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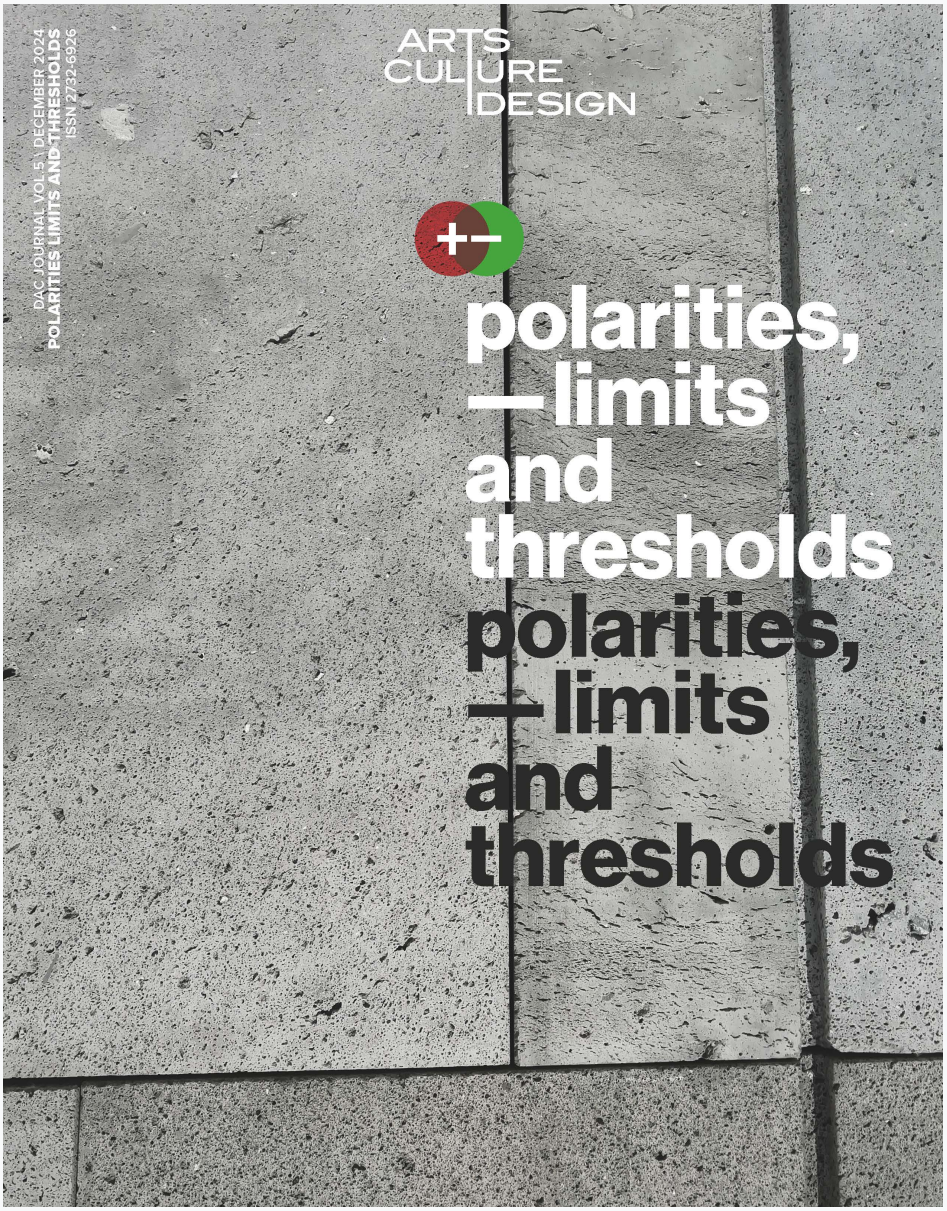

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ARTS
CULTURE
DESIGN

polarities, —limits and thresholds

polarities, —limits and thresholds

ABOUT THE JOURNAL

The International Journal Design \ Arts \ Culture is a digital open access and peer-reviewed multidisciplinary journal, published by “Design, Interior Architecture and Audiovisual Documentation” laboratory of the Faculty of Applied Arts and Culture of the University of West Attica Greece in cooperation with the Doctoral Studies of the National University of Arts Bucharest Romania, University of Nicosia Cyprus, ESAD Porto Portugal, and the Academy of Fine Arts Gdańsk Poland.

DAC Journal is biannual (regular and special issues) and publishes research articles, projects, and portfolios, as well as book reviews and student works. It aims to provide an academic forum for sharing and connecting ideas, projects, practices, and findings about design, applied arts and culture. DAC Journal provides immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge. The journal does not charge submission or publication fees.

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Practice models and new alternative perspectives in building methods, materials research, cultural studies, sustainable approaches.

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POLARITIES, LIMITS AND THRESHOLDS

The present time is played out in insoluble conflict and the end of any debate is all or nothing, has shown polarisation to be a figure of our times. In effect, there is a set of technological, political and cultural conditions that determines the constant extremism of positions and transforms everything and everyone into antagonists. The excessive polarisation of society has instrumentalised causes, radically compromising the complexity of the world and the possibility of a common place. But, in contrast, it has also given new visibility to identity issues and collaborative approaches, allowing for a better understanding of differences and the widening of frames of reference.

By placing these discourses as central issues, the use of tensions without constraints between antagonistic poles transposes protocolary categories and challenges assumptions of knowledge, questions aesthetic and cognitive criteria, highlights limits and unfolds practices. The terms that make them up show a new consistency in collaborative approaches and have fuelled new directions for research and education, such as the goals for the United Nations' 2030 Agenda.

Thus, the "decolonial" movements have emphasised distinct visions in the understanding of history and have constituted more corporeal narratives; the "relational" modes of constitution have mobilised proximity politics, favouring the purpose of an assembly and the continuous exercise of negotiation; and the "speculative" exercises have revealed possibilities of coexistence, finding value in unexpected connections.

We may say that the challenge lies in knowing how to maintain this availability, how to continue this dialogue and generate a difference in action, how to notice these particular ideas and experiences, that is, how to live up to the emerging vitality.

Guided by the terms proposed in the title of the publication – Polarities, Limit and Threshold – the articles present readings of a more theoretical and speculative nature. From the perspective of authors who are fundamental to understanding the topic, some models, approaches and technologies from the social and human sciences disciplinary field are explored. This seems to constitute new research terminologies in art and design courses and bring academia closer to the contexts surrounding it.

Exercises carried out with students – from different schools and education levels – are framed in different pedagogical projects. Narrative or disciplinary limits are considered in these cases, while mediation practices and devices are perceived as potential agents in redefining this initial limit condition.

The political and visual rhetoric, the autonomy of individual subjectivity, and the circulation of images and texts – as well as the emancipation of the tools and processes determening it – configure more particular approaches, resonate experiences, bodies and places, and explore other forms of existence in art and design.

ANA RAINHA

ARTICLES
PORTFOLIO & PROJECTS
BOOK REVIEWS
STUDENT WORK

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KEYWORDS
Co-Design
Participatory
Design
Social Design
Community Empowerment
Sustainable Practices

THE NEIGHBORHOOD IS IN(CLUSIVE): LEVERAGING CO-DESIGN FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT.

ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

This study explores the intersectionality of Design for Aging, Health and Well-being, and Social Design within the intricate socio-cultural ecosystems of local communities. It underscores the efficacy of participatory design and artistic practices as instrumental mechanisms in fostering collaborative creativity and addressing collective societal challenges. Emphasis is placed on the pivotal role of university-level students in enhancing socio-political interventions, thereby positioning them as vital advocates for social justice and community empowerment. This research is exemplified through the case study of "The Neighborhood is IN(clusive)" project, spearheaded by ESAD—College of Art and Design, and funded by the Healthy Neighborhoods Program, focusing on the Cruz de Pau neighborhood in Matosinhos, Portugal.

INTRODUCTION

Communities and local networks can be complex socio-cultural ecosystems where participatory design and art practices can play a crucial role in fostering collaborative creativity and addressing collective challenges. Co-design may be able to act as a catalyst for social innovation by actively engaging community members in creating shared environments. Social design transcends disciplinary boundaries, harnessing the capacities of art and design to respond to multifaceted societal issues, thus creating mechanisms that instigate positive community transformations. University students appear to demonstrate a pivotal role in these processes, enhancing interventions with socio-political dimensions and contributing significantly to community empowerment. They can act as mediators between different age groups and stimulate sustainable change for local communities.

Participatory design methodologies encompass a range of techniques and approaches aimed at engaging community members in the design process. These meth-

odologies prioritize inclusivity, transparency, and empowerment, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are heard and valued throughout the decision-making process. One key methodology within participatory design is co-design workshops, where community members collaborate with designers and artists to generate ideas, develop concepts, and prototype solutions. These workshops provide a platform for open dialogue and exchange, allowing participants to share their experiences, insights, and aspirations for their communities.

Another important aspect of participatory design is the use of participatory mapping and visualization techniques. These methods enable community members to collectively map out their environments, identify key issues and opportunities, and visualize potential solutions. By engaging in hands-on activities such as mapping, drawing, and model-making, participants gain a deeper understanding of their surroundings and are empowered to actively shape their built environment.

