Design School and the Cultural Turn

06 November 2017

**the
DESIGN
MUSEUM**

Welcome to the Design Museum

A warm welcome to the third and final UK summit in the series *Design School: The Future of the Project*, an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded research network with The Design Museum, London, Imagination, Lancaster University, UK, and Charles Sturt University, Australia.

Today's event explores the programmatic, productive – and to some, problematic - relationship between the Design School and the cultural sector, as expressed through the institutional context of the museum and the agency of the public programme – comprising exhibitions, displays, research programmes and structured learning content through talks, workshops, courses and networking. At the first summit, held at the former Design Museum on Shad Thames in June 2016, we debated how the content, pedagogies, structures and remits of the Design School might adapt to a fast moving context. The second summit held here in June 2017 pulled focus on Design School and the Industry Turn, questioning design's role within the creative and manufacturing industries in the UK and global economies.

This summit takes places as the new Design Museum nears its first anniversary in its new home in Kensington. Over the year the museum has welcomed thousands of visitors from schools, colleges and universities, alongside professional designers, to a vibrant and inspiring portfolio of programmes. From programme feedback, we know that the museum is proving to be a critical resource not only for the next generation of creative professionals but also for today's

designers, through a curatorial strategy that positions the museum as a laboratory as well as a showcase. .

What does curatorial practice look like when aligned with the interests and needs of the Design School? Should exhibitions reflect the increasingly multi-disciplinary approaches that constitute professional practice as demonstrated in the second summit? How can the museum position itself as a hub for design communities, a forum for debate and ideas exchange? What are the salient topics for research partnerships that will inform both future design schools and the museum? Or is there a fundamental mis-match between the Design School and the cultural institution?

We look forward to exploring these questions and more with today's outstanding roster of contributors, to whom we are extremely grateful for giving their time and sharing their expertise.

Dr Helen Charman
Director Learning and Research, The Design Museum, London

Paul Rodgers
Professor of Design, Imagination, Lancaster University, UK
Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Design Leadership Fellow

Craig Bremner
Professor of Design, Charles Sturt University, Australia

Schedule

10:00	**Welcome and Introduction** Welcome from Deyan Sudjic, Director of the Design Museum Dr Helen Charman, Director of Learning and Research, Design Museum
10:15	**Justin McGuirk :** 30 minute presentation followed by question and answer session.
11:00	**Maya Dvash :** 30 minute presentation followed by question and answer session.
11:45	**Constantin Boym :** 30 minute presentation followed by question and answer session.
12:30	**Break for Lunch:** Please see attached leaflet for locations options.
13:30	**Marco Petroni :** 30 minute presentation followed by question and answer session.
14:15	**Alexandra Midal :** 30 minute presentation followed by question and answer session.

15:00	**Tea and coffee break;** Tea and coffee available outside auditorium
15:30	**Clive Dilnot :** 30 minute presentation followed by question and answer session.
16:15	**Jan Boelen** 30 minute presentation followed by question and answer session.
17:00	**Final discussions and closing comments** Plenary panel with all the speakers – question and answer session. Closing comments from Dr Helen Charman, Director of Learning and Research, Design Museum Paul Rodgers, Professor of Design, Lancaster University Craig Bremner, Professor of Design School of Communication and Creative Industries, Charles Sturt University
17:30	**End of summit** Please depart via main entrance.

Speaker Biographies

Justin McGuirk
Chief Curator, Design Museum London UK

Justin McGuirk is a writer and curator based in London. He is the chief curator at the Design Museum and a tutor on the Design Curating & Writing Masters at Design Academy Eindhoven. He has been the director of Strelka Press, the design critic of The Guardian, and the editor of Icon magazine. In 2012 he was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale of Architecture for an exhibition he curated with Urban Think Tank. His book Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search of a New Architecture is published by Verso.

Maya Dvash
Chief Curator, Design Museum Holon, Israel

Maya Dvash was appointed as Acting Chief Curator of Design Museum Holon in June 2016, whilst retaining her duties as Chief Editor of Design Museum Holon, a role Dvash assumed in 2010. Throughout her time at Design Museum Holon, Dvash has curated a vast array of design exhibitions and written on design for numerous platforms. In addition to her functions as editor, curator and writer, Dvash lectures at leading design academies in Israel.Prior to her career at Design Museum Holon, Dvash held various leading editorial positions in some of the top-tier publishing houses in Israel (Kinneret, Zomora-Bitan and Modan). Dvash was then appointed Chief Editor of Binyan v'Diyur (Building & Housing) magazine, a seat she filled for six years. Dvash holds a Bachelor's degree in Literature and a Master's degree in Art and Curatorship from Ben Gurion University.

Constantin Boym
Head of Industrial Design, Pratt Institute NY USA

Constantin Boym was born in Moscow, Russia in 1955, where he graduated from Moscow Architectural Institute. In 1984-85 he earned a degree of Master in Design from Domus Academy in Milan.

In 1986 he founded Boym Partners Inc in New York City, which he runs together with Laurene Leon Boym. Boym Partners Inc brings a critical, experimental approach to a range of products and environments that infuse humor and wit into the everyday. The studio's designs are included in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

In 2014 Constantin Boym received an honorary doctorate from the Corcoran College of Art and Design.

From 1987 to 2000 Boym was a teacher and program coordinator at Parsons School of Design. In 2010-12 Boym served as Director of Graduate Design Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar.

Marco Petroni
Professor of Contemporary Art History at Abadir (Catania), Italy
Design theorist and critic.

Marco Petroni is a design theorist and critic; Adjunct Professor at Politecnico (Milan) and Università della Campania (Naples); Curator at large at Plart Foundation (Naples); he collaborates with several art, architecture and design magazines such as Domus, FlashArt, Artribune.

Petroni studied contemporary art and architecture. He develops innovative curatorial projects and events related to the design world themes with a transdisciplinary approach.

Alexandra Midal
Professor MA Spaces & Communication, Design Program HEAD, Geneva

Independant curator and author of films of visual theory, Alexandra Midal is Professor in design theory at HEAD - Geneva and at EPFL (Lausanne). Midal has curated numerous shows in museums: Popcorn: design & cinema ; Tomorrow-Now ; Politique-Fiction ; Eames & Hollywood ; Marguerite Humeau; Superstudio, etc. She is the director of the Invisible Film Festival, first festival of experimental films by designers. Her next book Design by Accident by Sternberg Press will be released next February.

Clive Dilnot
Professor of Design Studies at the Parsons School of Design and The New School in New York

Clive Dilnot was educated as a fine artist, and later in social philosophy, he has taught world-wide including at Harvard University, the School of the Art Institute in Chicago and in Hong Kong, as well as in Australia and the UK. Publications include Ethics? Design? (Archeworks, 2005) the essay for Chris Killip's Pirelli Work (Steidl, 2006) & the co-authored Design and The Question of History (2015). He is the editor of A John Heskett Reader: Design History Economics (2016) and of Heskett's seminar on design and economic thought, Design and the Creation of Value (2017). He is currently working on a four-volume series Thinking Design: History; Ethics; Knowledge; Configuration (2019-20). He is founding editor of Designing for Dark Times/The Urgency of the Possible, a new series of short books and polemical essays, and of Radical Design Thinkers, re-publishing significant texts in design thinking since 1960.

