Introduction

Sometimes we look to find community in similarity. That is often the case in academia. Disciplines tend to cohere and define themselves by a set of subjects and methods. But it is the diversity of subjects and methods in this issue that reveals the community of contemporary design scholarship: a community that is varied in how it conducts research and what draws its attention.

Kaja Tooming Buchanan's article, "Issue Mapping Strategy: Process of Discovery, Places of Invention and Design Process Fallacies," offers a compelling approach to design inquiry. A distinguishing characteristic of her article is that rather than focusing on the technical aspects of a method, she shifts our attention to a strategy for discovery that foregrounds interconnectedness. In "New Design Knowledge and the Fifth Order of Design," Marzia Mortati engages the conditions of artificial intelligence and data to propose a framework for design in which learning and learning systems are vital. Drawing together an array of design theorists, including Richard Buchanan, Neri Oxman, Elisa Giaccardi, and Johan Redström, she makes the case for a fifth order of design that centers on relationships. The "Significance of Aristotle's Four Causes in Design Research" by Boris Hennig and Matthias Rauterberg delves into the influence of Aristotelian metaphysics on designerly knowledge. Through a careful reading of philosophy, Hennig and Rauterberg argue that Aristotelian metaphysics does not conflict with attempts to pursue scientific knowledge in and through design—quite the opposite, in fact. The Covid-19 Online Visualization Collection (COVIC) is a collection of more than 3,000 articles, each with a visual element, such as a graph or diagram, related to the pandemic. In "COVIC: Collecting Visualizations of COVID-19 to Outline a Space of Possibilities," Paul Kahn, Hugh Dubberly, and Dario Rodighiero describe the making of the collection and suggest such collections as a novel mode of design research. In "Dig If You Will the Picture…: Reading Prince's Semiotic World," Aggie Toppins brings Roland Barthes, Stuart Hall, and W. E. B. Du Bois to her discussion of the branding of the artist formerly known as Prince. Through her interpretation, Toppins helps us appreciate how Prince's design artifacts combine with his lyrics, music, and performances to engage and express identity, resisting normativity through purposeful and creative illegibility.

Across these articles, we encounter philosophy and popular culture, algorithms and media, and theory and action. In their investigations, the authors employ semiotics, reflective practice, and rhetoric, among other approaches to produce interpretations and argument about the roles, meaning, and significance of design. A distinguishing characteristic of contemporary design scholarship is that all of these belong; all of these are relevant subjects and methods. Such intellectual pluralism is at the heart of *Design Issues*. Indeed, it is the interplay between them that makes contemporary design scholarship so exciting and robust. As design continues to expand in practice and influence, the study of design will expand. We can see this in the articles by Mortati and by Kahn, Dubberly, and Rodighiero that grapple with the emergent and pressing conditions of technology and a global crisis. At the same time, some topics and themes are persistent. And this is evident in the articles by Tooming Buchanan, Hennig and Rauterberg, and Toppins that contend with fundamental issues of discovery, scientific knowledge, and identity. While many fields strive toward ever greater specialization, the study and practice of design continues to grow in multiple directions. Across these differences of subjects and methods is a shared commitment to design as a significant endeavor; that shared commitment is what holds our community together.

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