Figure 1.
Senior inhabitants of Cruz de Pau community visiting ESAD – Collage of Arts and Design and collaborating with the project students, Matosinhos, Portugal, November 12, 2021. (Source: ESAD Archive, Bruno Mesquita, November 12, 2021.)

Furthermore, participatory design often involves iterative and collaborative decision-making processes, where community members are involved in every stage of the design process, from problem identification to implementation and evaluation. This iterative approach allows for flexibility and adaptation, ensuring that designs are responsive to the evolving needs and priorities of the community.

Overall, participatory design methodologies are essential tools for promoting inclusivity, collaboration, and empowerment within communities. By actively involving community members in the design process, these methodologies foster a sense of ownership and agency, ultimately leading to more resilient, sustainable, and equitable built environments.

2. BRIEF CONTEXTUALIZATION

Social Design, positioned at the confluence of design and social sciences, is an evolving field that tackles complex societal issues and promotes positive social transformation. This review explores key concepts, theories, and examples of Social Design initiatives, particularly in the areas of Design for Aging, Design for Health and Well-being, and Social Design.

Participatory design methodologies empower communities and stakeholders to engage actively in the design process, ensuring solutions are genuinely responsive

to their needs and aspirations. An exemplary project is “Better Block,” which reimagines underutilized urban areas through collaborative placemaking efforts, fostering cooperation among local residents, businesses, and municipal authorities in the revitalization process.

The “Better Block” project, a grassroots urban revitalization effort, aims to convert neglected urban spaces into lively, pedestrian-friendly community hubs using temporary interventions. Originating in Dallas, Texas, in 2010, the project has inspired similar initiatives across the United States and globally. The core idea of “Better Block” is to showcase the potential of revitalized urban spaces through low-cost, temporary changes that engage local residents and businesses. Typically, a block or street section is selected for transformation, and temporary changes are implemented over a short period, from a weekend to a few weeks. The project often collaborates with community organizations, businesses, and municipal authorities to secure permits, coordinate logistics, and ensure participant safety. Volunteers play a crucial role in implementing these temporary changes and organizing related events, such as live music performances, workshops, and community meetings. This project serves as a model for community-driven placemaking and participatory urban design, empowering residents to reshape their neighborhoods in ways that reflect their needs, values, and aspirations.

Social Design interventions aimed at aging populations seek to create inclusive environments that promote independence, dignity, and social connectedness among older adults. The “Age-Friendly Cities” initiative, led by the World Health Organization, exemplifies this approach by advocating for urban planning principles that enhance the well-being of older residents through accessible infrastructure, tailored social services, and recreational amenities. To avoid reinforcing inequity, activities should be designed to overcome disparities rather than exacerbate them. Our physical and social environments, including family structure, social norms, and cultural traditions, affect people differently based on gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education level, or disability. When age-friendly activities address social exclusion and barriers to opportunity, building and maintaining functional ability can also reduce inequity among older adults (World Health Organization, 2023, p.8).

Digital platforms and tools are increasingly utilized in Social Design projects to facilitate civic engagement, community mobilization, and collective advocacy. Initiatives like “Better Block” and “Age-Friendly Cities” empower residents to express concerns, share insights, and collaborate on neighborhood improvement projects, thereby fostering a strong sense of civic ownership and agency in local decision-making processes.

In summary, these examples highlight the diverse range of projects and initiatives within Social Design, each addressing unique challenges and creating opportunities for nurturing environments that promote human flourishing and equitable social outcomes. By leveraging the creative power of design to address urgent societal issues, Social Design emerges as a powerful tool for building inclusive, resilient, and sustainable communities.

3. THE NEIGHBORHOOD IS IN(CLUSIVE) PROJECT

The Neighborhood is IN(clusive) project exemplifies how the synergy between co-design, art practices, and social design can be the motor for social change. Initiated by ESAD - College of Arts and Design, Matosinhos, Portugal -, this project aims to promote improvement on a local Matosinhos community - Cruz de Pau - specifically on its

urban space through active community participation. This initiative targets a diverse neighborhood with various demographic profiles and socio-economic needs. Cruz de Pau in Matosinhos, Portugal, exhibits demographic characteristics typical of a suburban neighborhood within a larger metropolitan area. It is characterized by diversified household compositions, with a blend of traditional and modern housing. While specific population data for Cruz de Pau may not be readily available, general trends can be extrapolated from the larger parish and municipal statistics.

The age distribution in Cruz de Pau is reflective of the patterns observed in São Mamede de Infesta and Matosinhos, featuring a balanced mix of age groups ranging from: young families to a significant proportion of elderly residents. This distribution is indicative of an aging population, a trend prevalent across many regions of Portugal, with a notable number of residents aged over 65.

The socioeconomic profile of Cruz de Pau encompasses a diverse range of income levels, predominantly low to middle-class households. They are characterized by varied educational attainment levels, supported by access to local primary and secondary educational institutions. Households in Cruz de Pau typically comprise of a mix of single-family homes and apartment complexes. It has predominantly nuclear families, with a presence of multi-generational living arrangements.

Having these characteristics in account the project was built to compete for the Healthy Neighborhoods Program. Funded by the Portuguese's government, this program it's a governmental endeavor targeting enhancements in socioeconomically disadvantaged locales. The Neighborhood is IN(clusive) project was ultimately ranked first in the application proceedings, underscoring its significance and potential impact.

This interdisciplinary initiative aims to foster cohesion among Cruz de Pau's denizens, comprising senior citizens, 8th-grade students from the local school, and graduate students enrolled in the Interior Design Master's program at ESAD. Through a series of meticulously orchestrated workshops and participatory exercises, spanning multiple generations, the project leverages co-design and participatory design methodologies to engender creativity, envisioning, and the cultivation of self-build techniques, thereby advancing environmental sustainability imperatives. This comprehensive approach not only facilitates the collaborative genesis of aesthetically resonant artifacts but also inculcates a profound sense of agency and stewardship within the community fabric.

Moreover, the integration of university students fortifies the mutually reinforcing nexus between creative praxis and sociocultural transformation, underscoring the transformative potential inherent in directing academic fervor towards the realization of socially consequential outcomes. The deliberate incorporation of co-design and participatory design methodologies underscores the project's steadfast commitment to embracing inclusive and synergistic paradigms in community development endeavors.

The Neighborhood is IN(clusive) project employs a sophisticated array of methodologies, with a primary emphasis on participatory design and co-design principles. Grounded in collaborative engagement, these methodologies serve as the bedrock for fostering inclusive, community-driven solutions to urban challenges.Participatory design, a cornerstone of the project, ensures that community members are active participants in every stage of the design process. Complementing participatory design,

co-design methodologies facilitate collective decision-making and knowledge sharing among diverse stakeholders. By bringing together individuals with varied expertise and perspectives, including designers, academics, policymakers, and residents, co-design sessions serve as forums for collaborative problem-solving and idea generation. Through hands-on activities such as mapping, prototyping, and scenario planning, participants collaboratively envision and co-create innovative solutions tailored to the unique needs and aspirations of Cruz de Pau's inhabitants.

Furthermore, the project integrates art practices as catalysts for social engagement and urban regeneration. Creative workshops, led by artists and designers, provide a platform for residents to express themselves artistically, explore their cultural heritage, and reimagine public spaces. By harnessing the transformative power of art, the project fosters connections between individuals and their environment, instilling a sense of pride and belonging within the community.

Figure 2.
Students working on one of the five wood structures built, Matosinhos, Portugal, December 11, 2021. (Source: ESAD Archive, Fernando Miranda, December 11, 2021.)

The use of self-build techniques further enhances community engagement and sustainability. By involving residents in the construction and maintenance of public amenities, such as community gardens, playgrounds, and murals, the project promotes a sense of agency and collective responsibility for the built environment. This hands-on approach not only fosters skill development and social cohesion but also ensures that interventions are tailored to local preferences and priorities.

Overall, the Neighborhood is IN(clusive) project's holistic approach to participatory design, co-design, and art practices fosters collaborative creativity, empowers communities, and generates inclusive solutions to urban challenges. By prioritizing community engagement and interdisciplinary collaboration, the project exemplifies the transformative potential of integrating design and social innovation in community development initiatives.

Amidst the backdrop of rapid urbanization and profound social shifts, the Neighborhood is IN(clusive) project emerges as a pivotal endeavor, epitomizing the integration of social design principles with a steadfast commitment to sustainable urban futures. This pioneering initiative is predicated upon the aspiration to engender social

inclusivity within urban neighborhoods, envisaging a future wherein community vitality thrives through the amalgamation of diversity, collaborative endeavors, and conscientious environmental stewardship. Subsequently, design interventions are meticulously tailored to engender spatial configurations and activities that foster accessibility, inclusivity, and holistic well-being for all inhabitants.

