# Statement of Editorial Policy

Beginning with the current volume, *Design Issues* expands to become a quarterly publication. This represents a milestone for the journal, reflecting the growing community of writers and readers who want to learn more about the field of design and contribute to its thoughtful development. The editors would like to take advantage of this opportunity to look backward as well as forward in explaining our editorial policy and the vision and direction of the journal.

Developments in design practice, research and scholarly inquiry over the past decade have done little to change our belief that a common forum is needed for serious discussion of the nature of design and its place in contemporary culture. With the proliferation of special interest groups and the growing number of specialized professional and scholarly conferences and journals around the world, we believe there is an even greater urgency to provide a forum for discussions that contribute to the formation of a design community.

Special interest groups are an important part of the field of design, and many have formed over the years. They usually take shape around a particular problem or around a particular approach or philosophy. The special interest serves as the bond and creates the association. But associations come and go as interests are served and as interests move on in new directions. The idea of a community is something different. It embraces the diversity of associations and special interests that are its constituent parts, but it is more than the sum of such differences. It is the shared commitment to a collective enterprise and to long-term goals of greater understanding and accomplishment. As the philosopher John Dewey argues, a community forms around common problems; it encourages individuals to explore those problems in many ways; and it prizes communication among its diverse members so that the constituent elements of the community may be clarified and enhanced.

Building a design community from such diversity of associations is a great challenge. We hope that everyone who participates in associations and special interest groups will remain mindful of the long-term value of building and exploring connections among all of our diverse groups. To this end, *Design Issues* will continue to offer a forum where diverse interests may come together in an exchange ideas and of the results of inquiry. We believe this will properly support the development of the design community as a whole. Building bridges among diverse kinds of design thinking is our goal.
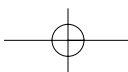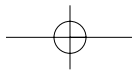
This goal is expressed in the two features that have become the signature of *Design Issues.* First is a mixture of history, criticism, and theory among our articles. From the beginning, the editors reasoned that all three forms of reflection are needed to advance design, because any one kind, if it existed in isolation from the others, could not provide an adequate understanding of a subject so complex and important. The formations of a strong design community depends on *historical* reflection on where design has been, *critical* reflection on where design is at present, and *theoretical* reflection on the assumptions and possibilities for what design may become in the future. This will remain one of the signatures of the journal.

Second is a belief in the importance of pluralism for our field. From the beginning, the editors believed that the collective understanding of design is best advanced through the challenging interplay of contrasting perspectives, approaches, and assumptions. Developments over the past decade have only strengthened our conviction that the field of design will grow best by recognizing and actively cultivating the diversity of perspectives that is one of its central characteristics. This, too will remain one of the signature of the journal.

To understand our editorial policy, consider the kind of writer and reader we hope will participate in *Design Issues.* We seek writers who are curious about design and see their work as a responsible exploration of the subject. They may be designers, design educators, scholars of design, or individuals from any discipline or professional background who want to explore a facet of design. They will be individuals who value not only the concrete experience of design as feature of human culture, but who also value the challenge of expressing the assumptions that lie behind the work of designers, the objects created by designers, and the efforts of those who study design. In short, they will be men and women who pose exciting and challenging questions about design and seek reasonable answers, drawing on whatever evidence, disciplinary knowledge, or inspiration they regard as appropriate.

In turn, we will invite these writers to imagine their readers as people who are passionately interested in design and want to read clear, reasonable discussions of the subject that may shed new and unexpected light on one of the most perplexing and influential features of the contemporary world. These readers may be professional designers, design educators, scholars of design, or experts in some other discipline related to design. They may be museum curators, students, or general readers. Their original interest may be graphic and communication design, industrial and new product development, engineering design, or any of the new areas in which design has been systematically applied in recent years, such as information design, exhibition design, human-computer interaction, experience design, retail and other interior environmental design, robotics, virtual spaces, interface, software, or interactive media. But
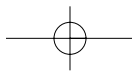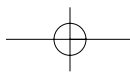
most of all, they will be readers who seek an alternative to the short, thin, and sometimes self-promoting articles that have become too common in many commercial design publications in the United States and abroad. Clearly, we recognize that *Design Issues* is not intended for everyone. Our readers are those who seek relevant connections to their own work in any discussion of design and who do not mind wrestling with unfamiliar subjects or ideas.

As editors, our primary test in selecting manuscripts is simply this: "Why should anyone interested in design read this article?" The answer, for us, must be that it contributes to the understanding of the conception, planning, and making of the cultural environment—an environment of graphic images and symbols, industrial products, services and activities, and systems shaped by designers to support the activities of men and women in all walks of life. The understanding may be historical, critical, or theoretic. It may be derived from the experience of designing or the fruit of scholarly research. It may focus on the classic expressions of graphic or industrial design or on one of the many new areas of design application and technology. It may probe issues of design education or the display of design in museums. It may address problems of design policy and management in corporations or the difficulties of integrating marketing, engineering, and design in product development. It may seek to clarify the subtle problems of information design and the new blending of words and images found in many areas of design. It may examine the career of products in everyday life. It may even address aspects of architectural design or urban planning—provided that ideas about design emerge in a form that is potentially useful to all designers and those who seek to understand design.

The identity of *Design Issues* does not lie in the limits of one branch of designing. Nor does it lie in an area of professional or academic specialization illustrated by any one of our contributors. Nor does it lie in a signature style of writing and reasoning that excludes contributions from individuals of different backgrounds. Instead, the unity of the journal lies in the judgment of the editors that these articles contribute to the advance of design in practice or in study.

But who shall judge our judgment? The first judge will be our readers. Please tell us what you like and do not like about the journal. And also tell us where you think the journal *should* be headed if it is to successfully pursue the changing character of design in the contemporary world. The second judge will be our Editorial and Advisory Boards, comprised of distinguished individuals who represent alternative perspectives and excellence along the wider path that *Design Issues* seeks to explore. And the third judge will be time. Time will tell what work has really made a difference in the understanding of design.
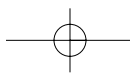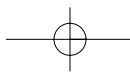
As at the founding of *Design Issues*, we continue to believe that a forum is urgently needed for serious discussion of the role of design in the contemporary world, and we want this journal to be the best forum available today for thoughtful reflection.

Richard Buchanan
Dennis Doordan
Victor Margolin