

# Introduction

*Experience* is a word that we frequently find at the center of discussions about design. Years ago, the emphasis was on styling and function, but in recent years, much attention has been given to the question of how designed products—whether objects, systems, or environments—contribute to the quality of life. Experience as a word does not negate questions of appearance and function; rather, it incorporates them into a larger framework that integrates them into discussions of how people live their lives.

In his seminal book *Art and Experience*, philosopher John Dewey was one of the first to address this topic, and his discussion of the subject continues to directly and indirectly inform other inquiries. As the topic has been pursued, researchers have explored and articulated different dimensions of it. In his article, “Go Green: Hotels, Design, and the Sustainability Paradox,” David Brody considers the social consequences of adopting “green practices” in the hotel industry. In order to create a better experience for their hotel guests, managers in several different hotels adopt policies that have an adverse effect on the labor practices that support guest services. Thus, improving the experience for hotel customers worsened circumstances for hotel employees. The problems seem to arise from not defining the situation in a way that considers the interests of everyone involved. Brody describes the Starwood Hotel’s policy to save water by washing guests’ sheets less frequently. Consequently, hotel employees’ work hours were reduced, which resulted in less frequent visits to guest rooms—hence less cleaning, which ultimately resulted in a buildup of oily sunscreen residues in bathtubs and showers. When these consequences came to light, the policy was canceled. Brody concludes by showing that achieving virtuous aims can be complicated when the interests of multiple parties are involved. The hotel industry, he says, needs to develop a greater awareness of design’s relation to labor.

Wellington Gomes de Medeiros approaches experience from a different perspective in his article, “Meaningful Interaction with Products.” De Medeiros recognizes different theories such as semiotics and semantics that have been applied to the study of products, but he believes that their separateness has prevented the

exploration of how meaning is generated from the interaction of products and people. He introduces the concept of “meaningful interaction,” which he characterizes as both a theoretical foundation and practical framework. The value of this approach, he argues, is to bring new research exemplified by the work on products and emotions into relation with purely representational theories like semiotics, and functionalist theories like ergonomics.

Robert Farrell and Cliff Hooker challenge the view that design and scientific research are very different processes in their article, “Values and Norms Between Design and Science.” They begin their article by debunking the logical positivist argument of Herbert Simon that design is a normative process concerned with attaining goals, while science excludes normative values in order to describe how things are. By arguing that design and science share a concern for values and norms, they also reject the attempts of some earlier design methods theorists, like S. A. Gregory, to align design with a non-normative definition of science. They also refute the dichotomy that science is a search for knowledge, while design is a search for client satisfaction. Instead, they propose a strategic approach to knowledge acquisition that scientists and designers share. The value of their argument is that it supports methods of design research without attempting to legitimate them falsely with an oversimplified definition of science.

Jesper Jensen introduces a new concept of experience in his article, “Designing for Profound Experiences.” He claims that ethnographic methods have not gone far enough in revealing the experiential possibilities that products can offer, and in this, he propounds the need for methods that can enable designers to engage with what he calls the “full richness of an experience.” He goes beyond the concept of user-centered design to move from the “use-experience” to the “profound experience.” Profound experience is fully immersive, and as Jensen points out, it has some relation to psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s idea of “flow.” To aid designers in understanding and exploring what he means by “profound experience,” Jensen introduces an Experience Scope Framework (ESF) and demonstrates how it might work through a case study of design in the Aarhus, Denmark city library.

A case study that addresses user experience indirectly, while concentrating on the process of designing a new digital magazine is discussed in “Oscillating Between Four Orders of Design: The Case of Digital Magazines” by Daniel Nylén, Jonny Holmström, and Kalle Lyytinen.

The authors consider the design for a digital magazine—initiated by the Swedish media company Bonnier—by applying Richard Buchanan’s four orders of design, originally articulated in Buchanan’s *Design Issues* article, “Wicked Problems in Design Thinking” of 1992. Where Buchanan outlined “places to consider design at different scales,” the authors of this article provide an empirical study of how the four orders can be seen as different dimensions of a single complex project and, consequently, help to produce a full characterization of the project for the purpose of case-study research.

Keith Russell’s “Chocolate Bread, Sacred Rice: Continental Ways of Looking at Things” employs the descriptive potential of Continental philosophy to introduce a deeper sense of objects. It can connect people with what Russell calls an *entre nous* (“between us”) that contributes to our experience of “self and other and objects.” For Russell, the *entre nous* can help us to discover a vitality that he believes design has lost.

In this issue, we inaugurate a new concept for the visual essay that we will elaborate in future issues. The late Paul Stiff’s “Designing Information for Daily Life,” looks at a group of printed documents that were designed to provide useful information to people as part of their daily life. In future visual essays we plan to offer comparable analyses of other kinds of artifacts.

This issue also has a number of different kinds of reviews. Ksenija Berk reviews the symposium “Balkan Locus-Focus: Long 20th Century Visual Communication Design Histories,” which was held in Izmir, Turkey. With the recent set of review articles in the *Journal of Design History* on the literature of Asian design, there has been a growing interest in regional design history, which Berk justifies for the Balkans through her descriptions of the Conference’s paper presentations and conclusions. Elizabeth Glickfeld reviews the British Museum’s exhibition and catalogue *British Design from 1948–2012: Innovation in the Modern Age*. She evaluates the three-part structure of the exhibition and the catalogue essays but concludes that visitors to the exhibition would find no easy answer to the question “What is British design?” Katarina Serulus, in Brussels, and Bess Williamson, in Chicago, review exhibitions of furniture designers. Serulus looks at the furniture of Jules Wabbes—a designer not well-enough known outside Belgium. Wabbes designed furniture for homes and for offices; and, the exhibition and catalogue highlight a project for a Belgian insurance company that involved his collaboration in the design of the building, as well as its furniture. Williamson looks at a display of furniture

and domestic products by the French designers Rowan and Erwan Bouroullec. Always original, the Boroullecs' work is as much fun to *use* as it is to *see*. These qualities are emphasized in the exhibition, which offered visitors a chance to interact with the objects rather than to only view them on pedestals and in glass cases. Finally, Astrid Skjerven reviews an exhibition of design for a very different audience in "Design Without Borders – Creating Change," held at the Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture in Oslo. The exhibition and accompanying catalogue that chronicle a body of work designed for developing countries sought to evaluate ten years of work by Norsk Form in cooperation with several Norwegian foreign aid organizations. While, Skjerven lauds the informational value of the exhibition and catalogue, she also recognizes that the issues that they raise are complicated and call for much more investigation.

Bruce Brown  
Richard Buchanan  
Carl DiSalvo  
Dennis Doordan  
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*Massimo Vignelli 1931–2014*

In his long career as a designer of graphics, products, and interiors, Massimo Vignelli fought for quality in design and demonstrated it through the things he produced. The many designs for which he is responsible have changed the landscape in which we live and work.