Central to the project's endeavors are a series of participatory workshops meticulously designed to cultivate community engagement, foster creative expression, and instill sustainable practices within the urban milieu. Spanning a spectrum of artistic and design disciplines, these workshops serve as crucibles for effecting positive transformations within public spaces while concurrently nurturing individual and collective creativity. From initiatives centered on self-build methodologies to ventures exploring experimental art modalities such as typography, skateboarding culture, photography, and regenerative architectural practices, the project espouses a multifaceted approach to community-driven urban development.

Figure 3.
Christmas event promoted on one of the five wood structures built, Matosinhos, Portugal, December 17, 2021. (Source: ESAD Archive, Bruno Mesquita, December 17, 2021.)

Furthermore, the project underscores its commitment to inclusivity by spearheading a range of initiatives tailored to the specific needs and aspirations of social communities. These inclusive endeavors encompass targeted interventions aimed at enhancing accessibility, fostering social cohesion, and promoting the well-being of marginalized demographics within the neighborhood fabric. By prioritizing the empowerment and integration of underrepresented groups, the Neighborhood is IN(clusive) project epitomizes a paradigmatic shift towards more equitable and socially cohesive urban landscapes.

3.1 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

The project's methodology is grounded in participatory design, engaging community members, university students, and local institutions in collaborative activities. This co-design approach ensures that interventions are tailored to the community's unique needs and aspirations, fostering a sense of ownership and agency among participants.

Participatory design processes involve iterative cycles of feedback and adaptation, enabling continuous refinement of the interventions based on community input.

WORKSHOPS AND ACTIVITIES

A series of workshops and participatory activities were conducted, each designed to address specific aspects of community life and urban space. These activities were integral to the co-design process, providing platforms for skill development, creative expression, and community building.

SELF-BUILD WORKSHOP

This workshop focused on creating sustainable structures for public spaces. It engaged 8th graders and ESAD students in designing and constructing wood structures. Facilitators guided participants through the principles of sustainability and environmental integration, emphasizing hands-on learning and collaborative construction techniques.

REGENERATIVE ARCHITECTURE WORKSHOP

Aimed at stimulating teenagers' creativity, this workshop involved the creation of a habitable sculpture, integrating it into the school's architectural landscape. Facilitators from Riccardo Dalisi / Semi di Laboratorio and ESAD professors led the sessions, combining theoretical insights with practical applications of regenerative design principles.

EXPERIMENTAL ART WORKSHOP

This workshop encouraged participants to explore various artistic techniques, fostering creative expression and community engagement. Artists facilitated sessions focusing on drawing, printing, and plastic expression, enabling participants to experiment with different mediums and methods.

SKATE WORKSHOP

Participants designed and produced skateboards using sustainable practices. The workshop concluded with a presentation and testing of the skateboards by local students, guided by ESAD professors and a professional skater. This activity emphasized the importance of sustainability in product design and the potential for sports to unite communities.

Figure 4.
Group of students and their skateboards, which were produced during the workshop, Matosinhos, Portugal, March 04, 2022. (Source: ESAD Archive, Fernando Miranda, March 04, 2022.)

LETTERPRESS TYPOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

Participants explored typographic composition, understanding its constraints and potential through hands-on activities. Facilitators from ESAD's typography office led the sessions, introducing participants to the intricacies of letterpress printing and the art of typography.

URBAN ART AND MURAL PAINTING WORKSHOP

Community members collaborated to create a collective mural, exploring inclusive drawing techniques and group ideation processes. Designers and artists facilitated the workshop, guiding participants in translating their ideas into a cohesive visual narrative that reflects the community's identity and aspirations.

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

This workshop introduced participants to analog photography, encouraging individual expression and creativity through personal fanzine projects. Photographers facilitated the sessions, guiding participants in capturing unique visions of their reality and developing their photographic skills.

Figure 5.
Multigenerational group exploring solutions during the photography workshop, Matosinhos, Portugal, May, 2022. (Source: ESAD Archive, Fernando Miranda, May, 2022.)

3.2 RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, RESULTS AND EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES

To initiate the project, ESAD master students embarked on an exhaustive four-week endeavor characterized by a meticulous process of research delineating the parameters of the intervention area. This preliminary phase was strategically designed to furnish reflective material that would underpin the subsequent self-building initiative while laying the groundwork for a forthcoming urban revitalization endeavor within the neighborhood. Employing a methodical approach, ESAD master students dedicated this period to the formulation of thematic maps encapsulating the salient features of the targeted locality. Serving as dynamic visual representations, these maps were instrumental in delineating the intricate dynamics inherent within the neighborhood's socio-economic and cultural milieu.

The structured methodology adopted by the ESAD master students facilitated an in-depth exploration of various facets of the neighborhood, encompassing vital elements such as traffic patterns, the availability of sports and cultural amenities, prevailing economic

activities, public transportation infrastructure, and accessibility metrics. By holistically examining these diverse components, the aim was to elucidate their interrelationships and discern their collective impact on community dynamics. This comprehensive approach aimed to elucidate the intricate interplay between these elements, thereby fostering a nuanced understanding of the neighborhood's socio-cultural landscape.

This methodological framework not only offered a tangible foundation for subsequent project phases but also empowered designers with invaluable insights into the community's inherent strengths, prevailing challenges, and latent potentials. By furnishing designers with a comprehensive understanding of the community context, this approach was geared towards facilitating the development of tailored interventions that effectively address the community's needs and aspirations. Thus, this methodological process played a pivotal role in informing the subsequent phases of the project, ensuring that the ensuing initiatives are rooted in a robust understanding of the community fabric and are aligned with its overarching objectives and aspirations.

ESAD students conducted extensive research on Cruz de Pau, developing thematic maps and conducting surveys to understand the neighborhood's dynamics. This preparatory phase provided a nuanced understanding of the community's socio-economic and cultural fabric, informing subsequent project phases. The research involved both qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews, focus groups, and demographic analysis, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the community's needs and potentials.

The resulting system demonstrates the potential of Circular Design and co-design methodologies to bridge tradition and modernity. The project fosters a harmonious blend of Mediterranean architectural identity and innovative solar functionalities, contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of sustainable practices.

The project's impact was evaluated through several metrics, including community engagement levels, participant feedback, and the tangible improvements in urban spaces. The evaluation process involved both self-assessment by participants and external reviews by independent observers, ensuring an objective analysis of the project's success and areas for improvement. The study emphasizes the importance of material circularity and efficiency. Implementing circular systems and integrating renewable energies with sustainable agricultural practices highlight new paths for architectural innovation. Challenges such as some resistance to change and lack of legislation present opportunities for further research and technological development.

4. CONCLUSION

"The Neighborhood is IN(clusive)" project exemplifies the transformative potential of co-design when coupled with a vision for sustainable futures. By embracing inclusivity, cultural diversity, and environmental consciousness, the project serves as a model for community-driven development. This article underscores the importance of collaborative endeavors in addressing socio-cultural challenges and advocates for continued exploration of co-design methodologies in fostering positive societal transformations.

In conclusion, our comprehensive examination of the participatory workshops within the Neighborhood is IN(clusive) project underscores their multifaceted methodologies and profound implications in fostering sustainable urban transformations and creative

expression within the Cruz de Pau neighborhood. Central to the project is the application of social design principles, prioritizing a human-centered approach to address societal challenges. By deeply understanding the unique needs and aspirations of residents, the project endeavors to create interventions that not only enhance the physical aspects of the neighborhood but also cultivate a profound sense of belonging and community cohesion.

As the project unfolds, tangible outcomes emerge, reflecting the collaborative efforts of residents, designers, and local authorities. The transformation of public spaces and the reinforced sense of community stand as testaments to the success of the initiative. Moreover, the project envisions multiple scenarios for sustainable futures, transcending mere environmental considerations to embrace a holistic approach that intertwines social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Inclusive social spaces have been envisioned, ensuring that public areas cater to diverse interests and abilities, with parks, community centers, and public art installations emerging as focal points for fostering social connections and community cohesion.

Neighborhood is IN(clusive) serves as a compelling exemplar of the potential of social design when coupled with a forward-thinking vision for sustainable futures. By embracing inclusivity, cultural diversity, and environmental consciousness, the project stands as a model for community-driven development, inspiring other neighborhoods to embark on similar journeys towards a more harmonious and sustainable tomorrow.

In essence, the Neighborhood is IN(clusive) project underscores the transformative power of participatory design, art practices, and social design in catalyzing positive societal change. Through active involvement of diverse community members, the project not only fosters participation and identification between inhabitants and their surroundings but also contributes to the overall betterment of urban spaces. This article advocates for continued exploration of collaborative endeavors, including multigenerational ones, in addressing complex socio-cultural challenges and unlocking the potential of participatory design, art practices, and social design in shaping more inclusive and resilient communities.

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HOW TO APPLY SOCIAL SCIENCES TO DESIGN RESEARCH. A CASE STUDY BEYOND THE MASTER CLASS.

ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

This article introduces the members involved in design teaching in a research proposal whose main objective is to present, from the disciplines of anthropology, philosophy, sociology, art history and cultural studies, teaching experiences related to the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the impact that classical social disciplines (sociology, ethnography, consumption and trend) are having in the final degree projects produced in higher design studies. The analysis of these methodologies, from the social sciences, starts from this research to advance a "stage of the question" that can also be present in the final degree works of other studies related to the arts and design in general.