Jan Boelen
Artistic director of Z33 House for Contemporary Art in Hasselt, Belgium, artistic director of Atelier LUMA,

Since the opening, Z33 House for Contemporary Art has been fashioning projects and exhibitions that encourage the visitor to look at everyday objects in a novel manner. It is a unique laboratory for experiment and innovation and a meeting place with cutting-edge exhibitions of contemporary art and design. With Z33 Research, design and art research studios established in 2013, Boelen is transforming Z33 from exhibition-based to a research-based institution. At the initiative of Z33 and the Province of Limburg, Manifesta 9 took place in Belgium in 2012. As part of his role at Z33, Boelen curated the 24th Biennial of Design in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in 2014.

Boelen also serves on various boards and committees including the advisory board of the V&A Museum of Design Dundee in the UK and Creative Industries Fund in the Netherlands. Boelen holds a degree in product design from the Media and Design Academy (now the LUCA School of Arts) in Genk, Belgium.

Papers (In alphabetical order)

Jan Boelen

A *School of Schools*: the 4th Istanbul Design Biennial

The amount of information in the world is more than doubling every two years. People know more than ever before. Lifelong learning is touted as the only way to keep a job and keep your head. Chalk and talk, and reciting multiplication tables has no chance against the animated distractions in our pockets. Meanwhile, the machines themselves have started learning too. What will be left for humans to do and which mental faculties remain irreplaceable are hot topics. Is it time to go back to school – and redesign it?

Alternative design education initiatives have consistently provided a brave space for experimentation and new knowledge. An immediate, obvious reference is the Bauhaus, which was founded 99 years to this date and still hovers as the inspiration behind many design curriculums all over the world; but also Black Mountain College and its experimental and interdisciplinary approach, which resonates up to this day. Similarly, from 1973 to 1975, the Global Tools system of workshops sought to go back an archaic form of wisdom, embracing nomadism and leaving the city itself behind; and the Sigma Group, from 1969-1980, used an artistic and pedagogic approach to tackle mathematics, cybernetics, bionics, psychology, and architecture in the arts.

These initiatives have not only helped design evolve, question itself and push its own boundaries, but also education and learning in general. Not only concerned with design, many of these experiments have also tested alternative ways of living, working, and connecting with each other and ourselves. Through this process-based experiential research, new manifestations, meanings, and implications of design have surfaced.

Today, design has become a form of enquiry, power and agency. It has become vaster than the world and life itself, permeating all layers of everyday life. As design becomes pervasive, the discipline can no longer claim to offer solutions to everything. In fact, the one-size-fits-all approach of many universal global systems is showing its cracks and exclusions. Similarly, design education – where the field and its practitioners have traditionally been reviewed and refined – now finds itself navigating new constraints and challenges regarding relevance, adaptability, accessibility, and finances.

As a space for critical reflection on design established in a historically rich context, the Istanbul Design Biennial offers the opportunity to question the very production and replication of design and its education. In 2018, the 4th Istanbul Design Biennial builds on the legacy of previous editions, in order to reinvent itself and become a productive process-orientated platform for education and design to research, experiment and learn in and from the city and beyond.

Titled *A School of Schools*, the 4th Istanbul Design Biennial will stretch both the space and time of the traditional design event, manifesting as a flexible year-long programme within which to respond to global

acceleration, generating alternative methodologies, outputs and forms of design and education. *A School of Schools* manifests as a set of dynamic learning formats encouraging creative production, sustainable collaboration, and social connection. The learning environment is a context of empowerment, reflection, sharing and engagement, providing reflexive responses to specific situations; it explores eight themes: Measures and Maps, Time and Attention, Mediterranean and Migration, Disasters and Earthquakes, Food and Customs, Patterns and Rhythm, Currency and Capital, and Parts and Pockets.

These themes have been determined based on personal, experiential and scholarly research in Istanbul, building on the research of previous Istanbul Design Biennials. While not aiming to be comprehensive, the themes indicate some of the dominant frames through which the world is learned today. Under the present conditions of information overload, extreme societal and environmental change, and increased tension between physical and digital, these parameters of knowledge are in urgent need of review.

Fuelled by a research and process-orientated approach, *A School of Schools* will manifest in a variety of formats in many locations, in addition to the six-week intensive in Istanbul from 22 September to 4 November 2018. As a first step in this process *A School of Schools* launches an open call, extended to all designers, architects, scientists, engineers, chefs, craftspeople, activists and everyone else.

Divided into a call for 'schools' and a call for 'learners', the open call is twofold. The format of a school is open for interpretation – from a one

hour class or tutorial, to an online network or alternative university; from in situ observation and other methodologies, to critical schools of thought. The learners are anyone who would like to participate in a school, and can demonstrate an openness to discovery and transformation, regardless of design expertise, background or experience. The biennial will endeavour to address matters of financial support and other accessibility issues but encourages resourcefulness.

Both learners and schools are urged to connect their applications to one or more of the themes under scrutiny for the 4th Istanbul Design Biennial. Besides those who demonstrate a capacity and passion for learning, *A School of Schools* will give preference to proposals that are committed to not only learning but translating the learning into a communicable form.

Can the biennial use, question and reframe previously tried-and-tested education models – from the museum-as-encyclopedia to the laboratory, the studio and the academy – to create a setting for meaningful dialogue and design? Can design itself be a brave space for people to share their knowledge and ignorance, their experience and curiosity?
Engaging multigenerational, transdisciplinary practitioners from Turkey and abroad, *A School of Schools* brings together old and new knowledge, academic and amateur, professional and personal, focusing on the process as much as the outcomes. Together, agents in this complex and ambitious ecosystem will create new knowledge, search for alternatives to implemented systems, and with radical diversity, push the boundaries of the design discipline.

Constantin Boym

Museum as Classroom: a Pratt Experience

Pratt Institute was established in 1887 by American industrialist and philanthropist Charles Pratt, who had made his fortune in oil business. Pratt's first intention was to train young people in engineering and industrial production. At the same time, he was interested in art, especially in drawing, which he understood as universal language of creativity and invention. In was only natural that the nascent profession of industrial design flourished there as early as 1930s.

The amalgam of art and industry still reverberates as an early definition of our profession. Since its origin, design has internalized economic, technological, and social influences of industrial age. Industry-supported courses and projects have long become a staple of every design school's curriculum, a paradigm of the 20th century's design education.

Yet another familiar paradigm declares that design should be reflecting its own time. As the second decade of the 21st century draws to a close, the economic situation is the American North-East has become vastly different. The largest industry in New York City, for example, is culture. In 2013 alone – the last year of Mike Bloomberg's tenure as the NYC Mayor – the overall creative sector generated $21 billion in economic activity and employed more that 320,000 people. Of the city's 52 million tourists, almost a half – 24.5 million – came for the sake of culture.

How should departments of Industrial Design in New York respond to this new reality? This was the question I asked myself when in 2015 I became a Chair of Industrial Design at Pratt. The challenge was to find ways to connect the design education to our new "industry", to engage students into working with cultural institutions of the city.

