

> The danger with aluminum is that you can do with it what you like; that it has no real limitations.[1]

I cite Mies van der Rohe as a way to begin my discussion of modern materials because he suggested that we understand the advent of new materials in the modern era as posing a new problem rather than providing a simple solution for whatever design opportunity is being considered. In constructing accounts of design in the modern era, we should be wary of deterministic approaches to the subject predicated on a positivist approach to history that suggests new materials naturally and inevitability generate new formal languages for design.

If Mies's warning represented an isolated position by an eccentric figure, we could dismiss it. However, he was not alone in registering a note of caution when discussing the brave new world of modern materials. In his 1940 treatise on industrial design *Design This Day: The Techniques of Order in the Machine Age,* Walter Dorwin Teague noted the epoch defining quality of modern materials. Today, he observed, designers are no longer limited to the catalog of materials available directly from nature:

> Our modern partnership between science and industry, with the great expansion of research laboratories and experimental stations through which it works, is able to meet our needs with reasonable promptness ... so that our repertoire of available resources is far more extensive than any possessed by designers heretofore.[2]

Teague went on to suggest that this partnership between science and industry presented designers with a challenging new context for professional practice, one they did not always handle well:

> These forces whose power we feel are not novel: they merely move more swiftly and so with greater impact, and they vary their direction more frequently, than they used to do. The peculiar difficulty of our position is that this interaction of forces is accelerated almost beyond our ability to keep pace with it in conscious mastery of our resources....

1 John Peter, *Aluminum in Modern Architecture* (Louisville, KY: Reynolds Metals Company, 1956), vol.2, 248.

2 Walter Dorwin Teague, *Design This Day: The Technique of Order in the Machine Age* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940), 68–69.

> But the Machine Age in its multitude of inventions has not only included our long repertoire of new materials, it has enormously increased the number and kind of things we can do with materials, old as well as new. It is not surprising that as a result we have fumbled very clumsily with many of our unfamiliar stuffs, while we ran wild in inept uses of those our forefathers understood so well.[3]

Publications like *Aluminum in Modern Architecture* and *Design This Day* are often described as self-promoting celebrations of individual designers, the design profession as a whole or specific industries. A close reading of this mid-twentieth century literature reveals, however, a significant maturation in design thinking compared to the prophetic but often technologically uninformed discussion of materials by designers generated earlier in the century. In 1924, for example, Mies van der Rohe could write confidently:

> Industrialization of the building trade is a question of material. Hence the demand for a new building material is the first prerequisite. Our technology must and will succeed in inventing a building material that can be manufactured technologically and utilized industrially. It will have to be a light material whose utilization does not merely permit but actually invites industrialization.[4]

A quarter century latter, and now fully immersed in a technologically sophisticated and industrialized building culture, Mies moderated his tone a bit and tempered his enthusiasm with a warning concerning the "danger" of materials characterized by seemingly limitless potential. In the comments by Teague and Mies cited here we see the emerging recognition among modern designers of a daunting new level of complexity that rendered traditional ways of thinking about the relationship between material and form increasingly outmoded.

Once we begin to listen to what designers like Teague and Mies van der Rohe were trying to tell us—that materials are not just a "given" to be incorporated in the designer's calculation but are part of the design problem—then the need to articulate a critical framework for the discussion of materials becomes obvious. Jeffrey Meikle opens his history of plastic with the following observation:

> Plastic itself, by its very nature, complicates efforts to think about it. Able to assume many degrees of shape, texture, hardness, density, resilience, or color, the myriad varieties are united only by a word—plastic—that has defied most attempts to promote specific trade names. What do we mean when we talk about plastic?[5]

3 Teague, *Design This Day*, 69–71.

4 Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, "Industrialized Building" (1924) reprinted in: Ulrich Conrads, *Programs and Manifestoes on Twentieth Century Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970), 82.

5 Jeffrey Meikle, *American Plastic: A Cultural History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 3.

In addition to my own work on aluminum,[6] in recent years, our understanding of the design history of materials has been enriched through the research of historians and curators like Gwenaël Delhumeau, Clive Edwards, Robert Friedel, Hans Joliet, Jeffrey Meikle, and Penny Sparke.[7] And, while not strictly speaking works of historical scholarship, the important contributions of Paolo Antonelli, Philip Ball and Ezio Manzini to the discussion of contemporary developments in materials technologies needs to be acknowledged here.[8] The fruit of all this scholarship is, I suggest, a new framework for the discussion of materials based on the triad: fabrication, application, and appreciation.

Fabrication deals with the initial stages in the life cycle of materials. It refers to the extraction, refining, and preparation of materials for initial use. In the case of aluminum, for example, fabrication involves extracting alumina from bauxite ore and reducing it to aluminum through a process of electrolysis. While in the case of plastics, fabrication involves calculating the particular molecular composition of the polymers to be employed. A historical discussion of fabrication involves tracing the scientific insights leading to the discovery of ways to produce new materials with specific properties. Discovery is followed by production and a discussion of fabrication also encompasses the growth of an industrial base technologically and financial able to produce the material in commercially significant amounts.

Application deals with transformation of materials into products. It involves the efforts of designers to match new materials to existing product needs, to develop new uses for novel materials and to impose a formal vocabulary on materials. This formal vocabulary can be imitative of other materials or emphasize properties and characteristics unique to the material in question. Mapping the various applications of new materials is familiar terrain for design historians because it traces the role of designers in the product development process. In my own work on the history of aluminum, for example, I have argued that designers enter the story to a significant extent when advances in metallurgy and production technologies (i.e. developments belonging to the story of fabrication) no longer are enough to sustain the growth of the aluminum industry. Furthermore, that the activity of design (understood as distinct from that of basic scientific research and production engineering) increases in importance as the competitive nature of the industry grows.

Appreciation deals with the reception of materials by the entire community of users who come into contact with whatever material is being studied. A history of appreciation traces the multiple and shifting response of different constituencies as they encounter artifacts endowed with a distinctive material identity. Just as a concern for the application of materials shifts the focus from scientists and engineers to designers, the turn from exploring application to appre-

6 Dennis Doordan, "Promoting Aluminum: Designers and the American Aluminum Industry," *Design Issues* 9:2 (Spring, 1993): 44–50; and "From Precious to Pervasive: Aluminum and Architecture," in Sarah Nichols, editor, *Aluminum by Design* (New York: Harry N.Abrams, 2000).

7 Gwenaël Delhumeau, *L'invention du béton armé. Hennebique, 1890–1914* (Paris: Editions Nomra, 1999); Clive Edwards, "Aluminum Furniture, 1886–1986. The Changing Applications and Receptions of a Modern Material," *Journal of Design History* 14 (3): 207–225; Robert Friedel, "Some Matter of Substance," in *History from Things: Essays on Material Culture,* edited by Steven Lubber and W. David Kingly, (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993); Hans Joliet, *Aluminum: die ersten hundert Jahre* (Düsseldorf: VDI Verlag, 1988); Sarah Nichols, editor, *Aluminum by Design* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000); Penny Sparke, editor, *The Plastics Age: From Modernity to Post-Modernity* (London: Victoria and Albert Publications, 1990).

8 Paola Antonelli, *Mutant Materials in Contemporary Design* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1995); Philip Ball, *Made to Measure. New Materials for the 21st Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Ezio Manzini, *The Material of Invention* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

ciation shifts the focus again, this time from designers to consumers and those critics, commentators, and trends setters who shape the cultural understanding of materials.

At this point, some refinement of a framework based on this triad of terms is necessary because a simple listing of the terms fabrication, application, and appreciation suggests they exist as discrete categories separate from each other chronologically as well as in terms of the "cast of characters" involved at each stage and the language each cast uses to discuss its respective domain of activity. In working with these terms, however, researchers soon recognize areas of overlap between these terms and the role of feedback loops within the sequence fabrication, application, and appreciation. Designers, a group I have identified as key players in the discussion of the application of materials for example, routinely respond to feedback from consumers. In the same way, the type of basic research and development activities characteristic of the fabrication phase of the material story often involves input from constituencies located in later stages of the material life cycle. The critical terms described here are serviceable to the degree they can clarify the type of questions researcher should ask and suggest the type of sources to be consulted in pursuit of answers. Interdisciplinary research is complex and the interpretive framework proposed here brings into sharp relief what stage in the life cycle of materials is under review at any moment in the research process.

A second clarification involves the concept of time. It is not my intention to specify in a restrictive manner the temporal dimension of these terms. Any attempt to discuss the appreciation of aluminum, for example, must take into account the shifting perceptions of this material as it evolves from a precious material in the nineteenth century to a pervasive one in the twentieth century. The rapidity of social and technological change and the fluidity of cultural meaning are recognized as characteristic features of the modern era. In the modern era, discussions of *what* must always be coupled with an appreciation of *when* in order to capture the fine details as well as the big picture in terms of the story of materials in the modern era.

A third clarification involves the place of natural materials in the critical schema presented here. The Teague passage cited above reminds us that the catalog of materials available to designers has expanded dramatically in the modern era. But the arrival of new alloys, polymers and laminates did not mean the disappearance of traditional natural materials. Substitute *cultivation* for the term *fabrication* and the schema works just as well for materials like cotton, bamboo or oak as it does for aluminum and plastic.[9]

In 1992, Richard Buchanan published an article in this journal entitled "Wicked Problems in Design Thinking." In it, Buchanan introduced a conceptual tool he called the "doctrine of placements." He used the concept of placements, which he described as broad

9 See, for example, Nancy Moore Bess, *Bamboo in Japan* (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 2001).

areas of particular types of design activities, as a way to explore the nature of invention in design activity. He observed that the conceptual repositioning of a design problem from one place to another often sparked innovative solutions. In an attempt to refine the concept of placement he distinguished it from the more familiar concept of category.

> Categories have fixed meanings that are accepted within the framework of a theory or a philosophy, and serve as the basis for analyzing what already exists. Placements have boundaries to shape and constrain meaning, but are not rigidly fixed and determinate. The boundary of a placement gives a context or orientation to thinking, but the application to a specific situation can generate a new perception of that situation and, hence, a new possibility to be tested.[10]

Buchanan is concerned here with design practice. If, however, we substitute research for design practice and consider my terms *fabrication, application,* and *appreciation* as designations for the different "placements" of research emphasis the scope and applicability of the doctrine of placements expands substantially. Hopefully, the critical framework outlined here will transform, what Walter Dorwin Teague characterized as our "peculiar difficulty" into a greater opportunity to treat the discussion of materials with the same sophistication we bring to other aspects of design discourse.

10 Richard Buchanan, "Wicked Problems in Design Thinking," *Design Issues* 8:2 (Spring 1992):10.

Methods in the Making: A Perspective on the State of Human Research in Design

Bruce Hanington

Introduction

This article was developed from experiences in human-centered design, both within field research and as a design researcher and educator. Several of the observations, insights, and examples offered here have been inspired, or at least clarified, by a current project being conducted by the School of Design at Carnegie Mellon University for the United States Postal Service (USPS). The USPS project entails the transformation of complex informational documents into accessible language and visualizations in a new set of documents for use by postal employees, the public, and business customers. My role in this project has been to advise the research and design team on user research and product testing, given a mandate of user-centered design.

This project is noteworthy from several perspectives relevant to this article, and design research in general. First, there is the unique aspect of application focused on the design of an informational document. Although certainly arguable as an interface, there is a perceived difference between this product and more traditional interfaces housed in three-dimensional and digital artifacts. Related to this is the recognized paucity of user-centered design and testing within communication (graphic) design,[1] particularly in comparison to the more established history of industrial design. Fundamental to my own background in human factors and industrial design has been the realization that although one can identify these differences, they become relatively mute in the process of research and design. That is, the issues that emerge, with respect to both content and methodology, are relatively similar in practice, and in fact should be mutually informing across disciplines and products.

The information shared here, culled from the USPS project and others, should serve to reinforce the need and *demand* for user-centered approaches in design, and offer some clarity in the methods that can best serve this cause.

The Language of Human-Centered Design

The very phrase *user-centered design* is worth contemplating at the outset, noteworthy at least for the absence of the word "research." User-centered design describes a *process*, one that is at once both

1 See, for example, the argument put forth by Strickler regarding suspect reliance by graphic designers on "specialist" design intuition. Zoe Strickler, "Elicitation Methods in Experimental Design Research," *Design Issues* 15:2 (Summer, 1999): 28.

human- and design-centric. Research, in this case, is implicit, yet is addressed *within* the context of design. Design, in turn, is recognized as an activity inherently tied to human needs and concerns. For this reason, I would argue for further clarity and humanizing of the phrase by calling it *human-centered design.*

I offer in contrast the more traditional terminology of *user testing,* and its counterpart, *usability.* There is a growing body of design literature critical of the limited connotations of these terms, both in definition and practice.[2] On one level, user testing may be misconstrued as implying a test *of* the user, certainly something we strive to de-emphasize to participants in human factors research! In response, a more accurate descriptive term would be *product* testing.

Furthermore, if we examine the activities of research at any given time in the life of a project, the term *user testing* is, in fact, a misnomer. The phrase implies that a product (or artifact, be it a prototype, manufactured object, or document) has an informational set to be matched (tested) against user (human) interpretation. In many stages of a design project, *user research* offers a more appropriate description of the activities actually taking place. For example, when we are collecting information from people to inform our baseline knowledge of their needs, desires, or thought processes, we are engaged in user research. User research may entail interviews, conversations, business or facility tours, the examination of currently used documents or products, and work observations, as well as documentation through writing, sketching, and photography.

Sometimes, it is also relevant to distinguish between *users* and *tasks*.[3] Whereas user research reveals aspects of people as described above, *tasks* often are isolated for research in terms of how goals are accomplished, pathways of experience, milestones and roadblocks to achievement. Eventually, aspects of users and tasks are mapped together.

Finally, user testing and usability often too narrowly define the range of human concerns of interest to design. This too is increasingly documented in current design research literature, with clear trends identifying the need to address aspects of product desirability, pleasurable interactions, and emotional resonance, in addition to the more established elements of product design centered around what is useful and usable.[4]

Project Life Cycles and Research

Past models of user testing and usability consulted users in late-stage product development, primarily for evaluating prototypes or finished products. There is a growing argument to include people in the very early stages of design, including pre-ideation phases.[5] In agreement with this, I advocate that, in the life of longer-term projects, a roster of stakeholders be built with agreement for participation at various stages throughout product development. This partnership results in an ongoing relationship, whereby relevant people

2 Bruce Hanington, "Innovation and Method in Design Research" in Silvia Pizzocaro, Amilton Arruda, and Dijon De Moraes, eds., *Proceedings of the Politecnico di Milano Conference, Design (plus) Research* (May, 18-20, 2000): 64–69. See also Patrick Jordan, *Designing Pleasurable Products: An Introduction to the New Human Factors* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2000).

3 JoAnn T. Hackos and Janice C. Redish, *User and Task Analysis for Interface Design* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998).

4 This argument currently is being promoted primarily in conference forums and accompanying proceedings. For example, Martin Helander, Halimahtun Khalid, and Tham Ming Po, eds., *Proceedings of the International Conference on Affective Human Factors Design* (CAHD), Singapore, June 27–29, 2001 (Asean Academic Press), and the Third International Conference on Design and Emotion, Loughborough, England, July 13, 2002 (proceedings forthcoming).

5 This view is supported by Liz Sanders of SonicRim, among others (in presentation, Carnegie Mellon University School of Design, February 12, 2001).

may be called upon to assist in both the generation and evaluation of concepts and solutions, while concurrently becoming *invested* in the project.

Particularly at the beginning of a project, when the user group and its tasks are unknown to the design team, it is critical for members to immerse themselves in the user's world to develop a functional literacy of the material with which they will be working. User research, as contrasted to user testing above, is appropriate here.

Initially, *speculative* scenarios may be used to test ideas of product engagement and use. These are hypothetical scenarios of use determined by the design research team, to pilot-test possible issues in interpretation or navigation, while simultaneously providing a check of research protocol. Once detail is collected through user research, *actual* scenarios may evolve for more specific product testing.

During early development, prototype reviews may be conducted with users or experts to probe for confirmation of design directions established from earlier research. This should not be misconstrued as user testing. In transforming the USPS manuals, for example, document reviews were used with a second prototype as probing confirmation of appropriate content, topics, and sequence of information. The prototype had enough fidelity to present it to users, yet it was premature to test specific content. Reviews were conducted both with business customers, and "experts" within the USPS. A typical protocol for this research would involve members of the design team asking questions on common information needs and scenarios of use, presenting the document and its general structure, and then asking for feedback on the prototype based on typical experiences of the user. The table of contents is put under particular scrutiny for logic of information flow, and the index is examined and supplemented by users for the comprehensive inclusion of key terms. While these sessions are conducted with design team members in person, in some cases, we may leave the document prototype with users for longer periods of time and conduct follow-up sessions for feedback.

At later stages of prototype development, more traditional product testing provides critical information. In the USPS project, document testing is carried out to evaluate successful elements and trouble spots in document content and navigation. These tests are slightly more formal than earlier phases of research, and involve the users going through the document using actual scenarios, thinking out loud to pinpoint decision-making issues, annotating the document with color-coded dots and written comments, and answering probing questions. These sessions typically are videotaped to provide a transcript of the session and to identify key observations of behavior. For convenience, we may conduct these tests in our own facilities; however, it is valuable to collect feedback in the actual

work setting, under real circumstances of use, wherever possible. For complex and lengthy documents, it will be necessary to conduct some tests of individual components or sections of the document only, and to conduct other tests where we again leave the prototype with users for extended periods of time, with follow-up sessions to elaborate on feedback.

The process used in the USPS project is thus described in terms of human-centered design, and includes the following elements of research, some of them iterative:

- User Research—early, baseline collection of information
- Speculative Scenarios—preliminary scenarios of use built from baseline information
- Pilot Testing—in-house testing of content, and research protocol
- Product (Document) Reviews—expert and user reviews of document
- Product (Document) Testing—testing of prototypes with users and experts.

Research in the early phases of a design project often is referred to as generative, formative, or discovery research, and generally is contrasted to evaluative research, typically positioned as an end-stage component of research. User participation in generative research can provide critical information in understanding users, and their needs and desires, but also can be invaluable in developing ideas for product features and forms. There often is a false distinction made between methods reserved for generative research, and those for evaluative research. While purposes may be different, there can be significant crossover in the application of methods and, in fact, multiple iterations of form (concept) generation and evaluation should be cyclical and mutually informing.

Method and Purpose

It is clear that there is a vast inventory of research methods from which to choose. The key challenge lies in making an appropriate, purposive connection to *goals* in the selection of methods used at any given time in the design and research process.

Consider the array of methods offered in Table 1.

Table 1
A Nomenclature of Research Methods for Human-Centered Design

Traditional	Adapted	Innovative
Market research	Observational research	Creative/Participatory
Focus groups	Participant observation	Design workshops
Surveys	Still, video documentation	Collage
Questionnaires	Ethnographic methods	Card sorting
Interviews	Video ethnography	Cognitive mapping
Unobtrusive measures	Beeper studies	Velcro modeling
Archival methods	Experiential sampling	Visual diaries
Trace measures	Cultural inventory	Camera studies
Experiments	Artifact analysis	Document annotations
	HCI	
	Thinkaloud protocol	
	Heuristic evaluation	
	Cognitive walkthrough	

Interpretation and analysis tends toward:

Counts	Content analysis
Statistics	Categories
Spreadsheets	Patterns, Themes
Graphing	Affinities, Clusters
Verbal + numerical information	Visual + verbal information

Traditional Methods

There are many traditional research methods that serve their purpose well, with little need to reinvent them for each intended use. Surveys, interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups—the traditional purview of market research—provide an efficient means to reach large numbers of people. If structured effectively, data collected, particularly from surveys and questionnaires, may be easily compiled, analyzed, and visualized. However, the methods are open to criticism, particularly for their reliance on what people *say* to be true, often subject to the influence of self-report bias or the natural tendency to make oneself appear "good."[6] Focus groups must be well facilitated to avoid bias introduced through peer pressure unwittingly exerted by other participants or, in some cases, by the researchers themselves. These methods tend to be better at confirming known entities, yet are less critical in determining as-yet-undiscovered information.

Archival and "trace" measures similarly rely on interpretations of existing artifacts, yet still are valuable for their original purpose of unobtrusiveness, intended to reduce researcher bias and the reactivity of research participants. Archival research may range from library records to historical files to documented process work; traces are those measures made evident through accretion or erosion.[7] For example, a document that has been sectioned, re-

6 "As Agnew and Pyke (1982) put it, 'On a questionnaire, we only have to move the pencil a few inches to shift our scores from being a bigot to being a humanitarian...,'" in Colin Robson, *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 310.

7 The landmark source on unobtrusive measures remains the classic by Eugene Webb, Donald T. Campbell, et. al., *Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive Research in the Social Sciences* (revised edition by Corwin Press, Sage Classics 1999; original publication by Rand McNally, 1966).

sequenced, and flagged in key places by the user offers substantial information to the designer during research.

The experiment as a research strategy rarely is used by designers, yet several intentions behind it serve to provide lessons of good practice for all research. For instance, the experiment draws attention to tradeoffs made between control and realism, and argues for rigor in research protocol. Lab research and protocols developed to isolate variables for manipulation and measurement provide the assurance of control, yet what field research lacks in control it may gain in realism, which is an advantage over many laboratory studies. Within my own teaching and consulting, the experiment is studied as a foundational tool for critical insights in both planning and evaluating research, assessing when and why control over variables is necessary and appropriate, and determining a suitable balance between rigor and relevance.

Adapted Methods

It makes sense that we would borrow established methods from disciplines engaged in human research, since design is fundamentally a human-centered activity. However, research professions often have purposes and goals that differ from those of design. For this reason, methods borrowed often must be adapted to better suit the needs of design.[8]

Observation methods have previously been borrowed from psychology by the human factors community and subsequently used by design, thereby giving them a laboratory model of scientific application. The growing consensus that the use of designed artifacts occurs in natural settings of work, home, and play has convinced many that human behavior therefore should be studied in context. This has forged an increasingly greater connection with the philosophy and methods of anthropology and ethnography, fields acknowledged for their sensitivity to the study of human communities, while maintaining an awareness of the dangers of subjectivity, researcher bias, and influence.

Methods borrowed may be appropriate for our needs in design, yet it is equally important to recognize that we have adapted them for our own purposes. For example, ethnographic methods in anthropology may demand months or even years on behalf of the researcher, who will spend time in a community with varying levels of participation during their observations. Adapted methods commonly used in design include so-called "beeper studies," or *Experiential Sampling Methods* (ESM), whereby people are paged at various times of the day to record their behavior, product use, and/or feelings, and *video ethnography*, where continuous video monitoring is edited, or collected in samples initiated by user movement or timers. These adapted methods serve to condense the extraordinary time devoted by formal ethnographers into more manageable and ultimately more relevant samples of information for the design

8 An excellent reference for sources of adapted research methods and others is contained in a special issue of *Visible Language* 36:2 (2002): "An Annotated Design Research Bibliography: By and For the Design Community." See pp. 161–168 for relevant discussion and sources of adapted methods.

researcher. Likewise, while cultural inventories or artifact analyses may not be as in-depth as those carried out by anthropologists when examining other cultures, a modest version of the methods may serve design purposes extremely well.[9]

While often scientific in approach, methods from human computer interaction similarly may be useful to design research. Depending on the particular needs, these methods may introduce a degree of rigor appropriate for some studies. Typically centered around issues within interface design, "thinkaloud" protocol has participants think out loud as they navigate problems or use products, to help the researcher identify key decision points, both positively and negatively encountered. Heuristic evaluation provides an expert evaluation of a product or interface against an established set of principles or guidelines. In "cognitive walkthroughs," an analyst assesses the opportunities for appropriate actions that might be taken by users in task sequences.[10]

Innovative Methods

Designers are fundamentally involved in creative, visual activity, and the research methods they use should provide corresponding opportunities. Fortunately, there are a number of design methods now established and continuing to emerge that represent credible ways of collecting user information through creative means. The benefits of working visually in research may be self-evident to designers, who respond intuitively to the language and find a more natural transition to design decisions from visual information. Additionally, when participants are invited to assist in research by engaging in a creative activity, the response is likely to be more favorable than when faced with a request to fill out a survey or take part in an interview. Creative methods are particularly appropriate during generative research, often referred to as *projective* because of their success in uncovering needs and desires that may be unknown even to the user, and that are difficult to articulate when probed for using traditional methods.[11]

Innovative methods typically are identified by their participatory nature, creative engagement and outcome, and their relatively specific application to design research. Examples include design workshops and other creative sessions in which participants (users) are invited to engage in the generation or manipulation of visual artifacts to communicate their thoughts or ideas. Completed as group or individual activities, emerging artifacts might include collages detailing preferences and feelings, cognitive maps or other diagrams indicating sequences of activities, actions, or thoughts, or models configured to represent desired product features and forms. Diaries may be formed using photographs and text generated by users over periods of days or weeks to provide insights into experiences and feelings. Existing visuals and documents may be annotated using colored Post-its®, highlighter pens, and handwritten notes.

9 A good range of anthropology-based methods for design is presented in a special issue of *Innovation* (Summer 1996): "Anthropology: A Research Resource." See also Tony Salvador, Genevieve Bell, and Ken Anderson, "Design Ethnography," *Design Management Journal* (Fall 1995): 35–41.

10 Several references are available for more in-depth discussion of HCI methods: Jakob Nielsen, "Heuristic Evaluation," in *Usability Inspection Methods,* Jakob Nielsen and Robert L. Mack, eds. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1994), 25-62; Clayton Lewis and Cathleen Whatnot, "Cognitive Walkthroughs," in *Handbook of Human-Computer Interaction,* 2nd revised edition, M. Hollander, T.K. Lender, P. Parch, eds. (Elsevier: North-Holland, 1997), 717–732.

11 Uday Dandavate, Elizabeth B.-N. Sanders, and Susan Stuart, "Emotions Matter: User Empathy in the Product Development Process," *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society 40th Annual Meeting* (1996): 417. See also www.sonicrim.com for reinforcement of this argument.

While these examples serve to illustrate the intent of innovative design methods, they are in no measure a complete list. The whole purpose of innovative methods is to allow for creativity in designing methods appropriate to the situation. For example, I had a student who was conducting a human factors design project on public restrooms on the university campus. Naturally, she was concerned about protocol when surveying people in context on such a private matter. We invented a method of "graffiti walls," whereby she papered the walls of several restrooms with a headline asking for input on experiences and needs. These then were photo documented each day, and collected from the walls at the end of the study. Needless to say, she received a wealth of rich and useful information for her project.

Interpretation and Analysis

Whether collected using traditional, adapted, or innovative methods, the interpretation and analysis of information by design researchers often will result in formats that may appear unconventional. These formats may include quantitative summaries and text reports, but will likely be complemented with visual information in the form of sketches, diagrams and maps, models, photographic records, and videotape. Prototypes such as documents that have been annotated and color-coded by users may be compiled into single documents that are visually analyzed for key problem areas and points of success. Research results commonly are presented in a team forum, in which they are discussed at length to extract fundamental meanings, and moved forward into possible design outcomes for further iterations of debate, development, and testing. Meaning typically is extracted through the search for emerging themes, patterns, or clusters of affinitive information.

The framework of methods presented here is not a comprehensive list, but an attempt to provide a convenient classification of method types. The framework hopefully provides enough structure and key examples to see where other methods might naturally be placed, as they are encountered or developed. It cannot hope to adequately represent the myriad of techniques that may permeate the life cycle of a typical research and design process, to say nothing of discrepancies in names given to similar or same methods. This flexibility, while contributing to some confusion at times, also can be a positive opportunity. Design research should be a creative activity, benefiting from many of the same characteristics as the design process. An integrated approach to design and research that includes designers as researchers will contribute to an enhanced understanding of project variables, and add value to both process and results.

Designers as Researchers

Vast resources often are spent on user research and testing, while ultimately not making any evident connection to design outcomes.

These failures often can be attributed to the inherent difficulty in translating results from other research disciplines into an adequate language for application within the design process. Practitioners from other fields, including human research and management, may lack a critical aesthetic "filter." Again, the term "user-centered design" argues for a process with implicit human concerns, yet places the activity of research within the context of design. While designers cannot typically claim the same level of expertise as professional researchers from other disciplines (e.g., human factors, social sciences, marketing, and anthropology), their active participation in the research process serves at least two key purposes.

Firstly, knowledge of design allows the interpretation of research information in context. Whether that information is a preference expressed by an individual user, or a pattern witnessed across users, these results can be balanced against the creative possibilities (and limitations) of design. The anecdotal is weighed appropriately in the context of more widespread opinions, yet the interpretation requires more sophistication than a strict adherence to favoring the highest number of responses, so often seen in quantitative analysis. For example, several users suggesting that an illuminated red button be used in an interface does not necessarily argue for its direct physical representation in a product, yet may suggest the need for a readily identifiable design element that offers appropriate feedback. The exact *manifestation* of those criteria will be a creative design decision.

