

Introduction

One way to conceptualize the process of reading a journal like *Design Issues* is to imagine it as a series of fortuitous encounters through which authors introduce their readers to issues, ideas and experiences. In this issue, for example, readers will encounter thoughtful discussions of aesthetics, management, education and design history. Allan Whitfield challenges us to think of aesthetics not as the artistic aspect of design but rather as a philosophical process for generating a distinctive form of knowledge. Barbara Jaffe unravels the relationship between vocational training and spiritual uplift as goals informing design education in Chicago prior to the arrival of the New Bauhaus. In an exercise he characterizes as “cultural archaeology” Thomas Leslie takes a fresh look at a familiar icon of modern design: the Pan Am Terminal in New York City. Rizal Sebastian advances a model for identifying the common ground between design and management as a contribution to the development of a more effective model of design management. Attentive readers note not only what is said but how. This issue is unusually strong in first person accounts of design. Carl Mitcham, for example, uses his first person account of building a house for himself in the Sangre de Cristo mountains of Colorado to reflect on Martin Heidegger’s seminal essay “Building, Dwelling, Thinking.” Shahriar Sarmast’s interview with the Iranian graphic designer Morteza Momayez provides readers with an opportunity to get to know this important figure. Momayez responds to Sarmast’s probing questions in a personal manner. He speaks of his roots and reflects on the process of aging in ways that reveal the personal story embedded within the professional career. It is tempting to treat this interview as providing a peek at an exotic figure from a distant land but Momayez is not describing an exotic experience. He is recounting his life and practice in his homeland. Describing Momayez as exotic is indicative of a way of thinking based on a crude model of center and periphery operating within the world of design. It is this model that Sherry Blankenship warns us about in her first person account of working around the globe with students from different cultures. Concepts such as globalization and center-periphery relationships are useful to the degree they accurately model phenomena but they fail us when they masked the true complexity of design cultures. Blankenship argues we need to be more thoughtful in developing the interpretive frameworks we impose on design experiences around the globe. In her essay Blankenship reminds us that design conveys “the flash of the human spirit by which the soul of a culture reaches into the material world.” Such reminders are valuable in a world

that too often ignores the marvels and the needs of the human spirit in pursuit of efficiency and profit. The editors of this journal believe that encounters illuminated by “the flash of the human spirit” sustain and enrich design discourse.

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