INTRODUCTION

Actually, schools and design education, like other educational institutions, must adapt to the new and changing paradigms that impact the real world (understood as the professional and work environment after the educational stage). With this in mind, the educational community, specifically those involved in teaching, must consider various questions related to enhancing theoretical, humanistic, and intellectual discourse in design education. These questions may include identifying the existing boundaries between the academic and professional stages or exploring the intangible frontiers between technical culture and intellectual culture in the practice of design. This article addresses a specific topic related to how art and design schools introduce their research subjects—students who will become future design professionals—to knowledge and research resources related to social, humanistic, and cultural studies. Another point to be discussed in this dissertation is the tacit or explicit values, criteria, and mechanisms deployed in art education.

According to the thematic axis of this text and in relation to the arguments previously presented, more than limits, what exists are barriers that have been constructed between students, teachers, and institutions. These barriers have taken shape through

different approaches and ways of doing, thinking, teaching, and researching, which have highlighted differences in design didactic strategies over the last few decades. Researchers like Lorusso[1] argue that in the academic field, considerable effort has been devoted to investigating the connections between educational institutions (referred to as "design schools" hereafter) and the real-world work environment.

Furthermore, researchers have examined the similarities and differences in student aspirations across different generations, as well as the role played by cultural capital in shaping emerging professional models (Adams, 2003; Tums, 2003; Atman, 2003).

Knowing the interests of students to outline an interdisciplinary theoretical framework for teaching specialties is one of the main objectives of this project. There are proposals similar to the one presented here, recently carried out in the field of higher artistic education in design and that are part of the transfer network provided not only by the schools themselves but also by organizations such as the "Confederación de Escuelas de Artes Plásticas y Diseño"[2]. In May 2024, this research project was disseminated within the framework of the "IX Jornadas para Docentes 2024" (Valencia, Spain) and it was found that it is a topic that interests many teachers in this specialty and especially those in the social and history areas. We must not only rely on literature and sources but also on the real needs of professionals who dedicate themselves to design teaching.

The humanistic investigation of design, beyond classical methodologies such as historiographic reviews, bibliographies, catalogs, or reviews, has been constrained by the technical dominance inherent in design disciplines. Therefore, research proposals like the one presented in this article are crucial in an increasingly digitized, technical society where critical thinking is virtually marginalized (Tatulyan, 2021). Regarding this idea, Lorusso is quite explicit: "I discuss how a broadly humanistic turn in design, which transforms the designer into an intellectual of techniques rather than a technical intellectual, is less a spontaneous evolution of the field than the logical outcome of design's unstable position within the technical domain".

The unstable position of design, as highlighted by Lorusso, emphasizes the need for a humanistic and creative approach to address the challenges inherent in the academic design field[3]. Therefore, other contemporary authors validate that expanding the didactic context of design contributes to the necessity of providing students with broader and more reflective approaches. These approaches must unequivocally be related to the social sciences and supported by methodologies that have proven most effective in recent decades, such as anthropology applied to sustainable design (Augé, 2000). These have been complemented by design theorists who have integrated social methodologies into the more technical realm of design. For example, Michael Leube defends, in his latest work[4] «By revising classical design approaches, such as those related to desire generation

1 Silvio Lorusso has challenged the traditional boundaries between culture and design, demonstrating their inseparability and the crucial role their interaction plays in understanding contemporary society. His work invites reflection on how design influences our everyday life and how culture manifests through it. Read more in his personal site https://silviolorusso.com/work/what-design-cant-do/

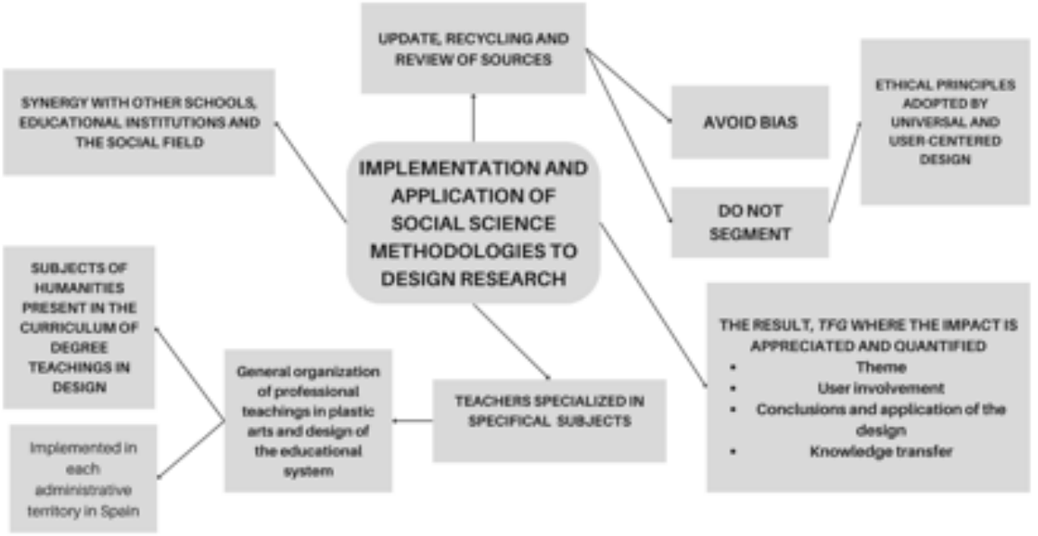
2 The programme is available at http://www.escuelasdearte.es/news/2024valencia/home.htm

3 Id. Lorusso, S. (2024). What Design Can't Do: Essays on Design and Disillusion. Set Margins' Publications.

4 Michael Leube, in his latest work The Future Designer: Anthropology Meets Innovation in Search of Sustainable Design, provides practical examples, methods, and tools for implementing sustainable approaches in the practical work of experienced designers. By showcasing cutting-edge innovations for pro-social and humanitarian design, Leube argues that if we change the objective of design from creating desire to creating value, we can solve many of the most pressing social problems, from citizen cooperation to sustainable cities.

and value creation, we can address numerous urgent and emerging social challenges. These challenges span from citizen collaboration to urban sustainability».

The research discussed in this article, like any qualitative research project, must also take into account how the data offers us, at a quantitative level, information that must be represented graphically, if we want the transfer of knowledge to be effective, providing students, teachers and other design agents with a theoretical but also practical corpus.



Self-made graph that summarizes the state of the issue.

2. UNDERMINING INSTITUTIONS FROM WITHIN

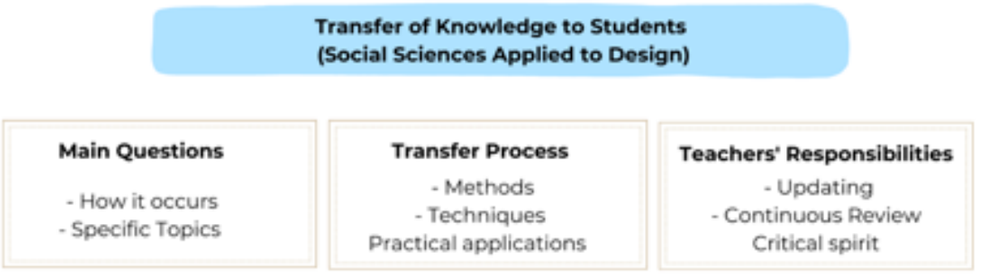
Since the student revolutions of ‘68, educational institutions have been undermined from within by student collectives themselves. The context provided by mass media means that information managed by students (and the educational community) is no longer solely produced within classrooms or departments. Internet and social media portray information in an aestheticized and spectacularized manner, and often, it is manipulated[5]. A substantial amount of information is related to the concerns that design students have, such as inclusion, sustainability, identity, or consumption.

The research project referenced here conducts a rigorous analysis supported by methodologies aimed at highlighting how the social issues chosen by students over the years yield multiple perspectives in the resulting research, fostering innovation and critical thinking. From these final degree projects, both qualitative and quantitative data can be obtained regarding how they have prepared students for a professional career where the social, anthropological, and cultural focus will increasingly be defined by the actual impact of design on the overall user experience. The importance of applying a social approach in any discipline affected by contemporary developments is emphasized[6], and subject to the vicissitudes of advanced capitalism (Jameson, 2017), this approach directly influences

5 Laranjo, F. Modes of Criticism: Design and Democracy. Eindhoven: Onomatopee, 2017.

6 Recent theories on capitalism, such as those proposed by Bell, Fisher, and Jameson, explore a new social formation that questions its nature and no longer adheres to the principles of classical capitalism. These theories challenge the traditional emphasis on industrial production and the omnipresence of class struggle. Instead, they engage with the complexities of contemporary capitalism, considering factors like globalization, technological advancements, and shifts in economic power dynamics.

the results of research like this, making it more evident that high-quality, up-to-date, and impactful social, anthropological, and cultural investigation is essential in the design and artistic creation process. The scheme below helps visualize the key elements involved in this research process.



