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It's Not What You Do, It's The Way That You Do It

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The Design Journal

Editorial 19.4, Louise Valentine

It's Not What You Do, It's the Way That You Do It

In this open issue of *The Design Journal* a connecting strand between our international authors is concern for how design process(es) can be enhanced. They share an interest in where and with whom design can learn, and the degree to which interactions can be enriched to improve the wellbeing of our communities, be they in Australia, Hong Kong, India, Sweden, United Kingdom or the USA.

Design's broad spectrum of activities and meaning is encapsulated in this cross-continent conversation with one book review, seven papers and 24 authors detailing their exploratory research journeys. The areas of Advertising, Drama, Ergonomics, Marketing, Men's Fashion, New Product Development, Product and Service Design are covered. Perhaps what is most revealing, is that above and beyond their subject focus, methods and tools, the collection attests the cultural diversity that perpetuates design as a discipline. And, for as much as the discipline is changing - with new priorities, skills and forms of practice emerging such as design for social innovation, design leadership and service design - there are many aspects of modern life where the traditional forms of design process remain an integral part of society, helping us to imagine and solve today's problems.

Prototyping - the conceiving, testing and developing of an idea - is explored across all of the papers in this issue, albeit with different emphasis. In Johan Kaj Blomkvist and Stefan Holmlid's paper the subject comes to the fore in *Benefits of Service Level Prototyping*. The research examines the impact of service design by honing in on the case of service prototyping, delineating how service prototypes differ in form from prototypes in other disciplines. It discusses how service designers often work in short-term concept development projects and are rarely, if ever, involved in the systematic testing of these services. The authors argue for a change in perception of the relevance of service design, shifting it from concept to include the implementation of new services. It discusses the different levels of prototyping and shows how three cases have informed the design processes of service

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prototyping. What is particularly interesting is how the authors encourage a review of the notion of 'customer' when understanding the impact of service design and how the prototyping design process for services must better attend to multiply categories of customers.

From our colleagues in the National Institute of India is a piece of research concerned with interface design for improved operational efficiency in the City of Ahmedabad's bus transportation system. *Ergonomic Analysis and Design of the Console Panel of a Bus Transit System in a Developing Country* by Prabir Mukhopadhyay, Vipul Vinzuda, Sudhir Dombale and Bhushan Deshmukh offers an account of research for a modern day design issue. The paper discusses how the application of ergonomic principles can better support the everyday working lives of people by improving the functionality of a console. It describes how two concept prototypes were developed and tested in order to craft new interactions between the bus driver and the bus controls to increase efficiency within the transport system.

With the issue of sustainability at its core and an interest in envisioning future design education models, Calga Dogn, Senem Turhan and Yekta Bakirlioglu from the Middle East Technical University in Turkey bring to our attention, *Evolving Paths: undergraduate design education through graduate and generative research with particular focus on sustainability*. The authors argue for different methods to be used within the early stages of idea generation when developing innovative sustainable solutions. They propose a new model for connecting graduate research with undergraduate design students and detail how this has been explored via the conversion of a third year design studio into a new design research lab. Two cases are presented using the methods of Experience Reflection Modelling and Biomimicry Design Spirals: testing and developing how their proposition of future design for sustainability education can be realised.

As one of many areas concerned with developing the creative human capacity, design has a long tradition of learning and engaging with other disciplines to push the boundaries of its practice. In, *Enhancing the Design Process with Drama-Related Methods*, human factors researcher Glyn Lawson leads a multi-disciplinary group to discuss (why and how) drama methods can improve idea generation, concept evaluation, communications issues and

Commented [LV2]: NB Material and Methods – in Paragraph one, line two, sentence two, remove 'three methodologies' and in line three, sentence three, remove 'methodologies'. [p 5 of 41]

collaborative working, for example. The co-authored paper critically reviews drama based methods to expose where they may add value to new product design processes. While it does not advocate their use as a panacea for all, it does offer a distilled number of methods to consider for increasing performance, innovation and validation of design.

British Business and Design Management researcher Fiona Maciver brings a critical discussion about the current changes in practice of the design profession and the designer's extended remit in New Product Development (NPD). In *Reversing the Design-Marketing Hierarchy: mapping new roles and responsibilities in 'designer-led' NPD* she draws on two periods of case study research and talks of design as being in an 'era of ascendancy'. In the exposition of her findings, particular attention is paid to designer leadership, why design and marketing need to work closer together across the NPD process, the emerging added dimension to designing, and its implications for the future profession.

Also with a new product design and promotional slant is the paper *How to Advertise Radical Product Designs* by the American marketing researchers Jeffrey Durgee, Dongling Huang and Dmitri Markovitch. Here, there is a focus on amending the interpretive text for revolutionary designs to improve their perceived appeal to the average consumer. The idea being that if consumers can find radical ideas more accessible, they may be more inclined to purchase them. The paper presents 'an experimental study of viewer attitudes towards four radical new product designs when accompanied by designer philosophies' and their conceptual intentions. It is similar to Maciver's work (only) in the sense that it calls for closer relations between design and marketing across the product development processes.

From the perspective of men's fashion is a descriptive paper which argues for deeper understanding of individual groups of fashion conscious male customers when designing. *Categorisation of Hong Kong Modern Males with regard to Predictors of Menswear Design Preferences in terms of Physical and Socio-Psychological Dimensions*, by Li et al discuss the multi-dimensional nature of modern menswear fashion. The paper shares the results of a survey (using multiple regression analysis and cluster analysis) undertaken to improve local menswear market knowledge in Hong Kong, while simultaneously improving menswear fashion design knowledge for retailers and designers to help them offer more appropriate

Commented [LV3]: NB Section: Marketing Led VS Design Led Approach to NPD – 'Approach' is mis-spelled in the paper – double check [p6]

clothing design to their customers. Three categories of male are suggested with a discussion of their style preferences and why.

To aptly close this issue is a book review of *User Experience Design* by Gavin Allanwood and Peter Beare, reviewed by user experience architect and service designer, Qin Han. It is a book that focuses on the practice of user and experience design rather than philosophy with simple theories, case studies, methods, techniques and exercises to support its professional development.