

Introduction

This issue of *Design Issues* reminds us that “successive generations often think they exist under special conditions of turbulence and dramatic change beyond those of previous generations” (Hobday, Boddington and Grantham). Accordingly, the collected papers address a broad range of perspectives on design that, together, remain intrinsic to the human condition. Walt Whitman once observed, “There was a child went forth every day, and the first object he look’d upon, that object he became.” So these papers chart a seamless link between the physical world of objects and our inner spaces of feeling and thought. Together, they remind us that we first make objects then objects make us. As we change the world, it begins to change us. Moreover, these papers highlight the powerful and mediating influence that design can have in helping to shape human relationships or when social cohesion is to be formed then sustained.

Tracy Bergstrom’s paper sheds new light on the relationship between Eric Gill and Count Harry Kessler (for production of the Cranach Press’s fine book *Canticum canticorum Salomonis*). Kessler’s earlier patronage of Gill’s fellow Ditchling craftsman, Edward Johnston, caused a sea-change to Germany’s national visual sensibility. Whereas Edward Johnston politely bridged the mediaeval and the modern, Eric Gill’s eccentric arrival in Weimar raised eyebrows. Here, Bergstrom traces the ways in which Kessler had to adjust his customary relationship, as a patron, to this now more willful design presence personified by Eric Gill. Christine Taylor Klein’s paper on the work of American designer, George Sakier, describes a quieter but, perhaps, more powerful influence on a nation’s sensibilities. Though painting remained Sakier’s passion, he relished the idea that his designs could inject the ideals of modernism into domestic objects that, eventually, would find their way into homes across the nation. Just as Bahar Emgin draws our attention to the ways in which design interventions can revive the lives of undistinguished objects so does Edmundo Morales illustrate how everyday things can be invested with the codes of a social hierarchy. His images of Andean headdresses contain the remnants of Colonial imposition.

In their analysis of social thinking for empathic design, Carolien Postma, Kristina Lauche and Pieter Jan Stappers outline a framework intended to provide designers with a thinking tool to better understand the user experience. Marc Steen continues

this debate by arguing that innovation is often driven by technological developments, rather than by concerns for users' needs and preferences. Udo Kannengiesser and John Gero further this discussion by exploring the ways in which users and artifacts can interact with each other in order to create dynamic effects. They go on to suggest that dynamics like this can extend beyond the intentions of a designer when first conceiving an artifact. Finally, Hobday, Boddington and Grantham conclude their two-part paper with an overview of approaches to, and theories of, design and innovation studies. In this, they first assess the antecedents to design as a problem-solving activity. This is followed by a reflection on the indeterminate nature of design and its complex challenges. They then examine insights from leading American scholars concluding with a consideration of the relationship between modern design sensing and the broader context of human-centered approaches to management.

Herbert Simon once observed that "Human beings, viewed as behaving systems, are quite simple. The apparent complexity of our behavior over time is largely a reflection of the complexity of the environment in which we find ourselves." The papers in this issue seek to address this richness and complexity as it evolves through the dynamic relationships that designers stimulate between the physical world of things and the inner worlds of thought.

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Erratum:

In Kjetil Fallan's book review, *Design and Truth*, by Robert Grudin, in *Design Issues* Vol 27 no. 4, the sentence on page 103 which reflects the retail price of the Eames Lounge Chair should have read, "... (in my local retailer here in Oslo, it sells for c. USD 9,400 – add another 3,300 for the accompanying ottoman.) Now how's that for abuse of power?" We regret the error.