

# Introduction

This issue of the journal presents a broad range of articles addressing important themes in different branches of design practice as well as in different modes of design inquiry. As always, the editors seek to bring to the design community a mixture of writing styles and intellectual perspectives that demonstrate the lively nature of design and the rich pluralism of approaches in the field today, while also advancing discussion of many key issues that bear on our understanding of design. The first article, Paul Atkinson's "A Bitter Pill to Swallow: The Rise and Fall of the Tablet Computer," presents an intriguing history of the development of pen input devices and personal computer products that have failed in the marketplace. It is a story of the complex relationship of design, technology, and marketing that is not far removed from the currents of contemporary product development. In contrast to the historical approach of Atkinson, the next author, Massimo Negrotti, presents a more philosophical or theoretical discussion of the concept of "naturoids," seeking a general framework for understanding and methodological development of products that attempt to approximate natural systems. Negrotti offers a useful set of distinctions that contribute to our effort to frame an adequate theory of the artificial—an effort as old as Aristotle and as contemporary as the design of computers and robots.

The nature of design thinking is the subject of the next article, by Rahah Bousbaci. In "'Models of Man' in Design Thinking," he focuses attention on the role of bounded rationality in design, as developed by Herbert Simon, and on the so-called "generational evolution" of design thinking. Bousbaci is representative of a small group of design investigators who are beginning to review and analyze the development of design theory and methodology in the middle and late twentieth century. A critical reassessment of that work is needed today, and Bousbaci offers a useful analysis that will contribute to a more sophisticated level of discussion. While theoretical discussions have a welcome place in *Design Issues*, the journal is deeply committed to discussions of the concrete work of designers, in whichever branch they may practice. Critical discussions of the work of excellent designers make an important contribution to the field and help to keep students and scholars, alike, sensitive to the bedrock reality of design. In this issue of the journal, Humberto Valdivieso presents a brief but insightful discussion of the posters of Venezuelan designer Santiago Pol. We are pleased to show some of the work of this leading designer.

The next three articles develop connections between the field of design and other relevant disciplines, focusing on useful concepts or methods that illuminate design or offer ways to strengthen its foundations. Kjetil Fallen turns toward the work in Science and Technology Studies (also sometimes known as Science, Technology, and Society, or STS) for the idea of script analysis and its potential application to design history. In “The Policy of Design: A Capabilities Approach,” Andy Dong discusses how a “capabilities approach” may bear on the formation of design policy in many countries. As Dong explains, “The capabilities approach is a normative theory of social justice developed primarily by the economist Amartya Sen and legal ethics philosopher Martha Nussbaum.” Dong offers very useful ideas that help in the understanding of the goals of design policy as something more than merely a tool of economic development. Finally, Gavin Melles discusses how the concepts of neo-pragmatism, particularly as presented by philosopher Richard Rorty, may have a useful bearing on the development of design research. John Dewey’s importance for design research is well known to some in the field, but many have only a passing awareness of how deep his influence extends. Melles helps to build the connection to Dewey while focusing on the later work of Richard Rorty, a former student of the philosopher Richard McKeon, who, himself, was a student of Dewey at Columbia.

This issue concludes with book reviews by Allison, Gorman, and Margolin, who discuss *Designerly Ways of Knowing* by Nigel Cross, *20th Century Design History* by Sarah Teasly and Chiharu Watabe, and the *Phaidon Design Classics*.

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Richard Buchanan  
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