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Design and communication

Under the direction of Bernard Darras & Stéphane Vial

If the 20th century was the century that saw the emergence of communication theories, it also saw the emergence of design, seen both as a profession and a discipline. Such simultaneity cannot be a coincidence and invites questioning.

By presenting itself to sponsors as a ‘weapon of mass communication’ (Vial, 2014), design has indeed profoundly changed and influenced communication practices during the last fifty years. In Anglo-Saxon countries, one can also refer to communication design to designate the branch of design specialising in conceiving and developing messages and devices dedicated to communication. In France, since Roger Tallon, one has outlined three major domains within design: the ‘domain of spatial planning’ (architecture, urban planning), the ‘domain of production’ (objects, products) and the ‘domain of communication’ (signs, messages).

In addition, the project or act of design can be considered in itself as ‘an act of communication’: a well-designed artefact is an artefact that ‘speaks for itself’ to the user (Norman, 2002). The semiotics of objects (Darras & Belkhamza, MEI 30-31, 2009; Beyaert-Geslin, PUF, 2012) and the semiotics of the project thus provide designers with analytical and systemic tools. This is confirmed by the international study into the relationship between semioticians and designers (Darras, SIGNATA Vol. 3, 2012), insofar as ‘the semiotician accompanies the designer’s work in organising the meaning (of the concept) and in ensuring the effectiveness of its communication’ (Deni, 2009). Not only must design products be comprehensible to their users, but for Krippendorff (2006), one can even say that “design is making sense of things.”

Finally, over the last fifteen years, designers from all sectors have been faced with the need to integrate the dimension of communication into their work. Now, “the project is not complete until it is communicated” to the point where “the objective is often no longer to sell a particular product, but rather to sell yourself” (Colin, 2003). How is design communicated to the public, whether in the media, galleries or museums? How does design exhibit itself? What cultural mediation is there for design?

This issue of MEI intends to question the diversity of the points of contact between communication and design on one hand, and design and communication on the other. How do communication theories and practices relate to the challenges of design? To what extent and in what ways is design a subject for information and communication science? How does this sector accommodate design and address its issues? Does design work as a medium which materializes thought? And conversely, how do design theories and practices address the challenges of communication? To what extent is communication a design object? How does design culture relate to the challenges of information and communication science?

To this end, all forms of design are discussed and not only those, such as interactive design and digital design, that are directly related to information and communication technology or those, such as graphic design or information design, that are an integral part of communication design. Product design, architectural design, landscape design, urban design, eco-design, textile design, fashion design, design management, strategic design and social design, etc. are also concerned with the challenges of communication.

Abstracts of 300 words should be sent to the following addresses: [bernard.darras \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:bernard.darras@gmail.com) and [hello \[at\] stephane-vial.net](mailto:hello@stephane-vial.net).

Abstracts will be submitted to peer review.

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First created in 1993 by Bernard Darras (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne) and Marie Thonon (Université Paris 8), MEI “Médiation Et Information” is a double-blind peer reviewed thematic journal published twice a year in the form of a reference work.