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Introduction

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Introduction

Though design continues to broaden its scope, application, and impact throughout the world, it remains a humble profession. What seems to keep it grounded and unassuming in the midst of its expansion and growth is its core commitment to serving others. The ongoing fascination with the “other” also provides design with a reservoir of unlimited subject matter. The imagining of others frequently converges around some key terms, such as empathy, service, interaction, participation, and integration.

There are also less positive terms, such as marginalized, privileged, and indifferent when we think about “others.” Design has a role to play here as well. There are times when portraying the plight and issues embedded within complex social situations in an appropriate way is the valuable contribution. Like sociologists and anthropologists, designers often help the world see individuals and people differently and articulate the need for change through subtler means. The things made by human beings—including ways of making—are often the vehicles used to highlight injustices, uncover deeper issues, and challenge the status quo.

In this issue, each author’s commitment to the notion of “other” becomes a place wherein contemporary design issues are raised and addressed. Pramod Khadilkar points to a massive other—34.7% of the world’s population—that lives on less than \$2 per day. Called the bottom or base of the pyramid (BoP) by economists, this is a group whose needs have not been sustainably met according to Khadilkar. Challenging the product centrality that is pervasive even among the set of design approaches that propose designing beyond the product, he offers a capability approach that formulates a more comprehensive design scope suitable to addressing BoP design issues.

In their article, Cees de Bont and Sylvia Xihui Liu ask what it will take for strategic design and breakthrough innovation to enter China. China is undoubtedly an emerging “other” on the

global stage according to many, yet the types of design-led innovation that have taken hold in Europe, United States, and Korea have not yet developed there. The contribution of the co-authors includes a recommendation for a practical design education program in China based on the input of high-profile design leaders within well-respected design and innovation organizations.

Pedro Alonso and Hugo Palmarola raise the issue of what a symbol really signifies as the NASA logo found in a U.S. satellite tracking station in Chile can be framed through an archaeological lens. Tracing the history and context of a remnant mosaic that still remains in the rural area of Peldehue, they provide a rich interpretation of the NASA logo as a system comprised, not only of satellites and radio signals, but also buildings, equipment, and infrastructure. Their archeological digging reveals design's role in making possible "the trespassing of national borders" in service of the U.S. strategy to shape NASA as an image of international mass consumption. There is a lesson here on the makings of a terrestrial communication system and insight into the messy arena that design often enters when it serves a particular group's interest.

Sometimes, systems are not built with a particular agenda and the messiness gives way to an emergent order of its own. In their article, Koumudi Patil and Uday Athavankar contribute to the developing domain of self-organizing designs and systems by shedding light on the reflective practice of Banarasi toymakers in Varanasi, India. They begin by comparing the collective design process of the toymakers to that of Latour's cartographers who inscribe and re-inscribe their community worldview through cycles of accumulated and non-explicit coordination. These Banarasi toymakers are able to bypass shared formal drawings as they have a clear sense of what their other, counterpart members are doing; they epitomize the idea of making and thinking with their hands. This article provides a way to understand how design often integrates various "others" to shape a more compelling or comprehensive whole.

The remaining three articles further explore the idea of design as a way to bring together various other perspectives. Per Åman, Hans Andersson, and Mike Hobday argue that design is not only a body of knowledge to be integrated but also a core knowledge-generating activity. Like light which is both a particle and a wave, the co-authors make the case for design's dual nature where the two natures are the technically rational and the human-centered dimensions. They argue for a dialectical view of knowledge where the other is us and we are the other—we cannot "treat science and engineering as the domain of rationality and efficiency and human aspects as non-instrumental or peripheral."

Contrary to the aforementioned duality of knowledge, Lindsay Poirier confronts the dualism in design practice that often leaves certain groups out of the conversation. She makes the distinction between the logic of design, or that which unifies distinct approaches to design, from what she calls design logics. Anchoring her experiment in the digital empirical humanities, Poirier offers a critical approach to designing digital systems that involves a deliberate disruption of hegemonic design logics through a strategy of devious design. Inspired by Teresa de Lauretis, devious design is fundamentally about positioning oneself as an “other” to a situation by displacing oneself as an “other” within it. By confronting incongruent logics within their own framework, designers are able to create frictions within a system that mark the beginnings of a transformation toward something ultimately more inclusive and heterogeneous.

The last article by Ozge Merzali Celikoglu, Sebnem Timur Ogut, and Klaus Krippendorff brings the idea of other full circle by focusing on designers as the other. Although the trend among designers has been to take on more of a holistic role by performing both the function of producer and front-end researcher in project work, many organizations still separate these two functions. This article addresses the practical issue of connecting insights to actions and the hand-off from research to production by exploring how cultural probes and user stories inform the understanding, interpretation, and synthesis of designers-as-producers.

The pluralism within design is alive more than ever and *Design Issues* continues to embrace the multiplicity of voices within the broadening field of design. Central to this pluralism is the commitment to the voices of others and serving all people in pursuit of their individual and collective purposes. In this way, not only is design a humble profession but also a noble one.

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