In this respect, it is useful to look at New York museums. Total attendance for just the top three New York museums last year (2016) has been a staggering 14.5 million people.[2] Yet museums are increasingly competing with technology that has made entertainment and culture much more accessible to people at home. Changing demographics, including the large, tech-savvy millennial generation, remains a significant challenge for the museum industry. Bringing students to a museum, engaging them into consistent project-oriented work with the museum curators, and enabling student participation in museum public programs is a win-win situation. This participation goes beyond relying on museum as a passive "resource". Instead, the museum becomes a proactive catalyst for creating new knowledge, a venue to encourage students' creative research, and an opportunity to make these projects public.

This was my hope when I contacted a few directors of New York museums, attempting to launch a design studio, supported by the culture industry. Some of the early results of those endeavors are presented below.

Our collaboration with the Brooklyn Museum resulted in several highly popular projects. Brooklyn Museum and Pratt Institute are old Brooklyn institutions. Both were founded in the same decade in the 1880s with the purpose of artistic and intellectual education of the public.

Establishing and sustaining a creative connection between these two organizations seemed like a natural and relevant choice. Today, the museum still has a populist agenda, tightly connected to the borough of Brooklyn and its multicultural residents.

From the beginning it was decided to make projects for public use. Students of Industrial Design department have a particular affinity for designing and making furniture. The topic of our first collaborative project focused on museum visitor benches. The project commenced with multiple museum visits, followed by sessions with museum professionals: from curators and exhibition designers to security personnel. Installed in the museum lobby for visitors' use, the benches proved so popular that the public petitioned the director for keeping them for another year. The topic of benches has been followed with activity tables for family use, and presently – with outdoor furniture for the museum garden.

Our collaboration with Cooper Hewitt, the National Design Museum, took a different route. In 2016 Cooper Hewitt was preparing an exhibition devoted to socially responsible design: *Design With The Other 90%.* The exhibition curator Cynthia Smith volunteered her time and knowledge to work with two student studios, helping the students and professors to develop the projects that related to the context of the exhibition. Under her guidance, Pratt students worked on design proposals with the Coalition for the Homeless and with CHIPS, an agency that helps young homeless women and mothers get back on track. After a semester-long work, students had a chance to present a selection of their projects as part of the public program, connected to

the Design With The Other 90% exhibition, to a full auditorium of museum guests. This was an empowering experience.

Another project for the upcoming Cooper Hewitt exhibition devoted to Accessibility has been developed in coordination with CaringKind, an organization that provides instruction and help to people with Alzheimer's disease. Working with medical and social experts, and in consultation with Alzheimer's patients and caregivers, Pratt students endeavored *design for the mind*. Products are understood not only as aesthetically pleasing to look at, but as tools responsible for producing relationships, thoughts, ideas, and ways of being.

Some design proposals are startling. The bathroom cabinet mirror, which is capable of disturbing and disorienting an Alzheimer's patient, turns into a reassuring display of family memorabilia with a simple flick of a switch. Other projects follow the tenets of Universal Design: while they are helpful for the ill, they are also smart and useful for everyone. For instance, there is Portable Garden– an herb planter that can be attached to a walker, or any other suitable structure. Magnetic Tray, devised for people with motor function impairment, is helpful for anyone who needs to carry filled cups across the room. These, and several other proposals are to be exhibited at the Cooper Hewitt museum in December 2017, as part of their forthcoming exhibition on Accessibility.

There are many ways of engaging a museum in sponsoring or collaborating with students at schools of design. Our examples only scratch the surface.

The idea of using museums as classrooms, curators as professors, and museum exhibitions as topics for student's research, is both timely and relevant. In the post-industrial condition of our economy and society, the culture-sponsored studio becomes the new paradigm for the design education.

Notes:

1) Progress: Arts and Culture, www.progress.mikebloomberg.com
2) Theme Index and Museum Index: The Global Attractions Attendance Report, www.teaconnect.org

Clive Dilnot

From Design and Culture to design as Culture

The opening sentence to the entry on 'Culture' in Raymond Williams' *Keywords* famously describes it as 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language.' Williams continues: this 'is partly because of its intricate historical development … but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought.'[1]

It will strike anyone reading this that much the same could be said about design. This is not irrelevant to how we might think their relation. Both words contain more than we tend think they do. And more than their institutional forms would suggest. In this talk I will suggest that there can be a very useful, perhaps in the light of the problem of the future, even essential relation understood between design and culture, but only once we understand what is *latent* in each term and therefore in the potential of their relation. In other words, you will find me saying that there is no useful or adequate, and especially no useful design-pedagogic relation, between "design" and "culture" when these terms are taken as given entities or only through institutional relations. On the other hand, these complex, difficult words (and the realities and possibilities subsumed within them) can be the source of new practice and

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[1] *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (Glasgow, Fontana, 1976) p. 76-82.

pedagogy once we open to their complexity and mutation – but only, again, once we think them outside the framework of institutions (which, as I indicate below, seems to me a very bad place indeed from which to start).

I

To begin with "Culture." Raymond Williams' short essay does a masterful job in elucidating, historically, the complex and shifting alignments of the word.[2] As Williams acknowledges, not only the term, but the phenomena and processes it seeks to address are riven with tensions. Today of those tensions can be caught most economically (if necessarily over-simply) in a single opposition. On one side stands 'the culture industry,' everything that Horkheimer and Adorno assailed so presciently and so powerfully in 1944,[3] but which by the time Raymond Williams was publishing *Keywords* in 1976 was already beginning to morph into that much larger sphere of exchange that we are familiar with, where cultural production of every conceivable type has been integrated into the economy as a whole - just as the economy, in a turn that would have surprised the early industrial and commercial Nineteenth century - now acts, not at all negligibly, *through* the cultural. Pointed to thirty years ago most sharply by theorists of the

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[2] See, on the concept of culture from a sociological and anthropological perspective, Zygmunt Bauman's *Culture as Praxis,* new revised edition, 1999 [originally 1973] (New York, Sage Books).
[3] 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (originally1944) in Max Horkehimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott. (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002), pages 94-136.

post-modern,[4] no-one who today speaks of culture, or invokes cultural possibility or the sites of cultural production, can ignore this structural entanglement, a binding which affects the museum no less than any other sphere (and affects design too in so far as it too wishes also to be thought a 'cultural activity').[5]

That is one side. We could label it realism. It essentially describes what is and the context today within which cultural institutions (and especially the largest) necessarily work. But if the economic today frames culture (such that its vaunted autonomy is less, always, than we imagine) the 'inconsistency' of culture as I will call it, is equally significant. Thought now not as set of institutions, or as a set of values, or even as identity - but as, in effect, an aspiration, the term stands not for what-is or what is given (for what is deemed as "necessary") *but for what might be*.

The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman summarizes the case.

