

# Introduction

Routine is the codification of experience. Routine enhances efficiency and facilitates production by providing a template for operations. But, as Owen Pedgley notes in his review of the Designing Design Research event at the Royal College of Art, “Every once in a while, it is useful to take time out, away from the technicalities and intricacies of one’s own research, and reestablish a sense of perspective and purpose alongside the goals of the wider research community.” Pedgley’s observation can be applied to reading as well. Rather than focus on a particular set of professional concerns or report on specific developments in one area of practice, the material collected for this issue of *Design Issues* addresses a range of topics. In the subtle and intimate way in which reading operates, *Design Issues* introduces arguments and commentaries that interrupt routines and present the readers with fresh perspectives and challenging questions. Routine codifies and interruption provokes; in an artfully balanced life, both are necessary to sustain productive engagement with the subject matter of design.

This issue of the journal offers a rich collection of different perspectives on design. In “Where the Two Sides of Ethnography Collide” Rob van Veggel, an anthropologist, asks the pointed question: what does ethnography contribute to design practice? He draws upon his own experience in order to reflect upon how ethnographic research does—and sometimes does not—fit into the design process. Probing the relationship between different professions is also at the heart of Birgit Helene Jevnaker article “*Vita Activa*: On the Relationship Between Design(ers) and Business.” How, she asks, do designers actually work with and for business organizations, and how can that relationship be enhanced? In “On Art’s Romance with Design” the critic Alex Coles reviews the often contentious relationship between Art and Design. In light of design’s impact on contemporary art practice, the questions Coles raises are fundamental to how we understand the dynamics of contemporary visual culture. In an intriguing way, Coles’s probing of the relationship between Art and Design makes a fascinating pair with Sherwin Simmons’s essay on “Ernst Neumann’s ‘New Values of Visual Art’: Design Theory and Practice in Germany at the Turn-of-the-Century.” In his early twentieth-century poster work, Simmons argues, we can see Neumann rethinking the place of the artist in modern culture and shrewdly assessing the emerging role of design (as opposed to the traditional role of the Fine Arts) in shaping the visual culture of modernity. Product semantics, one of the key concepts in design theory, is the

subject of Loe Feijs and Frithjof Meinel's essay "A Formal Approach to Product Semantics with an Application to Sustainable Design." The authors move back and forth from the elaboration of a theoretical framework to the application of ideas to the design of specific products.

The list of topics in this issue is diverse: appreciating Ethnography, navigating the borders of Art and Design, managing organizational relations, conceptualizing professional identities, crafting semantic content, designing design research. No doubt individual items on this list may be routine for some of the readers, taken as a whole, however, the editors believe that the contents of this issue offer ample opportunities for a stimulating "time out."

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