

Introduction

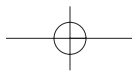
One of the tasks of design studies is to gather, interpret and relate the diverse learnings that emerge from design in local cultural circumstances around the world and explore their significance for broader design theory and better informed design practice. Taken together, the essays in this issue of the journal help us to face that task. They offer novel perspectives on important issues faced by designers and design scholars, alike, as we explore design as a cultural art.

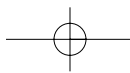
The essays explore three important dimensions of design as a contemporary cultural art. The first dimension is the manner of production, ranging from individual craft production to industrial mass production and mass communication. The second dimension is the diversity of designed products, ranging from graphic communications and artifacts to human interactions and complex human-created systems. The third dimension is the complex interrelation of time in the field of design, ranging from historical investigations of the past, to critical assessments of the present, to speculation about the future. We invite readers to study and compare the articles with these dimensions in mind.

In the opening essay, Nicola Morelli discusses the extension of design methods to treat product and service systems. Morelli notes that such systems have already been widely discussed in the disciplines of management and marketing but that designers are increasingly invited to share their own innovative insights into the problems that such systems are intended to address. This article focuses on a matter that concerns a growing number of designers today.

In the next essay, Turkish designer and design educator Oğuzhan Özcan discusses the world tradition of shadow plays and the possible relevance of that tradition for the design of new interactive media products. His essay reports exploratory educational projects conducted in the interactive design program that he established at Yidiz Technical University in Istanbul. The essay is intriguing in itself, but it also illustrates how a case study in educational practice may be given context in local culture and made accessible and significant for a wider audience.

Contemporary design practice in most branches of the field now recognizes the ethical and practical responsibility of thinking carefully about the intended user of a product. The roots of this recognition in the sphere of domestic living may be traced to diverse works in the nineteenth century. To demonstrate this point,





William Taylor provides close reading of a nineteenth-century book, “The Gentleman’s House.” This book presents a strong and explicit formulation of the role of careful planning in domestic architecture, based on the needs, interests, and behavior of the intended inhabitant. We include this essay because of its insightful use of history to illuminate its proximate subject and the perspective it brings to contemporary design practice in many branches of the field.

The next essay shifts our perspective from nineteenth century England to post-colonial India. Uday Athavankar presents an important account of the development of industrial design in post-colonial India, from the events surrounding independence to the beginnings of the design profession in the 1970s to the issues of globalization that now face the design community. The story is relevant for understanding design not only in India but in other developing nations, particularly those which once were colonies. It ends with some lessons for the global design community.

From time to time, the journal publishes visual essays that are of general interest to our readers. The HALO communication booth is such an essay. Lance Hosey briefly discusses the role of glass in design and then presents his entry in the Archinet competition of fall 2001.

In “Interactive Aesthetics,” Audrey Bennett discusses the problem of developing graphic design solutions that cross cultural boundaries, where the visual language of the designer initially may not be understood by an audience from another culture. She offers a method for facilitating remote participation in an evolving graphic design process—in essence, a form of co-designing.

In the final essay, “Okuwangaala,” David Stairs discusses design and the persistence of the vernacular in Uganda. He gives a fascinating portrait of a country that is remote from the consciousness of many in industrially developed countries but where people have found their own way with and without high technology.

We conclude with reviews of three books: *Aluminum by Design*, by Sarah Nichols and colleagues, reviewed by Jeffrey Meikle; *Clean New World: Culture, Politics and Graphic Design*, by Maud Lav-in, reviewed by Teal Triggs; and *Thinking Design* by Singanapali Balaram, reviewed by Adam Kallish.

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