> 'Santayana described culture - all culture, any culture - as a 'knife pressed against the future'. Culture … is about making things different from what they are; the future different from the present. It … is that which accepts that, first, "things are not necessarily what they seem to be", and second, that "the world may be different from what it is". 'A concern with keeping the forever inexhausted and

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[4] See for example, Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, (Durham, Duke University Press, 1991).
[5] See Guy Julier's books: *The Culture of Design* (New York, Sage, 3rd edition, 2014) and *Economies of Design* (New York, Sage, 2017).

unfulfilled human potential open, fighting back all attempts to foreclose and preempt the further unravelling of human possibilities, prodding human society to go on questioning itself and preventing that questioning from ever stalling or being declared finished. Pierre Boulez said that arts struggle to transform the improbable into the inevitable. I believe that this is precisely what "culture does" … Culture is a permanent revolution of sorts. To say "culture" is to make another attempt to account for the fact that the human world (the world moulded by the humans and the world which moulds the humans) is perpetually, unavoid-ably and unremediably *noch nicht geworden* (not-yet-accomplished), as Ernst Bloch beautifully put it.'[6]

Bauman is here taking up the sense of culture as the exploration of possibility, one that is implicit in some modern notions of the arts (pace Boulez's comment) but via Ernst Bloch's "Principle of Hope,"[7] he now generalizes this as the expression an acutely human aspiration – indeed, in Bauman's strong reading, *the* human characteristic.

Only the growth motivations, like culture, are truly specifically human. The adaptive … is not yet fully human. Human culture, far from being the art of adaptation, is the most audacious of all attempts to [work towards] the unfolding of human creativity. Culture is a daring dash for

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[6] Hybrid quotation. See Zygmunt Bauman & Keith Tester, *Conversations with Zygmunt Bauman* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2001) p. 31-33.
[7] Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Three volumes (originally 1954). (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1995).

freedom from necessity. It is blunt refusal of secure animal life.[8]

And he adds, now in specific reference to Bloch:

I am now inclined to accept that Utopia is an undetachable part of the human condition, just like morality. I owe that view to Ernst Bloch. I remember being deeply impressed by his definition of human being as 'intention pointing ahead', and of 'human nature' as 'something which still must be found'. I was impressed by his propositions that the sole 'being' possible for the moment - for any moment - is 'being before itself', and that 'in both man and the world the essential thing is still outstanding, waiting, in fear of coming to naught, in hope of succeeding', and that the world is a 'vast encounter full of future'. The 'human essence' lying forever in the future, the pool of human possibilities remaining forever unexhausted, and the future itself being unknown and unknowable, impossible to adumbrate.[9]

Reading these quotations, two things are quickly apparent. The first is the immediate sense that this way of culture, the active, even *activist*, sense of aspiration ('prodding human society to go on questioning itself and preventing that questioning from ever stalling or being declared finished,'; understanding that 'things are not necessarily what they seem to be,' that 'the world may be different from what it is'....) has an *internal*

[8] Zygmunt Bauman, *Culture as Praxis* (London, Routledge, 1972) p. 172. Revused edition (1999) p. 135.
[9] Bauman, *Conversations*, Ibid. p. 34.

relation to design, or at least to the better of its aspirations. The point is made even more sharply when we compare what Bauman is hinting at (culture as '… about *making* things different from what they are; the future different from the present. … [the] concern with keeping the forever in-exhausted and unfulfilled human potential open, fighting back all attempts to foreclose and preempt the further unraveling of human possibilities.') and what, for example, John Chris Jones sketched out more than thirty years ago as the necessary agenda for the future of design:

'Alongside the old idea of design as the drawing of objects that are then to be built or manufactured there are many new ideas of what it is, all very different: - designing as the process of devising not individual products but whole systems or environments such as airports, transportation, hypermarkets, educational curricula, broadcasting schedules, welfare schemes, banking systems, computer networks; - design as participation, the involvement of the public in the decision making process; - design as creativity, which is supposed to be potentially present in everyone; - design as an educational discipline that unit es arts and sciences and perhaps goes further than either; - and now the idea of designing WITHOUT A PRODUCT, as a process or way of living in itself ... (a way out of consumerism?) In my earlier book I defined design as the initiation of change in man-made things. Looking now at that definition I still like the emphasis on change but not the assumption that

design is limited to the thinking of a few on behalf of the many. Nor do I like the assumption that it is to do with change in things but not in ourselves. In my re-thinking of the nature of design in these pages I have moved far from the picture of 'it' as the specialized activity of if it is to as a paid experts who shape the physical and abstract forms of industrial life which we all, as consumers, accept or adapt to. That notion cannot possibly last forever – it's too limiting, too insensitive to the reactions it provokes. It's too inert. Designing, if it is to survive as an activity through which we transform our lives, on earth, and beyond, has itself to be redefined continuously.'[10]

The second response to Bauman's lines is that while we know that this sense of culture finds *some* echo, both historically and in some aspects of contemporary modes of practice in cultural institutions, it is weak, and it is very largely translated into and expressed through, the limits of art (and worse, of what we have to call today something like "the aesthetic-entertainment paradigm"). What this tells us is that in this context, no-one can presume that there is an inherent relation between the Museum and design or for that matter between the museum, as an indicative moment of culture in its institutional form and culture in its wider Baumanesque scope.

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[10] J.C. Jones, "Preface to the 1984 edition" *designing designing* (London, Architecture, Design and Technology press, 1991) p. xi-xii.

A graphic instance for me recently was at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and an imbecilic exhibition on the work of Ettore Sottsass, one that demonstrated an appalling lack of understanding of Sottsass's work, let alone of its context or more generally of design and how one might show it.[11] Another example, though it is now old, was an exhibition of Shaker Design at the Whitney, where far from explicating the complex relation of material culture to Shaker beliefs and mode of life in the content of design, the exhibition concentrated its research on trying to give proper names to the otherwise anonymous work of the Shakers, and who made a point of exhibiting (for crowd pleasing reasons) as many examples of colored Shaker furniture and artifacts as they could find. It was in short, the Shakers for genteel consumers- and the sale rooms.[12]

Now, there are counter instances. Just to work from my own experiences. My introduction to the Shakers came through a superb exhibition, back in 1975 organized by "Die Neue Sammlung" in Munich and in which the inter-relation of the material culture of the Shakers and their beliefs, aspirations, hopes; their conduct of life was beautifully and movingly made clear.[13] The most intelligent design exhibition in New York in the last fifty years in my view was Emilio Ambasz's *Italy: the New Domestic Landscape* held at MOMA in 1972, an exhibit which precisely dealt with the historic and contemporary

[11] For details see the review of the exhibit by the designer Constantin Boym http://boympartners.blogspot.com
[12] June Sprigg, *Shaker Design* (New York, Whitney Museum, 1986).
[13] *The Shakers* (Munich: Neue Sammlung, 1974).

relations of design and culture. I have seen echoes of that approach in later exhibits at MOMA, especially those mounted in the last decade or so by Paola Antonelli (*Design and the Elastic Mind, 2008, Talk to Me, 2011, Designing Life: Synthetic Biology and Design, 2014))* although in them both the scholarship and the wider understanding of design is less than was achieved by Ambasz. (Tellingly, for institutional reasons, the best of the recent shows she curated never made it into a physical exhibit. *Design and Violence* (2014/5) lived virtually, then in debate, and now in a volume.)[14] It is indicative too I think that some of the strongest exceptions to the mediocrity (from the standpoint of understanding not of spectacle) of the vast majority of design exhibits are those that have emerged from the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis under the curatorship of Andrew Blauvelt (e.g., *Strangely Familiar: Design and Everyday Life*, 2003; *Graphic Design: Now in Production*, 2010; *Hippie Modernism*, 2016).

