

Introduction

We live in turbulent times. Momentous change is occurring on every front including politics, culture, and technology. As social situations expand in complexity and require unprecedented responses, design has come to the forefront of intervention strategies. Where companies once thought of the designer as someone to provide an attractive shape for a product, designers are now integral to the planning processes of different types of organizations, not only those geared to the market but also others whose primary emphasis is promoting wellbeing through the organization of human action. Likewise, designers are becoming more active in smaller-scale local situations where they lend their expertise to processes of social change.

The genesis of Derek Miller's and Lisa Rudnick's article "Trying it on for Size: Design and International Public Policy" was a lecture to an audience of designers in London. Neither Miller nor Rudnick is a designer; rather they are experts in public policy who work for the United Nations' Institute for Disarmament Research. As they told their London audience, colleagues who work with them as diplomats, security experts, or UN field staff are skeptical of design thinking as it might to apply to their concerns. Miller and Rudnick, however, argue that design has much to contribute to the development of programs aimed at improving international security. A big lack in planning such programs, they argue, is local knowledge, which would be a welcome antidote to the reliance on more generalized public policy that has no connection with local situations. They write about the United Nations' involvement in complex situations where a better understanding of how people actually live would enhance the agency's intervention in those situations. One value of design they claim is to encourage a deep understanding of the client in order to achieve a successful result. They propose a new strategy called Strategic Design in Public Policy, which requires bringing together different elements of a planning process to design social actions for positive ends.

Ashley Hall echoes Miller and Rudnick's call for new design interventions in her/his article, "Experimental Design: Design Experimentation." Hall envisions the designer as someone who can anticipate new outcomes by pushing the boundaries of what designers normally do. She/he advocates a new role for the designer as someone who works at what she/he calls frontier edges, which are those that are beyond current industrial output and attract more ambitious designers. While her/his interest emphasizes markets rather than the critical situations that concern Miller and Rudnick, there is a shared vision of a larger role for designers in the processes of technological and social innovation.

Victoria Gallagher, Kelly Martin, and Magdy Ma combine rhetoric and design in their article “Visual Wellbeing: Intersections of Rhetorical Theory and Design.” They discuss two projects in the visual arts—the work of sculptor Andy Goldsworthy and a public art project in a Hong Kong housing estate. The authors introduce the concept of visual wellbeing, which is based on two Greek terms, *enargeia* and *eudaimonia*. Together these terms denote a vivid and fulfilling visual experience. The authors’ focus on rhetoric as an instrument of wellbeing offers a more profound way to understand the effects of art and visual communication on an audience. While they do not propose a new practice for artists or designers, they do suggest a greater consequence of existing practices.

Jørn Guldberg, writing about the exhibition *Design in Scandinavia* that was organized in the 1950s, shows that design was vital to discussions of national identity in the Nordic countries during that period. The exhibition was a joint effort of Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland to forge a mythic narrative of “Scandinavian design,” while the planning process was actually rife with competition and strategic actions to create a compelling story that the exhibition’s objects would support. Guldberg makes clear that design culture includes far more than designed objects. It involves curators, publicists, marketing experts, journalists, and retailers, all of whom have a stake in the larger meanings that can be constructed from the objects themselves.

Cigdem Kaya and Burcu Yagiz write about craft neighborhoods in Istanbul to characterize their discussion of design in informal economies. In comparison with other authors in this issue—Miller and Rudnick or Morelli—they are interested in designers as makers but not in the conventional sense of what industrial designers do. Their research focuses on collaborations between trained industrial designers and traditional craftsmen. Based on interviews, they describe how such collaborations work, particularly the ways that formal training is combined with local knowledge. Their emphasis on the local knowledge of craftsmen echoes Miller and Rudnick’s call for a greater use of such knowledge in the design of social action programs. The results that Kaya and Yagiz describe also support the claim that local knowledge can disappear if it is not preserved and used.

Soojin Jun, Miso Kim, and Joowan Lee return to the theme of complex situations in which designers are called upon to intervene. They emphasize the system diagram as an instrument of intervention to help unravel complexities, whether they are found in a physical place, an organization, or even in the design process itself. They make use of rhetoric to enumerate four types of diagrams, each of which has a specific purpose and then they demonstrate how these diagram types were used in the design of a complicated Domestic Mail Manual for the U.S. Postal Service.

Their enumeration of diagram types makes clear how valuable rhetoric can be in delineating design methods that are based on service to users.

