

Introduction

The current issue of the journal is what the editors sometimes call a “regular” or “open” issue, in contrast to a special “theme” issue. This means that the articles are diverse and not selected to explore a specific subject or topic. Nevertheless, there is a theme operating even in an open issue. It is the broad theme of reflection and inquiry that we believe characterizes the field of design. This is what gives coherence to *Design Issues* and, we hope, makes it valuable for anyone interested in design, whether a scholar, a student, a practicing designer, or a general reader. The first element is the relationship of past, present, and future. We believe that history, criticism, and theory must work together if our understanding of design is to grow strong. The subjects and discipline of thought in each is a corrective of the others. The second element is the value and the essential fact of pluralism in the design community. We believe that appreciation of the interplay of contrasting perspectives and approaches is the best way to advance our understanding of design. In short, the idea of an ecology of design culture—a pluralism of perspectives, grounded in an understanding of the past, present, and future of design—stands behind even our “open” issues of the journal.

We begin this issue of the journal with an article on one of the persistent challenges of design theory: how to provide an adequate account and explanation of how designers do their work, with a goal of better understanding and, in the long run, better design practice. The importance of this challenge is sometimes dismissed by practicing designers who are often more concerned with practice than theory. Yet, even the practicing designer is more and more called upon to explain what he or she does—called upon both by clients and by colleagues from other fields with whom the designer increasingly must work. Kees Dorst focuses on one aspect of the issue, characterized by Nigel Cross in his introduction to *Developments in Design Methodology* (1984) as the “description of the intrinsic nature of design problems.” Dorst calls for a reconsideration of design as problem solving and, specifically, Herbert Simon’s ideas about well-structured and ill-structured problems. In essence, Dorst argues that we should shift our attention away from trying to define a design problem—in his view at best a moving target and at worst indefinable—toward the designer and the paradoxes of discourse that surround the problematic situation the designer faces in practice. Drawing on diverse supporting work, ranging from Lucy Suchman’s *Plans and Situated Actions* to phenomenology, he keeps alive the sometimes-faltering struggle to understand design methodology.

In contrast to explicit theory, Seçil Şatir provides an account of the rise of industrial design education in Turkey, focusing on the history of the State School of Applied Fine Arts in Istanbul. Both theory and, more obviously, national policy play a role in the establishment of this school and its development from the late 1950s to the present. National policy involved the gradual industrialization of Turkey and the interplay of fine arts, craft, and mass production—all related, of course, to the development of the university system in Turkey, as well. Also important, however, is the influence of postwar Germany in providing the theoretical and pedagogic foundations of the school. Bauhaus ideas, mediated through different institutions in Germany after the war, and then the Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm, along with some influence from the United States, helped to shape the Turkish approach to industrial design.

In the next article, Elisa Giaccardi offers a case study of collective storytelling at the Virtual Museum of Collective Memory of Lombardia. *Design Issues* seldom publishes simple case studies, but when a case is well contextualized within a framework of design issues the result can be both interesting and valuable for readers. Giaccardi's account probes the idea of what it means to have a virtual museum in our time and how such a museum may be anchored in the social life of a region. This article provides useful ideas for the development of design thinking that should interest designers who are exploring digital technology and social communication. Watch the theme of "meta" in this article, because it begins to open the door to "meta-design" thinking.

Underlying the theme of information design in the virtual museum is the broader theme of the politics of information in museums and exhibitions. This is addressed by Nader Vossoughian in the next article, an historical account of the role of Otto Neurath in the interwar years in Europe as he sought to develop and implement the "Vienna Method of Pictorial Statistics" through the Museum of Society and Economy and the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM). The interplay of Marxist dialectical materialism, Vienna-style positivism, and the poetic pragmatism of Moholy-Nagy make for a lively and informative narrative. Though the subject matter of Neurath's attention is architecture, urban planning, and the modern city, the reader will see many useful connections to the politics of graphical representation. In passing, we should also note the Vossoughian's account serves to illustrate an important point made by Tony Judt in his recent *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*, namely the rise of "governmental planning" in the interwar years.

In this issue we also present a variety of items that we believe will interest our readers. One is a photo essay by Amir Berbić on "Dubai—Land of Contrasts." Berbić designed the cover for this issue of the journal, and we are pleased to offer his Dubai as "history rising." There are also two exhibition reviews in this issue. One is by Ezra Shales on the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition "Safe, Design

Takes on Risk.” The other is by Caroline M. Hannah on the exhibition “Designing the Taxi,” presented at Parsons. Finally, in addition to our annotated list of Books Received, we offer a review essay by Richard Becherer, “Talking in the City: Three Books on Beirut.” These stories of design and designers in a troubled city should interest all of our readers.

Editors’ Note: Beginning with the next issue of the journal, we will be joined by a new co-editor, Bruce Brown. Bruce was educated as a graphic designer and is currently Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Architecture at the University of Brighton. He is well experienced in the conduct and development of research, and he chairs the panel charged with the assessment of research across the United Kingdom in the arts and humanities. In addition to extensive experience in education and pedagogical research, his research in recent years focuses on various aspects of “graphic memory,” including the relationship of visual memory to contemporary advertising and branding. He is a member of the “Memory, Identity, and History” research group at Brighton. Bruce will bring a valuable perspective to the journal. We are delighted to welcome him to *Design Issues*.

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