This graphic scheme presents the transfer of knowledge to students in the field of social sciences applied to design, it is organized into three main blocks:
1. Main Question about how the transfer occurs.
2. Transfer Process which includes methods, techniques and practical applications.
3. Teachers Responsibilities highlighting the need for continuous updating, critical review and maintaining a critical spirit in design research.

There is an evident paradigm shift in design education, which educators in this field must embrace. This change necessitates a fundamental reevaluation of how design is taught (Findeli, 2001). Academic programs must adapt to address not only technical skills but also the ethical, cultural, and philosophical implications of design, working with, applying, and disseminating them. Furthermore, the research results generated by students upon completing their studies should reflect the assimilation of this knowledge associated with academic practice (Frayling, 1993) and its practical application in future design endeavors.

Design researchers are faced with a research approach that must consider an object/subject-oriented perspective from a scientific standpoint, which includes holism. When the decision to adopt such an approach is carefully considered, the research results can align with the new design practices demanded by the market and embraced by the individuals (in this case, students) conducting the research[7]. Classical historiography (for lack of a better term), led by Frayling, has paved the way for a widespread revision of the theoretical frameworks present in design research. This revision begins with criticism regarding how designers or researchers who are also educators have focused on studying creation and manual work, rather than utilizing scientific methodologies that encompass systematic hypotheses, thought structures, or ordered procedures to create meaning.

All of these categories that we intend to analyze (sustainability, inclusion, consumption, culture, etc.) are already integrated into the curricular systems, that is, in the subjects that are part of the humanities or design culture departments (nomenclature that may vary depending on the subject). schools but they are included in the educational laws that are the framework in Spain. Subjects such as “Design Culture”, “Design and Society” or “Design as an agent for social change” offer students theoretical knowledge (theoretical such as those that appear in this article) but also the skills to implement these concepts

7 Panchenko, M. What Is Holistic Design? The Future of UX or a Buzzword? Recuperado de https://www.eleken.co/blog-posts/what-is-holistic-design

into reality. practice. Concepts such as capital, economy and politics are explained as conditions to which the design is exposed.

The political component has been latent in design research, but it became particularly pronounced with the emergence of the pandemic and the spread of fake news, resulting in a kind of "superstorm" that Noemi Biasetton analyzes effectively in her latest work[8] offering a practical model to frame the relationships between design and politics, Noemi Biasetton proposes three distinct approaches: design with politics, design about politics, and design for politics. She encourages design researchers to recognize that combining design and politics does not necessarily imply activism, but rather responds to the need for new tools in addressing emerging challenges and urgencies.

Encouraging reflective thinking among students and design researchers must challenge the traditionally materialistic conception of education, which often views it as mere preparation for the labor market, tailored to market needs.

3. NEW FRAMEWORKS FOR DESIGN RESEARCH

Frayling described how the image of the designer has evolved. From being considered a thoughtful individual dedicated to honest practical experimentation, to becoming a style advocate, and transitioning into the role of a manager who seeks to recycle images, signs, and styles to align with the latest trends. Given this landscape, the function of the designer-researcher (whether student or faculty, as is the case in this text) must constantly renew itself and incorporate knowledge, tools, techniques, and methodologies beyond traditional lectures or independent student work.

One of the key points of this research framework renewal is to observe how topics from the social sciences (history, sociology, anthropology, ethnography, gender, etc.) have progressively integrated into Bachelor's theses (TFG) and Master's theses (TFM), according to the official curriculum[9] at present, all these works confirm how future design professionals are receptive to the social paradigms with which they interact, both practically and theoretically. This is evident in the mandatory research load that students must undertake for academic consolidation, as well as in the radical, and often violent changes observed in consumption, communication, trend models, and politics. (Lynam, 2024).

As Karen Heald proposes in one of her recent studies, 'practice-based research is also an integral part of art and design.' All these areas have been the subject of ongoing discussion and debate. One of the current challenges is to create models that facilitate and enable research development and advancement within art and design. (Heald, 2015). Practice-based research[10] it has been hegemonic in the artistic sphere, it is not sufficient

8 Biasetton, N. Superstorm. Design and politics in the age of information. Eindhoven, Onomatopee, 2024.

9 The regulations governing Bachelor's Degree Final Projects (TFG in spanish acronym) in the field of design at Spanish university schools are established by various legal provisions. In Spain, these regulations are governed by in Real Decreto 822/2021. According to regulations, each university may have its own internal guidelines for Bachelor's Theses (TFG) in the field of design.

10 The debate surrounding practice-oriented and evidence-based research has also generated considerable discussion regarding consensus on what is appropriate for academic development and evaluation purposes. Additionally, the field requires fair and consistent evaluation methods across different types of practice. Currently, research in these areas is being assessed, indicators are compared and evaluated, and proposals are made for incorporating indicators and developing and utilizing research models for further investigation and development. (Heald, 2015).

or, at times, appears incapable of effectively, honestly, and academically incorporating all aspects, indicators, or knowledge related to social and cultural studies.

Social sciences such as sociology contribute several suitable methodologies to research in design and art. In the initial stages, the analysis of diverse databases is essential. In the case at hand, these databases[11] (officials of educational institutions to analyze) like research memories, produced within a significant determined temporality, constitute the research memory.

Simultaneously, this memory is defined by the regulations or guidelines for Bachelor's theses (TFG) developed by educational institutions, as previously pointed out. These data must be subjected to a series of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. First, to organize this information, it should be sorted by calls, categorized by specialties (graphic design, product design, interior design, and fashion), and later organized based on the weight of data related to theoretical perspectives such as social, ethical, and cultural factors.

The following graph[12] visually illustrates how this categorical approach can be.

Conduct primary research[13] combined with an analysis of written material (Visocky, 2021), can offer a diverse series of recurring social categories that can be termed 'main categories.' Within these, secondary and tertiary categories can be inserted, which can be conceptualized as 'relational categories.' By organizing the data obtained from this initial analysis, a relevant presence of concepts related to the fields of cultural, social, anthropological, consumer, and ethnographic studies can be confirmed.

The dissemination of research is considered important for the spread and

11 Data are consistently obtained from official sources, repositories, and both physical and digitized archives maintained by higher education institutions in the field of design.

12 The graph below is my own creation and is part of the presentation that was made of this research at the last IX Conference for Teachers conference, which took place in Valencia in May 2024. Rojo, A. B., & Vidal, F. (2023). ¿Para qué sirven las humanidades y las ciencias sociales en los estudios de diseño? Propuesta de investigación. ResearchGate. URL researchgate.net/publication/380752812_Para_que_sirven_las_humanidades_y_las_ciencias_sociales_en_los_estudios_de_diseno_Propuesta_de_investigacion

13 Visocky, J., & O'Grady, J. (2021). Manual de investigación para diseñadores. Blume. pp. 42-43.

transfer of knowledge generated by these educational institutions[14]. The information generated by these research endeavors not only becomes valuable databases for design research but also serves as a valuable resource for consultation and fieldwork for the entire educational community (students, teachers, or researchers in design). This is particularly significant because it can extend understanding beyond the definitions of classical research inherent to the sciences and academic disciplines (Owen, 1998).

In addition to serving as a relevant asset for qualitative and ethnographic research, this information can be presented and disseminated through networks and media, transforming primary data into highly interesting processed information. This can be done in parallel or as a complementary approach to performative analyses[15], visual, ethnographic, etc., aspects that can enhance the outcomes of future research (Blauvelt, 2007). But the result, at present, will depend on how we work with the data that we now have, specifically, with all the Final Degree Projects (also TFG in Spain) that have been carried out in a period of time long enough to measure the gradual impact, the possible trends and thematic biases that may have occurred.

To facilitate the management and organization of the primary sources, which are the students' works, it is decided to enter the raw data in a table arranged in several columns where the inputs can be entered. Reducing it to a series of main social categories, which will help us classify this data. An example is shown below:

PROMOCIÓ	MODA	Nom alumne/a	CATEGORIA DOMINANT	CORE 2	CORE 3	CORE 4	PRODUCTE
2016-2017	Estereotípia*		Educació	Col·lectiu específic	Inclusió		
	WDF- We don't fit*		Identitat	Inter cultures	Crític Design	Gènere	
	La coberta*		Col·lectiu específic	Inclusió	Crític Design		
	Humans Sandals*		Inter cultures	Crític Design	Emergency design		
2020 A 2021	Awake		Inter cultures	Eco	Emergency design	Inter cultures	O.A-MED
	Otro Studio		Crític Design	Cultura	Emergency design	consum	First Step In Art
	Utopia		Eco	Eco	Emergency design		Coixi, la màgia del descans
	Dress Kawaii not animals		Inter cultures	Crític Design	Consum		dvok SADDLE
	Awareness		Emocions	Consum	Cultura		Wings
	Alternative		Crític Design	Eco	Consum		
	Si		Gènere	Identitat	Cultura	Consum	
	Bridges		Gènere	Identitat	Consum	Emocions	
	Ciao Bari		Inter cultures	Identitat	Cultura		
	Hygieia		Salut	Inter cultures	Eco		
	Up Sick		Salut	Inclusió			
	Nijt		Infància	Inclusió	Consum	Crític Design	
2021 a 2022	CYBER TRIBE clothing colection		Consum	Concept design	Crític Design	Col·lectiu específic	Inhalador d'asma
	Beyond Wounds		Salut	Identitat	Gènere	Col·lectiu específic	Cupra Tacoronte concept car
	Només un Tros		Emocions	Consum	Cultura		
2022 a 2023	Gloria Airways. Inclusive flights		Gènere	Consum	Salut	Col·lectiu específic	furgonetes modulars
	Artesania híbrida		Cultura	Consum	Crític Design	Eco	L'Albus i la ciutat sensorial
	KAGRILLO		Cultura	Identitat	Comunitat		Bossa Mar

Screenshot showing methodology in the initial phase of approaching the data

4. CATEGORIZING THE DATA

The main categories that can help design researchers delimit the areas of study can be quantitatively analyzed by conducting a documentary analysis of completed works. For instance, in the case presented here, the focus is on undergraduate final projects.