Nicola Morelli's account of three service design projects developed at the School of Architecture and Design (A&D) at Aalborg University in Denmark demonstrates the possibilities for organizing human action that Miller and Rudnick called for. The projects Morelli describes are based on the idea of social networks rather than hierarchical chains of command. A long time advocate of sustainable design, Morelli sees in these projects a way to accomplish multiple purposes: to provide a service that has economic value, to devise design projects that do not involve producing new objects, and to address an issue of social concern. The projects are embedded in a well developed theory of how new forms of design can contribute to social betterment.

Ethel Leon's article on the Instituto de Arte Contemporânea, which was created in Sao Paulo, Brazil in the early 1950s, describes a little-known design school whose influences included Chicago's New Bauhaus as well as the commercial design practice of Raymond Loewy. The school, which was connected to the recently established Museum of Contemporary Art, was spearheaded by the art historian Pietro Bardi and his wife, the architect Lina Bo Bardi. It preceded by a few years the better-known Brazilian design school in Rio, ESDI, which was strongly influenced by the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm. The Instituto de Arte Contemporânea is part of a history of modern design in Brazil that is just beginning to emerge as Brazilian scholars in increased numbers do research on the topic.

The range of articles in this issue, which includes both historical and contemporary themes, reinforces our belief that design research should be as attentive to the past as to the present and future. *Design Issues* makes a point of joining articles on historical topics with those that address more contemporary concerns because history provides a context for the present just as the present illuminates the significance of the past.

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Nigel Whiteley, 1953-2010

The loss of Nigel Whiteley towards the end of 2010 is as keenly felt in the Art and Design community as it is in his home institution of Lancaster University. At Lancaster he showed at an institutional level those characteristics that brought him recognition beyond Lancaster. Nigel was a wonderful colleague – always ready to listen to a good idea, always ready to challenge, with tact and humanity, a bad one. I use the word humanity in describing Nigel's interaction with others quite deliberately – he very often stood as a good example of how dignified the human condition could be. Nothing exemplifies this better than his passing – he used his last weeks to meet with each friend individually, break bread with them for one last time, and say farewell. Those he left behind felt comforted and loved by this. He also spent those days saying a personal farewell to other friends of his – works of art. I heard with amazement and no small measure of admiration how Nigel, shortly before his death, made one last journey to the Lady Lever Art Gallery to see some of his favourite pieces there for one last time. It cannot have been an easy journey for him. However, I am quite sure that the visit to the gallery brought him great comfort, and was a fitting counterpart to the meetings he had been holding with friends.

Nigel's commitment to Art and Design is clear – yet his contribution was often subtle. When the future of Art at his home institution looked bleak, Nigel campaigned quietly, but effectively, not simply to save his subject, but to have that subject re-imagined in the context of a broader Arts offering in the institution. Given that this was the second time that Nigel had re-imagined Art at Lancaster, having previously revived and reoriented the subject in the 1980s, one must marvel at the imagination and verve that his passion for Art and Design fostered. It also chimed well with his intellectual agenda – he was often heard to say “the only way to prove you've got a mind is to change it occasionally.” That flexibility of thought and the fecund imagination behind it do more than simply save his subject at Lancaster, it provided a transformation in the Arts at the University which was welcomed by all. I, and many of his colleagues, will deeply miss him both for his personal qualities and for his wise contribution to many debates.

I am quite sure that the Nigel I knew at the institutional level will be missed just as much at the national and international level. The qualities that distinguished him at Lancaster distinguished him just as much beyond Lancaster. His publications are testament to that distinction and show clearly the breadth and generosity of his scholarship. His first book *Pop Design* revealed the impact of art and ideas of the 1960s on manufacturing, graphics and industrial design. *Design for Society* anticipated, 20 years ago, issues of sustain-

ability, recycling and ethical consuming that we are yet to properly address today. In *Rayner Banham: Historian of the Immediate Future* Nigel formed a new scholarly approach, the intellectual biography, allowing for a fine-grained analysis of a thinker who influenced him deeply.

It is with pleasure that I can say that Nigel's contribution is not concluded – a forthcoming, posthumously published, book by him on Lawrence Alloway is in press (Manchester University Press, forthcoming). This will provide a curiously appropriate last word from Nigel, as in it he considers the contribution to Post-Modernism of Pop Art, The Independent Group and the art and ideas of the 1960s/70s. So, as in twilight at the end of a bright summer's day, there are a few rays of sunshine to come which will remind us of the brilliance, and the warmth, of Nigel Whiteley.

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