Secondly, immersion in the research process and direct engagement with users forges a sense of empathy between designer and user. In direct conversations in which users have described upsetting and costly experiences owing to inadequate information, it is difficult for the designer not to feel a sense of responsibility. Similarly, when observing users who express a tangible sense of frustration when navigating an interface, the evident impact of design decisions and need for improvements are driven home. Such exercises in research tend to expand the notion of usability beyond function, and to reinforce the necessary emotional component of human-design interaction.

Conclusion

Human-centered design currently is under scrutiny, both for the positive aspects it has to offer, and in the critique it faces as it emerges into a research discipline in its own right. While few would argue against the merits of consulting users in the process of responsible design, the debate about how this form of research is best conducted, in sequence and method, continues. The tendency toward integrating a scientific approach into the activities of design, only to justify the discipline to professions established in the history of science, should be waning by now. This is not to say we are not responsible for the appropriate rigors of research, but only suggests that

models of research adapted from other human-centric fields such as anthropology and ethnography, and those developed through our own innovation, correspond more adequately to the requirements of design both as a creative process and in holistic content inclusive of emotive human concerns. As the field of human-centered design matures and earns credibility on its own merits, we can look forward not only to the development of methods that satisfy the needs of research, but to an increasing array of rewarding products that emerge from responsible practice.

Great Expectations: A Postscript on the *AIGA 365* Debate

David Cabianca

Footnotes begin on page 24.

This essay was prompted by a public debate posted on the American Institute of Graphic Arts' (AIGA) Website during the summer of 2001, and while the debate may seem to have passed into history, the release of the 2001 *AIGA 365* annual perhaps marks a good moment to assess the fallout. The online discussion centered on the design merits of the 2000 annual, *365: AIGA Year in Design* by San Francisco designer Jennifer Sterling. Many of the comments took issue with Sterling's treatment of the published work: Sterling's design crops book covers, selects poster details and, in general, presents fragments of the winning entries. It rejects the customary—and accustomed—layout of book spreads, silhouetted images on a neutral, white background, and full-frame posters. In contrast to accepted conventions, Sterling's design engages us with a "cult of texts." [1] While this phrase was coined by Jennifer Sterling in relation to a specific moment, it is intentionally misused here. By misreading Sterling's statement, by expanding its interpretive boundaries similar to what Roland Barthes lays out in *The Pleasure of the Text*, fecund possibilities will open up for the discourse and analysis of design.[2]

Specifically, I was provoked to write after reflecting upon a comment made by designer, educator, and critic, Lorraine Wild. Wild's comment seems to be the final word as it were, since hers was the last posting among the numerous comments of others, many of which call for a return to the standard format of "book cover and spread." It is Wild's general assessment that design annuals should function as a historical record "of what was valued by the community of designers in any given year. [This] is the record that will last after we are all dead and gone." And, as a record, annuals should demonstrate a neutral or transparent attitude toward the work they are intended to display: "So, twenty years or thirty years from now, when design historians look to *365* for an idea of what the profession was interested in in 2000, they will have a very hard time figuring it out. (On the other hand, they'll have an excellent idea of what Jennifer Sterling was into!)" [3] There are two points that are troubling here. The first is the assumption that work selected for publication reflects the overarching interests of the profession, when in fact, annuals sanitize our history by narrowing its representative value. Wild's identification of "what on the other hand" a single voice was into, hints that all is not as uniform and tidy within the profession of graphic design as annuals would lead us to believe.[4] The second

Figure 1
365: AIGA Year in Design Jennifer Sterling, designer. Cover detail.

Figure 2
Interior spread.

Figure 3
Interior detail.

assumption is that Sterling's handling of the design is personal and therefore opaque to understanding. What is of interest here is Wild's side note, parenthetically set apart because the commentary has moved from a general discussion of the book to a remark on individual vision. Like the sidebars of spoken language—slips of the tongue, parapraxis, forgotten names, et al.—such marginalia often are more revealing than the focus of the discussion itself. Wild's comment suggests that had Jennifer Sterling handled the design in a different manner, we would somehow know less about what Sterling "was into" with regards to design in exchange for a "truer" display of the work of others. I think it is obvious that had Sterling designed the AIGA annual differently, it *still* would have been a product that reflected the design interests of Jennifer Sterling. However, it would have been a different book. What is at issue then, is not the interests of the designer but the *genre* of the book and, by extension, the institutionalized sociopolitical practices that created the genre.

The term "genre" is used to bind together a particular group of properties whose expression reflects a specific codified form; while "expression" is used here to suggest that these properties have discursive value, this value being the cultural mores of a given society. "In a given society, the recurrence of certain discursive properties is institutionalized, and individual texts are produced and perceived in relation to the norm constructed by that codification. A genre, whether literary or not, is nothing other than the codification of discursive properties." [5] Genres occur in all disciplines—the visual arts, language, and music, among others—and can be what both allows a discipline to emerge by establishing parameters, and what prevents the expansion of those same parameters. Many of the comments on the AIGA Website reflect a desire to maintain the formal expectations of the art catalog, that the design should be transparent to its content. Postings critical of the book's design include calls for a "traditional approach"; statements that "some things don't need to be rethought"; and accusations that "innovation in format, gratuitous decoration and styling, sheer self-indulgence, or leaving behind a valuable artifact is grandiose in thinking and irresponsible." These views reveal that the genre of book design—the representational conventions of an art catalog—are well established. But the breaking of a code or convention sets into play a discourse with the practices of culture which attempt to enforce those codes. It is the departure from the inherent inertia of a genre which allows for *speech,* the possibility of critique, and engagement with society and culture.[6]

Wild's sidebar is a reflection of the generally held belief that graphic design should foreground the conventions of objectivity, "the natural," or "the real," and that such forms are sanctioned as true. This realist attitude conceals the socially relative and constructed aspect of design. It helps to confirm the prejudice that there is a form of "objective" design which is somehow natural and transpar-

ent, rendering reality "as it is": "The realist or representational sign effaces its own status as a sign, in order to foster the illusion that we are perceiving reality without its intervention."[7] This realist belief also shares the notion that because Sterling's design is interpretive—following the conventions of fiction—it emphasizes the designer's voice or vision at the expense of content. However, the presence of the interpretive in the arts, that is, "the textual," requires an active reader but is no less informative about the world. In literature, myth, parable and literary tropes such as metaphor, allegory and paradox among others, are no less valuable as devices for providing information, nor are they any less pleasurable.[8] They can be, however, more challenging. The conventions of narrative fiction follow the linear plot structure of introduction, character development, conflict, and resolution, but "In novels in which the conventional structure of narrative is faded or indistinct [Joyce, Beckett or Pynchon for example], the reader must construct the narrative by sifting through the debris of the text. In these works, meaning resides in relations of parts and structures—or apparatus—rather than in…explicit narrative content."[9] Meaning in these unconventional structures, "lies not in a one-to-one relation between thing and concept but in a constructive operation upon many possible connections."[10] It is not impossible to discern the design logic of the material presented in the AIGA annual, but it admittedly is difficult. A "cult of texts" makes visible the codes and experiences employed in the act of reading and understanding by destabilizing our expectations of a transparent relationship between form and content, the real and the fictive, but is no less meaningful.

In its most general form, graphic design combines a verbal message with a visual image—simply put, graphic design uses *words* and *pictures.* However, this deceptively simple structure is complicated by the fact that unlike other arts, the graphic designer can satisfy the obligations of communication without exceeding the basic requirements of delivery, the graphic designer can convey a message without communicating an *idea.* Unless it achieves the communicative excess necessary for architecture, a building remains mute. Similarly, clothing does not attain the status of fashion without acknowledging its own codes and constructed language. But graphic design is inextricably linked to the communicative role of basic language, and its message is often mistaken for the content of an idea. The assumed transparency of communication in design is a symptom of modern society's canceling of distinct experiences ("Design should look neutral"), and eradication of disciplinary specificity ("Designers shouldn't appear to be expressing their interests"). The social reality of modern society (read "capital") desires a rationalizing, quantifying, and leveling of operations to serve its appetite for an ever-expanding consumer market. This leveling force is immediately evident among the comments posted on the AIGA Website: "I think it's important to emphasize that groundbreak-

ing design should do more than look cool in a design annual. …it should also lead to great results for our clients." and "It should be something we could give (or show) to a client." [11] Although Sterling's design does not prohibit either action from taking place, the preceding comments suggest that the book's value—because of its explicit interpretive perspective—is somehow compromised. The authority of the natural attitude suppresses its own ideological roots in order to promote the illusion that the "objective" is the only true vehicle for viewing the world. In this passage by Terry Eagleton, "signs" could just as easily be substituted with the word "design": "Signs which pass themselves off as natural, which offer themselves as the only conceivable way of viewing the world are by that token authoritarian and ideological. It is one of the functions of ideology to "naturalize" social reality, to make it seem innocent and unchangeable as Nature itself." [12] Wild's "historical artifact" may attempt to sustain a similitude between everyday life and communication, but its "transparent"—and ultimately communicative—content is suspect. The unmediated design is simply an illusion: it is the product of an ideological position. And with the assumption that transparency is neutral, that content remains untainted by so-called "objective delivery," ideological consumption is made complete.[13]

In specific literary terms, this intertwining of the real and the fictive in the AIGA annual can be identified as the trope of "the grotesque." "When we use the word 'grotesque' we record, among other things the sense that though our attention has been arrested, our understanding is unsatisfied." [14] To invoke the grotesque does not mean that I am speaking negatively here. I am speaking about strategies, genres, and conventions. However much Sterling's design challenges our expectations, it equally challenges the limits of graphic design as a discipline if one is to judge by the numerous negative comments found on the Website as any indication of disciplinary abuse. "[T]he grotesque, and those who indulge in it, frequently encounter a backlash that takes the form of genealogical abuse, with accusations of illegitimacy, bastardy, or hybridization, terms that indicate structural confusion, reproductive irregularity or typological confusion." [15] Does this perform a disservice to those whose work is included in the annual? Hardly. Sterling's design puts into use pre-existing codes, reterritorrializes them and demands the invention of new skills altogether. The rethinking of the genre results in an extended life of habits and routines, new meanings of knowing, belonging and practicing. But this interpretation is also dependent on our effort and desire to come to terms with what we see. "Grotesque forms place an enormous strain on the marriage of form and content by foregrounding them both so that they appear not as a partnership, but as a warfare, a struggle." [16] Sterling has given us something new, and the work of the winning entries may actually live on, longer than if they were shelved as some historical relic.[17]

It is graphic design's possibility to act as a form of expression which may allow it to claim the status of a discipline—as a way to see the world—over service industry. In doing so, graphic design may actually begin to critically engage the structures of social and cultural reality rather than merely perform subject to its bidding. It may actually have something to *say:* graphic design(ers) might begin to ask questions about meaning, values, language, feeling, and experience. The challenges posed by new forms are not the occasion to retreat to a conservative position. However, I won't hold my breath. The general public tends to condemn the interpretive in favor of the representational in architecture, painting, music, and literature—disciplines that are much older than graphic design.

1 Sterling coined this phrase to describe her approach to the redesign of the American twenty-dollar bill that appeared in ID Magazine. Jennifer Sterling, "Fresh Mint," in *ID Magazine* 46:2 (Mar/Apr 1999): 68. "Cult of texts" refers to conceptual circumstances which Jennifer Sterling has specifically outlined: "Several designers were asked to redesign the twenty-dollar bill. I suggested that, instead of using the image of past presidential figures— whose reputation tends to be judged on America's cultural mood at the moment, and therefore enjoys a type of sliding-scale affection— we instead used the language our nation holds dear: the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, or the inscription on the Statue of Liberty (to name a few). Hence, the phrase 'cult of texts.'" Jennifer Sterling in correspondence with the author (February 2002).

2 "...what I enjoy in a narrative is not directly its content or even its structure, but rather the abrasions I impose upon the fine surface [...] It is not (logical) extension that captivates it, the winnowing out of truths, but the layering of significance; [...] the excitement comes not from a progressive haste but from a kind of vertical din (the verticality of language and of its destruction)," Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text,* Richard Miller, trans. (New York: Noonday Press, 1975), 11–12.

3 Lorraine Wild's complete posting is reproduced here: "One thing I wanted to say about this year's annual and those of the future: I think it is in the duty of the AIGA to its profession to acknowledge that in publishing the Annual it is creating a public record of what was valued by the community of designers in any given year. That is the record that will last after we are all dead and gone. I know from experience, from doing design historical research, that the Annuals are an important guide. Individual pieces of design (especially things that are not archived permanently, like books in libraries) are incredibly hard to track down, and sometime their appearance in annuals is the only record of a thing existing. So, twenty years or thirty years from now, when a design historian looks to *365* for an idea of what the profession was interested in in 2000, they will have a very hard time figuring it out. (On the other hand, they'll have an excellent idea of what Jennifer Sterling was into!) So, ignoring the issue of what constitutes an 'interesting' or 'boring' annual, shouldn't the base line of discussion be whether or not it actually creates some sort of viable record of what work the organization honored at the time of publication? Or will the AIGA annual become a one-off piece that is only valuable as a sample of work by the person who designed it? (If that is the route taken, one has to ask why the organization sink its resources into it, and why people would pay money to enter the competitions?) If you look at old Annuals, there are good ones and bad ones, and many of them are very interesting artifacts in and of themselves: but the current Annual is only of interest for itself, providing a very unreliable record of the work of all the others contained within, pretty much useless for the researcher of the future, our ultimate audience!" Lorraine Wild, *365: What's Next? Discussion* Online posting. July 9, 2001 <http://www.aiga.org/content.cfm?contentalias=365discussiondisplaynew>. See the Website for the complete list of posted comments.

4 Ironically, Wild herself has in the past argued for many of the points being made here: "Perhaps it seems dumb to say this, but I'm beginning to think that the best way to salvage graphic design in the face of the juggernaut of technology and the demands of the market is to nurture authentic individual voices in graphic design, and to recognize that individuality manifests itself in form made independently of conceptual analysis of the market." Wild's essay concludes by championing the work of individuals whose histories would not be found in graphic design annuals, including Sister Corita Kent, Big Daddy Roth and Ed Fella: "Too personal, maybe, or too eccentric, their work resonates anyway, looks better and better over time, and makes more sense." Lorraine Wild, "The Macramé of Resistance," in *Emigré* 47 (Summer 1998): 15–3.

5 Tzvetan Toderov, *Genres of Discourse* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 17–8.

6 As used here, "speech" and "communication" in graphic design are two distinct, yet related, concepts.

7 Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 136.

8 See Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms* 2nd edition. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991); and Sharon Crowley, *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students* (New York: MacMillan, 1993).

9 Jennifer Bloomer, "In the Museyroom," in *Assemblage* 5 (1987): 63. Jennifer Bloomer is an architect and theorist. Her book, *Architecture and the Text: The (S)crypts of Joyce and Piranesi* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), investigates the relationship between writing and architecture and pursues many of the same representational questions raised here.

10 Ibid.

11 *365: What's Next? Discussion.*

12 Eagleton, 135.

13 The term "ideology" is, of course, problematic because it "always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count for truth," when this essay would suggest that there are discourses that are neither true nor false, but plural. See Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 109–133.

14 Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 5.

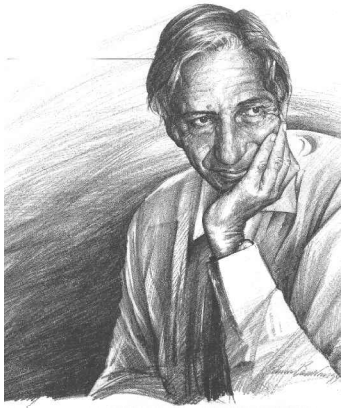
15 Ibid., 7.

16 Ibid.

17 Referring to graphic design as a discipline simultaneously necessitates and retroactively establishes a sense of continuity (like architecture, which draws from its own history in the act of creation). Ultimately, it is this self-awareness of its own past which produces resistance and criticism, and maintains the life of art. Misusing Sterling's phrase was a way to enter into a discussion of continuity in her work. This understanding does not render Sterling's process reductive or calcified. On the contrary, I take immense pleasure in assuming that each question or project presented to a designer is unique, and produces a unique solution. At the same time, I assume that a strong designer will have as much an intellectual signature as she may have a design signature— it is something that allows (and propels) one to work.

In Memoriam Ivan Illich: Critic of Professionalized Design

Carl Mitcham



Permission granted by *Catholic Agitator*. Drawing done by Gary Palmatier for the cover of *CA*, 1:1 (June–July 1971).

Eine fremde Verlorenheit war
gestalthaft zugegen.…
— Celan, *Die Niemandsrose* (1963)

Ivan Illich, who inspired a critical appreciation of design and its limits, died his own death quietly at the home of friends in Bremen, Germany, on December 2, 2002. He was 76 years old, and had suffered for more than a decade with what appeared to be a mandibular tumor that he chose to treat as a difficult friend rather than an enemy. He was buried three days later on the outskirts of a city that had a tradition of independent hospitality for those who might even be its strongest critics. For the last ten years, Illich had lectured regularly at the Universität Bremen on such topics as friendship, *askesis*, and the history of the senses, in order to question "modern certainties." He had been preparing a lecture on *misterium iniquitatis*, the mystery of evil, when he became tired, lay down for a nap, and did not awake again to this world. After being allowed to remain for three days simply where he had found rest, kept company by a single candle, a bouquet of flowers, and friends, he was buried in the Oberneuländer cemetery.

The Early Illich

Illich was born in Vienna in 1926, grew up in Italy, moved to the United States in the 1950s, founded the Centro Intercultural de Documentación (CIDOC) in Mexico (1966–1976), and since the 1980s served as a visiting scholar at multiple universities. He remains best known for three widely influential books from the 1970s: *Deschooling Society*, *Tools for Conviviality*, and *Medical Nemesis*.[1] In each case, Illich identified what he termed the phenomenon of "counterproductivity": that is, the pursuit of a technique beyond its inherent limits.

In the discovery of proper limits, Illich had been influenced by studies of organic morphology and natural design such as D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson's *On Growth and Form*,[2] J.B.S. Haldane's "On Being the Right Size,"[3] and especially Leopold Kohr's *The Breakdown of Nations*.[4] Indeed, Illich liked to tell of meeting Kohr quite by accident on a park bench in Puerto Rico, when both were there during the late 1950s.

1 Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971); Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973); Ivan Illich, *Medical Nemesis* (New York: Pantheon, 1976).

2 D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson's *On Growth and Form*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917).

3 J.B.S. Haldane, "On Being the Right Size" in *Possible Worlds and Other Essays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1927), 18–26.

4 Leopold Kohr, *The Breakdown of Nations* (New York: Rinehart, 1957).

Kohr, a teacher of E.F. Schumacher [5] became a mentor to Illich as well, helping him to appreciate the dis-economies of scale and to understand the manifold failures of attempts at unlimited expansions across a variety of sectors. The system of public schooling, designed originally to advance learning, had become an impediment to real education. Advanced technological tools of transportation and communication were at odds with autonomous human development and the culture of friendship, in the name of which they were commonly invented and continued to be promoted. High-tech health care was making people sick. Iatrogenic illnesses, that is, illnesses caused by physicians—as when patients have negative reactions to drugs, are harmed by diagnostic x-ray treatments, or are otherwise mistreated and misdiagnosed—had, he argued, become a epidemic of counterproductivity. Perhaps the most detailed analysis of counterproductivity is that found in *Energy and Equity* [6]—especially as extended in *La Trahison de l'opulence* by Jean Robert and Jean-Pierre Dupuy[7]—which argues that increased use of cars actually deprives one of auto(self)-mobility.

The correct response, for Illich, was to learn to practice a more disciplined and limited use of technology, and to invent alternative, especially low-scale, technologies. To this end, Illich continuously searched for what he called an *askesis* appropriate to the contemporary techno-lifeworld. Often he refused to wear glasses or to speak using a microphone. During one period, he practiced the discipline of not word-processing any text that he had not first composed with pen and paper. More publicly, Illich became a promotional theorist of alternative technology, as was reflected in Valentina Borremans's "Guide to Convivial Tools." [8] Illich even limed to think that he had inadvertently contributed the *Whole Earth Catalog* motto, "Access to Tools."

In many instances, however, the practice of such a fundamentally ethical imperative was made more difficult than need be by what Illich termed "radical monopolies." Although no car manufacturer has a monopoly on the automobile market, cars themselves have a fundamental monopoly on roads such that they crowd out pedestrians and bicycles.

A Second Illich

In the late 1970s, Illich's thinking took a new turn. His essay *Toward a History of Needs* [9]—a volume which reprints "Energy and Equity"—points toward a new project in historical archeology that takes its first, full-bodied shape in *Gender*.[10] Originally titled "Vernacular Gender," this book was among the first attempts to thematize the distinction between biological sex and its culturally constructed extensions in gender. The book provocatively attempted to recollect those social experiences of female/male complementary obscured by modern economic regimes. *H2O and the Waters of Forgetfulness* [11] explores the possibility of a history of "stuff," thus picking up

5 E.F. Schumacher, *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

6 Ivan Illich, *Energy and Equity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

7 Jean Robert and Jean-Pierre Dupuy, *La trahison de l'opulence* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976).

8 Valentina Borremans, "Guide to Convivial Tools," *Library Journal, Special Report* No.13 (New York: Bowker, 1979).

9 Ivan Illich, *Toward a History of Needs* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

10 Ivan Illich, *Gender* (New York: Pantheon, 1982).

11 Ivan Illich, *H2O and the Waters of Forgetfulness* (Dallas, TX: Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, 1985).

on a phenomenology pioneered by Gaston Bachelard.[12] *ABC: The Alphabetization of the Popular Mind*[13]—building on the work of such scholars as Milman Parry, Albert Lord, and Eric Havelock[14]—carries historical archeology forward into the area of literacy, as does *In the Vineyard of the Text*.[15] Both explore how the techniques of reading transform humans' experience of themselves and each other, thus inviting contemporary consumers of automobiles and computers to consider that they might not be wholly unaffected users of neutral technologies.

Modern technology, for Illich, emerges from and then reinforces a distinctive ethos, the recognition of which is best appreciated by investigations into the moral environments of previous techniques. In this approach, there is some similarity to the attitude of Martin Heidegger, who defended his studies of Plato with the argument that what those who disparage as a "retreat into history" may actually be used to cultivate a critical assessment of the contemporary world, which in turn enables us "to leap out beyond our own present."[16] But unlike Heidegger, whose philosophical history justified a megalomaniac vision of himself as the vehicle for a new epochal "self-assertion" of that institution known as the German university, Illich's history promotes the moderation and delimitation of virtually all practices, but especially institutional ones. And again, unlike Heidegger, who seeks to understand the past better than it understood itself, Illich tries from the perspective of the past to re-understand the present. As he writes in the introduction to *In the Mirror of the Past:*

> I plead for a historical perspective on precisely those assumptions that are accepted as verities or "practical certainties" as long as their sociogenesis remains unexamined.... [N]ot infrequently I look at the present as if I had to report on it to the authors of the old texts I try to understand. [In each essay, I want] to suggest that only in the mirror of the past does it become possible to recognize the radical otherness of our twentieth-century mental topology, and to become aware of its generative axioms that usually remain below the horizon of contemporary attention.[17]

At his death, another major collection of materials carrying forward this trajectory awaits publication.

Toward an Archeology of Design

In the mid-1990s, while Illich was a visiting professor at Pennsylvania State University, he made provisional forays as well into the historical archeology of design. As a collaborator during this period, I pushed for developing such a study in ways that would explicitly reconnect with earlier social-critical work, and we attempted to develop a piece with a sometimes working title of "Anti-Design: Notes for a Manifesto on Modern and Postmodern Artifice." The

12 See, e.g., Gaston Bachelard, *La psychanalyse du feu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949) and *Poétique de l'espace* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957).

13 Ivan Illich and Barry Sanders, *ABC: The Alphabetization of the Popular Mind* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1988).

14 Milman Parry, *Les formules et la métrique d'Homère* (Paris : Société d'éditions"Les belles lettres", 1928); Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960); and Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963).

15 Ivan Illich, *In the Vineyard of the Text* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

16 Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit: Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet, Gesamtausgabe,* vol. 34 (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1988), 10.

17 Ivan Illich, *In the Mirror of the Past: Lectures and Addresses 1978–1990* (New York: Marion Boyars, 1992), 9–10.

first paragraph of one version (Fall 1994) of this incomplete project read as follows:

> Contra the widely promoted belief that design is something all human beings do and have done throughout history, but now must do more consciously and thoroughly than ever before, design is something that has had a history. Its beginnings can be traced to the rise of modernity, and it will almost certainly come to an end with the modern project. Indeed, we have an obligation not so much to promote designing as to learn to live without it, to resist its seductions, and to turn away from its pervasive and corrupting influence.

The argument in support of this thesis was to be two-fold. In the first instance, design (especially engineering, but also architectural design) was not capable of achieving what it promises in the way of and expanded control and the well-managed reduction of unintended consequences. In the second, even insofar as it did achieve such goals, design as practiced by experts and professionals ultimately would dehumanize the world. The aim was to reanimate the moral criticism of designing as a lack of proportionality in ambition and contrivance.

One modest result of this aborted effort was the offering, in fall of 1995, of a two-week seminar in the Architecture Department, conducted by Illich and his long-time colleague Jean Robert. Robert, an architect, born in Switzerland but now a resident of Mexico, was a tireless worker on questions of alternative technology design and "design by people"—the latter extending the ideas of John Turner's *Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments.*[18] Illich also had been teaching a seminar at the University of Pennsylvania, in the Graduate Program in Architecture, directed by Joseph Rykwert, whose *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World*[19] gave respect to the intuitive, vernacular, premodern traditions of city construction. The Illich-Robert seminar provided an critical review of developments in design that tended to turn place and landscape into managed space, depriving people of both roots and autonomy. What Illich had once heard Jacques Maritain say of planning, *"C'est une nouvelle espèce du péché de présomption,"* Illich and Robert applied to design.[20]

An alternative, for Illich and Robert, is design in a fundamentally different sense, one that did not presume to social control and individualistic self-realization, but instead sought to promote social solidarity, live in harmony with greater orders, and to dwell.[21] Too often design treats the world as an enemy rather than a friend, and calls in experts to manipulate and manage. What Illich and Robert imagined was a design based on friendship, mutual give and take, respect for the world, and ultimately suffering, in the positive sense of creatively accepting and affirming limitations.

18 John Turner, *Housing by People: Towards Autonomy in Building Environments* (London: Marion Boyars, 1976).

19 Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976).

20 David Cayley, *Ivan Illich in Conversation* (Concord, Ontario: Anansi, 1992), 62.

21 See Ivan Illich, "Dwelling" in *In the Mirror of the Past (1992),* 55–64; and Jean Robert, *Trust People* (Mexico, DF: Habitat International Coalition, 1996).

An Illich Community of Scholars

Illich's thought and life have had a strong influence on a circle of friends whose own insightful and independent work has its own implications for design. The works of Valentina Borremans, Jean Robert, and Joseph Rykwert have already been mentioned. Other representative works from what might be called the Illich community of reflection are, for example, William Arney's *Experts in the Age of Systems,*[22] Barbara Duden's *The Woman Beneath the Skin: A Doctor's Patients in Eighteenth-Century Germany* and *Disembodying Women: Perspectives on Pregnancy and the Unborn,*[23] Wolfgang Sachs's *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power,*[24] David Schwartz's *Crossing the River: Creating a Conceptual Revolution in Community and Disability* and *Who Cares? Rediscovering Community,*[25] Uwe Pörksen's *Plastic Words: The Tyranny of a Modular Language,*[26] Lee Hoinacki's *El Camino: Walking to Santiago de Compostela* and *Stumbling toward Justice: Stories of Place,*[27] Madhu Suri Prakash and Gustavo Esteva's *Escaping Education: Living as Learning within Grassroots Cultures* and *Grassroots Post-Modernism: Remaking the Soil of Culture*.[28] A younger generation of scholars strongly influenced by Illich also shows promise for contributing to this tradition: Andoni Alowo, Samar Farage, Silja Samerski, Sajay Samuel, and Matthias Rieger, to mention only a few.

22 William Arney, *Experts in the Age of Systems* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1991).

23 Barbara Duden, *The Woman Beneath the Skin: A Doctor's Patients in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991) and *Disembodying Women: Perspectives on Pregnancy and the Unborn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

24 Wolfgang Sachs, ed., *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power* (London: Zed Books, 1992).

25 David Schwartz, *Crossing the River: Creating a Conceptual Revolution in Community and Disability* (Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books, 1992) and *Who Cares? Rediscovering Community* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

26 Uwe Pörksen, *Plastic Words: The Tyranny of a Modular Language* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1995).

27 Lee Hoinacki, *El Camino: Walking to Santiago de Compostela* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1996) and *Stumbling toward Justice: Stories of Place* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1999).