It is perhaps not a coincidence that both Ambasz and Blauvelt were trained designers. For them both, the impulse towards understanding as well as presenting seems key: or perhaps better what seems is to work at how presentation of design can lead *through* spectacle to deeper comprehension, at once of the act, circumstances and processes of designing (designing as the negotiation with circumstance) and of the work itself – now *thought* as against merely *shown*.

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[14] Paola Antonelli and Jamer Hunt, *Design and Violence* (New York, MOMA, 2015)

But even if we grant these exceptions, the larger record of the relation between the museum and design is at best ambiguous. Sufficiently so, I think, that any premise that the future of design education somehow lies *naturally* in relation with cultural institutions (most obviously the art museum) is fundamentally wrong. The validity of this point might also be suggested from historical American experience. There is a significant tradition of US schools of art and design originating from museums (RISD, the Corcoran school in Washington, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and so on.) Today that linkage has almost completely disappeared. It may be telling in this respect too that the largest institution I know of which maintains a connection, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, is a one in which design is peripheral (and where the relation to the museum, in most practical senses, is in any case all but non-existent).

All this suggests that while there is the slogan "design and culture," (and even a journal of this name) the relation between "design," design pedagogy and its closest seeming institutional instantiation outside of the design school per se, is ambiguous at best – and at worst directly, even dangerously, unhelpful. The necessary focus of especially major museums on popular spectacle and quasi-commodified objects (however "objects" are defined in any instance) mitigates *directly* against depth understanding. In these contexts understanding is won, if at all, "in spite of." More seriously, it tells us that everything opened or suggested by Bauman's opening of culture or by Jones'

opening of the future of design, can scarcely be adequately explored within the limits of these spaces.

Is there then no relation? No way to think "design" and "culture" (and design pedagogy. the 'future of the school' in a forward-looking way? I think there is. But not institutionally (at least in the first instance) and it arrives not as design *and* culture (the conjunction betraying the inherent separation) but as design-*as*-culture, which also means, today, culture-*as*-design. It is that possibility which I would now like to turn to and briefly explore.

II

Because these notes for the conference have already vastly exceeded the word limit sets by the organizers I will temporarily close this paper here. I will then use the occasion of my talk in the summit to take this initial argument as read and to try elucidate, from the other side as it were, what I think could be a critically affirmative (pedagogic) relation between design and the kind of understanding of human actions and aspirations (as "culture") that Bauman is pointing us towards.

Maya Dvash

Almost from the earliest days of their establishment, museums had a distinctly educational role. Their duty was to recount and present the past. The museum was an inseparable part of social, cultural and political policy. Alongside educational systems in schools and universities, museum collections were used by students, scholars and amateurs alike. In this respect, the museum's educational mission has hardly changed in recent centuries; and it is still, as Joseph Veach Noble has written, to excite, inspire, and enlighten its visitors.

In an article by Dr. James M. Bradburne (General Manager of the Palazzo Strozzi Foundation), "The Future of Museums: Doubts and Reflections" (2012), he argues that museums were founded not to be visited but to be used. 21st century museums must choose between visitors (one-time) and users (multiple-occurrence), claims Bradburne and adds that the difference between a one-time visitor and a re-visitor is mainly a result of education. At the basis of this distinction between visitors and users lays the essential qualitative character of the user as opposed to the visitor's quantitative character.

The museum remains a vital and necessary institution only as long as it has a role in imparting the skills required by an ever-changing society. But what are these skills? Differentiation abilities, creativity, openness to experience, creating connections and quality assessment, and a kind of cultural literacy that prepares future generations to fulfill their role in a rapidly changing economic system. These skills are acquired through repeated visits to the museum and involvement in its activities.

The number of visitors in museums in Israel exceeds 4 million a year. More than half of them are students. This is interesting data because it reflects a global trend of change that has taken place in the history of museums in recent decades: the average age of the public visiting museums, is declining. Similarly to what is happening around the world, here too, schools, families and children have become the main target audience for museums, which are trying to cope with the decrease in public funding and are continually attempting to raise the number of visitors.

Throughout the existence of *Design Museum Holon* (founded in 2010), a great deal of resources have been invested in its educational department and in networking activities between the museum and the municipal educational system.

This paper will review the educational role of *Design Museum Holon* through two major projects initiated by the Museum in recent years. These projects demonstrate how the museum not only hosts visitors but also enables various aspects of usage within it.

One of the projects initiated by the museum in its early years was the hosting of studio classes in the museum's Design Lab space. For three years, the Museum hosted students and lecturers from leading design academies in Israel for a semester of study, experience and shared thinking. The students and lecturers were hosted in the museum's design lab, which served as a studio class - a space for studies and activity. The Design Lab was open to the general public on the remaining days. Visitors were able to follow the classes, which took place in the lab, through a blog created by the students on the museum website, as well as to encounter the products in the lab space

during the rest of the week and meet with the students themselves on weekends.

The intent of this project was to involve visitors with the beginning of the process of design study and to reveal the initial space in which the tools that outline this long road, which does not end in academia but rather lasts a lifetime, are created. This was a great opportunity to discuss design in the making, to study and teach creative skills, to reveal thoughts about the process and the end product, along with the considerations and thoughts that accompany young and established designers throughout their work process. But what did the students themselves gain from this? Was there a difference between the way this course was conducted in the past in an academic setting and its existence in the museum space? Was the dynamics different? In what way did studies at the museum affect the students?

"The space's presence was very powerful." Says the course lecturer Pini Leibovich. "The organized space, the exhibition, the courtyard and the very entrance to the museum itself - these encounters undoubtedly influenced the products".

The question arises, why do students need quality space for such a course? Is there really a difference between this space and an academic classroom? "Quality space paves the way for alternative products." claims Leibovich. "The students had to do a good job because they knew that the work stayed there all week and was seen by strangers visiting the museum".

Moreover, meeting museum visitors on weekends allowed students to conduct a dialogue with them, to "receive advice" and additionally,

allowed visitors to be exposed to the process. The students also realized that they have the ability to create desirable objects, the kind that people covet.

It could be argued, that the students work process in the lab, which takes place not only as individual work in the studio between creator and object, becomes a kind of participatory art, and through it the museum becomes a platform for creation which holds political power, and as a result, acts in itself as an entity shaping society and politics.

Another program that has been regularly hosted by the museum in recent years and treats its spaces as a platform for learning is the "School in the City" program. This unique program, allows students to study at special sites in the city of Holon. As part of the city's policy and intent to broaden the cultural world of local children and following the wish to impart upon elementary school students a unique and unusual educational experience, elementary school principals, the department of primary education at the education administration and cultural representatives in the *Mediatheque* complex, which the museum is part of, developed a joint initiative: the "School in the City - Holon" program, which benefits primary school students in the city. *The Cinematheque*, the *Materials Library* and the *Design Museum*, become an open and flexible experiential learning environment that enriches the children's imagination and creativity and presents them with a new perspective of the city and its cultural institutions, as welcoming, accessible spaces that enable them to become more familiar and connected with the community in which they live. The students, who spend full days at the museum, receive a "corrective" experience, quite different from the usual distant and conservative

image of museums. For these students, spending full days at the museum, the museum serves as a tool for creating a way of life, influencing thought, as well as cultural and social style. This project also bears the character of participatory art, and, in fact, embodies a performative quality. As such, it also situates the museum as a political body, shaping society (and its culture).