14 To make this approach in search of primary data, various university and higher education design school websites have been consulted, such as ESDAPC. Data can be accessed there http//www.esdapc.cat.

15 Referring to Andrew Blauvelt, these qualitative data related to contextual and experiential design are indicative of the application of ethnography in design research. Retrieved from https://designobserver.com/article.php?id=5467

While there is no specific fixed number of categories that can be considered ideal (as it depends on the needs of each research study), it is advisable that if the resulting number of categories in an initial classification is too high, researchers proceed to further reduce this initial categorization into broader thematic groups.

In the initial stages of research, it may be favorable to broaden the number of main areas to avoid unwanted biases from research results. And also, to accommodate the categories that may arise from the analytical work of the databases of the center with which interdisciplinary work is carried out, as is the case with the previously treated political sphere.

One of the objectives of research of this nature may be to establish parallels and synergies by quantifying common categories between art and design, such as gender, identity, sustainability, culture, or concept design/art.

As an example, the realms related to sustainability can include those of 'environment' and 'development'[16], grouping them under the category 'eco.' This methodological organization of categories can be useful for research, as one of its objectives should be the creation of repositories for consultation, work, and research that are valuable to the artistic and design community. It also addresses the need for knowledge dissemination, outreach, and transfer. Additionally, most of the categories selected during the initial data exploration can be transformed into visual parameters, which may even lead to new investigations with a more aesthetic and artistic focus[17].

In fact, part of the data analyzed during all phases of the research can be transformed into multimedia, audiovisual work, etc. And this may be a point of synergy that should be considered as an axis of collaboration and interdisciplinary work in design research.

Data, the more varied, the better, since we cannot separate research from the context in which it develops. (Sanjuán, 2019). The debate regarding the emergence of AI in the purely academic context (specifically within theoretical and cultural domains) of design is not yet widespread. However, it is more prominent in the theorization and artistic production sphere (across various disciplines, but particularly in multimedia, image, and sound), resulting in a significant body of work and critical reflection[18].

5. CONSEQUENCES IN DESIGN RESEARCH

The consideration of all human aspects, accepting the long-term consequences of design, emerges as a consistent theme in the majority of the analyzed research. This is likely related to increased awareness among students and also due to a noticeable presence of theorization and research on sustainability in design, such as the principles of Hannover. (McDonough, 1992).

16 Despite the fact that development and environmental areas can also intersect with consumption or economy, they contribute to the production of significant human capital.(Pont, 2000).

17 Forensic Architectures is an organization made up of architects, artists, filmmakers, journalists, scientists and lawyers. Its main objective is to investigate violence perpetrated by the state and large corporations, especially when it affects architecture and the built environment. To carry out their work, they create expert reports, models, animations, video analysis and maps, and disseminate them both in general media and in courts, truth commissions and civil courts. A whole series of quantitative data that are transformed into artistic pieces to publicize social problems that currently affect us. It can be consulted at https://forensic-architecture.org/

18 A good example is found in the amount of reflection around new technologies and artistic production that we find in institutions such as the CCCB. More info https://www.cccb.org/ca/exposicions/fitxa/ia-intelligencia-artificial/240941

The intensification of the need to enhance multidisciplinary research in design underscores the importance of studying, understanding, and comprehending how these social and cultural concepts are integrated into the creation and transfer of knowledge. It can be argued that investing in research is an optimistic proposition, as schools should serve as spaces for liberation that foster critical thinking—the essential backbone of 'design thinking'. Art and design schools are a special case because, more than in other places, they encourage students to transform their own cultural background, especially the most personal aspects (passions, hobbies, readings, ethical and political ideas, etc.), into practical work. According to Bordieu, a design practice can be understood as the activity through which culture becomes beneficial, and cultural consumers become cultural producers." (Bordieu, 1979).

6. DOING RESEARCH IN A COMPLEX CULTURAL CONTEXT

Providing an example that clarifies what is argued next, historically, the design profession has excluded women (Lupton, 2021), minorities, and oppressed groups, especially in recent decades[19]. The design profession has become one where workers self-devalue and operate within precarious conditions (Zafra, 2018). Design work, fully embedded in cultural industries, is sustained by part-time professional collaborators, enthusiastic interns, and diverse individuals who normalize new forms of professional precarity in the digital era.

But when the cultural system itself sustains or promotes this precariousness, how reliable are the data it provides? How should design researchers manage all these complex data?

If, as discussed in other sections of this text, cultural capital encapsulates the aspects currently under investigation in design, and given that design is in crisis, we are dealing with data, facts, and information chains that must be managed critically. This necessitates ongoing review and constant updating of the knowledge generated and received, as well as the sources and data handled at all initial stages of research. The profession of design has become intellectualized, thanks to the incorporation of 'social research,' giving rise to generations of 'organically intellectual' designers, as noted by Lupton (from a Gramscian perspective): 'These organic intellectuals could merge physical and mental work, constructing 'new models of thought' based on actions of making and creating. Their skills would be both technical and theoretical.The affinity with the 'designer prototype' conceived and promoted by art and design schools is evident: it refers to an intellectual who takes a stance, critiques, and learns, designing themselves and transforming their work into original content that they will also use to express their own personality.

The educational community, particularly the community of professors, must understand what intellectual work entails and how it should be integrated with practical work. Perhaps one of the differences that needs to be examined lies in recognizing the challenge of distinguishing between the technical and the intellectual[20]. One of the 'resolved'

19 We can say that the crisis exposed by Ken Garland's 1960 manifesto is revalidated and fed by the new crises brought about by millenarianism. See the 2000 edition of the First Things First Manifesto hosted on the Adbusters.org website. Recovered from https//:www.adbusters.org

20 One of these differences, for authors like Lorusso, may lie in the generalized perception of the professional roles of design, which may not take into account the roles that the design student acquires, among which is that of researcher, data analyst, data manager. sources, etc.

differences in the practical and academic exercise of teaching applied design has been moving away from a singular focus and opting for a multidisciplinary vision and strategy.

7. BECOMING DUAL DESIGNERS

Quoting Irwin, through this multidisciplinary approach, complex problems posed by society, their interconnections, and interdependencies can be visualized and mapped (Irwin, 2018). The systemic issues presented by the society for which design is undertaken (a continuously changing structure that requires design strategies in transition) call for new academic approaches to assist future designers in identifying key areas within a complex (and problematic) system for strategically locating design actions.

Frayling's concept regarding the dual nature of design research[21], does nothing more than reinterpret Bourdieu's 'double culture' in relation to the cultural boundaries faced by a student who not only investigates design (cultural capital) but also becomes a professional synthesizing these two cultures (Angeschi, 2020). Given this perspective, if the current cultural context is so complex and confronts the previously mentioned 'perfect storm,' how can we explain the intellectual, 'monocultural' inclination of contemporary design? Not having managed to establish itself authoritatively in the technical sphere, the designer, as criticized by Lorusso, attempts to occupy the humanistic sphere.

This is a sensible decision, as schools can thereby confer a formally autonomous role, which involves the exercise of critical thinking and consciousness production[22]. Previously we explained the need for teachers who are experts in these topics, sensitive to the fast-social changes that are occurring, increasingly faster, and which the student must condense in their final project. On many occasions, as can be seen in the final reports of these works (or their summaries), there is a kind of "resignation" to introducing these social issues because they "touch", they are necessary to approve the project and it is for this is why another of the objectives that permeate this proposal is to quantify the real impact that these categories have on both the students and their final work.

But how is this achieved? Organizing the raw data, the qualitative results that build the first hypotheses evidently only allow us to scratch the surface. This is why techniques specific to ethnography, such as interviews, must be applied. Directly question the students in the research process, when they are faced with devising their project. Only in this way can we know, first-hand (through directed surveys, obviously) the concerns, the real social concerns that are behind the idea. There is no doubt that the school environment (sponsored by the teachers, their direct involvement and mastery in these topics), the need to orient the design to the social and the universal make up a relevant part of the presence of these inputs in social work.

