

served by a highly idiosyncratic selection of quotes:

"Geographers say there are two kinds of islands . . . Continental islands are accidental, derived islands. They are separated from a continent . . . Oceanic islands are originary, essential islands. Some are formed from coral reefs . . . others emerge from underwater eruptions . . . These two islands, continental and originary, reveal a profound opposition between ocean and island" (p. 9). "Dreaming of islands . . . is dreaming of pulling away, or being already separate, far from any continent, of being lost and alone—or it is dreaming of starting from scratch, recreating, beginning anew" (p. 10). "Hence the fundamental list of the senses of the word planetary: global, itinerant, errancy, planning, platitude, gears and wheels" (p. 75). "Who speaks and who acts? It's always a multiplicity, even in the person that speaks or acts. We are all groupuscules . . . there is only the action . . . in the relations of relays and networks" (p. 207). "If we look at today's situation, power necessarily has a global or total vision" (p. 210). "Imperial unity gave birth to philosophical discourse . . . Philosophical discourse has always maintained an essential relation to the law, the institution, and the contract . . . traversing the ages of sedentary history from despotic formation to democracies" (p. 259). "Whoever reads Nietzsche without laughing, and laughing heartily and often and sometimes hysterically, is almost not reading Nietzsche at all" (p. 257). "An island doesn't stop being deserted simply because it is inhabited" (p. 10). "The simple is not divided, it differentiates itself. This is the essence of the simple, or the movement of difference" (p. 39).

If anything, the errant quality of Deleuze's thought points to a largely underexplored aspect of the work of Deleuze and his collaboration with Guattari: geophilosophy. In *What is Philosophy?*, they write that "thinking takes place in the relationship of territory and earth." *Desert Islands* takes this further: "Islands are either from before or after humankind" (p. 9). Thus, "the island is also that towards which one drifts" (p. 10).

## LES DÉFIS DU CYBERMONDE

edited by Hervé Fischer. Les Presses de l'Université Laval, Québec, Canada, 2003. 275 pp. Paper. ISBN: 2-7637-7932-8.

*Reviewed by Stefaan Van Ryssen, Hogeschool Gent, Jan Delvinlaan 115, 9000 Gent, Belgium. E-mail: <stefaan.vanryssen@pandora.be>.*

In her introduction to this collection of short essays, Canadian journalist Paule des Rivières asks for a round-up of the unkept promises and the new challenges facing the Internet and the World Wide Web. Has the world become more democratic, and has the distance between governments and citizens really shrunk? Is the Internet economy just an inflated idea that has all but collapsed in the early years of this century, or is there a future yet? Does the future of cyberspace lie in new modes of creativity and multidisciplinary scientific research? How are we going to direct the ever faster movement of information along the superhighway?

In the spring of 2002, these questions were posed to a number of more or less distinguished artists, authors, philosophers and scientists from four continents, and the answers were published in the French-Canadian newspaper *Le devoir*. Now, 27 essays have been brought together in this wide-ranging lucky bag. This is not intended disrespectfully, but a collection of 27 essays of less than nine pages on average and on a range of topics from the myths of the cyber-economy to the nature of the universe, the future of on-line education and the development of new modes of authoring must have something for all. This is a strength as well as a weakness. Its strength lies in the fact that an uninformed reader at least gets to know what the issues are. In a very readable format, all philosophical, political, artistic and scientific facets of the current state of the cyberworld are covered.

However, the strength of a chain depends on the weakest of its links, and that is certainly true for this volume. Some of the contributions are of prime quality. Jacques Nantel, professor of e-commerce at the Ecole des hautes études commerciales de Montréal (School for Higher Business Studies) does an excellent job of assessing the alleged virtues of e-business, and Diana Domingues from the Universidade Caxias do Sol in Brazil writes convincingly and lucidly about one aspect of art and magic in cyberspace. These are just two of the stronger links, and there are many others.

On the negative side, there are some very, very poor contributions that I

would put down to an uninformed or unlucky choice of authors. Surely, more and better things have been written about cyberdemocracy and the Digital Divide or on the reality of the virtual?

Fortunately, only a small number of essays are really below standard, and this is compensated for by a number of really outstanding, original and often humorous pieces.

## FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT AND THE JOHNSON WAX BUILDINGS

by Jonathan Lipman. Dover Publications, Mineola, NY, U.S.A., 2003. 224 pp., illus. Paper. ISBN 0-486-42748-X.

*Reviewed by Roy R. Behrens, Department of Art, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, IA, U.S.A. E-mail: <ballast@netins.net>.*

Nearly 20 years ago, the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University organized a traveling exhibition that opened at the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., and was afterwards installed, during the next two and a half years, at 10 other major museums across the country. Titled Frank Lloyd Wright and the Johnson Wax Buildings: Creating a Corporate Cathedral, the exhibition focused on the planning, design and construction of the two major components (the Administration Building, completed in 1939, and the Research Tower, completed in 1950) of the corporate headquarters of the Johnson Wax Company in Racine, Wisconsin. To accompany the exhibition, a book-length study was produced by Rizzoli, of which this newly published book is an unabridged reissue. Its author is the (then young) architectural historian who curated the original exhibition and has since gone on to write other books about the architect, preside over the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy and serve as an expert consultant for a number of Wright restorations. Born in 1953, only three years after the completion of the Johnson Research Tower, Jonathan Lipman has devoted much of his life to becoming an authority on Wright's creative process and to preserving the structures that evidence that. Not surprisingly, this is a book of unusual detail, some of it fairly technical and, yet, because of the varied and interesting mix of vintage photographs, archi-