But if we return to the question of how one-time visitors become recurring users, since students who come to the museum on organized buses, whether for a long school day or even a few days, do not come voluntarily. Well, it turns out that many of them return to the museum on their own and act as guides for their families, feeling proud of their ability to be the guides and not the guided. Part of the answer may be the motivation to pass along the knowledge which has been acquired.

This unique quality of intergenerational transfer of knowledge and the creation of a shared infrastructure of belonging and empowerment is also reflected in another one of the Museum's project's which takes place throughout the city.

Apart from hosting students at the museum over the past three years, we have been running a large-scale educational program in the city's schools called the "Karev Program". This program, originally designed as massive enrichment programs, in order to offer students from peripheral areas the same advantages as children in central locations, now encompasses almost all of the city's schools. Annual design courses allow students to learn basic concepts in design through workshops and social projects.

This year, we have offered selected youths from schools in Holon a special training in how to guide children at summer camps held at the museum. Thus, the museum became an educational incubator in which teenagers from the city of Holon hosted the city's younger children in a space which they feel a part of. It can therefore be said, that a new generation of graduates, who embody a new spirit, is bringing up the next generation, while the museum serves as fertile ground.

Justin McGuirk

This Is Today

Fifty years after *This Is Tomorrow*, the seminal exhibition by the Independent Group at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1956, the artist Richard Hamilton ventured that, since there had been nothing particularly futuristic about it, it should really have been called *This Is Today*.[15]

If you held a gun to the Design Museum's collective head and demanded a three-word mission statement, 'This is today' would more than do. A design museum – perhaps more so even than an art museum – ought to be holding up a mirror to contemporary society, reflecting the ways in which material culture, human behaviour and the discipline of design itself are evolving. Museums in the 21st century have long since ceased being repositories of historical artefacts and are at pains to keep up with the pace of change, even at times positioning themselves as factories for envisaging the future.

When the Design Museum was founded in 1989, it was very much a product of its time. In the 'designer decade', here was a museum founded by a lifestyle entrepreneur, Terence Conran, staging exhibitions about brands and branding. The inaugural exhibition was called *Commerce and Culture*. Curated by then director Stephen Bayley, it took the thoroughly post-modern position that the distinction between high and low culture had been erased, and that everyday consumer goods were worthy of those museum plinths. In other

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[15] Interviewed by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Rem Koolhaas at the Serpentine Marathon in 2006

aspects, it took a fairly traditional curatorial stance, presenting 'good design' in the mode of the *Good Design* exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in the 1950s. In this mode, the museum acted as the arbiter of good taste, though certainly in a less moralistic way than the school of *gute form*, as Max Bill called it (bear in mind that the Design Museum was housed in a banana ripening warehouse remodelled to look like the Bauhaus).

The Design Museum today faces a more complex but thrilling challenge. Design has always been a vast discipline – a meta-discipline, you might say, encompassing everything from architecture and urbanism to products, fashion, software and services – but it has become harder than ever to categorise. Graduates of design schools have no obvious future mapped out for them. Designing consumer goods for mass production is probably not even an option for most of them, if that were even their ambition. Instead, a design education now serves as a mode of thought applicable to almost any creative endeavour, from business to cleaning plastic out of the oceans. Designers operate in a world of environmental crisis, planetary-scale systems and, generally, bewildering complexity. (In truth, design education is only slowly adjusting to the realities of such strident rhetoric, but that does not seem to be stopping young designers taking on incredible challenges.) And, increasingly, such practices have immaterial outputs – nothing as reassuring and tangible as a chair.

It was precisely in response to this situation that the opening exhibition of the Design Museum in its new Kensington home sought to reflect the changing role of the designer. Indeed, it sought to offer designers a new proposition in relation to the museum. *Fear and Love: Reactions*

to a Complex World was conceived as a post-object exhibition. Eleven designers from a range of disciplines and parts of the world were invited to create installations in the gallery about issues that they considered urgent. Echoing the binary of *Commerce and Culture*, the title of *Fear and Love* suggested how far design discourse has travelled from its days as a commercial art form. Instead, here were designers making works about the perceived threat of automation, dating apps and the immigration crisis, life in deprived communities, urban nomads, artificial intelligence, textile recycling and Brexit. There was no pretence of 'solving problems'. Instead, each installation elucidated a *context* – a field of battle in which the designer might have some crucial stake.

As an exhibition of new commissions, *Fear and Love* sought to treat the museum as a laboratory. It opened up a space for the unexpected, for the unpredictable (and as such it was a considerable risk). Naturally it sought to challenge the public's perception of what design is and what one might find in a design museum but, in terms of the relationship to design practice, the crucial gesture was to treat the gallery as a space for creating new work. The 'post-object' nature of the format was intended to empower designers to be thinkers, storytellers or provocateurs, and to reflect design as an expanded mode of practice. Curatorially, it also established a way of working with designers that has become engrained at the Design Museum. For instance, the exhibition *Breathing Colour* was the product of Hella Jongerius being invited to use one of the galleries to display her prodigious research into the behaviour of colour. Again, most of the content was created specifically for the exhibition, which was

experimental in its format and featured nothing so reassuring as any of her commercial products.

This is now the way the museum works with contemporary designers. Monographic exhibitions are no longer straightforward retrospectives, but opportunities to address a particular theme in their work and to generate new thinking and new experiences. In fact, it is interesting to see how the museum's relationship with well-known, mid-career designers has begun to mirror the model of the Designers in Residence programme, which is aimed at relatively recent graduates. Here again, young designers are invited to treat the museum as a resource – as a physical space, as a network of professionals, as a place to encounter the public – which feeds into their work in progress.

To satisfy the multiple roles that the museum now plays – and indeed the financial pressures that most museums face, especially one that is not government funded – the curatorial programme is being shaped into clear strands or typologies. One type is the major thematic exhibition. The first example was *California: Designing Freedom*, an ambitious survey of design from California stretching from the 1960s to the present day. Significantly, this was the first exhibition to attempt an assessment of the enormous impact of Californian design and technology on contemporary life, and on the design discipline itself. The thematic survey is now an annual fixture. The next iteration will look at 'the home' and explore whether the concept of home is changing in the face of new social and domestic behaviours and technologies.

Another strand is an annual series of exhibitions specifically addressing topics that may appeal to a mass audience, from household names (in the *Commerce and Culture* mode) to topics of broad appeal. This is partly to achieve the museum's mission of expanding its audience and making design relevant to those who would not normally engage with it as a topic, but also to subsidise the museum's other interests. The third strand, as mentioned, is an annual exhibition that offers a platform to a contemporary designer. Finally, one strand consists of a major piece of public programming annually that is independent of the exhibitions. This event, which can be a symposium or other gathering, is intended to explore the critical and philosophical issues around design. The first iteration that we are planning is an exploration of Ivan Illich's concept of 'conviviality' as a means of bringing new technologies and social movements together to create more cooperative forms of living and working. These are not conceived as academic symposia but broad, multidisciplinary gatherings that treat the museum as a crossroads and a generator of new networks.

