# Introduction

Designers make things. This idea is so basic to our shared under-
standing of design, across fields and practices, that it is almost
uncontroversial. And yet, making no longer seems enough to ex-
press the work of designers. In addition to making things, some
designers are also doing things. Put another way, for some, de-
sign is a mode of action. This distinction between making and doing
is not merely semantic, and to say that design is a mode of action is
not trivial. These are meaningful shifts in how we understand and
participate in and through design. Notably, the tensions between
making and doing and the potentials and problems of action per-
meate the articles collected together in this issue. Across these
articles, in both direct and indirect ways, the authors call our atten-
tion to how the idea of design as doing, as a mode of action, begets
not only new practices and outcomes, but also new ethical and po-
litical consequences.

Kipum Lee's article most directly addresses these questions
of making, doing, and action. Lee begins his article by offering an
institutional lens to better understand design in organizations. He
explores the ideas of institutionalization by design and design as a
social institution as an alternative to the received view of organiza-
tions. With this interpretation, design is not merely capacities and
skills for innovation, but also habits and values that shape purpo-
sive action. But Lee's argument is not another simplistic call for tak-
ing design more seriously in organizations. He goes on to confront
the challenges of design in organizations achieving agency, due to
the pressures of structure and what Lee calls "the entrapment of de-
sign by design." One way to address these challenges, according to
Lee, is to broaden our understanding of design beyond activities of
making, to also be an activity of doing. This shift opens a space of
possibilities for realizing design as a liberal art and appreciating
how a culture of design might mature within organizations.

In his article, Mahmoud Keshavarz brings a critical perspec-
tive to design as an activity of doing in relation to humanitarian
efforts. Keshavarz problematizes the practice of humanitarian
design as a potentially paternalistic endeavor that may reproduce
situations and consequences that are detrimental to those whom
designers are purporting to serve. To develop this line of inquiry,

Keshavarz investigates two concepts central to humanitarian design—crisis and compassion—and explores how these concepts are mobilized in design responses to refugees. In casting crises as opportunities for invention, designers often overlook the complex environments in which those crises occur, and as a result, create products that fail in their efforts. Compassion can also be misused in design practice as a means of objectifying and distancing those who are suffering, casting the refugee as an abstraction in need of emancipation by design. Such perspectives, according to Keshavarz, thwart justice and equity; what is needed is a shift from practices of problem-solving to politics of solidarity.

Elisa Giaccardi and Johan Redström call our attention to how non-humans shape action, and in the process, they question the idea of human-centeredness that is the basis of so much design. In the contemporary moment, as our lives are increasingly mediated through and manipulated by algorithms, non-human perspectives are important for understanding what it is that both designers and things are doing. Giaccardi and Redström offer two moves to re-orient designers toward an appreciation of non-humans. The first is a move from delegation to co-performance, recognizing that non-humans participate, in distinctive ways, in the making of the world. The second is a move from functionality to responsiveness, recognizing that computational entities behave in ways that extend their immanent use and develop in interaction with their environment. These characteristics of non-humans have both aesthetic and ethical implications for design. Through their argument, Giaccardi and Redström aim to move designers away from deterministic perspectives on computational things and bring awareness to diverse modes of agency.

This attention to technology continues in Niya Stoimenova and Rebecca Price's article, which offers a consideration of the role of design in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Stoimenova and Price begin by returning to discussions of tame and wicked problems, which they use to frame the space of applications for AI. Many of the initial applications of AI are to address tame problems. But given the ubiquity and entanglement of computation in our lives, such tame applications of AI often unfold into wicked problems. For designers to engage the wicked problems of AI, according to Stoimenova and Price, we must consider infrastructure as design material. This turn toward infrastructure sensitives designers to the imbrication of the social, technical, and organizational aspects AI, while also offering an approach to designing systems that recognizes emergence, or what they refer to as unanticipated events

and performances. Stoimenova and Price end their article by noting that the building blocks for robust approaches to designing AI are present in the field, but in need of articulation.

Miso Kim considers other forms of action in her article on service design, asking the question of how to design for participation in services. She approaches this question through an inquiry into the forms of conceptual models used in service design. She interprets these models, and a corresponding set of projects, through ancient and medieval systemizations of the arts. Moving through an astute discussion of grammatical, rhetorical, poetic, and dialectic forms, Kim draws our attention to the diverse ways that conceptual models express a relation of the whole of a service. Each of these diverse expressions frame the possibilities for participation differently. By taking such a pluralistic approach to conceptual models and their role in service design, Kim creates and shares a multiplicity of possibilities for design action.

While much of the discourse of design, particularly with regard to action, is implicitly about decisiveness, Hung Ky Nguyen's article asks us to consider ambiguity as expressed through the concept of *ma* in Japanese poster design. Nguyen begins with a careful exposition of the concept of *ma* in Japanese culture, which means an "interval" or "pause," but also expresses an aesthetic sense of in-betweeness. He then examines how this concept of *ma* is present in the Japanese graphic design, through ethnographic interviews with designers Nagai Kazumasa and Sugiura Kohei and interpretations of their work. Nguyen's attentiveness to the complexity of *ma* and the aesthetics of the posters of these designers provides the reader with a nuanced perspective on the interplay of cultural ideals and design forms. As Nguyen points out, *ma* is concept that is present in both the production and the consumption of these works, that is, it affects the action both of the designer and the viewer.

In his review essay, Cameron Tonkinwise takes up a recent book by Ezio Manzini, *Politics of the Everyday (Designing in Dark Times).* Here again, the relationship between making and doing is present and action takes centerstage, as Manzini is one of the pre-eminent theorists and practitioners of design for social innovation. Tonkinwise's interpretation of this book is critical, but fair. While he acknowledges the significant contributions Manzini has made to design, Tonkinwise calls attentions to the limitations of Manzini's formulation of design in this book as "an account of the politics of a designer rather than a stronger articulation of design-based politics."

This review essay is followed by Arden Stern's review of *The Graphic Design Reader,* edited by Teal Triggs and Leslie Atzmon and Alice Twemlow's review of *Writing for the Design Mind* by Natalia

Ilyin. Across these books and their reviews, as diverse as they are, one can sense an expanding field of design, in which making is present and important, but not all that there is.

Taken together, these articles, essays, and reviews each distinctively mark and explain shifts occurring in design discourse and practice—shifts toward design as doing, as well as making, and shifts toward greater appreciation of design as a mode of action. This is not the first time these concerns have been explored in the pages of *Design Issues*. Indeed, many of these authors in this issue draw from the work of prior authors in *Design Issues* on these same topics. In other words, these concerns are not minor nor isolated. They are emerging themes in design theory and criticism that will continue to expand our appreciation of both the potentials and the limitations of design.

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Carl DiSalvo
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