tectural drawings, accounts by Wright's apprentices and other eyewitnesses, sometimes combative letters between architect and client and all kinds of behind-the-scenes sources, it really does read like a novel while also maintaining the more serious tone of scholarly sleuthing. Of particular interest is Lipman's insightful discussion of Wright's Prairie Style residential buildings (which were "extroverted and integrated with the landscape") in contrast to his public buildings, the Johnson Wax buildings among them, which were almost always closed off from their surroundings (being "introspective and virtually windowless"). As in any book about the colorful and then-controversial architect, amusing anecdotes abound, such as the short-lived suggestion by the company's board of directors that the finished building should be identified by a neon sign. One of Wright's underlings answered: "When this building is finished it is going to be such a contribution that you won't need any sign. After all, there's no sign on the Washington Monument."

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## DESIGN RESEARCH: METHODS AND PERSPECTIVES

edited by Brenda Laurel. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, U.S.A., 2003. 336 pp., illus. Trade. ISBN: 0-262-12263-4.

*Reviewed by Maia Engeli, Planetary Collegium, University of Plymouth, U.K., and University of Art+Design Basel, Switzerland. E-mail: <maia@enge.li>.*

*Design research is how you bring intent and capability into context. . . . The hypothesis that drives this book is that there is a direct relationship between the quality of design and the willingness of the designer to take on mindful explorations of what lies beneath a beautiful surface.*

—Brenda Laurel (p. 316).

These words from Laurel's conclusion to *Design Research* point out very precisely the book's aim. What does one have to know in a design process? How does one get to know it? How can pitfalls and misconceptions be avoided? These questions are addressed in *Design Research*. The book shows the value of known research methods and examples of their application as well as examples of innovative and even specu-

lative approaches to design and how they lead to success. Peter Lunefeld writes in the preface: "At its best, a lively research methodology can reinvigorate the passion that so often fades after designers 'join the profession'" (p. 12).

I found the title of the book a bit misleading. Because of my personal, mostly academic background, I expected a book on academic design research, whereas it is actually about investigations as part of design practice. But once I understood the focus—which is most clearly pointed out in the conclusion—I was able to really enjoy the book.

The four sections of the book, "People," "Form," "Process" and "Action," introduce aspects of finding out more about who a designer is dealing with, what the product could be, how to achieve outstanding results and the relation of process and outcome.

In addition to the linear line-up of the sections and the articles within them, the book offers two kinds of cross-references. One is a table relating the articles to different content categories. The major categories are Domains, Subjects, Contexts, and Research Methodologies. Subcategories of Research Methodologies include Experimental, Qualitative, Quantitative, Speculative and Experiential. This table is extremely valuable for giving an overview and helping one choose single articles for serendipitous reading. The other kind of cross-reference can be found within the texts as a specially colored pointer to another contribution in the book. When reading the book from beginning to end, these are not very helpful, but I can imagine that it could be interesting to follow a reference when reading the book in a non-linear fashion.

*Design Research* is an edited book and very heterogeneous. One thing the contributions have in common is that the authors talk about firsthand experiences and usually present them as very personal stories. This makes the book a pleasure to read, even if some of the contributions are more to the point than others.

Because of this heterogeneity, it is not possible to do the book justice with a summary. The richness of the collection allows different readers to have diverse preferences regarding the content. I will, therefore, give a few examples of articles I personally appreciated: Peter Lunefeld's preface is intelligently written; it encourages a deeper involvement in the design process and also

discloses the complexity of the field with historical and contemporary examples. Lisa Grocott's contribution "Speculation, Serendipity and Studio Anybody" describes in a very encouraging way a discovery-led process and its remarkable outcomes. Contrary to Grocott's methodology, which may not be applied in a one-to-one fashion, BJ Fogg offers a proven method in his contribution "Conceptual Designs: The Fastest Way to Capture and Share Your Idea." It is "a formula he has evolved over the years" (p. 202) consisting of twelve elements, which he demonstrates convincingly with an example. Brenda Laurel's interview with Will Wright about SimSmart conveys a good sense of the different kinds of personal involvement of Wright as the designer of the Sims and the different methods he and his team used for testing the game.

There are two things to criticize. The color coding of the different sections actually is very helpful, and therefore I find it confusing that the colored pages visible on the outside lead you to the "Demos" somewhere in the middle of the sections. The second criticism concerns the many spelling and grammar mistakes: I noticed 20 in the second half of the book.

All in all I can recommend this book to design practitioners who are interested in different possibilities and new approaches to improving the design process through research. It is a rich book and addresses numerous issues from different perspectives. The many contributions are compiled into a meaningful collection through the overall structuring into the four sections and the inclusion of different cross-references. This turns the heterogeneity into an interesting quality; it allows the presentation of different points of view within a graspable framework.

## THE SOUNDSCAPE OF MODERNITY: ARCHITECTURAL ACOUSTICS AND THE CULTURE OF LISTENING IN AMERICA, 1900–1933

by Emily Thompson. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, U.S.A., 2002. 509 pp., illus. Trade. ISBN: 0-262-20138-0.

*Reviewed by Trace Reddell, Digital Media Studies, University of Denver, Denver, CO, U.S.A. E-mail: <trreddell@du.edu>.*

Emily Thompson's account of the modern American soundscape moves like a