In the face of such a paradigm, could design not be considered a reflective activity in which, by configuring the environment, we also reconfigure ourselves? Answering affirmatively would undoubtedly validate the need to enhance reflective

21 Frayling (1994) links the use of the first term ('research') with a common investigation, inquiry or investigation, the second ('Research') is associated with academic professionalization, the legitimation of the domain and the practices around the development of products and innovation.

22 Lorusso, S. What Design Can't Do: Essays on Design and Disillusion. Set Margins' Publications. pp. 257.

practices related to the environment. An environment that is inherently social, in constant crisis, and subject to questioning from its foundations.

The design researcher must be acutely aware that the things they design have an impact on the designer themselves. Art and design schools primarily become laboratories for self-design, and only secondarily serve as contexts where objects are created. This conception, resulting from nourishing design research with tools and methods from the social sciences, does not clash with the 'classic' implementation of design as a project of self-awareness (self-design - the designer) that directly intervenes in spheres such as human capital or identity policies (the context in which the designer designs).

"The versatile, multifunctional, and multidisciplinary aspects are key features of (post)modernity, representing both a range of opportunities and a series of 'curses' for design professionals who operate in non-traditional environments (purely intellectual contexts). Overall, and by way of conclusion, the traditional figure of the designer has (self-)perceived themselves more as a technician than as an intellectual. However, what kind of future designers do we, as design educators, wish to cultivate in today's schools? Is it the one who does not reflect or aspire to engage in intellectual or research work, or the one who does?

Research proposals like this one, sponsored by teachers who are interested in educating their students in the challenges of the future (a future that oscillates between utopia and dystopia) are nourished by real projects that have been coming out of higher schools for a few years. of design, not only from our country, but from art and design schools around the world.

The schools ensure their dissemination and transfer by sharing these final degree works on social networks, interactive channels, conferences, presentations and specialized festivals. I strongly invite the community of readers, teachers and researchers to access the virtual spaces of schools like ours (ESDAPC[23]) to learn first-hand how our students are sensitive to social paradigms, know their problems and implement the design to achieve a better world.

23 https://www.esdapc.cat/en/students/final-degree-projects/

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KEYWORDS
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ARTICLE

CHILDREN CREATE EMOTIONAL PLACES (THE HUT). DESIGN PRACTICES IN RELATIONAL, EXPERIENTIAL AND ECOSOMATIC PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES, IN RESPONSE TO THE CONTEMPORARY SCHOOL MINDSET.

ABSTRACT

In this article it is argued that the lack of proximity to the school environment and learning hinders the holistic development of children. What is missing in contemporary learning is the development of children relationships with the emotional, social and environmental world and most importantly with themselves. Community build-up is deemed essential in this research for collaboration, active engagement and participatory planning in an everyday learning context. Collaboration within the community is intended to improve the children's daily lives and not simply to improve their performance in a learning subject outside their own interests and culture. In this way, children are actively and spontaneously involved in the events that they themselves create. The experiential situations stem from children everyday life, generating intense emotion, a key feature for their all-round development. Children experiences are formed in a playful, multimodal, open and interactive field with the community.

In this research a holistic scheme of work is approached, with intensive active engagement, creative play in nature, kinesthetic action, and ecosomatic perception. At the same time, by intervening experientially and participatively in the natural landscape of the school, students through ecosomatic pedagogy understand both the environmental and material cultures as a concept with permeabilities. In relational experiential pedagogy, the interactive dynamics of persons (from the perspective of their

emotional engagement) with their environment is important. Person and environment do not constitute two separate entities that interact but they rather constitute a single condition of existence in the world. Thus, the atmosphere of the school changes as children relate directly and intensely emotionally to individuals and the environment.

INTRODUCTION

It is now a given that the nociarchic character of the school is not sufficient to express the needs of the child (Kalouri-Adonopoulou, 1999, p. 37), neglecting more than it should the social and emotional aesthetic aspects of his/her personality. The educational system, trapped in the impasses of encyclopedism, turns the educational process into an endless verbiage and a futility, since the connection of knowledge that has not been acquired with the activation and mobilization of the subject, is lost and indeed very quickly (Chrysafidis 2000, p. 66). What is required today is not so much skills as the ability to acquire skills and transform them. Similarly, it is found that without the parallel development of emotional intelligence, the individual cannot deepen concepts, become responsible and empathetic in his/her relationships with others. The curriculum that wants to be creative aims at the utilisation of all the individual's potentials in a universal and not fragmented way, with the ultimate goal of connecting knowledge to life. It should provide for processes relevant to experimentation with the unknown and all this in relation to the child's inherent tendency to investigate and learn, mainly how to think rather than what to think (Xanthakou, 2011, p. 79). In order to implement the above objectives, education must turn to introducing of creativity in everyday teaching and practice and not only in the form of specific lessons. When creativity is fostered, the emotional, social and moral development of the child is facilitated (Xanthakou, 2011, p. 77). "Creativity is a universal characteristic of self-realization" (Gowan et al., 1967, p. 26).

The main purpose of this research was to study how children can naturally experience art in their everyday life. While the most ideal context seems to be aesthetic education, which has the potential to potential to include the basic principles of a lively educational process, meaning those of learning experience, proximity and self-activity (Krustalakis, 2002, p.25). The premise is that art and culture cannot be separated from everyday life, as well as that "Aesthetic education is not only acquired through the learning process, but also through everyday life" (Glykofrydi-Leontsini, 2006, pp. 331-332).

The aim in this pedagogical research is to welcome everyday life as a continuous reconstruction by transforming experiences (Dewey, 1934). It is equally important that education promotes experiential learning, within the wider field of life as felt and experienced by students. In this context, facts and situations stem from everyday life, as well as from the experiences and concerns of the child, created within the social environment where it lives (Chrysafidis 2000, p. 17). The child's lives and activities are legitimately transformed into an experiential, playful, multimodal, open and interactive field with the community. After all, the child is creative when it is in harmony with the needs and interests of its environment (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1975) as the aesthetic education has the ability to regulate the psyche of the child (Vygotsky), to identify with humanitarian education (Eisner, 1965) and to build healthier societies (Eaton, 1989).

This article will study the experiential perception of students in an interactive community environment that was established in relation to the large school community

in the context of an art class. In the research, an axis of work projects with a sustainable and interventionist character was developed, in the natural micro-scale of the school via the formation of a community. Following the experiential method the children create what they themselves have declared that they desire, in this case a house. The action took place in the natural environment of the school with a strong eco-physical and relational interweaving of the community. The actions, the perceptual development, the relationships, the ecological and sustainable consciousness of students were studied in a free, open and playful action format, through the methodological framework of Action Research. Through the thematic analysis, the key conceptual meanings of the project were captured, which helped to decode the meanings of the project and lead to the scheme of experiential, ecosomatic[1], relational[2] pedagogical approach and participatory design, as a counterpoint to the distorted mindset of the school routine.

2. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK
THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTION THROUGH THE HOLISTIC-EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING METHOD

According to Konstantinos Bakirtzis (2005) experiential learning activates the individual, arouses its interest and co-motivates it. Learning is triggered through the emotions of the experience. Learning is at the same time a social and emotional activity. The emotion which is the object of knowledge, influences both the assimilation of knowledge and the behaviour. According to John Dewey, a primary and basic human need is emotion, which leads to the psychological need for the formation of motivation and interests not only for action but for all psychosomatic functions. Whereas, even today in education, priority is given to reason over emotion, to facts over values, to spirit over intuition, to material over spirit, to functional values over intrinsic ones (Lithoxoidou, 2005, p. 847). So that segregation, fractionalization and materialistic worldview isolate and downplay the spiritual aspects of reality (Lithoxoidou, 2005, p. 847). The school has to orient its teaching intervention towards the emotional experience in order to achieve learning and development. The best educational proposals, programmes and logistical infrastructure risk leaving the student indifferent if they fail to move him or her, if they don't create motivation and interest (Bakirtzis 2006).

Experiential learning does not conflict with theoretical knowledge and its deepening. The individual is a single entity and as such must be treated, as in all its activities (Bakirtzis, 2005, p. 75). The holistic nature of live learning wants individuals to participate through their senses, emotions and cognitive abilities. It focuses on sensation, making learning more personal and emotional. It fosters cognitive and emotional development as well as the creation of relationships with oneself, other participants, the instructor and the world in general. The process in this kind of active learning is continuously shaped until the participants acquire the ability to recognize, evaluate and reconstruct the experience in order to give it meaning (Triliva & Anagnostopoulou, 2008, p. 54-5). With experiential learning we enter a holistic-global mode of child development and learning where biological, social, emotional and cognitive developments, affect and influence each other (Schirrmacher, 1995, p. 42).

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1 Ecosomatic, is a new concept that recognizes the human body as an integral part of the global ecosystem, while the ecology of our body becomes part of the ecology of the earth. It is a new movement that explores, bodily sensory experience in relation to the environment

2 Relational learning requires a deep interaction with the inner self, with other humans, living beings, things and places.