28 Madhu Suri Prakash and Gustavo Esteva *Escaping Education: Living as Learning within Grassroots Cultues* (London: Zed Books, 1998); and Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash, *Grassroots Post-Modernism: Remaking the Soil of Culture* (London: Zed Books, 1998).

Julien Hébert and the Emergence of Industrial Design in Canada

Martin Racine with Alain Findeli

Introduction: Julien Hébert, A Pioneer of Design in Canada

Julien Hébert (1917–1994) is recognized by many as the father of industrial design in Quebec and in Canada. Most of the designers who worked with him or had him as a professor consider him a master and a mentor. Hébert played a key role in the evolution of the design field in Canada and, more specifically, in the French-speaking province of Quebec. After a brief presentation of his career, we will concentrate on issues such as the vision Hébert tried to promote throughout his career and in his teaching. We also will study his position with regard to the ethical and social roles of design. We will show that Hébert had an idealistic vision of design—influenced in part by the European modernists—and concentrated his efforts in promoting what we might call a humanistic design philosophy.

Whereas Canada still isn't recognized as a leader in the design field, this was even less the case in the 1940s and 50s when Hébert started his career. Nevertheless, Hébert wanted to change that situation. He was concerned that Canada's economy was based essentially on primary resources and was convinced that the country should concentrate on designing and producing its own products—more adapted to its environment and culture—and be less dependent on the importation of manufactured goods. All through his career, Hébert was dedicated to positioning Canada as a leader in design. He put a lot of effort into promoting the field to both the government and the general public. Indeed, he made many attempts to establish a structure on which to build stronger foundations for the field: he organized exhibitions, created design courses, and struggled to teach design in the early '50s in traditional fine arts institutions. He also traveled around Europe and the U.S., visiting different design centers and design schools with the objective of creating an important design institute in the city of Montreal. He played an active role as a designer for the Worlds Fair in Montreal in 1967 and at the ICSID conference also in Montreal that same year and won numerous design awards in Canada for the quality of his work. In the 1960s, as an instigator of modern design, Julien Hébert participated in what historians call Quebec's "quiet revolution."[1] It was a decade in which Canada's French-speaking province evolved from a conservative, traditional community into a modern society, initiating secular social structures (in health and education), as well

1 See previous article in *Design Issues* Cinzia Maurizia Giovine, "Jean-Marie Ga[u]vreau: Art, Handicrafts, and National Culture in Quebec from the 1920s until the 1950s" *Design Issues* 10:3 (Autumn 1994): 22–31. And for more information on design in Canada, see Michael Large, "Communication Among All People Everywhere: Paul Arthur and the Maturing of Design" *Design Issues* 17:2 (Spring 2001): 81–90.

as new infrastructures in the areas of transportation (subway and highways), architecture, and urban planning. The Worlds Fair of 1967, where design was of great importance, is recognized as a major international event that played a key role in the evolution of Quebec society.

Julien Hébert's Career

Born in 1917, Hébert focused his studies on sculpture at the *École des Beaux-Arts de Montréal* (Montreal School of Fine Arts) from 1936 to 1941. This institution was strongly influenced by the French *Beaux-Arts* tradition, and its goal was to initiate students to classical painting, architecture, and sculpture in the Renaissance spirit. Though Hébert was quite talented, he found himself questioning the role of art in society, and decided he needed to deepen his thoughts with regard to this issue. Therefore, he pursued studies in philosophy at the University of Montreal, obtaining his degree in 1944. Hébert later would say:

> I became a designer, probably because I studied both sculpture and philosophy. Sculpture is related to the form, the sensual, the touch. Philosophy is the mind, the reflection. Hence, moving to design was a logical step.[2]

This interesting and unusual education left a significant mark on his life since he always reflected deeply on his later activities and projects. This inclination towards reflection was expressed in his extensive writings. Hébert kept a personal diary for the major part of his professional career, from 1950 to 1980. In it he described his thoughts about philosophy, design, education, art, and architecture. In his writings, there is a certain influence from the French humanist neo-Thomist philosopher Jacques Maritain (1882–1973), and also a strong advocacy of design's social role in society.

After his studies in philosophy, Hébert returned to sculpture—he didn't know anything about design at the time—and since he was interested in teaching, he found a position at his alma mater, the *École des Beaux-Arts* (Montreal School of Fine Arts). But in the late 40s, many students began to criticize the School because they considered its program outdated, cut off as it was from the modern art currents emerging in Europe. Moreover, many artists of that period felt that they didn't have much freedom to express themselves within the rigid and conservative religious society of Quebec, a province which was, at that time, dominated by the clergy and Catholic authority.[3]

Seeking a more stimulating environment, Hébert left Montreal for Paris, where he did a fifteen-month internship at the studio of the Russian sculptor Ossip Zadkine in 1947–1948. Hébert was greatly influenced by the post-war Paris because of his contacts with artists and intellectuals who had progressive ideas about art and society. He also was impressed by the cubist approach of Zadkine, and

2 Julien Hébert, from a radio interview, Radio-Canada, July 7, 1982.

3 In 1948, a group of artists (Borduas, Riopelle, Arbour, etc.) published a manifesto entitled *Le refus global—or Global Refusal*—denouncing the abuse of power by the clergy and expressing the need for more freedom of expression. This publication created quite an impact on Quebec society. It is considered to be one of the key events that led to the decline in the dominance of the clergy. These anticlerical ideas initiated drastic changes within political and economic spheres and led to many important reforms such as the secularization of education and health institutions in the 1960s.

Figure 1 (above)
Julien Hébert, Contour Lounge Chair, 1953.
All images courtesy of Julein Hébert's estate archives, Muséedu Québec, Québec City. Fonds Julien-Hébert, Bibliothèque et Centre de documentation du Musée du Québec.

Figure 2 (right)
Advertisement for the Contour Lounge Chair, 1953.

became more familiar with the interrelation and interaction of art with architecture and design. Upon his return to Montreal, Hébert felt so enthusiastic about his discoveries in Europe that he decided to move things along in his own country.

He resumed his position at the Montreal School of Fine Arts, and shared his European experiences with his students. He continued to work as a sculptor, but only for site-specific projects since he wasn't interested in exhibiting his work in galleries or selling it to the rich bourgeois. For Hébert, who was striving for social engagement through art, this type of practice didn't make much sense.

In 1951, he entered in the first design competition in Canada. The competition was organized by the Federal Ministry of Trade and Commerce in order to promote the conversion of wartime industry into the manufacture of consumer goods. The idea of a design competition came from the head of the National Gallery in Ottawa, Donald Buchanan. He was inspired by the series of design exhibitions and contests organized by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which was eager to promote modern design in the United States.

As a winner of the competition, Hébert discovered his passion for design, a field by which he could better express his creativity while satisfying his social consciousness. Design appeared to him as a revelation, an answer to the existential questions he had in relation to the social meaning and dimension of art in society. He designed a chaise longue with an aluminum structure (figures 1 and 2). It consisted of two bent tubular forms resting on a triangular base that also functioned as an armrest. The chaise was stable in two positions: balanced on its base or lowered with its foot on the ground. Nylon or canvas covers were available in red, green, royal blue, and gold.

This project marked the start of Hébert's brilliant career. After seeing his aluminum chair in a newspaper article, Sigmund Werner, an Austrian manufacturer who had emigrated to Montreal to escape the Nazis, hired Hébert to design a line of aluminum and

steel furniture. Initially, Werner manufactured ski poles, but sales were slow due to several poor snow seasons. Therefore, he wished to diversify his production. Hébert collaborated with Werner to create a complete line of garden furniture. Hundreds of thousands of chairs were sold throughout the country in only a few months. In the meantime, Herbert's winning concept, the "Contour Chair," had been selected to represent Canada at the *Triennale di Milano* in 1954. It also appeared that same year in Milan's prestigious *Domus* magazine (November 1954) and London's *Decorative Arts Annual* (1954–55). It was one of the first Canadian products to receive international praise. The chair also was selected to be part of the New York Museum of Modern Art's design collection. The "Contour Chair" is the perfect synthesis of Hébert's design philosophy: inexpensive, practical, and well adapted to production and to the cultural context. It also has very pure structural lines, and is quite well proportioned.

From then on, Hébert put all of his energy into the design field, an area in which he thought art had genuine utility for society at large. Unlike the fine arts, reserved for the elite, Hébert considered design as a form of art for the masses. He emphasized "utilitarian forms," and wished that more artists would become interested in design to improve the aesthetics and functionality of everyday objects. Every aspect of design interested him: products, furniture, graphic, and interior design. He had a global vision of design, and didn't want any barriers between the different fields. For Hébert, all these forms of art were related to the same objectives: improving peoples' lives and environment; and allowing every class in society to have access to quality products which were both functional and aesthetically pleasing.

Parallel to his design practice, Hébert kept his position as a professor at the Montreal School of Fine Arts, then at the *École du meuble* (Furniture School). The *École du meuble* was headed by Jean-Marie Gauvreau,[4] who had been trained in Paris at the *École Boulle* in the 1920s. Gauvreau's objective was to develop skilled craftsmen and cabinetmakers inspired by the French tradition. He wasn't sympathetic to design, a field he associated with the American invasion of cheap and tasteless industrial products covered with chrome. Hébert had to convince him that there was interest in the discipline in Quebec by providing examples from the Scandinavian model. Scandinavian design had successfully evolved from limited craft-based production towards the more important industrial production, while maintaining the tradition of man-made quality in objects and furniture. Indeed, Hébert always promoted the idea of linking design with the various crafts instead of creating a barrier between the two worlds. He was fascinated by the success of the Danish designers in the production of local goods:

4 Cinzia Maurizia Giovine takes a closer, if somewhat narrow look at Gauvreau's work, "Jean-Marie Ga[u]vreau: Art, Handicrafts, and National Culture in Quebec from the 1920s until the 1950s" *Design Issues* 10: 3 (Autumn 1994): 22–31.

Figure 3
Julien Hébert, on the left, receiving a design award from the National Industrial Design Council in 1957.

> I am concerned to see that Denmark, with a population of only six million, has 2,000 members in its association of professional designers. In comparison, Canada has 200 designers for a population of 28 million. The Danish produce a great part of the designs they use, while in Canada, we import most of our manufactured goods.[5]

Hébert's major objectives therefore were to develop the design field in Canada and to invest his efforts into its promotion. In 1953, he was one of the founding members of the Canadian Association of Industrial Designers, and because of his leadership and professional reputation (he already had five or six patents for products he had developed), he was elected president in 1958. As a French Canadian, Hébert was definitely a pioneer since commerce and industry, in general, was neither valued nor greatly respected within the French-speaking community. The Catholic clergy was suspicious of Anglo-Protestant capitalism, and wanted francophones to concentrate on so-called "good" values such as those represented by agriculture, medicine, and the liberal professions. Moreover, Canada's economy was based essentially on primary resources, so far, the country had not developed the sector of transformation. To a certain degree, Hébert helped to change this situation through his involvement in the professional association and by playing a leading role as a designer.

The decade of the 1960s was very important in Hébert's career. He shared an office with a colleague who was an architect, while holding a teaching position at the newly founded *Institut des Arts Appliqués de Montréal* (Montreal Institute of Applied Arts). It was in that institution that he trained the first generation of designers. Ten years later, more than half the professional industrial designers of Quebec had been his students. Hébert was happy to see that the government and the public were beginning to recognize the value of design more and more. In those years, he worked on various projects, demonstrating the diversity of his practice. These included a mural in aluminum for a concert hall and the bus stop signs (figures 4 to 8) for the City of Montreal Transport Commission (Montreal was the first city in Canada to have surface route-maps for its bus transportation system). He also launched a collection of office furniture, and created symbols for different organizations.

The most important design event in Canada at that time was definitely the Worlds Fair, known as Expo '67. Hébert hired a few of his former students to work with him on designing exhibits for the Canadian and Quebec pavilions. The theme of Expo'67 was "Man and his World." In 1963, Hébert won the design competition for the official symbol of the event (figure 9). His design was composed of abstract figures displayed in a circular shape. The design can be interpreted in different ways: as a series of couples forming a circle on the planet, living in equality and harmony, their hands raised in

5 Newspaper article ("Journal La Presse"), Interview with J. Hébert, 1979.

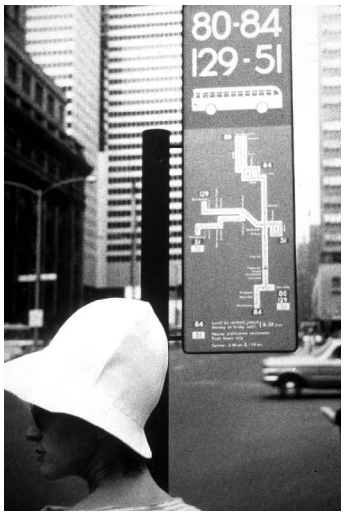


Figure 4 (above)
Bus stop sign for the City of Montreal Transport Commission.

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Figure 5
Bus stop shelter for the City of Montreal Transport Commission.

6

Figure 6
Office furniture.

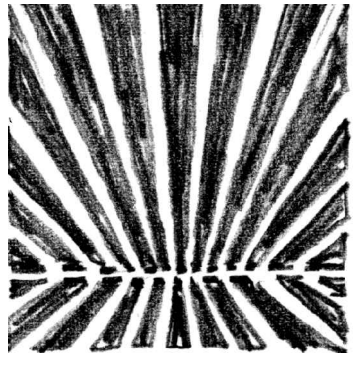

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Figure 7
Sketch for the trademark of the Airports Association of Canada.

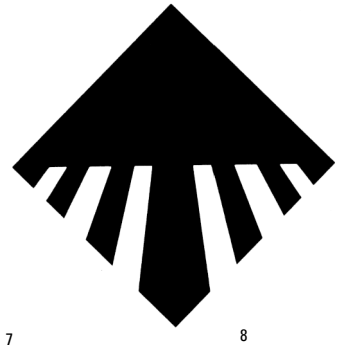

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Figure 8
Final version of the trademark.

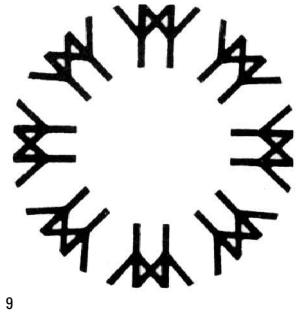

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Figure 9
Julien Hébert, Expo'67 Symbol, "Man and His World", designed in 1963.

the air as for a celebration. It also recalls the form of a large snowflake or a series of trees. This ambiguity suggests an interesting and ingenious relationship between nature and culture.

The public unveiling of Hébert's design for the symbol created quite an uproar in the media at the time. Instead of being saluted for its simplicity and aesthetic qualities, it created bitter debate when members of the Canadian Parliament found out Hébert's work had been selected to represent Canada. Many politicians thought the logo was a monstrosity, and wanted to replace it by something that would look like a more traditional representation of the country, such as the Canadian flag, the beaver, or some other variation of the maple leaf. Others were even more cynical, arguing that the logo looked like the drawing of a five-year-old.

The situation was quite shocking for Hébert, who realized that, although things were evolving, design was still not widely understood by everyone, not to mention the superficiality of certain politicians' points of view on art and design in general. On the other hand, in newspaper articles and editorials, the symbol was defended by art critics and designers. They argued that it was easily recognizable and simple to understand and remember, as well as very functional since it was convenient to enlarge or reproduce on different backgrounds. Hence, it had all the qualities of a good trademark design. Fortunately for Hébert, the controversy surrounding this symbol ceased as soon as it won a prestigious international design award in 1964 as top in its category at the 13th Annual Exhibition of Advertising, Editorial, and Television Art in New York. It also won the award for best trademark at the prestigious Top Symbols and Trademarks of the World competition in Switzerland. Therefore, in the light of this international acclaim, the critics had to recognize the credibility of its design, and the symbol was used for and identified with Expo '67 with great success. What marks this event even more is that the symbol still is widely used in Montreal to identify the Expo site and today, more than thirty-five years later, the population still recognizes the design as the symbol of Expo '67.

In 1970, Hébert designed the Canadian Pavilion for the Osaka Worlds Fair in Japan. He also worked on the interior design and created the furniture for the new international airport in Mirabel, close to Montreal. While carrying out these numerous projects, Hébert continued to teach at the *École de Design Industriel* (School of Industrial Design), which had opened in the mid-seventies and was attached to the University of Montreal. He won many design awards, but most important, in 1979, he received the Borduas Prize, Quebec's highest award in the field of visual arts, for the quality of his work and career as a designer. It was the first time this prize had been given to someone who wasn't primarily a painter or a sculptor. For Hébert, it was an indication that the design field finally was valued as highly as the fine arts, and this was one of his greatest rewards.

It should be noted that Hébert was not the only designer to help develop the field in Quebec at the beginning of the 1950s. Five or six other persons, who also had their own companies, were making their mark in the profession. Designers such as Jacques Guillon, Morley Smith, Douglas Ball, and Henry Finkel (who were trained as architects or had studied design abroad), also can be considered pioneers in Quebec. But Hébert's impact and influence was greater, mostly because he played an important role as a design educator and published many articles expressing his vision of design. Obviously, Hébert could have left his teaching duties and concentrated on his professional practice but, above all, he considered himself an educator.

Design and Ethics: Hébert's Idealist Vision

In order to understand Hébert's position more accurately, one can consider two different projects that he tried to initiate in the 1960s. In 1961, he prepared a proposal for a design institute in Montreal, in which he suggested to the Quebec Ministry of Trade and Commerce that a study be made of the possibility of opening a design center in which a university degree in industrial design would be offered at the Master's level. He also foresaw the establishment of an exhibition center, including an information and documentation room accessible to industrialists, designers, and the public at large. The government agreed to study the question and assigned Hébert the responsibility for preparing a report on the project. For this task, he visited different design institutes and schools in Europe and the U.S. The list of the people he consulted is impressive: Max Bill, the Swiss designer, architect, and artist who had graduated from the Bauhaus and who had been director of the *Hochschule für Gestaltung* in Ulm from 1951 to 1956; Charles-Édouart Geisenhof, professor of architecture in Zurich; Eric Herlow, from the *Kongelige Akademi* in Copenhagen; Mors Nilsson, Director of the Danish Design Center and Rudolf Harde, from a design school in Stockholm. He also met with Hans Gugelot and Bruce Archer in Ulm, and then went on to France to see Jean Poirier, from the *Formes utiles* association and also met with representatives of the French Ministry of National Education. He consulted professors at the Royal College of Art in London and the Chair of the British Design Council.

After his visit to Europe, Hébert was convinced of the necessity of grouping all the design fields within the same structure. He had seen a great deal of interesting design institutes, but felt the most successful ones were those organized in a centralized manner, avoiding administrative duplication. For the implementation of a design institute in Quebec, he suggested two major objectives: the training of qualified designers and the promotion of good design to industry and the general public. Hébert strongly recommended the creation of a specialized degree in design, since there was none at that time (he was basically the only professor of design in Quebec in the early 60s).

Figure 10 (right)
Maquette (view of the interior of the cafeteria of the Canadian pavilion at Expo'67).

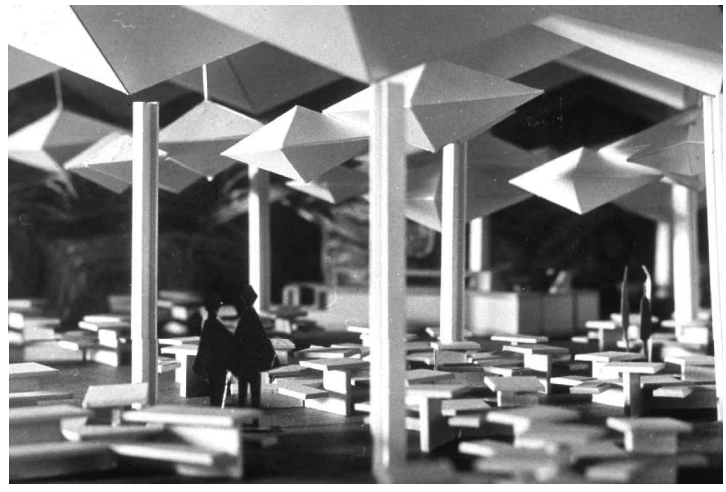

Figure 11 (below)
Picnic table designed for the Canadian pavilion.

Therefore, he suggested that educators from abroad be hired in order to benefit from the teaching of experienced design professors.

Hébert promoted the idea of developing the design field in Quebec for a number of reasons. He insisted on the need to develop better products that would match the local cultural identity more specifically, and which would be better adapted to the specific environment and climate of this northern region.

> We absolutely need a design institute in order to develop the field of design in Quebec. The quality of the products available to us is poor, they are copied on foreign models and do not reflect our culture or our specific tastes and needs. We have great natural resources but do not exploit our potential to design and produce manufactured goods better adapted to our specific cultural identity.[6]

He also promoted the development of the design profession and industry for the economic benefit of the province. Hébert believed that design could revive the lost tradition of excellence related to the arts and crafts of Quebec. He always felt that industrial design was the logical evolution of traditional crafts, and that good craftsmen should orient their art towards industrial production.

Although he fought for the establishment of a design institute, his project was not approved. In 1961, design was still not a priority of the provincial government. Hébert felt quite bitter because he really thought the province was missing a great opportunity to develop an important cultural and economic pole. He was convinced that Quebec had the potential to be a leader in design, and eventually could export quality products to other countries. He had studied the situation all over the world and was envious of the importance the Scandinavians, Italians, and Germans were giving to design. In his report, he also wrote about the situation in Japan:

> Japan, known for producing cheap products and copying foreign models at a poor quality, is now putting tremen-

6 Julien Hébert, *Rapport pour un Institut de design à Montréal* (Not published, 1961), 4.

> dous efforts into developing the design field and raising the quality of its production. In 1960, the Japanese government distributed grants to more than sixty students to give them the possibility of studying design in Europe and America.[7]

Years later, seeing how Japan had gained one of the strongest reputations in industrial design, he was frustrated to note that the field could have been developed with a lot more energy in Quebec and Canada instead of remaining stagnant. Eventually Hébert's ideas were adopted, although many years later. A promotion center named "Design Canada" was active in the 70s and early 80s, and a design institute [8] finally was opened in Montreal in 1992!

There is yet another project that can help us understand Hébert's vision of design. In 1971, he tried once again to convince the government to implement a project related to the problem of unemployment. He submitted a report in which he described how design could help reintegrate inactive people into the workplace. Hébert suggested putting what he called "mini-industries" in regions where unemployment was high. In these reduced-scale enterprises, people would be trained to produce useful objects using local materials. After a certain time, these same people would be encouraged to create and develop new models with the help of experienced designers. Eventually, this structure would grow into a small-to medium-sized industry, which would distribute its production on a larger scale. Hébert had in mind the example of the company Bombardier,[9] which had started as a small enterprise producing snowmobiles, a transportation technology perfectly adapted to the specific needs of northern communities.

For Julien Hébert, this initiative was meant to give unemployed people access to new technologies, develop their skills, and be stimulated by doing something useful for society. Even though he was critical of large industries in which people did repetitive and tedious tasks, he considered small industry to be a stimulating place where creativity and innovation were of great importance. Hébert was convinced that design was at the root of every industry, which is why he believed designers had an important role to play in order to develop employment in the country. Moreover, he strongly believed that producing quality objects would be a source of pride for workers.

This project was turned down once again by the government, probably because it sounded a little too utopian to the pragmatic politicians. Nevertheless, with his students and in his articles, Hébert continued to promote the idea of the importance of social implication for designers.

7 Ibid., 8.

8 In 1991, a government study (*Picard Report*) has identified the design field as an important economic pole for the development of Montreal, this report led to the foundation of the "Institut de Design Montreal." Its role is to do the promotion of the different design disciplines: graphic, web, interior and product design.

9 Joseph-Armand Bombardier (1908–1964) was an inventor and designer, who founded his company in 1942 to manufacture tracked vehicles for transportation on snow-covered terrain. The company's name at that time was L'Auto-Neige Bombardier Limitée. It is now one of the largest company in the world producing a wide variety of transportation vehicles, such as, boats, trains and aircrafts.

Conclusion: Hébert's Vision and Influence

Hébert was convinced that Canada had the potential to develop the profession and become a leader in design, inspired by the Scandinavian model. But for Hébert, design was more than just a tool to develop the economy: it was a creative activity and a culturally meaningful form of art which led to the production of products that improved people's quality of life and enhanced the cultural environment as a whole.

Moreover, Hébert had immense respect for the crafts and wished that design would inherit the richness and quality of their work ethic developed over the ages. Since he had social concerns, he was against all forms of art reserved for the elite, and he hoped that craftspeople and artists would orient their skills toward the creation of aesthetic and functional objects accessible to everyone, thanks to the reduction in costs brought about by industrial production. In many ways, he shared the ideas of Walter Gropius and other pioneers of modern design. That is why, at the end of his career in the 1980s, Hébert felt very troubled by the postmodern movement and the evolution of design on the international scene. Above all, he was angry to see that design was becoming more and more associated with expensive, high-end products. He thought that designers signing their creations like artists signing their works created a "star-system" and elitist attitudes.

What could we conclude about his influence? Hébert's career and the discourse he adopted served as an example to Quebec's and Canada's design community. Some of the major issues he brought to light were: the importance of social design; the role of design in the public sphere; and the possible link between modern design and the traditional crafts.

The Importance of Social Design

Through the social projects he tried to initiate and the various assignments he gave to his students, Hébert promoted the idea that designers are not just creators of aesthetic objects meant for industrial production. He thought that designers could play an active role and contribute directly to the positive evolution of society and culture. They could be proactive by initiating social projects designed to improve the lives of the poor, the handicapped, the sick, the elderly, and so on. It was obvious to Hébert that designers should not work solely for the benefit of private companies, but should participate actively within nonprofit organizations and community groups in order to make their expertise available as part of the social economy. In this sense, he was close to the current represented by such important figures as Buckminster Fuller and Victor Papanek.

The Role of Design in the Public Sphere

Although Hébert was active in the creation of furniture and products oriented towards private and domestic use, he also was very concerned about the importance of design quality in the public environment. This issue is somewhat closer to urban architecture, because it has a direct impact on the city landscape. Yet for Hébert, the field of urban design was just as important as any other. Indeed, as a designer and even as a sculptor, he undertook many projects in that area, such as the interior and exhibition design for a number of major trade fairs, the furniture design for the Montreal airport, and many elements related to public transport. Therefore, he insisted that street signs and urban furniture such as bus stops, park benches, and even picnic tables should be very well designed since they represent part of our material culture. Hébert felt that the public ought to be aware of the importance of the public environment, and he promoted the idea that designers and architects should become more conscious of the importance of their cultural role as modelers of the urban landscape.

The Link Between Modern Design and the Traditional Crafts

Modern architecture and design often have been accused of turning their backs on traditional usage. International architecture is considered as the epitome of this attitude. Indeed, it has generated impersonal buildings in many cities in the world, designed with very little concern for their integration into the urban landscape and its specific social and cultural context. Naturally, Hébert was not in favor of this radical aspect of modernism; he was always an advocate of the long tradition of excellence espoused by the various crafts. However, he was concerned about traditional crafts declining in Quebec and failing to meet the challenge of industrial production. At the same time, he could see that industrial processes were not getting the benefit of the craftspeople's knowledge, since links were not being established between the two sectors. On the other hand, Gauvreau's approach at the *École du meuble* was to keep traditional crafts alive by completely ignoring the evolution of technology and the concept of modern design.

As a result of such attitudes, the crafts and industrial sectors have not moved forward together harmoniously in Quebec, as they have in Italy, Germany, and Scandinavia, where modern design has long been considered to be outstanding. Hébert fought hard to fill the gap by promoting modern design as an extension of the crafts, and trying to avoid a rupture with them. Obviously, the conflict between the arts and the crafts has its roots in the history of design, from Muthesius to van de Velde, and from Morris to Gropius. Between the tides of Gauvreau's conservative advocacy of traditional crafts and the massive invasion of imported manufactured goods (mostly American), Hébert promoted the idea of distinct, original Quebec design, in continuity with the craft tradition.

Figure 12
Stamp representing Industrial Design in Canada; Julien Hébert's design is at bottom right.

Hébert the Humanist: A Man Ahead of His Time

When we look at Hébert's career, it seems clear that his ideas were well ahead of their time in both Quebec and Canada. Many of his initiatives and projects, such as the foundation of a design institute as early as 1961, were not realized until very recently. Design still is a field that needs to be developed in Canada, but it seems nowadays that the political and economic spheres are much more aware of the situation and have a better understanding of the importance of the field. There is no doubt that, through the quality of his work and his many efforts to promote design as a global activity touching the whole community, Hébert remains as one of the major figures to have contributed to this evolving scene. The province of Quebec acknowledged Hébert's outstanding contribution by awarding him the Borduas prize in 1979. In addition, a seris of postage stamps (figure 12) was created recently to pay tribute to the pioneers of industrial design in Canada, on which one of Hébert's best known designs.