Sitting alongside these temporary exhibitions and events are two anchor programmes that reflect a longstanding relationship between the museum and the design industry. The permanent collection display, Designer Maker User, is a free exhibition that offers a detailed insight into the three different perspectives that determine design: the designer's, the maker's and the user's. As a free resource for design students, and the layman, the collection display illustrates the influence of design on our lives and, in turn, the influence of the user on design. And alongside the collection, the museum's annual survey and awards scheme, Beazley Designs of the Year, offers an ongoing

appraisal of the design industry's output across a diverse range of disciplines. It reflects the concerns and processes of designers year upon year, and is thus a rolling snapshot of a subtly shifting landscape.

These different curatorial strands allow the museum to engage with the design discipline and the public at different levels, from the specialist to the lay person. As a resource for students and emerging designers, the museum is addressing a set of topics and discourses that reflect the way the discipline is evolving in a rapidly changing world. The ideal would be for the museum not only to reflect the design of its day but to help stimulate it. The museum can be a catalyst, driving certain agendas in dialogue with practitioners. The results will be presented to the public as if to say, 'This is today'.

Alexandra Midal

Learning by the images

In 1970, the Polyark Bus Tour, orchestrated by the architect Cedric Price, brought a group of students on a journey with the architect. His goal was to invent a new radical pedagogy by combining flexible forms of travelling with flexible forms of learning. From teaching in a *roulotte* to the structured schedule of an art school, from *Bad Teacher* to *Art School Confidential* or from Jacques Ranciere's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* to the Global Tools or AVL-Ville, many have posited diverse responses to the contradictory perspectives of what teaching could be. But it is within the scope of *The School Without Walls,* coined by the anarchist Colin Ward to refer to the extra-institutional learning practices in the appropriation of other spaces, that as a Professor at Large (a position created for me by Marie Inez Fernandez, the directory of CAPC/ Museum of Contemporary Art in Bordeaux), I am conducting experiments in coordination with my teaching in the MA Space & Communication at HEAD, Geneva.

Why images are so prevalent in the design realm, and why aren't they examined as design visual culture? And on the other side why designers are so silent when it comes to theory, at the difference of architects and visual artists? Instead why does a designer strive to pretend that objects speak? This attitude goes beyond style, era, and discipline. This common attitude discards the quiet claims of functional design to instead adopt a metaphor for the apparent effective silence of functional, anonymous design found in ventriloquism, which first appeared in the performances of Fred Russell in 1896. Artists and

architects regularly invoke the ventriloquist as the figure that connects body and abstract discourse, provoking the frisson of being willingly fooled by illusion. A similar suspicion marked the reactions of those who first listened to Edison phonograph: they skeptically assumed it was duplicity, a ventriloquist behind the mechanism. Cinematic works have repeatedly explored this theme, showing the complexity of the ventriloquist and his creature, torn between the silence of the master/author and the chatter of the always-disrespectful dummy. This is the case of the relationship in James Cruze's intriguing film, The Great Gabbo (1929), brought to life by Erich von Stroheim and his marionette. It finds a surprising echo in the history of design and to a certain extent this metaphor illustrates the design situation and its relation with culture, content, and storytelling, in schools and beyond. The designer-ventriloquist pretends his creation speaks for its self, and this delegation of speech or the « no comment » strategy (J. Morrison, etc.) fuels the separation between culture and design. In the MA Space & Communications at HEAD-Geneva, we have reconciled practice and theory (not history) on an everyday basis. This education is unusual in the sense that it proclaims not only the autonomy of theory for the discipline, but also its even dialogue with practice. This education statement rejects the status quo where theory counts for little, where culture is like a decorative trophy and both are second to practice. The school of design can be a unique space of invention to escape the pre-chewed knowledge and the pre-digested treads which are served everywhere. I insist on this twofold and non-hierarchical approach because I believe it effectively conveys the intricacy of the design discipline today and it helps the students to avoid the artificial split in design schools between technique and theory, and therefore to avoid the confusion of a simplistic partition.

In my theoretical practice, I am investigating the relation between theory and visual theory. And to do so, I defend a mode of investigations, which favors the accidents, the misunderstandings, and the intrigues in order to generate multiple versions of reality. It is what I am aiming to do for my next show in December 2018 at CAPC. It deals with experimentation in education through the use of images. I could find many precedents for the power of editing from Eisenstein to Godard, but my main inspirational models are the educational experimentations by the Eameses with *Rough Sketch for a Sample Lesson for an Hypothetical Course* and the films realized for the Norton's Lectures Series. Instead of presenting what will be my next show, I'd rather invite you to examine these historical precedents for education through images.

1 - Editing by chance

Long before their first projections, the Eameses' inclination for image montage and association was already discernable, as this anecdote from the early 1940s suggests: "Ray usually took Charles to MGM in the morning, and when she picked him up at night after work they would often park on the street outside a nearby drive-in movie on Overland Avenue and watch the film – without the benefit of sound. Charles claimed that he had learned a lot about the dynamics of film editing the silent sessions he spent sitting in their car with the top down…" What drew the Eameses to these films with neither dialogue nor soundtrack? What appealed to them in these purely visual series of shots without discourse? Was language really so superfluous to cinematic transmission? Perhaps the silent drive-in alerted the Eameses to a non-discursive form of intelligibility that operated

through montage alone. Far from an anecdote, this practice of the debuts demonstrates the importance the couple granted to the power of the images and to the meaning of editing. Influenced by the information theory by Norbert Wiener and Claude E. Shannon, Charles borrowed the idea that the receiver needs to reconstruct and reconstitute the information scattered through the transmission.

2 - Editing for teaching

The Eameses' first attempt is almost by accident. In the 1950's, Georges Nelson invites Charles Eames and Alexander Girard to collaborate on *Art X*. In 1953, after five months of work, they complete *A Rough Sketch for a Sample Lesson for a Hypothetical Course*, a name the Eames had devised for *Art X*. It consists of a proposed 55-minute lesson, which combines images, film, music, and even artificial scents with commentary from Nelson and Eames. In this new educational format, the overall sensory experience was, for the first time, the central pedagogical axis. Unfortunately for them, the reactions of the University of Georgia faculty were mixed at best, and its teachers showed no interest in developing the course further. Still, the unity of the project was an innovative format of education and as a multimedia model of audio and visual sensations. "They're not experimental films, they're not really films. They're just attempts to get across an idea," said Charles Eames. This statement reveals the way in which the Eameses forged an invisible link between visual culture and thought, and their belief that their projections ought to transmit a hidden message to viewers. Yet, the visual seduction and mental stimulation is challenged by the individual attention required. While the Eameses' films ostensibly go beyond straightforward visual

entertainment, the sheer pace of these avalanches of images means that even the most attentive viewer would be incapable of apprehending them fully, and consequently that they cannot be said to operate on the level of intelligibility and logic.

