

# Introduction

Designers shape experience. Designers construct identity. Designers organize collective efforts and animate the potential latent in social situations. Designed objects mediate human interactions and provoke emotional responses among users. Design researchers draw out the knowledge embedded in practice and objects and render it accessible to others. Each of these statements generates lively discussions within the design community and provides fodder for books, conferences and workshops. All of these concepts are present in this issue and reflect this journal's commitment to the belief that our understanding of design can be enriched through a process of thoughtful, rigorous and sustained investigation into the multiple ways that design manifests itself in the world. In the lead article for this issue Kristina Niedderer describes a concept she labels the "Performative Object." More than the manipulation of behavior through design, the author contends that the idea of the Performative Object suggests ways to reconceptualize the users experience such that mindfulness and social reflection and not just consumption become identifiable goals of the design. Niedderer's article is noteworthy for the systematic manner in which she goes about identifying a phenomenon, defining it, drawing upon the insights of other disciplines in order to develop our understanding of it and finally suggesting the implications of her research for other designers. Artemis Yagou's study of architectural lighting fixtures in Greece during the 1930s demonstrates that the history of designed objects involves more than the history of form. Design history refines our understanding of how the process of modernization unfolded in different places at different moments in the modern era. Annaleena Hakatie and Toni Rynnänen turn our attention to an important aspect of professional practice: the interaction between design consultants and their corporate clients. What happens after the congratulatory round of handshakes is over and the parties get down to the business of designing for business? As with the article by Niedderer, it is as much the authors' investigatory method (in this case the tools and techniques of ethnographic studies) as their conclusions that are of interest. Carissa Kowalski Dougherty's contribution to this issue asks the reader to consider questions of identity as mediated through the design of album covers for the jazz records in the 1950s and 60s. Album covers she argues stamped the music with a visible identity; significantly, she asks, "Whose identity?" The visible "blackness" of jazz covers she argues reflected an

increased manipulation and commodification of black identity by the entertainment industry more than it did the growing participation of black artists and designers in American culture. *Design Issues* has often featured articles that focus critical attention on the writings of important design commentators including figures little known to the English speaking segment of the design community. In this issue Fedja Vukic examines seminal essay by Vjenceslav Richter and Bernardo Bernardi that appeared originally in Croatia (then part of Yugoslavia) during the 1950s and 60s. Vukic helps the reader come to terms with the terms formgiving and visual worker in the socialist context of the era. Chanpory Rith and Hugh Dubberly's piece on the work of Horst Rittel is more than a brief reminder of Rittel's role in the founding and development of the Design Methods Movement. They provide an annotated bibliography of Rittel's key contributions to the enrichment of our understanding of design. An annotated bibliography is an invaluable tool that facilitates the process of growing the entire field of design studies. Book reviews are another tool and this issue includes probing reviews by Richard Buchanan, Igor Marjanovic and Dmitri Siegal. Tools, descriptive categories, modes of analysis, and models of research: these are the building blocks of knowledge and practice. As it has since its inception, *Design Issues* remains committed to fostering the entire field of design studies through the presentation of material that enriches our understanding of design in all its rich complexity.

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