If he had a more direct influence in any one area, it was definitely on his students, who have great respect for his ideas. Many practicing professionals herald his influence, such as the well-known Quebec designer Michel Dallaire, who has commented: "He made us understand what design was all about."[10] For his students, he was more than a professor; he was a mentor. Making art accessible to all was his vision of design.

10 Quoted in a newspaper article, *Le Devoir,* Montreal, July 23, 1994.

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Peripheral Vision: An Interview with Gui Bonsiepe Charting a Lifetime of Commitment to Design Empowerment

James Fathers

Introduction

This article documents an interview with Gui Bonsiepe[1] conducted by James Fathers.[2] The interview attempts to shed some light on the career of this figure who has been at the heart of the discourse on design in a developmental context, and yet is little known in the mainstream Western design literature. It explores some of the thoughts, methods, and motives behind a career spanning the last forty years, and devoted to addressing the challenges of design in the periphery.[3]

Bonsiepe was trained at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm (HfG Ulm)[4] in the second half of the 1950s. He then went on to teach and design there, from 1960 to 1968, alongside his friend and mentor, Tomás Maldonado. When the institution closed in 1968, he decided to move to Chile. Thus began his thirty-five year odyssey with design in the periphery and, in particular, in Latin America.

The Interview

Q1: You are well known for your writings and experiences designing in developing countries, especially in the 1970s and '80s. Can you describe why you first became interested in the role of design in development?

I studied at the HfG Ulm in the 1950s, when we had a considerable number of foreign students, particularly from Latin America. So this was my first contact because, similar to other Europeans, at least at that time, I didn't know anything about Latin American history or culture. Then, in 1964, I was invited to Argentina by my teacher, friend, and intellectual mentor, Tomás Maldonado, whom I considered one of the most important design theoreticians of the twentieth century—a real giant, though his works weren't widely known outside the Spanish and Italian language context.

I arrived in Buenos Aires, planned to stay for two weeks, and stayed for two months. I was fascinated by the cosmopolitan climate of the city—a city in which you could go to the cinema at any time of

1 Gui Bonsiepe kindly agreed to this interview as part of the program of the *Mind the Map* conference hosted by Istanbul Technical University and Kent Institute of Art & Design in Istanbul, Turkey in July 2002. Gui Bonsiepe, Professor of Information Design Escola Superior de Desenho Industrial (ESDI), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

2 James Fathers is a senior lecturer at the University of Wales Institute Cardiff. He has an active research interest in the role of design in the context of development.

3 The term "periphery" in the context of this article refers to those countries commonly termed developing countries. Bonsiepe adopted the term in a paper for the *Design for Need* conference in 1973 as a more appropriate way of describing these geographic areas and peoples. See "Precariousness & Ambiguity: Industrial Design in Dependent Countries 2" in Design for Need, J. Bicknell and L. McQiston, eds. (London: Pergamon Press,1976).

4 Other articles relating to HfG Ulm published by *Design Issues* include Paul Betts, "Science, Semiotics, and Society: The Ulm Hochschule für Gestaltung in Retrospect," Design Issues 14: 2 (Summer 1998): 67–82 and Gui Bonsiepe, "The Invisible Facets of the HfG Ulm," *Design Issues* 11: 2 (Summer 1995): 11–20.

the day or night if you wanted! I hadn't found this to be the case in Germany, least of all in Ulm, a very small, provincial town.

This initial contact [with the periphery] was purely personal, without any professional intentions.

In 1966, I again traveled to Argentina in order to teach a course in packaging design and packaging technology. The course was organized by the International Labor Organization (ILO), which had contracted me as a consultant. At that time, the United Nations International Development Organization (UNIDO) did not exist. So, step-by-step, my encounters with the periphery started to get more intensive.

In 1968, I decided to move to Latin America. My move to Chile coincided with the closure of HfG Ulm. However, it was not motivated by this abortion of one of the most influential experiments in design education in the second half of the last century. I had the chance to go to Milan which, at that time, already was a very attractive place to work in design. But I accepted an alternative offer, again by the ILO, to go to Chile; to work there as a designer on a project for the development of small- and medium-size industries. In Chile, I entered the "real world."

A decisive influence on this decision had been my Argentinean wife. When we discussed these options, either to go to Milan or Chile, she told me to opt for adventure. At that time, I didn't know Chile. I didn't even speak Spanish. She said simply, "Look, in Europe, everything already has been done in design. Let's go outside, where there are new challenges."

Q2: In 1973, UNIDO commissioned you to write the report "Development Through Design." How did this come about?

At the beginning of the '70s, ICSID, our international professional organization, became more and more interested in what was happening in developing countries—we didn't yet have the name "peripheral countries." Josine des Cressionières, the Belgian Secretary General of ICSID at that time, approached me to write this report. As far as I remember, there was a draft paper already written by an American designer, Nathan Shapira; but this paper had certain shortcomings, mainly because this colleague didn't have substantial, firsthand experience in a developing country.

The deadline was six weeks—a very short deadline when you consider that the Internet did not exist at that time. I collected whatever materials I could get hold of, from India, Cuba, Chile, Brazil, and Argentina; and presented this as a working paper at a meeting of experts in Vienna where, for the first time, an international organization explicitly dealt with industrial design policy for those countries which were called at that time "developing countries." This draft then was transformed into a guideline paper for the industrial design policy of UNIDO.

Q3: What are your most significant memories of your experiences designing in Chile and Argentina?

This is a very personal question, and I am not particularly keen on getting involved in my own history. But since you asked the question, the most negative memory I still have of my stay in Latin America was of September 11, 1973, when the military coup d'état was implemented with help from outside secret services and covert military support against the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende. As you know, this coup d'état, with its tortures, killings, and "disappearences," was officially legitimized by declaring that the "occidental and Christian values of our culture had to be defended." So much for the values of our society: this was the negative side.

I then moved to Argentina, for obvious reasons. Fortunately, I had a German passport; otherwise, if I had had a Brazilian or Argentinean passport; I probably wouldn't be sitting here talking with you. It took me several months to get over the traumatic Chilean experience and, in nine months, I wrote the book *Theory and Practice of Industrial Design.* Written in German, it was published in Italy in 1975, and later translated into Spanish and Portuguese.

On the positive side, I had the good luck of meeting and getting acquainted with, and later getting to know, a group of very passionate design students who had just finished, or were finishing, their university courses. These courses did not fulfill their promise: to educate industrial designers. Their titles were something like "craftsman in decoration," which was somewhat distant from "industrial design," and still dominated by an interpretation of design as a kind of art—or worse—applied art! Furthermore, I found positive resonance within higher government official circles for the design approach that I practiced. This was, for me, a very fertile environment.

The political experience I had gained in Europe was limited. I was interested, of course, in political issues, which was inevitable in the fervent climate of the 1960s. During my education in Ulm, reading books on critical theory such as Ernst Bloch, Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, and Jürgen Habermas, as part of our seminars, was a must. So, I had some critical consciousness of what was going on, and what makes economies tick, but I did not have any experience of a direct relationship between professional work and the socio-political environment or a socio-political program. In Chile, it was possible to map professional practice to a socio-political program.

Q4: You are quoted in an article in 1976 by S. Newby [5] as being a "parachutist from Ulm." This phrase often has been used in a negative way to describe Western intervention in a developing country. What steps did you take to limit any negative influence caused by your "landing" in Chile after your experiences at Ulm?

I do not know Mr. Newby nor his article. I am not sure what motivated him to make this assessment, but if my landing or parachuting into Chile is not to his preference, then it's his problem, not mine. Perhaps he wanted to insinuate a politically motivated disagreement, and would have preferred me to have arrived in a Rolls Royce in 1975 at the palace of Mr. Pinochet, a person with whom I definitely would not share a dinner! I assume it's the Ulmian design approach that irritates the author, and which he wants to disqualify, and not my supposedly parachuting. By the way, I was *invited* to go to Chile and did not—and do not—favor any idea about "intervention."

Now as to the negative influences, I am not quite sure what these might be. The pragmatic rational "Ulmian" approach that made it possible to draw a profile of the industrial designer, and to consolidate his education, apparently met a latent need. Otherwise, the resonance would not have been as strong as it has been. There seems to exist a hidden romantic notion of the periphery: that it should maintain its status of pristine purity that would be contaminated by any outside contact. It might be advisable to distinguish between influence and influence. I don't see anything negative in the endeavor to contribute to a project of social emancipation. I did not come as a missionary to Latin America. What I did was to provide an operational base for concrete professional design action. People in peripheral countries, and Latin Americans particularly, are not as naive as sometimes is supposed. They are critical and demanding. I offered some operational tools in order to do product design, from agricultural machinery to wooden toys for children and low cost furniture, and get rid of the ballast of art tradition and art theory.

This operational know-how was not provided by the universities at that time because the teachers of those courses often did not have firsthand design experience. I wonder how you can teach design if you don't practice design. For this reason, there was a vacuum and a very fertile breeding ground, and thus receptivity for any relevant information and methodological tools which would help to resolve practical design problems.

5 Sonia Newby, "Ulm in a Peripheral Landscape," *Design* 332: 40–41.

Q5: In the *Design for Need* conference at the Royal College of Art in 1976, you made the statement:

> **My summary, "Design for Dependent Countries," based on eight years of continuous work in peripheral countries, should read "Design in Dependent Countries" or "Design by Dependent Countries." The center does not possess the universal magic formulae of industrial design which have to be propagated to the inhabitants of the periphery whom the intelligence agencies ideologically conceive as...[the]..."underdeveloped...."** [6]

Do you still hold this view?

To a certain degree, yes. I would not move one millimeter from the position or the statement that, according to my opinion, design should be done *in* the periphery and not *for* the periphery as the result of some kind of benevolent paternalistic attitude of the center to these countries. I insist and always have insisted on local design practice. Design problems will only be resolved in the local context, and not by outsiders coming in for a stopover visit. This typifies one of the great disadvantages of short-term consultancy jobs, with people flying in from the central countries with very little knowledge about the local context, and believing that issues can be resolved by remote control. To cite one example, the deep present-day economic and political crisis in Argentina is well known. Now if the International Monetary Fund sends a specialist to Argentina to deal with the question of foreign debt who does not speak Spanish, then this is quite revealing of the ignorance and arrogance with which international institutions often confront local realities that are different from the view from an office window in Washington or New York.

Q6: At this same time, Victor Papanek was writing about similar issues. Design historians have put the two of you together as the key figures in what has become known as the "Design for Need Movement." Did you discuss your theories together or collaborate on any projects? How do you feel your ideas differ from Papanek?

In 1964, when I spent one semester as guest professor in basic design at Carnegie Mellon University, Victor Papanek invited me to go to North Carolina, where he was teaching industrial design, to show me the design approach he had developed. I had high esteem for Victor Papanek because he dared to swim against the stream, and against the complacency in design practice and design education. For this courage, he was heavily punished. For a number of years, he almost was prohibited from speaking publicly at industrial design

6 Gui Bonsiepe, "The Invisible Facets of the UfG."

7 Gui Bonsiepe, "Bombast aus Pappe," *FORM* 61:13–16. Also published under the title "Piruetas del neo-colonialismo" in the Argentinean journal Summa 67 (1973): 69–71.

conferences in the U.S. However, my esteem for Papanek did not prevent me from writing a polemical review of his book *Design for the Real World*.[7]

He had attacked a sensitive issue, but his approach and the answers he was ready to give seemed to me not adequate. I would say that he had little understanding of the political economy of design. As is known, he became fascinated by the "do-it-yourself" design approach, and did not have a strong interest in industrialization and the development of economies. He opted for design services outside of the business and industrial enterprise context, which I considered of limited effectiveness—like that of a maverick. For this reason, I did not share his views. But this does not mean that I have underestimated his contribution to the field. The receptivity of his book, which was translated into many languages, shows that he had touched real issues. But in answer to your question, we never developed projects together. We occasionally met at conferences. I also wrote a review of his book *The Green Imperative*.[8] I think this was his last book. After that, we lost contact.

Q7: The "Design for Need" movement seemed to draw on a collective desire in the design profession to do something about social need. In hindsight, can you offer any suggestions as to why this movement appeared to founder?

I wouldn't say that it foundered, because it didn't take off in the first place. It was an attempt to find some answers as a profession to the needs of the majority of the world population, which we felt were left out. This movement, sometimes also called the "Alternative Technology Movement," changed into the "Appropriate Technology Movement," and was promoted particularly in Great Britain, where they had an office with consultants offering services in appropriate technology especially to African and some Asian countries. Later in the decade, this activity lost momentum and went into oblivion. I suppose the reason was that the "Appropriate Technology" and "Design for Need" movements could never quite get away from the prejudice (and it is a prejudice really) that it deals only with second-rate and third-rate technology. It seemed to continue with a class distinction between two types of technology: high-tech for the central countries and low-tech, do-it-yourself technology for the periphery. The appropriate technology movement in the '80s was influenced by the writings of E.F. Schumacher, who wrote *Small Is Beautiful*. Increasingly, the main protagonists of this movement were coming from the fields of engineering and economics. There hardly were any industrial designers as far as I know. Designers played a marginal role in these efforts to do something about design in what was, at that time, called developing countries.

8 Gui Bonsiepe, "Im Grünen," *Formdiskurs* (December 1995).

9 Pauline Madge, "Design, Ecology, Technology: A Historigraphical Review," *Journal of Design History*, 6: 149–166.

Q8: In a paper in 1993, Pauline Madge quotes correspondence with you in which you reflect on the design movement in the 1970s:[9]

> **I consider it a merit of the representatives of the appropriate technology movements to have asked some uneasy questions about industrialization and its effect on the Third World; furthermore, of having shifted attention to the rural (poor) population in the Seventies, there still was the hope that a different social organization would give rise to different products and a different mode of consumption. This hope is today shattered.**

The statement that hope is today shattered is a very strong one. Can you explain the thoughts that led to this conclusion?

You see in the 1960s and '70s, and even up into the 1980s, there still was a vague hope called the "third way" between the Eastern block or socialist countries, and the Western block or capitalist countries. With the demise of the former socialist countries of the Eastern block, at this moment there seems to be no alternative outside the general configuration of capitalism. The only alternative nowadays can be found within the system of globalization, which perhaps we will talk about later.

So, taking up the notion of "shattered hope," I am, by temperament and by decision, not a depressive character. Rather, I would characterize myself as a constructive pessimist and, therefore, I don't agree at all with the well-known "TINA" (There Is No Alternative) dictum by Margaret Thatcher. I would claim there always are alternatives.

Q9: In recent years, you have not written very much about the issues relating to role of design in a developmental context. What triggered this apparent shift in focus?

I worked in Brazil from 1981–87 as a consultant to the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development, participating as designer in the formulation of an industrial development policy. While there, however, I had only limited access to computer technology. The technological revolution information/computer technology attracted my interest. I perceived that a radical change was approaching, an enormous challenge for designers. One day, I got a letter with an offer to work as a designer for a software firm in Berkeley. I took this job, and started to work there in this new field of technology, which I felt was of utter importance similar to the invention of movable type for the printing press in the fifteenth century.

If I had had access to computers and software development from a user's perspective in Brazil, I probably would have remained there. But I didn't, and so I moved to the United States and worked

there for three years. The practical work as a designer in a software office permitted me to reinterpret design, getting rid of the traditional topic of form and function, and developing an interpretation of what design is all about, based on language and action theory.

At about the same time, I rediscovered the work of Heidegger. As a German, it was very difficult for me to read Heidegger after the devastating critique by Theodor Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity.* However, while in Berkeley, I was fortunate to be able to participate in some philosophical conversations with, among others, Hubert Dreyfus. I got a better understanding of Heidegger through the English translation and interpretation. Taking some ideas from Heidegger and computer science, I developed a reinterpretation of design as the domain of the interface where the interaction between users and tools is structured. I consider this not a minor contribution to design theory.

Having said all this, let me just add one thing. My interest in peripheral countries has not diminished. On the contrary, it has increased due to their economic decline and to what I consider to be the symptoms of the end of a one-dimensional socio-economic model. In my last book available in English,[10] I assess the role of design in the center from the perspective of the periphery and vice versa. In addition to this I have established, created, and coordinated the Masters program in Information Design at the University of the Americas in Cholula, Puebla, Mexico, and continue to work on this program. I live part-time in Brazil, where my main base of operation is located, returning to Latin America whenever my teaching obligations in Germany permit me to do so.[11]

Q10: It is well known that, in the 1970s and '80s you were a significant influence in the "Design for Need Movement." Despite this prominence, it has been said that you have received little or no recognition as a designer and, in fact in the 1980s, you were quoted as saying this is due in part to a political agenda. Both Er and Langrish and Madge state that, despite Bonsiepe's involvement in the area since 1968, he still is relatively unknown in design circles, and has remained marginal in the design literature. The reasons given are "because the subject itself did not attract any interest within a design world dominated by theoretical underdevelopment and self-centered design discourse"[12] and "because the issue of design in developing countries increasingly has been seen as a political rather than design issue, and associated with the political left."[13]

Could you expand a little on this?

Recognition is a relative issue. It is not one of my major concerns. We might ask: recognition where and by whom? I am not particularly inclined to self-branding and self-promotion in the professional field of design. I cannot complain about an absence of recognition—the

10 Gui Bonsiepe, *INTERFACE: An Approach to Design* (Maastricht, Netherlands: Jan van Eyck Akademie, 1999).

11 Since the interview, Gui Bonsiepe has moved to Brazil permanently, where he is teaching at the ESDI in Rio de Janeiro.

12 Alpay Er and John Langrish, "Industrial Design in Developing Countries: A Review of the Design Literature" (Institute of Advanced Studies, Manchester Metropolitan University, 1992).
Note: Dr. John Langrish recently retired from the Art & Design Post Graduate Centre at Manchester Metropolitan University, and Dr. Alpay Er is an Associate Professor in the Department of Industrial Product Design at the Istanbul Technical University.

13 Pauline Madge, "Design, Ecology, Technology: A Historigraphical Review."

opposite of what might be called the narrow-minded chauvinism of the "center" that dwells in supposed superiority or "development."

There are universes of language, and if we limit ourselves to the universe of discourse of the English language, by definition, we are cut off from a lot of what is going on in the world. In Latin America where I am teaching, living and writing for a great part of my time, I cannot complain about an absence of recognition.

Q11: What would you say your own contribution has been to the field? What lessons have been learned, and what would you do differently?

These are various questions, so I will take them step-by-step.

I consider my function in Latin America more as a catalyst, simply being there at the right place at the right time with the right kind of people, just by chance, mixed with an ingredient of personal decision because of my general interest in the Latin American culture—the great variety of different cultures which I find very stimulating. I feel at home or at ease when I am in Latin America, be it Brazil, Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, or Chile. I don't feel like a foreigner there. On the contrary, I find a receptive climate for what I am teaching and writing and doing as a professional. The hospitality and solidarity of Latin Americans is proverbial.

Now, assessing what I have done so far and I tell you that I don't intend to end my work very soon! I would say that I helped, in a critical moment of industrialization, to define the profile of the industrial designer in Latin America, perhaps even with extrapolation to India and other peripheral countries at that time. Apart from this professional role, I educated or put some students on a track where, on the one hand, they acquired the capacity for critical discourse and, at the same time, became efficient professionals. During our meetings at this conference, the conflictive issue between practitioners versus theoreticians frequently arose. I find this a very damaging tradition. I do not accept this bipolarity that labels you either as theoretician or a practitioner. This either/or proposition has its roots in the origin of our profession, namely vocational training with its deeply ingrained anti-intellectual attitude. However, in university courses you are obliged to think about what you're doing, and to reflect on your activity and not just on your own activity but what is going on around you. This is typical of the Ulm approach, of which I would consider myself an exponent—an exponent of "critical operationality."

So, in summing up, my approach was to reorientate young people who did not find answers to their questions in their own context; to provide them with design tools and to propagate industrial design as an autonomous activity separated from art and architecture, and engineering. And not only in Argentina, Chile,

and Brazil, but also in other countries such as Cuba, where I spent two months in 1984, again under the contract of a United Nations consultancy job, in order to help get their ambitious project of the National Office for Industrial Design into shape.

Q12: In the field of design for development, what would you think the criteria should be for judging a successful design?

I wouldn't say the criteria have changed, though we cannot talk today anymore about development policies. These have been abandoned. In peripheral countries today, the former development policies have been replaced and dislocated by policies of financing the external debt. Finance-driven policies don't take into account local industrialization, local needs, and local populations. The present imperative is: export or die. Whole countries live only to service their debts, debts that grow and grow and grow, provoking social misery and a potential for conflicts. Banks *"Über alles"* that is the present dogma. In Latin America, we can observe a return to a situation similar to the agrarian feudal economy of the Middle Ages under which the majority of the population lived only to pay tribute to their rulers. Today, whole nations mortgage their future due to the enormous amount of money they have to pay back on international loans, loans of questionable value and outside any democratic control because the local populations that are supposed to "benefit" from these loans are not asked at all. It just happens to them, like a thunderstorm from above. As I said yesterday in my short presentation, the capital flow from the South to the North is bigger than vice versa. So contrary to popular opinion, the North is not "helping" the South at all, but the South is transferring value to the North.

Returning to the question of the criteria, I interpret the role of design professionals as being responsible for the quality of use of artifacts and information. Designers are specialists in the quality use of artifacts material or immaterial. Let me add that the domain of "quality of use" includes the formal-aesthetic dimension that is intrinsic to design and design work, and not simply an add-on that you can dismiss. It also includes environmental criteria. Designers intervene in helping to assimilate the artifacts into our everyday practice. That is for me the main issue about industrial design and graphic design. So one criteria of success could be paraphrased in the words of Brecht: to make the world more habitable, not a bad aim for a profession! Formulated in more general terms, I claim that the most important criteria for successful design is any attempt to contribute towards autonomy, be it the autonomy of the user, the autonomy of the client, or the autonomy of the economy.

Q13: "Design for Need" and "Design for Development" are both terms that have been attached to this area in the past. What terms would be most appropriate today to describe design activity in this area?

The design for need and the appropriate technology movements cannot be removed from their historical context, their time has passed. Today, the general settings, particularly the macro-economic settings, have changed drastically into a situation characterized by the anything-but-clear notion of "globalization."

When I was working as a consultant for different governments and private institutions or companies, the focus was on material production, artifacts, machinery, tools, toys, and furniture. Whatever the products, the industrialization process was linked to hardware. Nowadays, I would say, the hot design questions have shifted from a material culture to an information culture based on information technology.

If I were called on today to assist in some program, I would focus on the importance of information technology and communication, which have not been considered as decisive factors in industrialization policies so far. I don't know of any government plan in peripheral countries that takes into account, and tries to do something about, this sector of communication and information technology from a design perspective that puts people in the center. And I would say that design has a vast new field for activity.

Q14: What message do you have for designers and design educators working in the development context today?

I have always resisted the label of "design-guru," and of having the magic solutions up my sleeve. I don't have any magic solutions. What I do is to go to a particular context and then see what I can do there.

I would divide your question into three parts: professional action, education, and research.

We all know that design is a scandalously under-researched phenomenon, compared with other domains of human life and academic life. As I wrote elsewhere,[14] a profession which does not foster and promote research, and incorporate research intensively, building up a proper knowledge base, has no future. We are confronted today with the challenge of constructing a proper body of knowledge about design issues with the help, of course, from many other disciplines such as sociology, computer sciences, philosophy, and history, among others.

Particularly in peripheral countries, design research is necessary and has a legitimate function because, through this research, the design discourse is promoted and people start to reflect on it. I am, however, aware of a danger related to what we would call esoteric

14 Gui Bonsiepe, "Design as a Cognitive Tool: The Role of Design in the Socialization of Knowledge" in the proceedings of the *Design Plus Research* international conference, Politecnico di Milano (May 2000).

research issues. If we look at some research work, which is very well done of course, obeying all of the rituals of scientific procedures, I sometimes ask myself what is the relevance of the issues that are dealt with? So my recommendation would be to stick to the local context, this is the rich stuff which cannot be substituted, and which is proper. Start from this local ground without, of course, losing the international perspective. I am definitely not advocating a parochial view of design.

Turning now to education, this is a very thorny question not only in peripheral countries but also in central countries. In all the countries of the periphery, we can observe that design is far more rooted in the academic sector than in professional practice. It is an alarming fact that we register a demographic explosion of design courses, some of questionable quality. For example, consider evening courses which last three semesters, and then you become a designer. If you tried to do this in medicine or engineering, they would laugh at you! Design has the image, the unjustified image, of being an easy career. It tends to attract the wrong people.

We also face the problem of the "banalization" and "trivialization" of design during the 1990s under the labels "design for fun," "designer jeans," "designer food," "designer drugs," "designer hotels," "designer...?" I'm not against fun, but I think it's misleading to put exclusive focus on this aspect of design and the designer's intervention. I am definitely against the notion of design as an ancillary function of marketing.

With regard to design education, I recommend (although I know this recommendation is very difficult to implement) that the people in charge of design courses have professional experience. Otherwise, we get into an academic closed and sterile circuit in which no innovation will occur the so-called "title factories." Both design and design education lives from contact with real-world problems, and in searching for and accepting problems from the outside and bringing them into the learning environment. Design education anywhere has to reassess its foundations, that often are taken for granted, and "academisized" and "bureaucratisized." Breaking with traditional paradigms, addressing the unresolved relationship between design and the sciences, and getting relevant design research done, these are the issues that are relevant to design in general.

Now as to the professional issues, I do not feel authorized or legitimized to tell colleagues what they should and should not do. You probably know the very recommendable book *Advice to a Young Scientist* by the British molecular biologist Peter Medawar. I think every designer should read this very clarifying book. He does not talk about design, fortunately enough, but in a typically British ironic manner gives a good x-ray of what a scientist is, and should and should not do. Scientists do research and write papers. They produce

knowledge, and these papers then are presented at conferences and later published in learned journals or books. He quotes from a manual of the British Society of Electrical Engineering a manual on how to deliver a conference paper and how to prepare a text for a lecture. He states that all persons who are giving a public lecture are under certain amount of stress. The manual recommends that, if you want to feel secure, then you should stand in front of your audience with a 40 cm distance between your feet. Note the fantastic precision: it must be 40cm and not 38! This, of course, illustrates one of the ridiculous aspects of advice on what to do and not to do.

I would recommend that professional designers working in industry or working as professionals in their own design studios or in public institutions never forget what I consider the basic claim of our profession: "design for autonomy."

I would like to end with a quote from an Argentinean writer who lived for a long time. He lived in three centuries and reached the age of 103 years. He wrote books but, more and more, he desisted from publishing these books. He wrote them for his friends. He opted not to live in Buenos Aires, but in a very small, distant provincial town. When he was asked why he preferred to live so far away from the fascinating metropolis of Buenos Aires, he answered with a very hard phrase (and I ask you not to misunderstand me if I paraphrase this assessment, transferring it to design):

"*The center knows nothing about the periphery, and the periphery does not know anything about itself.* " This provocative sentence might serve as a breeding ground for reflections about the dialectic relationship between different discourses and practices of design. After all, we live in different places, but in one world!

Furnishing the Modern Metropolitan: Moriya Nobuo's Designs for Domestic Interiors, 1922–1927

Sarah Teasley

Footnotes begin on page 68.

Introduction

Once Japan began intensive diplomatic and trade relations with Euro-American powers after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, engaging with modernity meant reordering all spaces, objects, and practices in a dualistic schema of either imported "Western" or vernacular "Japanese" ones, in which the imported most often was associated with modernity, and the vernacular with tradition and the past. While both terms were, in practice, hybrids influenced by and bleeding each other, and "Chinese" as well as other Asian styles formed an ambiguous third sphere, this dualism would regulate material culture, the visual and performing arts, and greater social structures for the next century, and to a great extent continues to do so today.[1] The furniture and interior design industries were no exception, and public spaces including schools, government facilities, offices, and public transportation had been refitted with chairs and desks by the late-nineteenth century. Domestic interiors also could be furnished in either "Japanese" or "Western" style, determining the clothing and manners of its occupants.[2] And the Western-style interiors omnipresent in department store displays and the new media of photography and cinema were a key part of new urban visual and consumer culture.

This article introduces two of Tokyo-based furniture designer and interior decorator Moriya Nobuo's (1893–1927) prescriptions for the domestic spaces of modern Japan: "Small Interior Art" (*Chiisaki shitsunai soshoku*), a 1925 design manifesto in the form of model rooms, and a line of inexpensive mass-produced furniture by the furniture design group Kinome-sha, which Moriya co-founded in 1927.[3] Radically different in target, style, expense, and degree of sophistication, both "Small Interior Art" and the Kinome-sha furniture were responses to the hybrid conditions of modern urban Japan. Both projects were a challenge to the furniture industry, and a sign of the direction in which Moriya hoped the environment and practices of daily life in Tokyo would move. With a retooled furniture industry allowing all Tokyoites to enjoy modern Japanese interiors at home, albeit ones which recognized and reaffirmed new class divisions,

Moriya hoped to furnish modern metropolitans (and the modern metropolis) with proper settings for their lives.