3 – Editing the Transmission

The heterogeneous editing, mixing sounds and comments on a non-linear mode establish a technique that will stand out later as the Eames signature. Later, at the prestigious occasion of the Norton Conferences at Harvard, Charles Eames gives 6 lectures between October 1970 and April 1971. Each of these lectures alternates film editing and bits of talks given by Charles[16]. Projected as triptychs, hundreds of slides create the ensemble: *Circus Slide Show, Day of the Dead, Movie-Sets*, etc. The audience discovers a series of triple projections whose innovative format aims to provide a new protocol of education. All these films employ a non-linear from of narration, with two photographs from the same film set rarely appearing one after the other. The effect is that of a visual essay in which countless permutations point to a total equivalence between images and ideas. While *Movie Sets* offers a glimpse of its creators' thought processes, it also accords a significant level of responsibility to the spectator, who must seek to organize the discontinuous information and create the necessary connections between the images – in short, create their own *final cut*. In an interview with Paul Schrader, Charles Eames discusses the role of these montages in his work, and warns that they are not to be taken at face value: "They're not experimental films,

they're not really films. They're just attempts to get across an idea"(Paul Schrader). This statement reveals the way in which the Eameses forged an invisible link between visual culture and thought, and their belief that their projections ought to transmit a message to viewers. The film decors of *Movie Sets* render credible the visual illusions of streets and buildings and the stars' acting as they take on their role; we might speculate that, in much the same way, the Eameses' montages made possible the couple's –perhaps unconscious- desire to project and transmit their ideas in a direct and unmediated fashion.

Their projections aspire towards an ideal model of seamless transmission, one capable of bypassing language altogether. This dream of a universal, purely visual transmission of ideas is one which is shared by a number of other designers, who hoped that a language of forms and signs might supplant other, more explicit forms of communication.

4 -An invisible Force

There is no doubt that the flux of images has conditioned the audience in a mental state of advanced susceptibility which presupposes the advent of a short series of unconscious phase, almost as in an hypnotic state not far away from the mental universe of Charles Eames who confessed: "for years, I tried the autohypnosis by looking at me beyond a candle in front of a mirror". Whether it is a question of exhibitions or lectures, the overwhelming nature of these streams of images are altogether intentional, and represents an aesthetic of "corruption" that relies on "competing" images: "by giving the viewer more information than he can assimilate, information-overload short-

circuits the normal conduits of inductive reasoning"(Paul Schrader). Though the Eameses had pioneered this format in the context of the university, they were ultimately more interested in the circulation of ideas than pedagogy proper, and conceived their montages in such a way as to deliberately disrupt linearity. This presentation raises the question of the quasi-hypnotic power of the images and how they trigger the senses in the educational context. In this context, the projections can activate the model of a fluid and uninterrupted transmission, and deliver the fantasy of a direct communication as telepathy. My hypothesis consists in questioning anew the designerly languages of theory; a shift that could transform design education.

Marco Petroni

The school as a form of protest

The school as a form of protest is a research around new perspectives within the expanded field of design. Exploring the spectrum of new design aspects the author considers the paradigm of "possible" as a strategic term to enlist in analyzing political and aesthetic developments in an ever-changing and dynamic world. The research focuses on the forms and expressions of design that adopt new perspectives outside the logic of mainstream universities. It is a process on design overload in network societies and about how we might start to think and explore our way through it. Because of this abundance and acceleration of information, the sheer overload that constitutes contemporary global culture, it was necessary to assemble and reinvent old methods and by that being able to take in this bewildering alteration without being overwhelmed by it. Leading the study is the firm conviction that it is necessary to analyze a human dimension that considers its points of crisis as opportunities to question, and propose alternative scenarios characterized by an activism aiming to a more inclusive environment.

The research is divided in three main chapters pursuing the following paths: the declination of the paradigm of "possible", the historical path of this concept, and the contemporary models of our paradigm related to curatorial and teaching practices.

The first chapter immediately clarifies the theoretical references in which you can outline the early adopters of this paradigm, which are mainly Maurizio Lazzarato (Italian sociologist and philosopher, post workerism) with his book "The politics of the event" and Susan George (American political scientist and activist) with her book "Another World is Possible If". In his book Maurizio Lazzarato affirms that the days of Seattle (1999) were a political event, which – like every event – first generated a transformation of subjectivity and its own mode of

sensibility. The motto "another world is possible" is symptomatic for this metamorphosis of subjectivity and its sensibility.

The difference between this and other political events of the XX century is radical. For example, the event of Seattle no longer refers to class struggle and the necessity of taking power. It does not mention the subject of history, the working class, its capitalistic enemy, or the fatal battle that they must engage in. It restricts itself to announcing that "something possible has been created", that there are new possibilities for living, and that it is a matter of realizing them; that a possible world has been expressed and that it must be brought to completion.

We have entered into a different intellectual atmosphere, a different conceptual constellation. We need to preserve this new space of independence and autonomy from the dominant laws of the situation. This is more relevant in the context of academic worlds.

The second chapter looks at Global Tools, an italian experiment of researching new modes for teaching during the Seventies. Global Tools was first and foremost an experiment for alternative education, inspired by Ivan Illich's arguments in *Deschooling Society* of 1971. In a remarkable anticipation of the present, Illich had argued in favour of the use of advanced technology to support "learning webs" based on sharing: "educational webs which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing, and caring." Global Tools called for "life as a permanent global education."

Global Tools allows us to revisit and rethink some topics about a possible shift.

Global Tools proposed a whole landscape of experiments, tracing the connections beyond design and architecture, to art, performance and philosophy.

A galaxy of heterogeneous figures becomes the vital nutrient for new forms of production, even an unnamed but fertile school, or rather "anti-school."

A group of people dispersed around Italy that despised the idea of a body of knowledge to be transmitted, had nevertheless backed into such a faculty and such a highly developed form of knowledge.

The urgent issues we face today about ecology, globalization, technology, and social justice seem to closely echo the issues addressed by Global Tools. The specific circumstances of the time were completely different but Global Tools introduces a radical innovation in understanding the relationship between knowledge and society and their vision was based on the "possible".

The third chapter traces a perspective that starts from Global Tools and defines a vision of design not only as a solution to troubles and problems but as a discipline capable of creating spaces and times in which the roles set by the ways of governance of contemporary capitalism "break down".

This point of view on the design world is extremely instructive, especially for the younger generation because it is capable of forming a critical look, since design is sometimes seen as disengaged from the issues of the real world. Instead, new visions are born and also design teaching methods that attempt to widen the scope of this discipline by promoting new and more engaged manners to the social sphere could lead to new opportunities for young designers.

The critical interest and widespread concern of Italian Radical design and of figures such as Ettore Sottsass confirm the importance, almost the need of expanding the field of contamination with other disciplines and knowledge such as: political theory, philosophy, anthropology, science and so on. However, rather than presenting themselves to us as distinct fragments, each with its own identity and structure, they appear to us as a meshwork of overlapping cultural formations, of hybrid reinventions, cross-pollinations and singular variations. It is increasingly difficult to think of cultural formations as distinct entities because of our awareness of the increasing *interconnectedness* of our communication systems. It is not a matter of speculating about a future where 'our fridge will talk to our car and remind it to buy the milk on its

way'. The school is going to be a co-creational space of knowledge exchange, where foreign and local professors and students, lecturers, local craftsmen, in-town guests, local researchers, exhibitors and citizens get together in a free flowing information correspondence creating a process of multi-layered learning across disciplines.

The design professions are going through a moment of deep rethinking, due to the economic recession, the acknowledgment of the Anthropocene and due to the complexity of the contemporary human habitat. Possibilities are choices and choices are possibilities. Design as a discipline can give an interpretation of the changes and act in the society. THIS IS OUR CHALLENGE.