

Get it in perspective

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Get it in Perspective

Editing this journal, with its wide range of papers covering so many different aspects, is a constant reminder of how design as a discipline never stands still. By its nature, design is a ceaselessly shifting surface, and over time it is viewed from different standpoints. Different aspects of design are discussed, re-discussed, examined and re-examined on a regular basis, but from a seemingly ever-wider range of perspectives. These evolving perspectives ebb and flow due to a number of factors – the prominence at any given time of various social, cultural or political developments; the introduction and assimilation of new technologies; or the re-emergence of past traditions as new inspirations for designed forms. So although the topic of a particular paper may seem familiar, there is always something new ...

Two of the papers in this issue concern design education. Firstly, looking at teaching and learning styles within design education, is Cheng's paper, 'An Investigation into the Relationship Between Tutors' Ideological Styles and Their Students' Learning Achievements of Educational Objectives: An Empirical Study of Digital Media Design Education in Taiwan'. This addresses a controversial issue – that of teaching being a political act. Cheng uses a case study of digital media design education in Taiwan to investigate 'the ascendancy of a tutor through his or her power and authority expressed in terms of different ideological styles'. Using high level data analysis software, he shows that an authoritative ideological style from a tutor is likely to constrain the creative thinking of students, and (among other informative points) that improving the quality of the interaction between tutor and student needs to take the subjective tendencies of individual students into account.

Secondly, looking at how students use technology in the learning process, is Evans and Aldoy's paper, 'Digital Design Sketching Using the Tablet PC'. The authors detail a nine-month longitudinal research study to assess how the use of tablet PCs might support portable digital sketching during the concept and development stages of the product design process. The use of a tablet PC has the benefit of enabling sketching to occur spontaneously as does paper and pen, while at the same time allowing saving of the sketches at different stages and revisiting them to make immediate alterations. A group of students used the technology over the course of their final year of their degree and were then questioned about their experiences. Reporting a number of different strengths and weaknesses, it is clear that while, with some development, such technology has great potential, there is still a place for paper and pen in the design studio. Moving from sketching to product appearance, Haug's paper, 'A Framework for the Experience of Product Aesthetics', aims to help designers in designing products that generate 'aesthetic affection'. To achieve this, he proposes a framework for understanding how the process of aesthetic affection takes place. As Haug notes, even for products that are reliant on technological functions, aesthetic considerations can be instrumental in their success or failure. Designing for emotion, he says, is far more complex than many might think, as there are several different kinds of emotion to take into account, and different models of emotional response to consider, all of which are context dependent.

His proposed model of the aesthetic experience is intended for use during the product development process as a way to study consumer reactions to different designs.

A different type of aesthetic affection is explored in Kouhia's paper, 'Roots in Tradition: Karelian Tradition as a Creative Resource for Finnish Craft Designers'. Kouhia explores the role tradition plays in contemporary design discourse. The cultural tradition examined is that of Karelia – an area split between Finland and Russia – which has acted as an inspiration for a wide range of Finnish creatives. The author issued a design call, titled 'Roots: Karelian Tradition in Contemporary Finnish Design', through which young designers were asked to construct their ideas about the Karelian tradition in the form of contemporary craft pieces, and to reflect on their making process. A useful analysis of the written part of their submissions and interviews with selected participants elucidated different ways in which the designers had related to the concept of tradition as a resource.

Moving from the past as inspiration to the future, Choi and Choi's paper, 'From Representation to Participation: Graphic Identity of the BMW Guggenheim Lab' recounts the authors' role as designers of the brand identity for 'a mobile laboratory about urban life' and their reflections on its conceptual background, the design process and the project's social implications. Between 2011 and early 2014, the touring exhibition explored 'how urban environments can be made more responsive to people's needs ... and how to find a balance between notions of modern comfort and the urgent need for environmental and social responsibility'. The graphic identity for this evolving exhibition was intended from the outset to be redesigned by different designers as the project progressed, meaning that the consistency necessary to allow the design to operate as a recognizable identity needed to be balanced with a level of flexibility to allow constant reimagining. Later designers were intended to be actively participatory in the design process while being separated by time and place.

The final paper, by Nguyen, is titled 'Kyosei: A Co-living Approach in Japanese Culture and Design Practice'. 'Kyosei' can be loosely translated as 'symbiosis' or 'co-living' and Nyugen explains that it is an essentially ethical and philosophical concept that has been applied in a number of ways – ranging from being used to improve the image of Buddhism in Japan, to being an element of Japanese corporate working practices since the 1960s. The concept has been usefully employed to sustain the living conditions of Japanese people coping with extreme restrictions on space (reflected in such objects as multi-purpose tatami mats and futon beds). As such, the concept forms a strong basis for far wider adoption of the principles in order to achieve a co-living approach for a more sustainable future globally, and might have far-reaching benefits for designers and clients alike.

Returning to the educational link, this issue concludes with Frances Stevenson's review of Michael Hann's book *Stripes, Grids and Checks*, a textbook resource for design students wishing to understand more about the principles of composition within art and design. As alluded to at the beginning of this editorial, such issues

are by no means new to design, but are yet again made relevant to new audiences by taking a fresh perspective.