Moriya's interest in modernization beginning in the home was anything but coincidental. For those charged with shaping Japan into a modern nation in the early twentieth century, the home provided a key site from which to modernize the nation through the daily life of its citizens. Introducing such Euro-American furnishings, forms, and practices as chairs, beds, hardwood floors, and meals taken together around a communal table would, it was hoped, create modern homes, a modern citizenry and, by extension, a modern state.[4] These changes were advocated by bureaucrats from the Ministry of Education, along with influential architects, educators, designers, and home economists trained at new universities and technical institutes organized along Euro-American lines. Reordering the domestic environment along Western-style designs, reformers argued, would not only encourage modern practices among the Japanese, increasing productivity and health, but also would present a "civilized" face to the world, thus helping to secure Japan's position as a modern nation in the world order. As the preface to *Jutaku kagu no kairyo* ("The Reform of Domestic Furniture"), a 1924 report by the Ministry of Education-sponsored Lifestyle Improvement Coalition stated, "The organization and improvement of the style of the traditional ways of life—clothing, meals, housing, and social relations—to a more rational level is the greatest and most urgent task for the improvement of the efficiency of the national lifestyle and, by extension, for developments in the fate of the nation today."[5]

Japan's claim to modern nationhood stood on firmer ground after its victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 forced Europe and North America to recognize a new regional power. Domestically, eating meals around low *chabudai* tables became popular in the 1910s, but the majority of Japanese homes retained vernacular interiors typified by *tatami* floors and *futon* for sleeping well into the 1920s.[6] The Lifestyle Improvement Coalition and other groups in the lifestyle improvement movement recommended single-family freestanding bungalow "culture houses" as the key to a modern and rational "culture life." Those who could not afford a new house were urged to renovate old vernacular spaces into "Western-style" ones.[7]

However, annual double-digit rates of inflation after the First World War precluded home purchases for most consumers, including factory workers drawn to the cities from the countryside by the promise of employment in the textile or manufacturing industries, and the "new middle class" nuclear families of *salariman* white-collar workers and full-time housewives. Thus, the majority of city-dwellers lived in rental accommodations, making renovations not a possibility for most households.[8] And, while department stores such as Mitsukoshi and Takashimaya marketed Western-style furniture to upwardly mobile metropolitans from the early 1910s, and rattan chair and table "visiting sets" for visitors in Western dress became

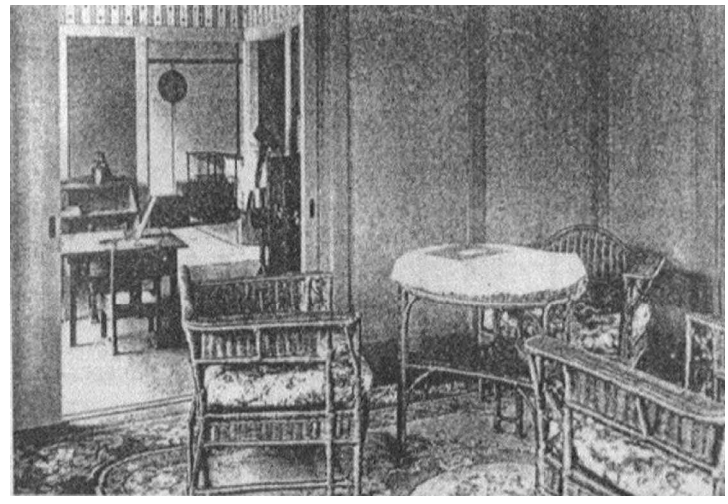


Figure 1
Interior of a Western-Japanese hybrid "culture house" from the 1922 Bunkamura (Culture Village) model home exhibition, Tokyo, Japan, *Kenchiku zasshi* 36 (1922): 427: np.

Figure 2
Moriya Nobuo (1893–1927).

popular furnishings for *engawa* open hallways around the edges of the house, Western-style furniture remained a luxury item for most consumers.[9] Reformers may have recommended Western-style furniture (along with food, clothing, and manners) as economical and efficient, but consumers found wooden chairs, beds, and tables heavy, bulky, and impractical for the small rooms that had to serve multiple purposes. With most floors covered in *tatami,* consumers resisted buying chairs and beds on the grounds that their designs clashed with the vernacular Japanese aesthetic of *tatami* rooms, that chair legs might scuff the delicate *tatami* surface, and that chairs and beds were simply not necessary for a life lived on the floor.[10]

A product of this geo-political background and socio-economic reality, Moriya Nobuo was a tireless campaigner for the adoption of Western-style furniture and interiors. Moriya was a firm believer in the prescriptive power of interior design, and saw the key to conversion as not only enlightening potential future users, but also improving the quality of the product itself. His designs incorporated and manifested his complex politics, reflecting an expressionist need for art, beauty, and emotion in daily life, a modernist concern for rational use and production, and an evangelistic zeal to spread the gospel of good furniture and chair-style living as the key to modernity. With these resided a nationalist desire to "nativize" the modern, thus defining and enabling a specifically Japanese modernity for the sake of Imperial Japan as nation, state, and race.

Prescriptions for the modernization of Tokyo from the inside out, Moriya's designs also were localized responses to specific conditions, events, and populations in metropolitan Tokyo. As such, they plot one way in which design can embody and enable the adaptation, evolution, and deployment of global cultural capital in a specific time and place—a "local" or "alternative" modernity.[11] Thus, Moriya's designs for domestic space—and for its occupants

and creators—offer insight into the role of design as a program for performative modernity, and into the relation between furniture, politics, and social formation.

Moriya Nobuo

Despite his short life, Moriya Nobuo had a profound impact on the development of Japanese interior design and furniture-making in the twentieth century as a teacher, a writer, and a designer. Born in Chiba (east of Tokyo) in 1893, Moriya Nobuo graduated from the design (*zuan)* department of Tokyo Industrial High School in 1915, and began working at Shimizu-Gumi, now Shimizu Corporation, a Tokyo-based construction company. He soon became active in Japan's first professional association of interior and furniture designers, the Kenyokai, and regularly published articles in the Kenyokai monthly journal, *Mokko to soshoku* ("Woodwork and Decoration"), renamed *Mokuzai kogei* ("Woodcraft") in 1923. From 1920 to 1922, he spent eighteen months in Europe and the United States as a fellow of the Japanese Ministry of Education, studying drafting and furniture-making methods, and surveyed the history and current state of the furniture industry, including design education and crafts museums, in Western Europe, Scandinavia, and the United States.[12] He studied English furniture-making history and methods in London, and encountered expressionism and the early Bauhaus in Germany. In the United States, he was greatly impressed by the mass-production methods he observed at furniture manufacturers in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

After returning to Tokyo in June 1922, Moriya began teaching interior design and woodworking at the newly-opened Tokyo Higher School of Arts and Technology (Tokyo Koto Kogei Gakko, now the Department of Design and Architecture of the University of Chiba).[13] He continued to write for design and architectural journals, translated several histories of British furniture, and published a history of ancient furniture and a guide to interior decoration for housewives and students.[14] Ranging from theoretical manifestos to descriptions of historical styles and practical how-to articles, Moriya's writing aimed at increasing public and professional knowledge of Western furniture. Outside of his writing, he toured Japan speaking to women's groups on good furniture in 1926, and gave a lecture on the history of the chair on JOAK, Japan's first radio station, that same year. He also presented his designs at government-sponsored industrial exhibitions in Tokyo. In 1927, he founded the design group Kinome-sha with three colleagues, but fell ill soon after, and died on April 6, 1927, one week before the first Kinome-sha exhibition was to open.

Moriya's later designs and design philosophy were in direct response to the urgent need for housing left by the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, and rode the tide of urban reconstruction the earthquake engendered. "Small Interior Art," the earlier of the two

Figure 3
Chiisaki shitsunai bijutsu ("Small Interior Art").

projects, was not only a direct response to post-earthquake conditions, but also the product of Moriya's personal reaction to the shock of the disaster.

Small Interior Art

Constructed in two weeks by a team of carpenters, joiners, upholsterers, painters, sculptors, and other artisans under Moriya's supervision for the 1925 National Art Exhibition (*Kokumin Bijutsu Ten*) in Tokyo, "Small Interior Art" presented three model rooms: "Sleeping Beauty's Bedroom (*Nemuri-hime no shinshitsu*)," "A Study Whose Window Reflects a Bird's Shadow (*Torikage no utsuru mado no shosai*)," and "A Dining Room with Red-Lacquered Furniture (*Shunuri no kagu wo ireta shokudo*)." [15] The furniture's fate after the exhibition is unknown, but the rooms were recorded in a catalog of the same name published the following year.[16]

"Small Interior Art" represented a distillation of many of Moriya's beliefs, chief among them the need for industry reform, the importance of art and beauty in daily life, and an understanding of modern Japan as an imperial nation encompassing Korea, Taiwan, and Manchuria; and the nativized visual, material, and corporeal traditions of these colonies. The rooms manifest a vision for a lifestyle performed entirely on chairs and in beds, but unlike chair-style model rooms presented by lifestyle improvement groups and department store furniture departments from the late 1910s, Moriya's rooms emphasized not the presence of chairs (and absence of *tatami* mats), but the overall style of each room. A decade earlier, the emerging middle class had been one target of the lifestyle improvement movement's campaign to put chairs in domestic space; now Moriya could shift his attention to what he termed "decoration" (*soshoku*), which allowed expression, as differentiated from mere "furnishings" (*setsubi)* which had only use value.[17]

Moriya's vision also was shaken into place by the Great Kanto Earthquake. Between tremors and fires, the Great Kanto Earthquake of September 1, 1923 destroyed 10,558 houses, and turned 3,470 hectares of residential property into wasteland.[18] This included approximately ninety percent of the working-class Asakusa, Honjo, Kyobashi, and Fukugawa wards.[19] The government of Tokyo, under the leadership of new Secretary of the Interior Goto Shinpei, viewed the earthquake as a chance to institute an ambitious city plan through the implementation of a new infrastructure. Meanwhile, thousands of Tokyoites needed housing. The government-organized reconstruction board built barracks for immediate relief. Later, those who could afford the change moved into new, single-family dwellings in western Tokyo suburbs made accessible by new train lines completed in the few years leading up to the disaster (and often developed by the railroad companies).[20] New houses meant a market for new furniture but, for Moriya, as for city planners, the disaster was also an opportunity to renovate the city in line with the modern age (city

Figure 4
Bedroom, "Sleeping Beauty's Bedroom," *Chiisaki shitunai bijutsu.*

planners would work on a macro-scale of streets and bridges; Moriya on the micro-scale of intimate space). As he wrote, this was not only "reconstruction," (*riikonsutorakushon*) but also a chance to be "all the more progressive in the sense of a revolution and improvement in all things."[21]

In "Sleeping Beauty's Bedroom," the first of the three rooms, revolution took the form of fanciful, expressionist ornament and color in an fairytale, theatrical bedroom suite based on the story of Sleeping Beauty. Attempting to "express the beauty and youth of a girl, since the room is meant to sleep a princess from a fairy land," the ivory-colored furniture was decorated with carvings such as the stylized vine, hearts, and crescent moon on the footboard of the bed, and "highlighted" (Moriya) by gold and silver stars.[22] Gold stars in a nebula of darker purple watched over the bed from the light-purple ceiling, and pineapple stencils bordered the vermilion floor, carefully painted one shade darker than the rose wallpaper. Another romantic touch draped a canopy over the head of the bed; the book's accompanying text described this as "a halo like that of Madonna."[23] The room also included a flower stand with flowers, a bedside table with a small box "for a princess—in which to place a ruby ring before going to sleep," a tray, a "charming" lamp inspired by botanical form, and a surrealist-influenced watercolor over the fireplace.[24]

Moriya begins his written commentary on the room by recounting the tale of Sleeping Beauty, adding modern details including a cook who falls asleep while grilling a steak (*bifuteki*), and closes it by stating, "I wanted to describe a quiet, charming princess, and [so I] stepped into the palace of fairytale poetry."[25] The appearance of poetry and expression parallels Moriya's use of expressionist, almost cinematic lines in the furniture. Moriya had encountered expressionism during his time in Germany in 1921, and was among the first and the few Japanese interior designers to champion expressionism as a design movement before the functional modernism of Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus established its dominance in Japanese design circles after 1925. Publicly arguing its case in articles in *Mokuzai kogei*, Moriya saw expressionism as a second secession from hidebound historicism along the lines of the Viennese Secession thirty years earlier, and speculated that it might be the prime register for expressing modernity in Japan as well as in Germany.[26] Here expressionism's emphasis on voicing emotion through form was key. As he wrote, "The imitation of nature ended with the nineteenth century. Now, we're raised in nature and it is innately a part of us, so it is all about emotion."[27] The purpose of interior design was to bring beauty and an artistic sensibility to the mundane, hence the work's overall title, "Small Interior Art."[28] That said, the fairytale room's furniture also was to be practical. Moriya emphasized the literally implicit obligation of the applied arts to merge use and beauty, writing, "There is no applied art which has abandoned purpose. There is no use value to be found in art alone."[29] A romantic who hand-painted the inside

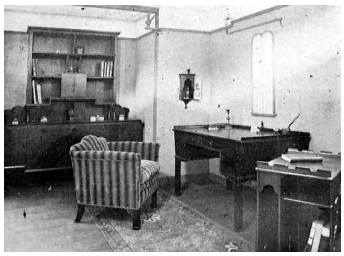


Figure 5
"A Study Whose Window Reflects a Bird's Shadow," Chiisaki shitsunai bijutsu.

covers of his books with flowers, and used a hand-drawn fragment of music as the epigram to *Chiisaki shitsunai bijutsu,* Moriya also was clearly a pragmatist, at least in theory.

Part of this pragmatism lay in his use of specific designs for specific users. If Sleeping Beauty's bedroom was for a girl, "A Study Whose Window Reflects a Bird's Shadow" was for her father, a salaried worker who, upon returning home from work in the evenings and on the weekends, would want to relax with books in his study. Like the bedroom, the study was furnished entirely with chairs. Unlike traditional vernacular layouts in which a single room might have a number of users and functions, it devoted one room to one person, thus emphasizing the privacy of the occupant. Furthermore, it assumed that its occupant knew how to live in an entirely chair-style space, and that he (for this occupant, too, was entirely gendered) could afford the luxury of a home large enough to accommodate rooms differentiated by occupants and uses. All of these mark the two rooms as solidly intended for the new suburban bungalows in which Moriya himself resided.[30] The tasteful arrays of knickknacks on the study's mantelpiece and bookshelf played to middle class ideals of "taste" (*shumi*) in their references to the cultured leisure activities of collecting or travel.[31] In a housing culture that placed fireplaces in the kitchen, the mantelpiece also recalled the ideal of the hearth as the center of the home, which like taste and collecting had been imported and adapted for domestic use by home economists, department stores, and social reformers in the early 1900s.[32]

Moriya intended the study as a place for the *salariman* to carry on the intellectual pursuits he would have acquired during his university years. As he writes, "It is hard to gain academic knowledge even if one tries, but—and this is the feeling of this room—perhaps it might come just once more, coming in like the shadow of a bird through the study's paper windows." [33] A portable box for books at hand and a bookshelf for permanent storage and display also would contribute to this opportunity. In keeping with the room's intellectual intentions and foregrounded aestheticism, the study's inspiration came from another literary allusion, this time a phrase in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: "... now and then the fantastic shadows of birds in flight flitted across the long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, producing a kind of momentary Japanese effect." [34] Much like Wilde's birds, Moriya tempered the entirely chair-style study with citations of Japanese design. Taking advantage of his extensive studies of Chippendale in London in 1921, the teak desk referenced Japanese Chippendale but, as Moriya wrote, "It's no problem if it also seems as though it has been influenced by [traditional Japanese] *karaki* [decorative wood]work."[35] An ornamental box mounted on the wall is said to "recall colored Japanese paper and *Nishiki-e* prints." And Moriya upholstered his similarly Chippendale-influenced chairs

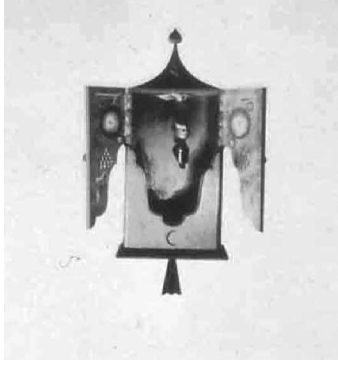


Figure 6
Box, "A Study Whose Window Reflects a Bird's Shadow," *Chiisaki shitsunai bijutsu.*

Figure 7
"A Dining Room with Red-Lacquered Furniture," *Chiisaki shitsunai bijutsu.*

with highly iconic *Nishijin* textiles from Kyoto, itself a metaphor for tradition in contrast to modern, Westernized Tokyo.

Filtering Japanese style through the japoniste screen of late-nineteenth century English design, Moriya projected a shadow in from the outside, borrowing not only the japonisme of Wilde's England, but the very movement and moment Wilde describes. Perhaps he hoped that, by incorporating Japanese elements into a chair-style interior, the unfamiliar space and furnishings would seem more familiar. He had argued elsewhere "unfamiliarity and novelty breed dislike. Craftwork (*kogeihin*) for the Japanese must have been designed for the taste of the Japanese."[36] This *mise-en-abyme* also might aim at nativizing once-foreign chair-style interiors as Japanese, or as modern Japanese.[37]

It is ironic that Moriya's desire to create furniture that would, as he wrote elsewhere, "express the Japanese national character," occurred here in the reclaiming of traditional motifs recognized in the context of Western design.[38] That said, Moriya himself rediscovered Japanese design after the Great Kanto Earthquake, taking the earthquake—as did the novelist Tanizaki Junichiro, whose *Naomi* is at once a paean to and a warning against the seduction of the Westernized, modern "culture life."[39] He explained the resulting nativist turn in his designs as follows: "I wanted to overcome a way of thinking based on keynotes that stink of the West, and to express the feeling that 'He's Japanese after all.'"[40] However, steeped in Western furniture practices and the ideology of adopting Western-style, Moriya could only embrace this transition through a movement first outwards, then back in.[41]

Figure 8
Chair, "A Dining Room with Red-Lacquered Furniture," *Chiisaki shitsunai bijutsu.*

When the "Japan" invented and produced came back in, it incorporated not only Euro-American and Japanese design, but also Chinese styles that brought Japan's colonial presence in Asia into the home as well. True to its name, "A Dining Room with Red-Lacquered Furniture" presents a table, chair, and sofa finished in red Chinese-inspired lacquer.[42] However, the Chinese motif was only skin-deep; despite its "japanned" finish, Moriya describes his variation on a Windsor chair as "early eighteenth century English country style [given] an Oriental feel" by its red lacquer coat, with the sideboard drawing on English folk historicism. The sideboard also returns to the fanciful decoration of "Sleeping Beauty's Bedroom" with a decorative alcove and a vernacular heart and vine design.

Moriya's use of defined styles such as Chinese Chippendale and expressionism reflects Japanese design education in the early twentieth century, in which (as was most often the case in Britain and North America), designers and architects learned a lexicon of historical styles, then applied them in their work. However, while Moriya made intensive studies of the styles he found most appropriate for Japanese taste (namely Chippendale and Adam), he rejected a devotion to one period or style in favor of flexible *bricolage* that reflected the motion and hybridity of modern Tokyo as well

Figure 9
Kinomesha sakuhin-shu (collection of Kinome-sha works).

Figure 10
Wardrobe, *Kinomesha sakuhin-shu.*

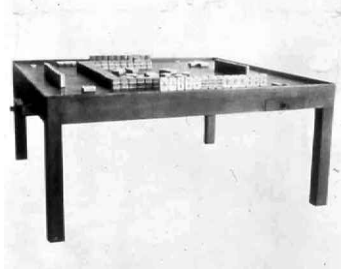


Figure 11.
Mahjong table, *Kinomesha sakuhin-shu.*

as his own identity. For Moriya, these composite interiors were anything but "copying" the West; conversely, the superficial references to traditional styles in what were more commonly considered "Japanese" interiors were only ahistorical repetitions of a historicized vernacular.[43] As he wrote,

> The way of thinking that ... says that the nation of Japan has a wonderful national tradition as Japan, and that it must be preserved, feels lonely to me. Can't we understand that national tradition is fine as such, but that we first see the best of that tradition when looking at it in the context of its age? As Japanese, we carry on the blood of our ancestors splendidly. No matter how hard we try, we cannot distance ourselves from the blood of the Japanese, so even if we make an extra effort, nothing will come of it? ... Think about it calmly, and look at new things with a free and open spirit. When you look at the next thing without being constrained by the specific, can't you clearly see something belonging to the Japanese people even without thinking about style this and national tradition that?" [44]

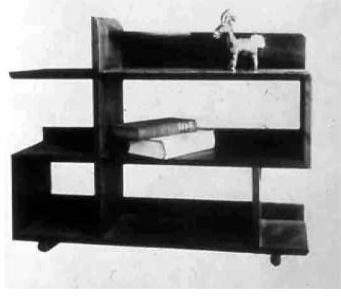
In this formulation, nation was determined by bloodline, leaving Moriya free to write not of Western furniture, but of "chair-style Japanese furniture (furniture for Japanese that has incorporated Western methods)." This also meant that he could claim these hybrids as the true "modern Japanese design" for modern Japanese lives.[45] Freed from constraints to continue the historical vernacular by virtue of his Japanese blood and modern context, Moriya could employ styles selectively as a palette to express emotion and to create taste, which he saw along with comfort as the most important element in an interior, and as "the most important thing for the houses of the new Japan." [46] However, taste was not the primary goal but, like decoration and expression, an additional step available for those who already had incorporated chairs into all facets of daily life, "Small Interior Art" was for this still-elite group; the Kinome-sha furniture would concentrate on furnishing the others.

Kinome-sha

With its central goal of popularizing well-made chair-style furniture for the urban working class, Kinome-sha was an attempt at democratizing the media of daily life. This would happen through steps to increase the practicality of use and production, most of all through a reform in industrial practice emphasizing mass production.

Moriya, Kato Shinjiro, Suzuki Taro, and Moriya's younger brother, Isaburo, founded Kinome-sha, literally "Leaf Bud House," in 1927. Kinome-sha quickly produced a line of prototypes, which were exhibited from April 9–18, 1927 at the Marubishi gallery in the Maru Biru (Building), Tokyo's first modern office block and another prototype of Tokyo modernity.[47] Photographs were then collected

Figure 12
Desk and chair with runners for use on *tatami*, *Kinomesha sakuhin-shu*.



Figures 13 and 14
Bookshelf inspired by *chigaidana* and art deco armchair, *Kinomesha Sakuhin-shu*.

into a book, published in memory of Moriya.[48] In line with an earlier Moriya declaration that "furniture must be practical and durable, but also comfortable and homelike," the Kinome-sha prototypes covered the furnishings Moriya believed necessary for even modest homes: dining tables, chair and desk sets, wardrobes, bookshelves, mirrors and storage units, and a bed.[49] Some of the furniture (such as the many easy chairs) clearly predicated a chair-based lifestyle; other pieces (such as a wardrobe for Western clothes) demonstrated the understood connection between clothing, food, and housing.

The collection contained some nods to actual working-class daily life, houses, and leisure activities, for example a mahjong table and low *chabudai* tables to use when sitting on the floor. *Chabudai* and children's desks acknowledged newly invented traditions. (The study desk, for example, was introduced into the home as a way to accustom children to sitting in a chair at a desk, as they would do in school.) Designs also took into account the ubiquitous *tatami* and cramped conditions of urban tenements: runners on the bottoms of chairs saved *tatami* from scuffing, and nesting tables saved space. There were some more elaborate stylistic flourishes—bookshelves that cite the *chigaidana* staggered shelves of formal *zashiki tatami* rooms in an arts and crafts rhetoric, an art deco shape to many of the armchairs, and a few tasteful knickknacks on decorative shelves—but most designs were more reminiscent of the pared down aesthetic of Gustav Stickley's arts and crafts furniture.

This simplified aesthetic reflected pared down costs as well. Moriya saw economic accessibility as paramount to popularizing Western-style furniture, writing, "Japan will not adopt chairs until the Japanese are rich enough to afford them; we must make improved furniture affordable or people will not—cannot—adopt it. We must remember the condition of most Japanese houses."[50] Moriya argued that most furniture was either order-made, in which case it was expensive, or cheap, in which case it was of shoddy manufacture.[51] Thus, "Good cheap furniture (Western-style) has been out of the range of ordinary people. How joyful if we could [make it accessible for them]!" Since the simple designs of Kinome-sha furniture would be easier to reproduce, production costs would be cut, and the savings could be passed on to the consumer.[52]

Such attention to streamlining production extended throughout Moriya's philosophy. Calling on the industry to use the Kanto Earthquake as the catalyst for change, Moriya charged furniture manufacturers to replace inefficient prewar production methods with the mechanization and efficient labor practices of mass production.[53] These included standardized dimensions and easily reproducible plans that would allow anyone to make the same object multiple times; these practices were to replace hand methods, a "one artisan per object" custom and factory owners' resistance to footing the initial outlay of mechanization given the low demand for Western-

style furniture.[54] He also recommended increased instruction in Western furniture techniques for artisans, who often made chairs with Japanese techniques; his own educational and publishing activities were the practical application of this philosophy.

With mass-production techniques and labor education making furniture more affordable and increasing the quality of inexpensive furniture, Moriya explained, chair-style furniture would spread across class lines.[55] He used his 1926 national lecture tour to proselytize to regional women's groups on "the democratization of Western-style furniture," and named the democratization of furniture as a barometer of democracy in the state as a whole.[56] In the lecture, which called attention to the historical association of chairs with authority in both Europe and Japan, Moriya drew on examples including the rise of neo-classicism in France after the French Revolution and the eighteenth-century renaissance of English cabinetry after the implementation of the constitutional monarchy to demonstrate a historical correlation between the establishment of a democratic regime and the flourishing of furniture production.[57] Now, it was Japan's turn: "Individuality and self-recognition require a chair-style life, and [in Europe, the United States, and now Japan] have become more and more universal."

However, as the rhetoric of "Small Interior Art" and the Kinome-sha furniture makes clear, if chairs meant democracy for Japan, it was still a nuanced democracy. While a modern, rational chair-style life was the right of all Japanese, artistic expression and tasteful beauty were the property of those who could afford it. At the same time, however, they also were the right of anyone who could afford them; thus, while economically striated, Moriya's vision of democracy through material culture negated older, original ideas of class to create a society in which identity could be consumed, and design could determine identity.

1 This paper intends to offer one example of how the relationship between Japan and "the West" was understood and formulated in one instance of design practice. However, engaging the fine points of the construction of the Japan-West dualism in intellectual discourse is beyond the scope of this paper.

Oguma Eiji's *Tanichi minzoku no kigen "nihonjin" no jigazo no keito* (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1995) and *"Nihonjin" no kyokai: Okinawa, Ainu, Taiwan, Chosen Shokuminchi shihai kara fukki undo made* (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 1998) are two comprehensive mappings of the formations of Japanese national identity in relation to Asia and the West among intellectuals, and in state policy in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

2 For example, one would wear Western-style clothes in a Western-style room, or when eating a Western-style meal. Conversely, the *kimono* necessitated a Japanese-style room and meal. Western dress was associated with work and school, in contrast to the Japanese dress worn for relaxing in the home. Likewise, men and children wore predominantly Western dress by the mid-1920s, while Japanese dress remained standard for Japanese women (except urban office workers) into the 1930s. These use- and gender-based differences resulted in such user-specific rooms as a Western-style visiting parlor (*osetsushitsu*) furnished with a table and chairs to entertain mostly male visitors in Western dress, and a *tatami* "housewife's room" (*shufushitsu*) or family room (*chanoma,* literally "room for tea"), for a family relaxing in Japanese-style dress or for female visitors in *kimono.*

3 All Japanese names are given with the surname first and personal name last, in accordance with standard Japanese practice.

4 Fujita Haruhiko, "Notomi Kaijiro: An Industrial Art Pioneer and the First Design Educator of Modern Japan" in *Design Issues* 17:2 (Spring 2001): 17-31, provides a detailed example of one pioneer of Japanese design education in the late-nineteenth and early- twentieth centuries.

5 Hirai Yae, ed., *Jutaku kagu no kaizen* (Tokyo: Seikatsu Kaizen Domeikai, 1924), Preface (np). See Kashiwagi Hiroshi, "On Rationalization and the National Lifestyle: Japanese Design in the 1920s and 1930s" in Elise K. Tipton and John Clark, eds., *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 61–74, for an analysis of the relationship between the lifestyle improvement movement and national modernization.

