

# Introduction

This issue of *Design Issues* assembles articles that, together, reflect a spirit of inquiry being intrinsic to the broad church of design research. Here, some articles set out to test the boundaries of our existing knowledge to determine its limitations. Others apply critical reason to the orthodoxies of established bodies of knowledge to expand their *modus operandi*. However, both approaches assert that the knowledge we possess is inherited from past times and contexts that are unlike our own.

In “Advancing Donald Schön’s *Reflective Practitioner: Where to Next?*” Linus Tan, Anita Kocsis, and Jane Burry acknowledge Schön’s foundational contribution to design research but propose that his theory of the reflective practitioner has limitations that must be recognized and addressed to remain relevant. In particular, the authors observe Schön’s approach to the reflective practitioner at an individual level; they then expand on this approach to describe a team of reflective practitioners at the organizational level.

In dialogue with works that address the subversive and political dimension of play, Igor Fardin’s article, “The Politics of Play: Ugo La Pietra’s Design Without Ends,” considers how a certain type of play can offer the possibility of suspending and deactivating the power relations that shape our everyday experience. The author observes that this understanding of play suggests the possibility of a design that questions the traditional links between form, function, and use—so opening up new possibilities by interrupting the orthodoxies that determine experience.

In “The Influence of Fonts on the Reading Performance in Easy-to-Read Texts: A Legibility Study with 145 Participants,” Sabina Sieghart draws attention to the limitations of an extant body of research that either has been developed by cognitive scientists who have insufficient professional knowledge of typography or by designers who possess insufficient scientific competence. In seeking to establish effective typographic principles for barrier-free communication, the author demonstrates that the basis for some conventional wisdom concerning text legibility “is simply wrong.”

In “A Promising Break in the ‘Black Box’: Agency of Competencies and Interpretation in Istanbul Maker Ecologies,” Özgün Dilek and Cigdem Kaya examine changes to the traditional ecology of making through the proliferation of digital production and

communication technologies, maker spaces, and technology-driven maker activities. In particular, the authors consider how these conditions shift the established orthodoxies of economic production and labor between independent makers and the managed creativity of companies. They contend that this shift may give makers the autonomy to produce independently from the structural forces on human production.

Dina Lutfi tests another pillar of design research in “The Design Problem Revisited.” In doing so, the author observes that the characteristics once used to describe design have shifted and will continue to do so in the future. However, this still belies a persistent, and stubborn, use of the terms “problem” and “solution.” Within the context of shifting social and economic conditions, the author observes that an enhanced understanding of design could now include its agency as a facilitator of human needs, experiences, and desires.

These discussions conclude with a reflection on “The Delightful Phrase: Are There Really Designerly Ways of Knowing?” by Richard Herriott. In recognizing the pervasive nature of Nigel Cross’s terminology of “designerly ways of knowing” the author also observes that his writings, and that of others in the 1980s, were a noble attempt to rescue design from being a “mere science.” The author also observes that to protect it from the design-as-science position, and through a wish to preserve design’s particular territory, this clarification about designerly ways of knowing may have been a “misdefinition.”

To close this issue of the Journal we include an essay in which the visual evidence of inquiry is a primary source of reference being augmented by brief textual notes. This visual essay by Moohan Kim, Jongeun Yang, and Sujeong Lee is titled “Integrating Technology and Art in Landscape Design. It offers visual evidence for the use of sand and lasers in the modeling and making of environmental features in the landscape.

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