6 Edward S. Morse, *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings* (New York: Dover Publications, 1961 reprint of Boston: 1886); Inouye Junkichi, *Home Life in Tokyo* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1985 reprint of Tokyo: 1910); and Jordan Sand, "House and Home in Modern Japan, 1880s–1920s" (unpublished Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1996) provide thorough English-language descriptions of the vernacular Japanese house in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

7 The lifestyle improvement movement (*seikatsu kaizen undo,* also known as the "lifestyle reform movement" or *seikatsu kairyo undo*) began in the mid-1910s, gained attention with the 1918 Lifestyle Improvement Exhibition at the Education Museum in Tokyo, and was strong through the early-1920s. Proponents of the improvement (*kaizen*) and reform (*kairyo*) of daily life promoted its modernization and rationalization, mainly through the adoption of Western-style food, clothing, and housing; as well as the simplification of social customs. Some groups affiliated with the movement were private; others, such as the Lifestyle Improvement Coalition, received sponsorship from government bodies including the Ministry of Education. Similar to early-twentieth century housing reform movements in Great Britain and the United States, the movement's work in housing reform recommended replacing dark, unsanitary, and cramped urban tenements with light, airy housing —ideally single-family suburban homes with a kitchen garden.

See Jordan Sand's "The Cultured Life as Contested Space: Dwelling and Discourse in the 1920s" in *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910s to the 1930s,* Tipton and Clark eds., 99–118, for a discussion of the meaning of "culture" and "the culture life" in 1910s–20s Japan. The culture houses recommended by architects and reformers included a combination of a master bedroom, a nursery, a dining room, a study, a visitors' parlor (often combined with the study), a housewife's room or living room, and a kitchen— all arrayed around a central living room or hallway. In theory, culture houses were to be composed of entirely Western-style rooms, however, in practice, most built culture houses contained both *tatami* and hard-floor rooms.

8 This was partially relieved by the implementation of a Housing Association Law enabling financing for home purchases through loan cooperatives in 1922. The "housing problem" (*jutaku mondai*) was one of the most fiercely discussed policy issues in architectural and urban planning discourse circa 1920.

9 One exception to this was the dowry set bought by a bride's parents before her marriage, meant to furnish all necessary goods for a household from towels and floor cushions to clocks and clothing chests.

Mori Junko's "Modern Seating, Modern Sitting: Japanese Women and the Use of the Chair in the 1920s and 1930s" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Royal College of Art, 2002) traces the iconic nature of the rattan chair in 1920s–30s visual culture. Sand, "The Cultured Life as Contested Space" and Jinno Yuki, *Shumi no tanjo* (Tokyo: Keisei Shobo, 1996) discuss department store marketing strategies and pricing scales for rattan furniture.

10 See Sarah Teasley, "The National Geographics of Design: The Rhetoric of Tatami in 1920s and 30s Japanese Interiors" in Samer Accach, ed., *De-Placing Difference: Architecture, Culture, and Imaginative Geography* (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Centre for Asian and Middle Eastern Architecture, 2002), 267–276, for a discussion of the arguments for and against *tatami* use.

11 The importance of inquiry into conditions and the creation of "local" or "alternative" modernities is well-recognized in recent scholarship, both on international topics (cf. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, ed., *Alternative Modernities* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001) and in specific reference to Japan (cf. Stephen Vlastos, ed., *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

12 Moriya recorded his impressions and discoveries in a diary, and relayed information to fellow Kenyokai members via regular missives in *Mokko to soshoku.*

13 In 1922, designer Yasuda Rokuzo assembled graduates of Tokyo Industrial High School including Moriya, furniture designer Kogure Joichi, and graphic designer Miyashita Takao to teach at the newly-founded Tokyo Higher School of Arts and Technology. For a comprehensive history of the first twenty years of the institution, its faculty, and students, see Matsudo City Board of Education, ed. *Dezain no yoran jidai: Tokyo Koto Kogei Gakko no ayumi 1* (Matsudo: Matsudo City Board of Education, 1996) and *Shikaku no Showa 1930–40 nendai: Tokyo Koto Kogei Gakko no ayumi 2* (Matsudo: Matsudo City Board of Education, 1998). In this article, I use the English translation given in the school's histories. Kashiwagi translates it as "Tokyo High School of Industrial Art."

14 *Seiyo bijutsu-shi: Kodai kagu-hen* (Tokyo: Taiyodo, 1926) and *Kore kara no shitsunai soshoku* (Tokyo: Taiyodo, 1927).

15 According to the production notes, Moriya spent four to five days designing the interiors, then built the rooms with the help of two firms and fifteen artisans for more than two weeks, taking advantage of a break in lecturing duties while students vacationed in Hakone, a mountain resort at the base of Mt. Fuji. (Moriya Nobuo, "Chiisaki shitsunai soushoku no kokoromi ni tsuite," reprinted in *Moriya Nobuo Ikoshu* (Tokyo: Tokyo Koto Kogei Gakko Mokuzai Kenkyushitsu, 1928), 20–22.

16 According to Moriya's nephew Moriya Nobuchika, much of the furniture is assumed to have been lost when the Moriya home was destroyed in the 1945 Tokyo air raids. The dining room chair was recreated for a 1994 exhibition in Matsudo, Chiba, Japan; and was displayed regularly in exhibitions of prewar Japanese design throughout the 1990s (Interview with Moriya Nobuchika, December 2000).

17 Moriya "Shitsunai soshoku wo kangaeru" in *Moriya Nobuo Ikoshu,* 17–19. The opposition of "furnishings" (*setsubi*) and "decoration" (*soshoku*) is based on class as well, with decoration reserved for the middle class who might be able to afford a life with taste (*shumi*) and culture (*bunka*); the working-class first needed the furnishings that would enable them to achieve a modern, rational, and sanitary life.

18 Suzuki Hiroyuki, *Toshi he* (Tokyo: Chuo Koron Shinsha, 1992), 39.

19 Architectural historian Suzuki Hiroyuki gives the exact percentages as: Asakusa Ward 98%, Honjo Ward 93%, Kyobashi Ward 88%, and Fukugawa Ward 87%. The earthquake also destroyed 20,532 houses in neighboring Yokohama, 21% of the city's total housing stock. Ibid., 259.

20 While migration away from the ruined areas led the city's total population to drop 8.1% in 1924, the population of Tokyo's suburbs jumped 78.8% — double the annual average for the decade in the years after the earthquake— and the suburban population jumped to 30% of the city's two million residents in the years following the disaster. Nagamine Shigetoshi, *Modan toshi no dokusho kukan* (Tokyo: Nihon Editazu Sukuru, 2001), 39, from Nakagawa Kiyoshi, "Senzen Tokyo ni okeru jinko no teichaku keiko" in *Niigata daigaku shogaku ronshu* 14 (March 1981, np).

21 Moriya, "Gei to ri yori mitaru teito fukko ni kansuru kagu no fukko" in *Mokuzai kogei* 57–58 (1923), reprinted in *Ikoshu* 51–57. For Moriya, the earthquake also was a personal call into action. As he explained, "[After my travels in Europe and the United States,] I had thought I would stay lazy and lost in thought for a while, but I had it explained to me by a friend that it had become impossible to think about the issues of the times impassively after the earthquake." Moriya, *Chiisaki shitsunai bijutsu* (Tokyo: Kyoyosha, 1925), 2.

22 Ibid., 11.

23 Ibid., 4.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid. Steaks were an early, popular import to Japan and, along with cabbage rolls and curry with rice, a symbol of Western-style modernity.
This was not Moriya's first relation of poetry to design. In an article entitled "Views on the Art of Furniture," he stated: "Rooms must tell beautiful poetry." ("Kagu geijutsu-kan," reprinted in *Moriya Nobuo Ikoshu,* 24–27.)

26 Ken Oshima's "Hijiribashi: Spanning Time and Crossing Place" (paper presented at the 2002 Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, April 2002) discusses the equally controversial use of expressionism in Japanese architectural circles during the same period.

27 Moriya, "Hyogen-ha no eikyo wo uketaru kagu shitsunai soshoku wo chushin ni" in *Mokuzai kogei* 49 (1923), reprinted in *Moriya Nobuo Ikoshu,* 71–75.

28 Moriya's emphasis on expressing inner emotion suggests an influence by aestheticism, however, depending on the client, he also espoused an interior decoration philosophy of expressing personality or taste, as in Charles Eastlake's *Hints on Household Decoration* (1878), or Elsie de Wolfe's dicta on style in the early 1900s. His 1927 interior design manual for housewives and interior decoration students, *Kore kara no shitsunai soshoku,* dictated that housewives should express their personality through the design of their homes, suggesting possible divisions between taste and emotion depending on gender and class.

29 Moriya, "Shitsunai soshoku wo kangaeru," 17.

30 Moriya lived last in a bungalow in Mitaka, west of Shinjuku, and occasionally used details from his house as examples to illustrate his arguments in *Mokuzai kogei.*

31 With its decoration of knickknacks and collectible objects, the mantelpiece is a replica of Moriya's own, as described in the essay "Omocha wo narabeta mantorupiisu wo ete" reprinted in *Ikoshu,* 22–23.

32 From the early 1900s, department stores used the concept of "taste" to promote consumption, and educators and social theorists promoted the adoption of "the family circle." See Jinno and Sand (1996) for discussions and examples of how these two Victorian domestic ideals were adapted for the Japanese context, respectively.

33 The windows' form, inspired by college gothic revival architecture, also might have had this effect (Moriya, *Chiisaki shitsunai bijutsu,* 4).

34 Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray and Other Writings* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982; reprint of London 1891), 5. The full sentence is "From the corner of the divan of Persian saddle-bags on which he was lying, smoking, as was his custom, innumerable cigarettes, Lord Henry Wotton could just catch the gleam of the honey-sweet and honey-coloured blossoms of a laburnum, whose tremulous branches seemed hardly able to bear the burden of a beauty so flamelike as theirs; and now and then the fantastic shadows of birds in flight flitted across the long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, producing a kind of momentary Japanese effect, and making him think of those pallid, jade-faced painters of Tokyo who, through the medium of an art that is necessarily immobile, seek to convey the sense of swiftness and motion." While it is unclear whether the translation is his own or that from a contemporary translator, Moriya's version literally reads, "The shadow of a bird flying made the tranquil sunlight coming through the papered screen quiver; it was like a Japanese painting." (Moriya, *Chiisaki shitsunai bijutsu,* 4.)

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid. Most likely, this meant being designed by a Japanese designer as well: "[I]f you look at the brushholder and inkwell in the convenient bookcase, you will be satisfied that it is the work of a Japanese." (Moriya, "Hyogen-ha no eikyo wo uketaru kagu shitsunai soshoku wo chushin ni, 73.) Moriya collapsed nation, race, and identity to argue that design expresses national character in other writings as well, for example, in critiques of furniture design in Europe and North America published in *Mokko to soshoku.* In one article published first in the British furniture journal *The Cabinet-Maker and Complete Home Furnisher,* he explained that the Japanese are predisposed by virtue of their national character to like, Chippendale and Adam chairs, but to have an aversion to British painted furniture and modern French furniture. ("A Letter to the Cabinetmaker Editor" in *Mokko to soshoku* 31 [1921], 2–4).

37 See Sarah Teasley, "Nation, Modernity, and Interior Decoration" in *Japanstudien* 13 (October 2001): 49-88. I argue that designers involved with the lifestyle reform movement often adopted strategies of hybridization in which Western-style furniture remained "Western" enough to be exotic and stylish, but also was naturalized as "modern Japanese" so that it might retain some familiarity, and thus be more approachable to consumers.

38 Moriya, "Konseiki ni okeru honpo mokkokai no kenyo," reprinted in *Ikoshu,* 34–7: 35.

39 Tanizaki Junichiro, *Naomi,* trans. Anthony H. Chambers (Tokyo: C.E. Tuttle, 1986). After the earthquake, Tanizaki moved from Tokyo to Kansai, the "more traditional" urban hub of western Japan that includes Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe. Serialized the following year in the *Osaka Asahi Shinbun,* a major newspaper, *Naomi* recounts the obsessive relationship between the narrator, a young company employee, and the quixotic, hybrid, and hyper-modern Naomi, and is known as the author's call to pay less attention to the charms of Western modernity, and more attention to tradition.

40 Moriya, *Chiisaki shitsunai bijutsu,* 2–3.

41 This movement, common to many Japanese intellectuals of the period, recalls Franz Fanon's formulation of the postcolonial subject in *Black Skin, White Masks,* trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1968).

42 Originally, the exhibition was to feature six chairs, however the team could produce only one in time for the exhibition's opening.

43 For reasons of space, this article cannot adequately address the issue of Japanese style as historical or ahistorical. Gulsum Nalbantoglu, "Towards Postcolonial Openings: Re-Reading Sir Banister Fletcher's "History of Architecture" in *The Online Forum & Database for World Architecture* (www.worldarchitecture.org/articles/gbn01.htm, nd) is one provocative discussion of the categorization of non-Western architectural styles in canonical architectural history, in this case, British.

44 Moriya, "Kagu geijutsu ron," 26. Kokusui, which I have translated here as "tradition," also can be translated, depending on the context, as "nationalism" or "chauvinism." *Kokusui-shugi,* or "*kokusui*-ism," was particularly strong as a school of thought and design style in the 1930s.

45 Moriya, "Tenrankai kaisai ni tsuite" in *Mokuzai kogei* 50 (1924): 23–27. For Moriya, possession was a matter of making an object, and recognition of that possession a question of familiarization. Thus, "Western-style houses will, in time, be called 'Japanese houses.'" (Moriya, "Shitsunai soshoku no zentei to shite," reprinted in *Moriya Nobuo Ikoshu,* 13–16.)

46 Moriya, "Jurai no nihon jutaku wo sono mama isushiki ni kaeru" in *Mokuzai kogei* 56 (1923): 8–12.

47 The 1923 Maru Biru (Building) was famed in part for its female receptionists, typists, secretaries, and the other working women who commuted to it daily in Western clothing, contributing greatly to the image of the "moga," or modern girl, an icon of 1920s urban Japanese visual culture.

48 Kinomesha, Kinomesha sakuhinshu (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1927). Like the "Small Interior Art" furniture, none of this furniture is known to exist today, but the Matsudo City Board of Education had a table reconstructed for an exhibit in the mid-1990s.

49 Moriya, "Seikatsu no kaizen to kagu no kaizen" in *Mokko to soshoku* 17 (1920), reprinted in *Moriya Nobuo Ikoshu* 38: 36–45.

50 Moriya, "Seikatsu no kaizen to kagu no kaizen," 42.

51 Moriya, "Tenrankai kaisai ni tsuite mite," 23.

52 Contemporary industry commentary often derided furniture makers for their lack of skill. The official history of the Shiba Furniture Commercial and Industrial Cooperative, an association of elite furniture manufacturers and retailers concentrated in the Shiba district of Tokyo, gives the difficulty of turning the curved lines of art nouveau furniture as one reason why this style never achieved the same popularity in Japan. Conversely, the history ascribes the persistence of Secession style to straight lines that could be more easily reproduced. Shiba Kagu Shokogyo Kyodo Kumiai, eds., *Shiba kagu hyakunen-shi* (Tokyo: Tokyo-to Shiba Kagu Shokogyo Kyodo Kumiai, 1966), 164.

53 Moriya, "Gei to ri yori mitaru toshi fukko ni kansuru kagu no fukko," 54.

54 Ibid., 51. Moriya's call for mass production was not an argument for mechanization for mechanization's sake. Far from embracing the machine aesthetic championed by Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus then beginning to make inroads into Japanese design, he saw machines as "no more than an extension of the hand," and believed "mechanization should be used judiciously, where appropriate." Ibid., 53; and Moriya, "Seikatsu kaizen to kagu no kaizen," 36.

55 Moriya's predictions were correct to an extent. The first decade of the Showa era (1925–89), saw increased activity in nativizing chairs and the chair-style life as "Japanese modern," and in making chairs available to all through mass production. State and private interests combined and intersected in organizations such as the government-sponsored Imperial Crafts Association (Teikoku Kogeikai, est. 1926), and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's Design Educational Research Center (Kogei Shidosho, est. 1928), which promoted industrial rationalization, and new design groups including former Moriya colleague and modernist architect Kurata Chikatada's Keiji Kobo (est. 1928). While Moriya's interest in European romanticism was replaced by a modernist, functionalist, aesthetic based on ergonomics, standardization and the rationalization of production and use remained guiding tenets for the majority of design groups, and the trend to incorporate premodern design elements into modern furniture only in the 1930s.

The promotion of a lifestyle based on chairs for increased efficiency in the home remained part of these new design movements, and some chairs did take off— desk sets for children are a good example— but production remained largely experimental. Full-fledged mass production did not occur until the 1950s, and the full adoption of chairs in the home would take another wave of middle-class suburban homebuilding in the high economic growth period of the 1960s and '70s to get underway, and a generation raised in houses with chairs that came of age in the 1980s and '90s to truly take root.

56 Moriya, "Yofu kagu no minshuka ni tsuite" in *Moriya Ikoshu,* 109–113: 109.

57 In *Taste and Power: Furnishing Modern France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), Leora Auslander carefully recounts the relationship between political culture and furniture in France since the Revolution.

Icons of the Bush

Cal Swann

Introduction

The personal mailbox is one of the first things a visitor encounters upon arrival. It creates a first impression—an impression that people want to ensure will confirm their distinctive individuality. Scandinavians have a whole range of modern designs to choose from to create a good impression. Their stainless steel and matte-black boxes in sculptural splendor grace the perimeter of more humble homes, glinting in the cool sun of the Nordic light. Americans, Canadians and Australians especially indulge in using their imagination and showing off with their own designs in that very public place, right on the front block. The British have no such tradition because their letterbox is almost always a slot in the front door, and the mail drops directly onto the welcome mat. Clearly, the country and cultural context have a big influence on such practices.

The Australian outback mailbox (exerting a hefty influence on the urban variety) is an extreme expression of this human urge for individuality to the point of being outrageous. So how come? There are many answers to that question, and a whole mixed bag of ingredients make up this typically Australian phenomenon. In this short piece, I will focus on the rural mailbox tradition in the context of vernacular art; drawing on the heritage of a pioneer convict settlement, extreme poverty, and "making do" in a country characterized by its harsh conditions and geographic isolation. The main features have to do with:

- *lack of regulations*
- *the bush tradition and perpetuating the myths of making do*
- *she'll be right*
- *access to tools and materials*
- *fun and self-satisfaction.*

The typical RMB (Roadside Mailbox) of Australia draws upon one or several, or all of the above factors, and has become an icon of a bush tradition that is almost as recognizable as the koala. Popular culture (as opposed to high art in a sophisticated society) is reflected in the mass of objects that people choose to keep in their everyday lives. High art is put on show and generally viewed in galleries—whereas everyday art, or folk art, "happens into visibility."[1] There can be little that is more visible than the rows of mailboxes along the highways of Australia. As Jim Logan puts it, we may be able to read many sub-texts behind the things people make, but folk art always is

1 Jim Logan, *Everyday Art: Australian Folk Art*, Susan Hall, ed. (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 1998), 4.

candid. The convict beginnings may have given greater impetus to the universal human tendency to rebel against conformity. (At least, that's what many Australians would like to believe.) Whatever the causes, Australian egalitarianism and social candor has developed with a healthy anti-authoritarian slant on life. Nowhere is this more expressed than in the nose-thumbing irreverence of the RMB.

Lack of Regulations

The U.S. Postmaster General established regulations as early as 1915 for a standard roadside mailbox. Designed by Roy Jorolemen and unchanged in its basic form since that time, the U.S. mailbox is weatherproof and secure. It incorporates a simple flag device to tell the deliverer of the mail, who also is the collector, when mail is inside for picking up. (It is not unusual to come across the occasional imported U.S. model in Australia.) Quite distinctive in looks, the US box is a standard across the country, and in its way has become an icon of rural America.

Australia has no standard design. The Australian Post Office issues a leaflet that states their Post Office Preferred (POP) sizes and recommends 330mm x 230mm x 160mm internal space, with a slot of 230mm x 30mm, but these dimensions are so general that almost anything can be made to fit. In 1994, an article in *Specnews*[2] referred to a proposal for a new joint Australia/New Zealand standard on mailboxes. *Specnews* found it unacceptable in that the "important Australian icon of the milk churn mailbox would be rendered obsolete." Furthermore, they claimed that the average country milk churn falls within the Australian POP recommendations. In effect, there are no restrictions and in the remoteness of the outback there would be a lackluster attempt to try and enforce anything if there were.

Figure 1
A colorful rainbow Jorelmen mailbox, U.S. style. All photos courtesy of the author.

However, there is more to it than the lack of regulations because, when a standard is imposed, many people just can't leave their mailbox alone. Americans (and Canadians who generally use the U.S. standard model) love to add all kinds of extras to the Jorolemen box, from painting it in bright colors (figure. 1), to sticking on heads and legs, wings or fins, and so on, just to distinguish their mailbox from the rest. It is a very human urge to rebel against conformity. The Aussie mailbox—without any regulatory constraints to begin with—exploits that rebellious and creative instinct to a level that, at times, elevates their efforts to a folk art.

The Bush Tradition and Perpetuating the Myth of Making Do

The historical development and geographical nature of any country exert strong conditions on the way people shape their environment and character. It is the special pioneer heritage of Australia from its convict beginnings to a modern agricultural and mining economy that means this past is somewhat different than other countries. A number of exhibitions in recent years such as "Bush toys and Furniture," "Everyday Art," and "Homemade Treasures" have

2 *Specnews* is the newssheet of NATSPEC, Australia's National Building Specification.

articulated a growing consciousness of this heritage and what it means in a reevaluation of commonplace objects. Here the case has been argued for many humble, homemade, domestic artifacts to be recognized as art objects in a vernacular tradition. Common factors in this development are the bush ingredients of economic hardship, shortage of manufactured goods, geographic isolation, leisure, and of course—the desire to make items just for pleasure.[3] Some or all of these influences combined to force people to make do with what they already had, or with what they could make at minimum cost.

"Making do" probably is the most important aspect of the mailbox culture in Australia and the *raison d'etre* for the majority of boxes seen along the roadside. Making do is not unique to Australia, of course. Every community throughout the world recycles and adapts items for other uses. But the key factors in the making do context in Australia lie in the extreme geographic isolation of communities and the scarcity of manufactured goods in a comparatively new settlement.

The development of modern Australia (its settlement by Europeans that brought paper-based correspondence and a need for mailboxes) has occurred within the last two-hundred years, and was built on a quite incredible manipulation of human resources. That is well-documented elsewhere and I simply want to highlight the ad hoc nature of that European settlement. From 1788, when the first group of ill-equipped and ill-prepared convicts miraculously arrived in Botany Bay, they had to survive with the barest of tools. A vivid account of that depressing beginning is provided in Robert Hughes's *The Fatal Shore*.[4] Considering the hardship that these early settlers endured, the near starvation as a result of the lack of planning for this venture, and their own arrogance in ignoring the experience of the indigenous Australians, it remains a mystery how anyone survived. Fortunately, while basic tools and equipment were in short supply, the newcomers had ample ability to extemporize and adapt objects for novel use.

The paucity of technology stayed with the pioneers of the new colony for a long time, but with the Federation in 1901, when Australia became an independent country, life for many people had become more comfortable. Federation brought the establishment of the Postmaster-General's Department to provide standard postal services across the nation. A range of manufactured goods was becoming available, and a higher standard of living was emerging even though people in the more remote areas had less access. However, World War I reminded everyone of the geographic isolation of the country as goods once more became scarce and home manufacturing turned to war production. The notion of "waste not, want not" became an essential credo for successive generations that lasted well beyond the Second World War.[5]

The period between the wars was particularly lean since this also encompassed the hard times of the depression. In almost all

3 Brian Shepherd and Stephen Anstey, "Homemade Treasures: Interpretive Challenges in Developing an Exhibition of Improvised Children's Items." (Conference paper presented at Fringe Benefits: Fifth Annual Conference of Museums Australia, Albury, New South Wales, May 1999.)

These two curators of the Edith Cowan University Museum of Childhood in Western Australia identified five categories (or motives) within which they located their exhibition: economic hardship, wartime emergency or shortage, geographic isolation, enforced leisure, and pleasure. They were, of course, relating these to childhood toys demonstrating that these have substantially common elements with the vernacular art tradition, citing "everyday art" as a particular source. I have based my own categories along these lines.

4 Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore* (London: Pan books, 1987).

5 As a child of the 1930s, I grew up in England during and following the Second World War, and I understand this attitude very well. The first toys I can remember were homemade from odds and ends of materials, some by German prisoners of war in England who were happy to utilize their time in productive ways.

Figure 2
A small suitcase made from a kerosene can.

Figure 3
A crowd of mailboxes wait for the mail at a Tasmanian road junction.

cases, there was extreme poverty in the outback. Just surviving in the driest land in the world was a precarious existence and settlers seldom had sufficient worldly goods. A manifestation of the waste not, want not ethic was the publication of a booklet "Makeshifts and Other Homemade Furniture and Utensils" in 1924.[6] This booklet extolled the virtues of making the most out of used objects, in this case, kerosene tins and packing cases. It advocated that a thrifty household should make the most of once-used containers rather than simply throw them away. Visits to pioneer museums in rural areas reveal a number of such objects, and a typical example is the small suitcase made from a kerosene tin (figure 2) in the Greenough Museum in Western Australia. Recycling items after they had passed their use-by date was a way of life.

If necessity is the mother of invention, the conditions in Australia certainly demanded a flexible and creative attitude toward everyday living. There have been many cases of Aussie ingenuity that have resulted in innovative adaptations, particularly in the agricultural field. Imported machines that worked under European conditions did not necessarily work in the outback terrain, requiring significant modification or alternative approaches.[7]

Australia is not only isolated from the rest of the world, communities also are remote from each other (the tyranny of distance). In a country similar in size to the United States, but with less than twenty million people, the distance between homesteads often is considerable. Mail was frequently picked up at the nearest town, and still is in many regions. Policemen on horseback were used to take mail to homesteads in the latter half of the nineteenth century. From the 1880s on, mail deliveries began to be contracted out to "posties" appointed by the Postmaster-General's Department. Getting the mail through to very isolated towns and outback stations could be an expedition of some significance. The courage and perseverance of the early mail carriers is vividly portrayed in John Maddock's *Mail for the Back of Beyond*.[8] From horseback to motor-driven trucks, mail runs to places along the Birdsville Track in South Australia, for example, were hazardous undertakings. The tracks, such as they were, constantly shifted with sand drifts and floods, and the successful arrival of the mail was cause for celebration. The mail trucks also carried supplies to homesteaders, and often were the only source of contact with the outside world.

It wasn't until the dirt roads and motor transportation became more reliable that mailboxes became a common item by the roadside, but individual homesteads could still be a good distance off of the main road. In the context of such distances, the mailbox often was placed at a convenient point of call for the mail carrier, frequently in a group at road junctions (figure 3). Whether intentional or otherwise, these groupings represent the community behind the constructions. Standing together (and sometimes falling) in what often is a harsh landscape, they evoke the lifestyle and loneliness of

6 Cited in David Dolan, Ann Stephen, Caroline Lorenz, and Anne Watson, "Bush Toys and Furniture" a publication for the exhibition of the same title at the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, July 4–September 2, 1990.

7 For a recent evaluation of many of these innovations, see Simon Jackson, "The Stump Jumpers: National Identity and the Mythology of Australian Industrial Design in the Period 1930–1975" in *Design Issues* 18:4 (Autumn 2002).

8 John Maddock, *Mail for the Back of Beyond* (Australia: Kangaroo Press, 1986).

Figure 4
Somewhat out of his Victorian territory, this outlaw Ned Kelly was found lying in the Queensland bush.

the outback heritage. Like the isolated chapel that signifies a sense of spiritual community in remote areas, the ubiquitous presence of mailboxes at road junctions represents a more practical, down-to-earth sense of collectiveness that has more to do with a sense of geography. Logan suggests that the settlement of Australia was more pragmatic than in America where communities had a very strong bond of religious togetherness.[9] Rural Australians are thinly spread across the land, and yet that somehow managed to unite the communities with a shared feeling for an outback culture.

This heritage is common knowledge across Australia, and while it is a special heritage unique to this continent, the legends of heroic survival in the outback became romanticized and soon became legends to be retold over and over again. Books, newspapers, songs, poems, films and television all have contributed to the folklore that Australians like to identify as part of their national character. Occasionally, legends are combined and it is not surprising to encounter mailbox models of the subversive character Ned Kelly (figure 4), a notorious nineteenth-century outlaw who has something of a Robin Hood status in Australian history. In recent years, there have been several articles devoted to the cult of the mailbox, including a national competition to find "The true Aussie letterbox," broadcast on a popular weekly television program[10] (carried out with a great sense of fun, because mailboxes seldom are taken seriously). It is inevitable that the past is evoked on the slightest pretext, and often is abused in the perpetuation of bush mythology. Australia is predominantly an urban community with more than ninety-percent of the population living in the cities dotted around the coastline, but people like to identify themselves with the courage and fortitude of the real pioneer generations. A mailbox that emulates the spirit of the outback is one way of associating themselves and their little patch of ground with the rugged independence of the early homesteaders. Crocodile Dundee lives everywhere—no more so than in suburbia.

She'll Be Right

Australians have a saying "She'll be right" that covers a multitude of situations, literally meaning, "It will be all right." In the context of the pioneer hardship, when everyone had to make do in the severest circumstances, few people expected sophisticated solutions or great craft skills. As long as it did the job, it was okay. Sharing this understanding (mythical or otherwise) is part of belonging to the community. At best, it sums up the spirit of flying by the seat of your pants in precarious situations and getting away with it—the virtue of improvising and creating solutions to problems "on the fly."

"She'll be right" still is very much in use but, unfortunately, the other side of the coin means that it also is used as an excuse for lazy or uncaring work. The complacency factor in "She'll be right" allows for the profusion of the poor and ramshackle human-made environment that is found in many rural areas. Farms, smallhold-

9 Jim Logan, *Everyday Art: Australian Folk Art.*

10 "Burke's Backyard," a weekly television program devoted to homes and gardens, as reported in the magazine *Burke's Backyard* (July 1998): 30–31.

ings, paddocks, shops, garages, homes, and outbuildings often are littered with old equipment and junk accumulated over many years. Tractors, plows, cars, fridges, ropes, old tires, and the kitchen sink are left to rot and rust where they fall. On a purely practical level, this open warehouse is the source for the spare parts and materials that saves money and a probable long trip to a township for replacements. One might argue that the stockpile could be tidied up and hidden from view with a little more planning, but it is this acceptance of the general untidiness that allows so many of the mailboxes to be tolerated along the roadside. Many have gone by their use-by date a long time ago. "She'll be right" frequently is an abuse of a proud outback heritage, and is a counter-culture to designing and making things properly. Paradoxically, it is within this context that the freedom to erect the weirdest contraptions is fostered.

Access to Tools and Materials

Farmers traditionally have a range of quite sophisticated tools in order to maintain the infrastructure of the farm. Country people generally have access to welding equipment and a stockpile of materials lying around that can be put to good use for the second or umpteenth time. It has been comparatively easy for anyone in a rural community to "rattle up" something that will do the job. In most cases, if the aim of making do with a revamped piece of equipment or a container of some sort is for cheapness and practicality, almost anything will do. Recycling or making a one-off special mailbox sometimes is left to (or taken over by) the teenagers in the family. In this instance, the result more than likely will be something creative and idiosyncratic but, again, that is by no means the rule.

The rural habit of the do-it-yourself letterbox has been emulated by urban dwellers for decades. While a factory-made product is most common in the cities and suburbs, there are a number of homeowners (like their counterparts in the U.S.) who enjoy making something from their own design. Derham Groves has described the urban phenomenon as stemming from the do-it-yourself period in the postwar years.[11] There certainly is a lot of time and effort spent by owners (invariably men in their backyard workshop) to make a mailbox that is distinctive. But the rural custom for making do with an on-hand container came first, and the inspiration for the extrovert homemade suburban mailbox was (and still is) the rural roadside mailbox.

Fun and Self-Satisfaction

If making do is the main factor for the vast majority of mailboxes, the other significant factor is the humor behind the more out of the ordinary examples in present-day life. These are the ones that have developed the mailbox sub-culture into a full-blown cult of the weird and wonderful. The outback make-do culture frequently is parodied in the continuation and upstaging of that heritage, which is both

11 Derham Groves, *Mail Art: The Do-it-yourself Letterbox from Workshop to Gatepost* (Melbourne, Australia: Hale & Ironmonger Pty Limited, 1998).

Groves is an architect and popculture historian based in Melbourne. His book explores the homemade letterbox in the context of the do-it-yourself craze of the postwar years, and the social role of the male backyard workshop. It contains many bizarre examples of homemade letterboxes, mostly around Melbourne and its suburbs.

treasured and mockingly presented at the same time. In the case of the mailboxes that exist out there—as part of the rural tradition—it can be hard to draw a line between those that are naïve expressions of a genuine outback culture and those that are made with a prominent tongue-in-the-cheek.

There is almost a subversive element in the mixture of bravado and self-deprecating humor in some of the more bizarre models on public exhibition. The humor can be contagious, because it is not uncommon for a locality to indicate a competitive spirit among the designers. That is, where one finds a particularly unusual box, it is quite likely that there will be several others in the same area. Having said that, some of the most distinctive creations that may be encountered can suddenly appear as lone examples among many conventional efforts. There are no set rules.

We can ponder over the simple making do practice and ask at what point did it turn to full-blown humor? Was it the frequency with which some solutions resulted in unintentional humor that sparked someone to set up a deliberate joke? Or did it all emerge at the same time? I guess that outback communities needed a strong sense of humor from the outset if they were to survive the deprivations brought about by their geographic isolation. But the fallabout fun that is evident in Aussie mailboxes (both in town and in the country) is a self-perpetuating cult that shows no abatement. The more fun people have in concocting the bizarre, the more it is appreciated, and the more it is accepted as the Aussie way of life. The cult of making an unusual mailbox is so strong that one newspaper article[12] described the "purchase of a purpose-built mailbox from a hardware store as an act of national betrayal."

Such claims by the media unashamedly cash in on the myths of the outback heritage. Nonetheless, the rural mailboxes are products of the bush—they are not suburban replicas, and they represent a nonconformist outlook that is part of the search for a national identity.

What's Out There

Not that all of the Australian mailboxes may be described as art or parody, only a minority graduate to this category. There's a plethora of objects that have been hung out on the road with a minimum of thought and effort. Any humor probably is accidental. Some of them could better be described as roadside junk and, at worst, a form of environmental vandalism. At this level, they can be an embarrassment to modern Australia and provide some justification for the "cultural cringe" that would rather ignore their existence. But there are many shades of design between the extremes of art and vandalism.

The main charm (where charm exists) of the Aussie mailbox lies in the fact that it can be anything so long as it holds the mail. That really leaves things wide open, for it can be something that is

12 Peter Laud, "The Mail gets Through" *The Sunday Times* (Western Australia), April 16, 1998.

13 Among the items we have seen:
air-conditioning flue,
beer barrels,
bread box,
buckets,
buoys,
cashbox,
chest of drawers,
cookers,
dustbins,
exhaust silencer, [muffler]
fire safe,
fire alarm case,
fridges,
freezers,
gas cylinders,
gearbox,
kennels,
lavatory,
lawn mower box,
milk churns,
microwaves,
mop buckets,
motorbike engine,
oil cans,
outboard motors,
petrol cans,
radios,
saucepans,
ships funnel,
stoves,
straw chaffer,
toolbox,
tractor hood,
water tanks,
watering can,
wine barrels,
and many more unidentified objects.

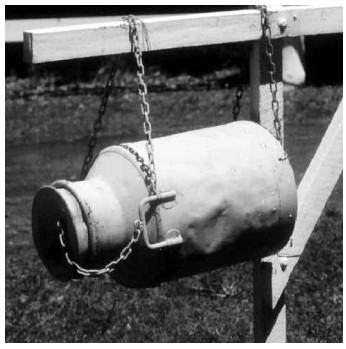


Figure 5
The most popular and now the *de facto* standard Aussie mailbox.

Figure 6
Old oil cans are a close second in the popularity stakes.

Figure 7 (above)
On the increase is the plastic liquid container that is easy to cut and nail to a post.

too old, worn out, or no longer needed[13] to a homemade, purpose-built container. In the first category (that may be described as genuine recycling), the most common item that country people use is the milk churn (figure 5), closely followed by the cylindrical oil can or fuel drum (figure 6). It often depends on the region: a predominantly dairy farming community will tend to reuse the many old milk churns that are available, whereas other areas may find more fuel cans no hand.

In recent years, the ubiquitous plastic liquid container has joined the club as the cheapest and most easily recycled item because it is soft and easy to cut and screw to a stand (figure 7). The plastic upstart generally is more unsightly than the rigid metal cans, but these three varieties are the most common recycled items seen along the roadside. However, it is the milk churn (conjuring up nostalgic ideas of a healthy rural life) that has become the *de facto* standard.

The homemade mailbox is the second category. It frequently is quite large, made of scrap wood or metal, or a combination of both, and often resembles a house (figure 8). The homemade box is as common in the countryside as the milk churn or oil drum. Sometimes, a quite ordinary box is mounted onto a specially constructed pedestal, and any creative effort is channeled into the stand rather than the box. Containers made of rock and slate, and even a whale-bone (close to the southwest coast) have been seen. Homemade letterboxes allow the makers to use their imagination to the full, and this can take on animated forms—human or otherwise. (There have been one or two alien "ET" appearances!) As one might expect, Australian bush animals also are popular.

The Social Role of the Mailbox

The large rural box is a functional design. Living in the country means that mail often is in the form of spare parts or mail-order goods that require a space large enough to contain a good sized package. It is one reason why the old (post-World War II) refrigera-

Figure 8 (right)
A small-scale house that functions as a depository for many items, noted in South Australia.

Figure 9
An old fridge mailbox blends better with the countryside when painted olive green.

tor makes a functional mailbox. It is large, generally watertight, and has shelves that can be adjusted for large or small packages. Left to rust on the roadside, it is seldom a pretty sight, but when painted an appropriate color, the fridge can be a serviceable mailbox (figure 9).

In addition to the large mail-order packages, neighbors leave message and return borrowed items or even money in the mailbox as an alternative to making the visit out to the distant homestead. The convenience of groups at strategic corners facilitates this social interchange by proxy. And few will worry about who else might see what has been left for a neighbor—everyone knows what is going on in small communities even if they are miles apart. Times may be changing, but the country tradition of leaving homes unlocked applies equally to the mailboxes. Occasionally, one sees a padlock on a roadside mailbox, but generally they are open to the elements and anyone passing by.

Valuing the Past

The potential supply of materials and spare parts from old machinery left in the corners of sheds is not the only reason for junk to accumulate. Country folk usually have a keen sense of family history, and it can be quite heartbreaking to just throw away a once-loved laborsaving device of their parents or grandparents. If the old item can be preserved and put to good use again, then several problems can be solved at the same time. The straw chaffer (figure 10) is just such an example. The farmer who converted this was pleased to explain the machine's function, and took us to his machine shed to demonstrate how a less ancient chaffer worked. He had saved the old machine for sentimental reasons, and had carefully welded the moving parts together so that it was safe in a public place. It was set in concrete in the ground, and he was justifiably proud that his distinctive mailbox was a noted landmark along the highway.

Figure 10
In retirement, a family workhorse (a straw chaffer) reposes as the family mailbox.

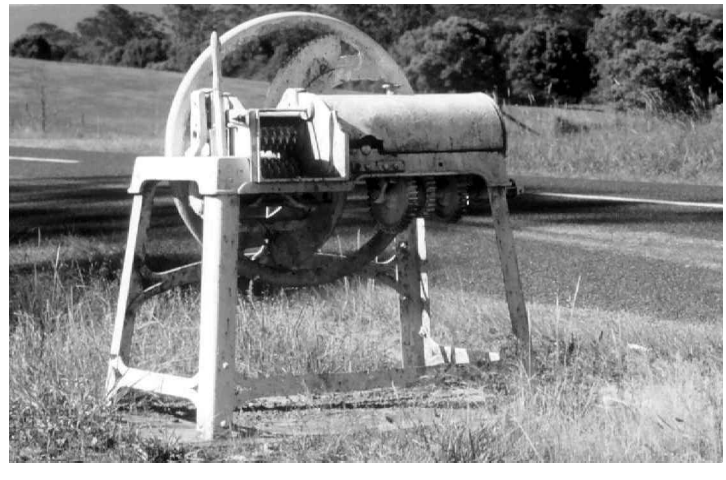


Figure 11
Engine spare parts and other junk make up a realistic kangaroo on the southwest coast.

This is another function of the distinctive mailbox: it doubles as a marker along the road. It can identify the particular homestead where it stands, and also serve as a landmark for other properties. "Two roads on the left beyond the pink pig..." might be the directions for finding an unmarked track. Special mailboxes create a local reputation for their creators, and contribute to the collective pride of the neighborhood.

The Mailbox as Everyday Art

These days, it sometimes is difficult to distinguish folk art from professional art. The influences seem to operate both ways. Images of soft-drink cans or piles of bricks have been exhibited in galleries around the world as art. In 2001, an empty room with a light switching on and off was awarded one of the most coveted art prizes in the UK.[14] Some of the mailbox constructions made by untrained people may lack a few craft refinements here and there, but they often are indistinguishable from the art object. Taken out of the roadside environment and put on a modern pedestal in a white-walled gallery, many would make a fine exhibition.

I am not suggesting that we should put the mailbox phenomenon on a pedestal. They are functional items, and it is right to see them in their authentic surroundings. The kangaroo (figure 11) is an ingenious construction from spare parts of machinery, and is simply one example of the everyday roadside exhibition. The battered oil can with flaking paint and half-obscured plot numbers glinting in the Australian sunlight has an attraction that may be appreciated as an art object. Art often is challenging us to see again, to look at ourselves in a fresh light and to rethink our values. The homemade rural mailbox is not made for commercial gain, and it is certainly not ersatz. The roadside product is not part of a cynical cashing in on a kitsch object—*this is the real thing.* The objects along our verges all have a story to tell of their makers, of the wear and tear of time, and of the harsh climate. More than myth, they are part of the narrative of the Australian culture.

14 The Turner Prize is awarded by Tate Britain each year for innovative contributions to contemporary art. In 2001, it was awarded to Martin Creed, who simply adjusted the light switch in one of the empty rooms in the Tate Gallery to go on and off every five seconds. The text states: "Creed celebrates the mechanics of *the everyday*.... We are invited to reevaluate our relationship with our immediate surroundings, to look again and to question what we are presented with." (My italics). http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/turnerprize/winner.htm

Facing the West: Greece in the Great Exhibition of 1851

Artemis Yagou

This paper explores the prehistory of industrial design in Greece, through original research on the Greek participation in the exhibition which took place in London in 1851, and is known as "The Great Exhibition" or as "The Exhibition of 1851." Although the participation of the young Greek state was very modest, at the same time it was a remarkable event which triggered numerous reactions, both positive and negative. This paper outlines the condition of the Greek state in 1851, presents facts about the Greek participation in the Great Exhibition, and discusses reactions by Greeks as well as relevant opinions expressed by foreigners. This research is situated in the context of an emerging local design historiography, which bears close links to economic and social history. Since this is research in progress, this text is meant to be an introduction to the subject.[1]

To begin with, it must be stressed that, in 1851, the modern Greek state was only two decades old, and it was undergoing a phase of organizational and political development. Various internal factors constituted serious obstacles in the growth of the production and financial sectors.[2] The production base remained archaic and the development rate was negligible. The country was still in a pre-industrial, pre-banking, and even pre-property state.[3] The country was devastated after more than a decade of independence war, it was very sparsely populated (seventeen inhabitants per square kilometer in 1839), the natural resources were underused, and urbanization was in an embryonic state. The majority of the population lived in villages, where exchange based on money was still unknown. The local economy was based on agrarian and self-sufficient ways of living. Before the "take-off" of the Greek industry in the late 1860s, there is no point in talking about industrialization, or even "early industrialization."[4] The first bank, the National Bank of Greece, was founded in 1841, and remained the only institution of this kind for more than two decades.[5] The journalist and writer Stefanos Xenos, who attended the Great Exhibition as a correspondent for Greek newspapers, points out the difficulties of presenting the exhibition to the Greek audience, of describing and comparing objects and situations unseen by the majority of the local population: "[We Greeks have] "neither the things, nor the names, nor the shapes."[6]

The British newspaper *Morning Chronicle* refers to certain historical conditions in an attempt to provide explanations for the underdevelopment of Greek industry in mid-nineteenth century.

1 An earlier version of this paper was presented in "Mind the Map," 3rd International Conference on Design History and Design Studies, held in Istanbul, Turkey, in July 2002.

2 Konstantinos Papathanassopoulos, "The Merchant Marine: From Mast to Steam" in Dimitris G. Tsaousis, ed., *Aspects of the Greek Society in the 19th Century,* (Athens: Hestia, 1983), 74–75. [in Greek]

3 Aliki Vaxevanoglou, *The Social Reception of Innovation: The Example of Electrification in Inter-war Greece* (Athens: Neohellenic Research Institute/ National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1996), 71. [in Greek, with French summary.] Also: Vassilis Panayotopoulos, *Modernisation and Industrial Revolution in the Balkans in the 19th Century,* (Athens: Themelio, 1980), 233. [In Greek].

4 Christina Agriantoni, *The Beginnings of Industrialization in Greece during the 19th Century* (Athens: Educational and Cultural Foundation of the Commercial Bank of Greece, 1986), 15. [in Greek]. See also: Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece* (London: Arnold, 2001), 33–40.

5 Agriantoni, 158-160. See also: Christos Hadziiossif, *The Elderly Moon: Industry in the Greek Economy, 1830–1940* (Athens: Themelio, 1993), 201–212. [in Greek].

6 Zefyros Kafkalides, *Stefanos Xenos—Scenes from the Drama of Hellenism in the East and the West (1821–1894)* (Athens: Kastaniotis, 1988), 128. [in Greek] See also note 42 below.

The main issues highlighted are the financial system of the Ottoman Empire, the absence of infrastructure, the lack of capital and raw materials, and the complete lack of legal guarantees for the safety of individuals and property during the four centuries of Turkish occupation.[7] To these long-term factors, one also should add the political situation in Greece in the two decades preceding the Great Exhibition. Despite her independence, Greece remained weak and insecure on a political level. In many ways, the war for liberation from a foreign yoke had resulted merely in a change of masters. The country was ruled by King Otto of Bavaria, who had been imposed by the great powers of the time: England, France, and Russia. Greek politics were dominated by the respective parties, the so-called English, French, and Russian parties.[8] The autocratic governance by Otto led to significant tensions, and finally to the uprising of 1843, which ended the age of absolutism and marked the beginning of Otto's constitutional monarchy (which lasted until his final deportation in 1862).[9] Despite the constitutional reform, the country's dependence on foreign powers remained strong. In 1850, the British fleet enforced a three-month blockade of Greek ports and threatened to bombard Athens in retaliation for the attack by an Athens mob on a Jewish merchant who was a British subject. These actions paralyzed all economic activity, and generated widespread anti-British feelings.[10]

Generally speaking, the Greek participation in the Great Exhibition should be viewed in the light of the prevailing ideology of the times regarding the role of the national state.

The Greek War of Independence was the first major successful war of independence by a subject population against an imperial power since the American revolution of 1776. It was the first successful nationalist revolution, and it became a model for later nationalist struggle elsewhere. The Greek war for liberation also must be seen in the context of Europe during the heyday of the conservative counter-revolution that dominated the great power politics after the defeat of Napoleon.[11] After independence was achieved, the Greek state remained a not yet fully formed apparatus, which was looking for ways to consolidate itself and obtain recognition from its European protectors.[12] Furthermore, the institution of the state, together with other institutions "imported" from the West, had to operate in Greece within a totally different system of collective representations and worldviews resulting from the country's historical trajectory. Such imported institutions become idealized, perfect exemplars which have to be imitated and approached, an attitude which leads to a strong cultural and ideological dependence from the original models, i.e., from the West.[13]

The Great Exhibition was the culmination of similar events which already had been organized on a national level in France since the end of the eighteenth century, and in various European countries in the first half of the nineteenth century. In concentrat-

7 Georgios Anastassopoulos, *A History of Greek Industry 1840–1940, Vol. I (1840–1884)* (Athens: Greek Publication Company, 1947), 108–9. [In Greek].

8 Gallant, *Modern Greece*, 31–33.

9 Ibid., 33–44.

10 Ibid., 42–43.

11 Ibid., 9.

12 Rodanthi Tzanelli, "Haunted by the 'Enemy' Within: Brigandage, Vlachian/Albanian Greekness, Turkish "Contamination" and Narratives of Greek Nationhood in the Dilessi/Marathon Affair (1870)," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 20:1 (May 2002): 47–74.

13 Constantine Tsoukalas, "State and Society in 19th Century Greece" in Tsaousis, 40–41.

ing on the progression from raw materials to manufactured goods, through technical processes and the application of design values, the exhibitions reflected the economic geography of industrial development, of specialization, and of international markets. Furthermore, the exhibitions provided insights into domestic developments in art and design, and in the expression of national character as well as in the articulation of private and governmental agencies in planning and funding. They were at the same time global and local, reducing complex sets of economic, scientific, and cultural interactions to one vast display.[14] The Crystal Palace was designed and constructed specifically for the needs of the exhibition in Hyde Park, in "the great European heart called London."[15] Reports by the Greek press at the time refer to the "crystal store,"[16] the "glass palace,"[17] the "large and infinite shelter of Hyde Park,"[18] and the "great building, in one part of which free Greece can be found."[19] The exhibition, which has become a touchstone for the nineteenth century, was inaugurated on the first of May 1851, and remained open until the 31st of October of that same year. During this period, it was visited by six million people.[20]

In the vast space defined by the glass and iron shell of the Crystal Palace, practically everything was presented, including products from a total of 17,000 exhibitors. Generally, exhibits were divided into four sections (Raw Materials, Machinery, Manufactures, and Fine Arts), each one of which was further divided into classes.[21] The exhibition was organized in an extremely systematic fashion, and the official catalogue was a three-volume publication with no precedent in history.[22] Furthermore, a complex prize-giving system was established, with committees consisting of judges from all over the world, appointed by the respective governments. The multi-volume catalogues with the verdict of the juries and the comments by the commissioners complement what has been considered as "the best documented event of the nineteenth century"[23] and anticipate the times when information and its management will dominate society. Thanks to the participation of the industrially advanced countries, the Great Exhibition became the most important and largest event of its kind that had been organized, in a scale that surpassed by far everything that happened before it. Of the nations invited to take part, thirty-four accepted, including Greece.[24] A great percentage of the exhibits consisted of raw materials and craft products. The Greek products also belonged in these two groups. Such exhibits were, in one sense, off the mark as they didn't contribute to the discourse of the relationship between art and industry.[25]

The participation of Greece in the Great Exhibition, however, was indicative of the efforts to organize the country according to European standards and to open up the Greek economy to the international market. Although the Greek presence was rather poor compared to the industrial innovations presented in Crystal Palace by the advanced countries, it provided the opportunity for direct

14 Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas, The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibition, and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 3–26.

15 *Pandora* 2: 43 (1/1/1852): 1031. [in Greek].

16 *Ionian Bee (Ioniki Melissa)* No. 16 (11/5/1851): 187. [in Greek].

17 *Ionian Bee (Ioniki Melissa),* No. 18 (21/6/1851): 214. [in Greek].

18 *Pandora* 2: 30 (15/6/1851): 725 [in Greek].

19 Anastassopoulos, *A History of Greek Industry 1840–1940, Vol. I (1840–1884)* 117.

20 Louise Purbrick, ed., *The Great Exhibition of 1851—New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 1–25.

21 *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851. (Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue, by Authority of the Royal Commission in Three Volumes)* (London: 1852).

22 *Great Exhibition, etc.*, 82.

23 Francis D. Klingender, *Art and the Industrial Revolution* (London: Evelyn, Adams and Mackay, 1968), 165.

24 Greenhalgh, 12.

25 Renato De Fusco, *History of Design* (Athens: Nova Publications, 1989), 53 [in Greek].

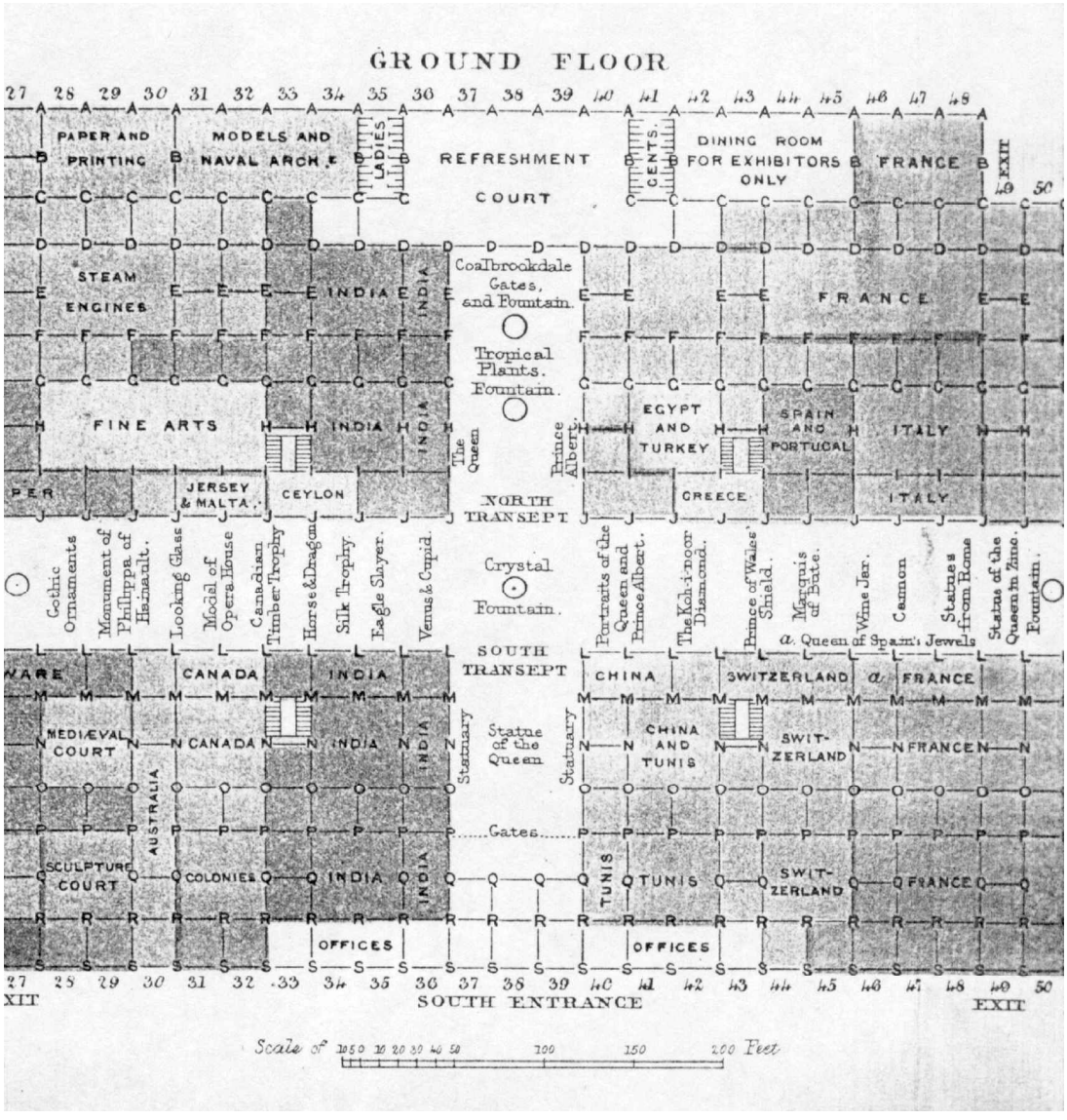


Figure 1
Plan of the exhibition area where the Greek goods were presented. From the *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851. (Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue, by Authority of the Royal Commission in Three Volumes)* (London: 1852).

contact between the Greeks and international technical achievements. It also created the preconditions for reflection and discussion regarding the image which Greece was projecting, or struggling to project, abroad.[26] In more general terms, the participation of peripheral countries in international exhibitions generates discussions regarding the character of participation. More specifically, the question arises whether the particularities of a culture should be emphasized, or whether it would be preferable to identify with modern, industrial standards.[27]

The Greek participation effort was coordinated by a committee consisting of local personalities, and supported by the London-based Commissioner and Agent, both distinguished members of the Greek entrepreneurial Diaspora.[28] The Greek exhibition space had a very good position on the ground floor near the south entrance

(figure 1). It was situated close to the Crystal Fountain and next to the Koh-I-Noor diamond, both great attractions.[29] The total floor space originally allotted to Greece was 186 square meters, but only ninety-three square meters were usable after deducting the space needed for passages.

As one might expect, the Greek presence in the exhibition was modest, consisting of only raw materials and some craft products. Despite the focus of the exhibition on industrialization, some of the Greek exhibits attracted attention, were praised for their quality, and received a number of prizes.[30]

The Greek exhibits were mainly raw materials: various mineral products (including several types of marble), honey, tobacco, figs, black currant, and sponges, as well as processed leather skins, silk embroideries, woodcarvings, and marble bas-reliefs. The thirty-one exhibits came from all over Greece, which, at the time occupied about half the area that it occupies today. The distribution of the official Greek exhibitors was as follows: Athens: ten (including the Greek Government, the monastery of Pendeli, and the monastery of Hymettus); Euboea island: four; Central Greece: two; Peloponnese: ten; Cyclades Islands: five; Hydra Island: one; and Smyrna (Izmir, Turkey, outside the boundaries of the Greek state, but with a thriving Greek community): one. Among them, it is possible to identify several of the pioneers of the Greek proto-industrialization that was going to take place in the following decades.[31]

Products by several Greek producers and merchants also were included in the official Turkish section. These were representing the Greek communities of Istanbul, Thessaloniki (Salonica), Rhodes, Crete, Cyprus, and other places still belonging to the Ottoman Empire in 1851.[32] The Ionian Islands (west of mainland Greece) at the time were under the protection of the British Empire, and exhibited in the "Colonies and Dependencies" section, together with the other Mediterranean colonies, Malta and Gibraltar. The Ionian Islands presented silver and golden jewelry, silk scarves, embroidered aprons, objects made of olive wood, and some raw materials. Some of these exhibits impressed the public and the jurors, who commented that "the specimens of embroidery are extremely rich and beautiful."[33] "The most remarkable products (from the Ionian Islands) are the splendid aprons which the peasant-girls of that country wear. These aprons are the ordinary work and everyday wear of the peasant-girls of Corfu."[34] Greece in a sense was present in some other pavilions as well, through the influence of classicism on products such as Wedgwood porcelain, but also through idealized representations of antiquity such as *The Greek Slave*, a sculpture by the American Hiram Power (figure 2).[35] These objects of course were irrelevant to the realities of the newly-founded Greek state.

Regarding the official Greek participation, honorable mentions were awarded to specimens of steatite (also known as soap stone or French chalk of commerce), honey from two different

26 Antonia Mertyri, *The Artistic Education of the Youth in Greece (1863–1945)* (Athens: Neohellenic Research Institute/ National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2000), 103. [in Greek].

27 See also: Peter B. MacKeith and Kerstin Smeds, *The Finland Pavilions—Finland at the Universal Expositions 1900–1992* (Tampere: Kustannus City Oy, 1992), 9–10.

28 Vissarion Stavrakas, ed., "The Hellenism in England," *Kathimerini* (special section, 9/2/1997) [in Greek].

29 *First report of the Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851* (London: Clowes & Sons, 1852). See also Jane Shadel Spillman, *Glass from World's Fairs, 1851–1904* (NY: The Corning Museum of Glass, 1986), 8–9.

30 *Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851, Reports by the Juries on the Subjects in the Thirty Classes into which the Exhibition Was Divided,* (London: Printed for the Royal Commission, William Clowes and Sons, Stamford Street and Charing Cross, 1852), xxxv–cxix.

31 Agriantoni, *The Beginnings of Industrialization in Greece during the 19th Century* especially the first and second parts.

32 *Great Exhibition,* 1385–1399.

33 Ibid., 947.

34 Ibid.

35 Purbrick, *The Great Exhibition of 1851—New Interdisciplinary Essays,* 89 and 188.

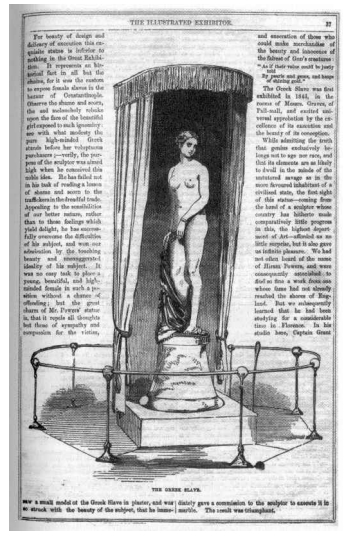


Figure 2 (left)
"The Greek Slave," by American sculptor Hiram Power. From The Illustrated Exhibitor, Vol. 1 (London: 1851).

Figure 3 (right)
Traditional, embroidered male costume. From the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851. (Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue, by Authority of the Royal Commission in Three Volumes) (London: 1852).

regions, sponges, and embroidered costumes for men (figure 3).[36] The costumes actually were the only Greek exhibits that could be regarded as mass-produced objects.[37] The gold-embroidered, traditional male costume from Athens impressed the jurors, and it was considered as representing the Greek spirit and individuality.[38] It was also acknowledged that the quality of this work was not irrelevant with the training received by its creators at the School of Arts in Athens (which later became the National Technical University of Athens).[39] Also, the Reverent Agathangelos, professor in the School of Arts, was honored with a golden medal by Queen Victoria for his delicate woodcarvings (figure 4).[40] By the way, Agathangelos is mentioned in the Official Catalogue as "Designer and Artist." [41] This must be the first usage of the term "designer" in the Greek context, as well as the first case of differentiation between "artist" and "designer." [42]

But what were the impressions generated by the Greek participation? On the one hand, there was a series of optimistic responses in the Greek press. The Athenian journal *Pandora* comments: "Although small, although poor, we can, if supported, improve industry." [43] On the occasion of the prizes awarded *Pandora* remarks: "Is it then possible for small Greece to boast that she hasn't appeared as a small and insignificant satellite on the huge stage in which giants and titans have astonished the world?" [44] The correspondent Xenos notes: "The Greek press has praised us poetically [...] because indeed we have a future, and a great one." [45] But most of the comments about the Greek presence were not so positive. Xenos, himself, expresses his disillusionment by the Greek participation by saying: "Greece could only demonstrate these plain, very plain things [...] in these industrial Olympic Games." He then criticizes the Greek press and the government for not sufficiently supporting the event.[46]

36 Stefanos Xenos, *The Great Exhibition* (London: Wertheimer & Co., 1852), 166 [in Greek]. See also: *Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations,* Vol. 2, "Greek Products— In the Great Exhibition of London," *Pandora* Vol. B, Issue 44, (15/1/1852): 1062 [in Greek]; and correspondence by Stefanos Xenon quoted in: Anastassopoulos, *A History of Greek Industry 1840-1940, Vol. I (1840–1884),* 117.

37 *Pandora,* 2: 44 (15/1/1852): 1062.

38 Ibid.

39 *Manuscript No KG861,* Gennadius Library, Athens, 42 [in Greek].

40 *Pandora* (15/1/1852): 1062.

41 *Great Exhibition,* 1407.

42 It has to be stressed, however, that the English-language differentiation between "artist" and "designer" could not be properly conveyed in the Greek language, since the concept of "design" was nonexistent. In a Greek text, Agathangelos was mentioned as "one of the most experienced and skillful men in the art of engraving, appointed as professor in the School of Arts" (*Manuscript No. KG861,* 39). A few years later, he was described as "teacher of woodcarving in the Polytechnic" (*Pandora,* 8: 169, (1/4/1857): 19 [in Greek]. Unfortunately, Greek design terminology remains ambiguous till today, thus adding to widespread ignorance regarding the design domain, and contributing to its low status. For a discussion of these issues, see: Artemis Yagou, "What Is Design? The issue of Greek Terminology in the Area of Industrial Design," *3rd Conference of the Hellenic Society for Terminology: "Greek Language and Terminology"* (Conference Proceedings) (Athens: 2001), 129–137 [in Greek and English].

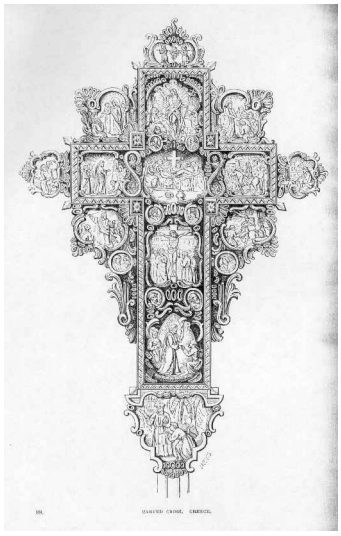


Figure 4
Cross, carved in wood. From the *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851. (Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue, by Authority of the Royal Commission in Three Volumes)* (London: 1852)

The French writer Edmond About later reports:
[...] I brought back to memory what Greece had sent to the exhibition of London. I recalled the disappointment I had experienced while entering the zone which had been assigned to Greek products, when I saw honey in a jar, Corinthian currants, a bit of oil and a bit of wine in bottles, some cotton, some madder-root, a handful of figs, a few acorns, a marble cube, and a showcase with some Greek dresses.[47]

Referring to a similar exhibition that was going to take place in Paris in 1855, he comments: "The Greek industry remains at the same point, and we will all see again in Paris the painful sight that I saw in London. [...] All the industrial products consumed in the Greek kingdom come from abroad. In Greece, they do not know how to make one of the knives sold in Paris for five pennies!"[48] Finally, About makes an ironic comment about the self-centered mentality of the locals: "In the opinion of Greeks, all the events in Europe have Greece as their core and purpose. If England organized an exhibition, she did so in order to promote the products of Greece." [49]

Charles Strong, Professor of Greek in Oxford, poet, and admirer of the Greek culture, exclaims: "Poor Greece.... You have come with simple clothes in this brilliant wedding, although you are the mother of this infinite world!" [50] In a similar mood, the English newspaper *Morning Chronicle* reports: "Greece participates in the exhibition only to remind us of her presence, because it is impossible to assume that the natural and manufactured products of the country consist only of the few specimens of marbles, textiles, and dry fruit presented. [...]. Perhaps, continues the British journalist, the Greek industry was afraid to show her smallness, as the country has just been released from the chains of slavery and the difficulties of a turbulent society. However, there were many serious reasons to excuse Greece in the eyes of everyone. It seems that Greece chose not to present herself properly, out of extreme modesty. This event is very sad." [51]

The situation of the liberated Greek state in 1851 also is described by the *Morning Chronicle* as follows: "Today, Greece is a commercial and exceptionally naval nation, she doesn't work for any foreign ruler, and she is not forced to produce and consume products of a foreign industry. She exports significant quantities of cereals, dry fruit, olive oil, silk, cotton, leather, sponges. Greece could utilize her income from export in order to improve greatly her agriculture and industry, or obtain the necessary machinery until she could manage to produce them herself. Unfortunately, the Greek exhibits do not provide a full picture of the development of Greek industry; the rare Greek textiles do not differ at all from the textiles sent by Turkey. The

43 *Pandora* (15/1/1852): 1062.
44 Ibid.
45 Correspondence by Stefanos Xenos for the magazine *Amalthia* of Izmir, quoted in Mertyri, 103.
46 Kafkalides, *Stefanos Xenos—Scenes from the Drama of Hellenism in the East and the West (1821–1894)*, 134–135.
47 Edmond About, *The Greece of Otto (Contemporary Greece—1854)*, (Athens: Tolidi Bros Publications, undated; first published in French, Paris 1854), 122 [in Greek].
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., 64–65.
50 Xenos, *The Great Exhibition*, 162.
51 Anastassopoulos, *A History of Greek Industry 1840-1940, Vol. I (1840–1884)*. 108–109.

brilliant Greek dress is exhibited in isolation and there are no others to compare."[52]

The official catalogue of the exhibition includes derogatory remarks regarding the participation of this "once-renowned country." It stresses that the Greek products are limited almost exclusively in the first three classes; i.e., in raw materials, whereas the contribution to intermediate products is negligible. It is then implied that the British and other foreigners might be interested in exploiting the Greek natural resources. Furthermore, a jar of Hymettian honey evokes "classical associations," and the ornamental marbles exhibited are reminiscent of "those monuments of skill which have formed the admiration of every time and people."[53] Reference to the ancient past inevitably is unfavorable for nineteenth century Greece. Lyon Playfair, who devised the Exhibition classification system, refers also to the "gigantic position" of Great Britain among nations and asks: "Greece was higher than we are, and where is she now?"[54] However, the conclusion of the Official Catalogue chapter dedicated to Greece is rather optimistic and states, in a patronizing mood: "Greece, replying to the courteous invitation addressed to her by England, whom she considers a protectress and beneficent power, presents herself at the industrial meeting of all nations, conscious of her own demerits, but confident that her exceptional circumstances will justify her efforts, and obtain for her industry a benevolent reception." The passage ends with two mottoes by Theocritus and Hesiod, emphasizing courage, hope for the future, and the importance of a spirit of noble emulation among nations.[55]

Given the standards of the time, the Greek public was quite well informed about the Great Exhibition, because local newspapers published several reports about it. For example, relative dispatches were published in the Athenian newspapers *Athena* and *Aeon*, in the Athenian magazine *Pandora*, in the newspapers *Amalthia* and *Ionian Bee* of Izmir, and in the newspapers *Aeolos* and *Elios* of Hermoupolis (Island of Syros), among others.[56] In 1856, the British Government offered the Official Catalogues of the Exhibition to the School of Arts in Athens. From these volumes, the students as well the instructors of this school had the chance to get to know the new achievements of technology and the various industrial innovations of the time, as well as the traditional exhibits and various products which the most advanced countries had exhibited.[57] Images of products from the exhibition catalogue where systematically used in the following years as subjects for wood engraving exercises in the School of Arts.[58] The Greek correspondent Stefanos Xenos published his impressions of the exhibition in a volume which included 300 illustrations, and was widely distributed to the artists and schools of Greece and of Minor Asia (i.e., the western Turkish coast, the home of large and thriving Greek communities at the time).[59] His book also was used as a prize for students of the School of Arts in 1866.[60] Other publications related to the Great Exhibition also were donated to the School

52 Ibid., 109–110

53 *Great Exhibition*, 1400.

54 John Tallis, *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal Palace, and the Exhibition of the World's Industry in 1851* (London, 1852), 196.

55 *Great Exhibition*, 1407.

56 See, for example, Aeolos, "Newspaper of the Cyclades" published in Hermoupolis (Syros Island), issues 349 (14/4/1851); and 351 (28/4/1851), 353 (12/5/1851), 355 (26/5/1851), 357 (9/6/1851), 369–370 (8/9/1851).

57 Mertyri, *The Artistic Education of the Youth in Greece (1863–1945)*, 104.

58 *Pandora* 6:126 (1855): 137 [in Greek].

59 Kafkalides, *Stefanos Xenos—Scenes from the Drama of Hellenism in the East and the West (1821–1894)*, 138.

60 Mertyri, *The Artistic Education of the Youth in Greece (1863–1945)*, 200.

of Arts by wealthy Greeks living abroad.[61] The influence of the first international exhibitions on Greece also is evident from the establishment of the national exhibition entitled Olympia, which was meant to promote the local products of industry, agriculture, and stock-breeding. The Olympia exhibition was inaugurated in 1859 in Athens, and although it was intended to be an annual event, eventually it was held only four times throughout the nineteenth century (in 1859, 1870, 1875, and 1888).[62]

Admittedly, the participation of the young Greek state in the Great Exhibition was a remarkable event, given the archaic conditions and the negligible development rate of the country during that period. Future research, based on the Greek press of the 1850s and 1860s and on the General State Archives, would further contribute to assess the impact that the Great Exhibition has had on early representations of design and industry in Greece, as well as on subsequent policies of the Greek government in relation to industrial production. These are the two areas where the Great Exhibition seems to have had the most lasting influence. On the one hand, collective representations were shaped through extensive press reports, as well as through the courses in the School of Arts, which at the time was the only institution for technical and artistic education in the country. On the other hand, the influence on state policies materialized mainly through the Olympia exhibition, which constituted a major forum for the Greek productive sector in the second half of the nineteenth century. In any case, despite its limitations, the Greek participation in the Great Exhibition highlighted the European dimension of the young state and nourished the powerful but controversial ideal of westernization.

61 *Pandora* (1855): 142.

62 Nikolaos G Lekkas, Entry "Greece." Chapter: "Fairs, Exhibitions, Markets" in: Great Hellenic Tncyclopedia, Vpl. 10, (Athens: Pursos, 1934), 161. See also: Agriantoni, 102.

John J. Graham: Behind the Peacock's Plumage

Jennifer Jue-Steuck

Artist, designer, esteemed colleague of Lou Dorfsman and Herbert Lubalin, alumnus of New York School of Industrial Art, and NBC's Art Director from 1956 to 1977, John Graham led a team of fifteen and engendered all NBC on-air promotion, promotional kits, exhibits, displays, newscast film openings, and print advertisements including magazines and newspapers. During his long and prolific career, he earned more than seventy-five design awards, yet few Americans today know of his contribution to the history of American graphic art and television.

Among his prestigious honors, the greatest success of his career has proven to be the longevity of his NBC peacock. With the advent of color television in the 1950s came the need to inform viewers that they were watching a program broadcast in color, regardless of whether or not they had color sets. Lawrence K. Grossman, a former NBC vice president, NBC News president, and PBS president recalls the questions facing the network: "What should

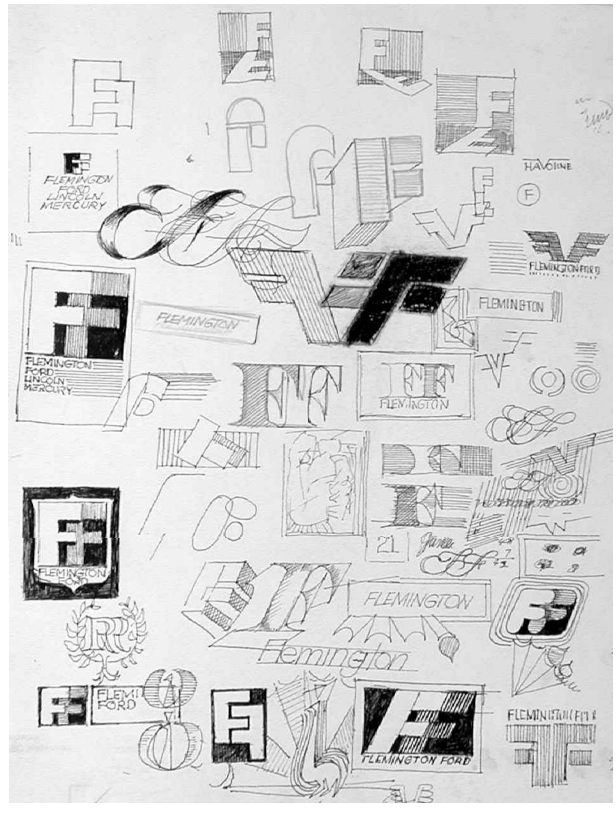


Figure 1
FF and Peacock Designs. All figures reprinted with the permission of Bruce A. Graham, © Copyright Estate of John J. Graham.

the color television symbol be, and how should NBC promote it?" Bruce A. Graham, John Graham's son, shares the family story of the peacock. When his father mentioned the need for a symbol for color television, his mother suggested, "Why don't you use a peacock?" The original peacock sketches created by John Graham are in the Graham archives.

Lou Dorfsman, former assistant to CBS Art Director William Golden, and later Creative Director for CBS Television and CBS Director of Design, states that the "NBC [peacock] logo was John's concept." Herbert Lubalin (1918-1981), graphic designer, photographer, typographer, creator of the typeface Avant-Garde, and a former editorial design director for the International Typeface Corporation's house organ *U & lc* (Upper and lower case), assisted with the artwork. Grossman recalls that Graham "came up with the idea for the peacock...it was a brilliant solution and a beautiful piece of graphics for television... What made the peacock such a wonderful logo was the fact that it worked to define color, whether seen on black and white TV sets, which everyone had then, or on color sets which almost nobody had...[it was] very clear and stood for what it was meant for." In 1956, viewers saw the peacock for the first time "in living color," with eleven feathers in six colors. Pianist Louis A. Garisto of the Metropolitan Jazz Quartet composed the music which accompanied the "bird" from 1957 to1962. By 1959, Graham went on to design the animated NBC snake logo. In addition to his work for television, Graham also created book designs and worked with numerous graphic artists including Andy Warhol. It has been said that he gave Warhol his first professional job. Warhol, in turn, expressed his admiration of and respect for Graham by creating the 1955 book titled *25 Cats Named Sam and One Blue Pussy* as an encomium to him. The limited edition book, published by Seymour

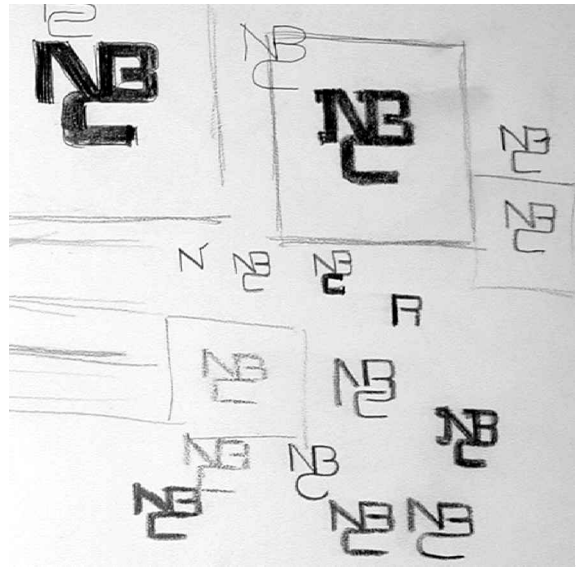
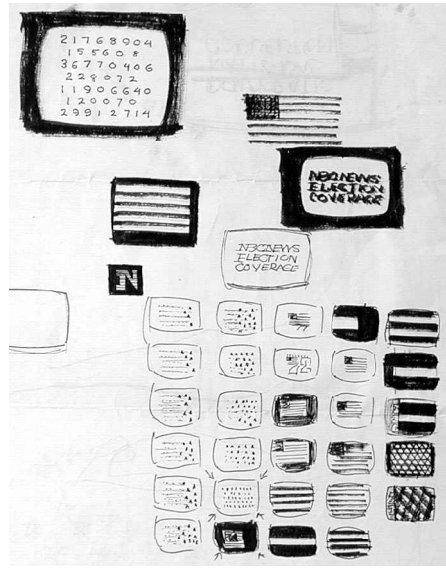


Figure 2
Concepts NBC Snake

Figure 3
Concept Election Night 1972
Figure 4
Decision 74

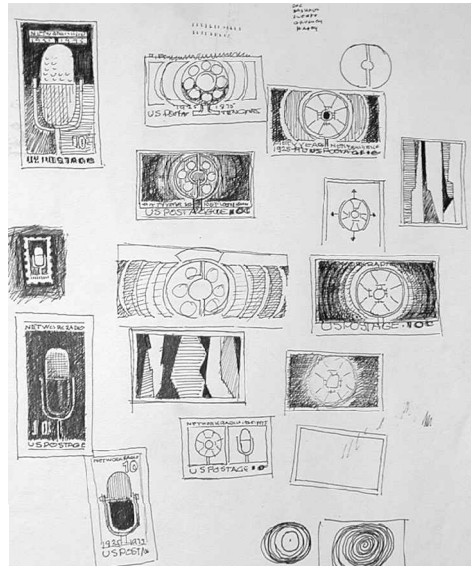


Berlin, was dedicated "To Johnny," designed and colored by hand by Warhol, written by Charles Lisanby, and included calligraphy by Julia Warhola, Warhol's mother.

Among his own book designs, Graham's *Somehow It Works*, a visual portrait of the 1964 Presidential election published by Doubleday, was lauded as one of the "50 Best Books of 1965" by the American Institute of Graphic Arts. In an NBC interdepartmental correspondence letter dated April 19, 1966, Grossman wrote that the honor "is another outstanding recognition of the extraordinary talents of John Graham." *Somehow It Works* was exhibited worldwide as part of AIGA's 1965 ensemble. The book featured photographs by David Hollander and Paul Seligman.

Figure 4
Decision 74

Figure 5
Broadcast Microphone Illustrations

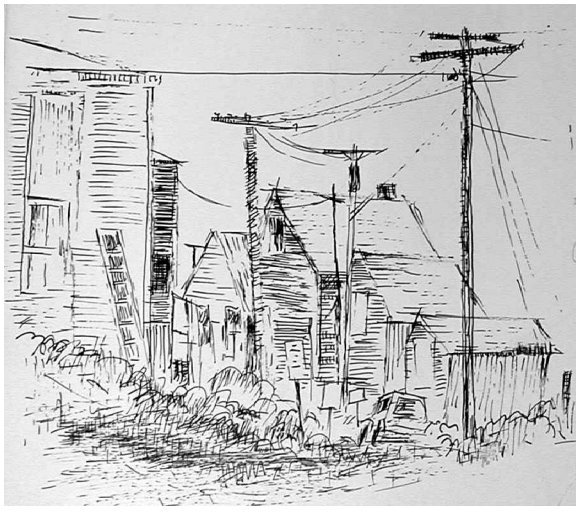


Despite an impressive body of work, Graham has received little attention in historical accounts of corporate identity campaigns and graphic design. When he passed away on June 12, 1994, the only published obituary his family found was in *TV Guide*. A reader wrote, "In the news, they said a man named John Graham had died, and that he was very important to NBC. I missed the part about *how*." A *TV Guide* ghostwriter responded: "He didn't appear on-screen and wasn't a star, but he was indeed important to NBC. As an artist working for the network, Graham in the 1950s created the NBC peacock logo, one of the most endearing symbols in TV history... ."

Grossman states that, despite his contributions, Graham was "a vastly under-appreciated art director," especially from a corporate perspective. Dorfsman adds that he was "an incisive idea person, a first-rate designer, and a first-rate art director." Dorfsman first met Graham in the early 1950s, and recalls that he "didn't have a press department to promote him like I did [at CBS]."

When Grossman came to NBC, he immediately recognized Graham's talent. "For the first time, John had someone who really appreciated his work," recalls Dorfsman. Grossman had come from the elegant designs of CBS," and therefore valued "Graham's great sense of what would work, and what images and metaphors could convey. He had a sense of simplicity, and clarity of communication. He was a genius in many ways," recalls Grossman. As an individual, Dorfsman states that Graham "was quiet ... a modest guy," a characteristic that was reflected in his work: designs that were far from flashy, pompous, or overdone.

Above all else, Graham was a family man and commuted everyday from his home in Pennsylvania to NBC's headquarters in New York City. As a result, he went home a little earlier than other designers. The art design industry, says Dorfsman, required long



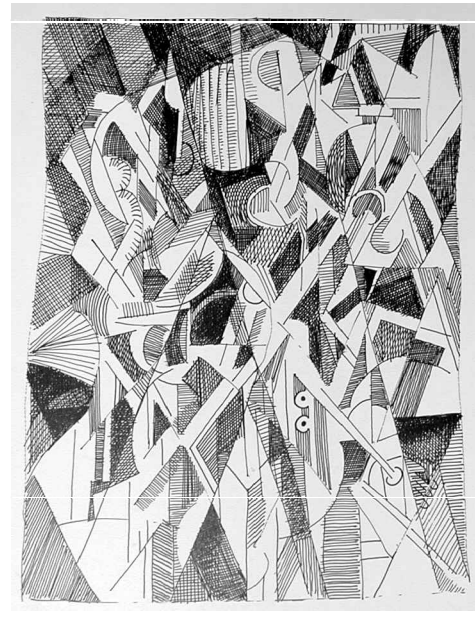


Figure 6 (left)
Cape Cod

Figure 7 (right)
Cubism in Pen and Ink

hours and "if you left early, you lost stature. At the end of the day, people look around and wonder where you are."

In 1977, after thirty-two years at NBC, Graham was unceremoniously discharged. A November 1977 *Variety* Magazine article, "NBC Axes Four Execs in Advertising Area," stated that "NBC's busy guillotine fell last week on the advertising and creative services departments ... and, in the unkindest cut of all, John Graham, who, as director of design, dreamed up the NBC peacock."

Around the same time, the peacock and the snake logo gradually had been phased out and replaced by NBC's "Abstract N" logo in 1976, which was created by an outside design firm. With production costs totaling an estimated $750,000 to $1 million, shortly after its unveiling, NBC was sued for copyright violation by Nebraska Public Television, which had an almost identical logo. The peacock returned by 1979—a less ornate version with just six feathers instead of eleven, and a rounder, symmetrical body—with a new slogan, "NBC, Proud as a Peacock," but there was little mention of the art designer who originally created it.

A logo, a symbol, and an effective technique for the introduction of color television, the NBC peacock will always remain an indelible image in the hearts of the viewing public. In his book *Design, Form, and Chaos,* Paul Rand writes, "A well-designed logo, in the end, is a reflection of the business it symbolizes. It connotes a thoughtful and purposeful enterprise, and mirrors the quality of its products and services." By producing a design that captured the full potential of color television during the medium's infancy, John Graham created a symbol that has lasted for generations. His legacy has touched more lives than we'll ever know.

Highlights of John Graham's Career

Born:	September 25, 1923
Education:	New York School of Industrial Art. Advertising design training with Howard Trafton at the Art Students League (three years).
NBC Employment:	November 1, 1945–December 31, 1977 NBC Art Director of Advertising and Promotion, 1956–1977 NBC Director of Design, 1966–1977.
Honors:	American Institute of Graphic Arts Awards, 1955, 1956, 1958-1960, and 1963–1965. American TV Commercials Festival Awards, 1965. Art Directors Club Awards, 1956–1957, 1960–1961, 1965–1966, and 1968. Communication Arts Magazine Awards, 1963 Curtis Paper Company Awards, 1953, and 1955. Direct Mail Advertising Association Awards, 1953 Hollywood Radio and Television Society Awards, 1974. Lithographers National Association Inc. Awards, 1955. New York Employing Printers Association Inc. Awards, 1955–1957. Printing Industries of Metropolitan New York Inc. Awards, 1963. Radio Daily Award, 1955. Society of Illustrators Awards, 1959, 1967, 1968, 1969. Type Directors Club of New York Awards, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1961, 1963, 1964, 1965, and 1967. Typo Mundus 20 Awards (Date Unknown).