THE VALUE OF THE SOCIO-SPACIAL DIALECTIC IN CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE

Today, the prevailing trend in school life in Greece is that the "built-in learning in classrooms is reduced to tasteless repetitions of pseudo-activities that shrink the child, alienate it from the process of knowledge itself, and isolate it from critical interaction with its environment" (Tsoukala & Germanos, 2020, p. 15). Children spend approximately six to eight hours a day at school, with the result that their identity is increasingly aligned with predetermined places, routines and activities. The standardized format of the school setting, confines children to the inside of classrooms and eliminates important aspects of learning offered by outdoor spaces, such as challenge, exploration and risk-taking (Stephenson, 2009). The socio-spatial structuring of the individual, according to contemporary sociological, psychological, psychoanalytical, anthropological and neurophysiological scientific trends, orients education in open, flexible, fluid and with the urban and wider environment intertwined situations (Tsoukala & Germanos, 2020, p. 16). In other words, a cornerstone of a truly child-centred education is the dimension of space, which should provide children with rich stimuli in spaces and environments, opportunities for engagement and autonomy, multiple challenges of active participation in the learning process, interaction and collaboration, social bonds, creative exploration and expression. That is, flexible spaces that provide stimuli for creative learning (Epstein, 2007).

The educational environment is a socio-spatial structure which is interwoven with both spatial and non-spatial practices of the educational process (Charalambous & Psathitis, 2020, p. 232). The material environment offers accumulated information to children and an opportunity to communicate with the man-made and natural environment (Trimi, 2005, p. 556). The concept of connecting to space can embody both the interface with the physical and social context (Altman & Low, 1992). Children in a space can discover countless new possibilities and develop activities that combine physical, symbolic, social, and cultural elements into an unbroken whole (Costal, 1995). When functioning as an active subject, the child has the potential to explore and intervene in space, alone or by communicating and interacting with others (Germanos, 2020, p. 33).

THE IMPORTANCE OF BIOFRIENDLY DESIGN AND THE ECOLOGICAL NATURE OF CHILDREN

It is desirable for children to be taught live the values and the process of life itself through a playful and revelatory way. According to Tim Ingold (2000, p. 18) biological as well as cultural skills are developed and integrated into the human organism through practice and education in an environment. Active engagement with the environment seems to create an ecological context through the relations that are created, in which learning occurs in a natural and existential way. Thus, by identifying with other beings (animate and inanimate) the individual realizes that the interests of the environment are also its own and spontaneously undertakes to defend them, without being imposed by any moral principles (Protopapadakis, 2008, pp. 57-58). Through biophilic design, students connect emotionally with the events of natural environment, creating a deep engagement with nature. 'Self-realisation' an important concept of Deep Ecology is the process through which people perceive themselves in an intense interplay with the rest of nature (Georgopoulos, 2002, p. 309).

Bill Devall and George Sessions (1984, p.305) taking this idea further, argue that Deep Ecology requires a more advanced maturity that leads beyond

identification with humanity to an identification with the non-human world. At the same time, studies of young children show a sense of unity with the non-human world, where the boundaries of self and others are initially absent (Rochat, 2003). All of the above findings conclude that ecopedagogy is consistent with Deep Ecology's goals (Washington, 2018) of biophilia and self-realization by teaching children what they already more or less know on their own.

3. THE METHOD

In this article there are presented the results in 1 of the 17 experimental work projects that were implemented during the basic research of the writer. 25 children, aged between 7 and 12 years, were active in the field research which took place within an Experimental Greek School for six months.

THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS ARE:

1. Whether holistic experiential learning through aesthetics can shape a culture of aesthetic literacy among primary school students?

2. Whether aesthetic development as a live experience can engage children in participatory design by creating social and relational networks that aim at collaborative activities. Can children be involved in school design decisions? How does participatory design relate to sustainability and aesthetics within school understand their role and responsibility in the environment, looking forward to become adults with sustainable-sensitive literacy?

3. Is the everyday contact of young children with the environment and the material world, more capable of shaping aesthetic experiences than conventionally, detached from real life, art education?

4. ABOUT ETHICS AND RESEARCH SUBJECTS

This research was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of West Attica, as well as by the management of the Experimental School where it was conducted and finally signed by all the parents of the participating students. The survey focuses on primary education and includes students from seven to twelve years old. In general, primary education provides a fertile ground for research studies aimed at activating perception, change and personality formation.

Primary education lends itself to interventionist type work plans, since children from 5 to 10 old, are at their most receptive age (Kalouri-Adonopoulou, 1999, p. 89). Children at this age learn mainly experientially and communicate emotionally. They learn about the world through their senses and emotions, they are exploring and discovering everything around them, but also, they learn how to learn. However, not much research on aesthetic and visual education in children of this age was found in the international literature. In addition, in the few studies that were found and had been conducted in the daily field of learning with young children on the subject of visual arts, it was found that they were mainly limited to the subject of painting, which was considered in this research an

outdated form of aesthetic learning and also inadequate, as the aim is for the student to experience aesthetic issues through its everyday life.

5. THE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ACTION IN SCHOOL

According to the characteristics and requirements of the present applied research, the Educational Action Research is the most appropriate method, since it is mainly characterized by its participatory and collaborative nature, the open dialogue, the critical and reflective dimension, the circular and formative character of the processes. Gilbert De Landsheere (1996) says that the purpose of action research is to link what traditional research tends to separate: theory and practice, research and action, psychology and social, emotional and cognitive. Action Research which is intertwined with educational research (McNiff & Whitehead, 2000) is interventionist and requires the involvement of participants. The researcher is asked to propose solutions or ways to bring about change and monitor the effectiveness of these changes (Tsiolis, 2014, p. 51). Research and teaching are treated as an indivisible whole, addressing issues that have been identified and improving the educational process as a whole. Efforts are made for personal and group change in practices, beliefs and perceptions (Katsarou, 2016, p. 295).

Action Research aims to be as participatory, collaborative and as inclusive as possible. All active subjects are involved as partners in the research decisions, regarding both the content of the research and as to the methods that are used (Katsarou, 2016, pp. 246-253). Action research enables the study of a situation in a holistic way where all factors are treated as a set of relationships that interact with each other (Glubou & Kakana, 2020, p. 100).

6. USE OF THEMATIC ANALYSIS TO FOCUS ON THE MEANINGS

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. It is a flexible method of analysis, which can be used with multiple modes of interpretation which originates from different theoretical or scientific starting points (Braun & Clarke, 2012). It is a method of identifying, highlighting and describing recurring meaningful patterns, i.e. ‘themes’ that emerge from the qualitative research data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). These themes are revealed through systematic their identification, organization and understanding in the total research data set (Braun & Clarke 2012). The analysis process requires fine manipulation in order to meet the in-depth analysis of the data. The emergence of a theme is mainly determined by the extent to which it is considered somewhat important in relation to the research purpose (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This means that the researcher will have to make sense of, connect and interpret the research material, according to specific scientific assumptions and the overall research design. While the researcher traced the numerous patterns of meaning and gained access to collective ways of making sense, she focused on the meanings that were most appropriate for answering her research questions (Braun & Clarke 2012, p. 57; Tsiolis, 2018). Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006, p. 87) speak of the researcher’s ‘immersion’ in the research data set. Especially in this study with numerous different data formats, Thematic Analysis seemed to be a particularly useful method to reduce the meanings by an abstractive process in order to capture the important elements and concepts contained in the data (Ayres, 2008). Thus, coding is a dual process that aims

through conceptualization to reduce the complexity of the material and at the same time open up new interpretive possibilities and conceptual frameworks. Coding functions more as conceptual schemas, which on the one hand enable the data to be understood and on the other hand are malleable and amenable to transformation.

7. THE METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS. OBSERVATION AND REFLECTION DIARY

Observation means “seeing” with all my senses a situation that is evolving. At the same time the information is collected and recorded with the scope of studying it afterwards in order to be able to draw conclusions. By observing the reality where the phenomena take place, the true elements that make up the situation can be identified (Kedraka, 2003). After observing and listening, the teacher analyzes the collected data. What differentiates the observation method from others is that the researcher studies the social phenomena which are produced in real-life conditions (Kyriazi, 1999). Observation is ideal for research in the early years of education, where the active involvement of children can be achieved through interesting activities as they act in material space by using their whole body (Tzekaki, 2007, p. 110-111). Suzan Stacey (2020, p. 50) encourages educators to observe how children manipulate materials, whether they insist on a single way, or other more unusual ways.

Observation in Action Research is always participatory, in the sense that the observer participates in the collective life of those he observes, looks, listens, talks with them and they know that is observing them and for what purpose. That is, he is also part of the educational situation he observes (Katsarou, 2016, p. 288). In participatory observation, the observer-researcher becomes a “player” in the action, appropriating one of the roles he studies (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010) and collecting data through its active participation in the group activities (Iosifidis, 2003, p. 56). Reflection helps the educator to elongate the moment in order to reflect on what is happening. Observation and reflection soon become a habit, a natural and spontaneous way for the teacher-researcher to function in the classroom. Stacey (2020, pp. 232-240) argues that this approach allows educators to become researchers within their own workplace. They pause for a moment what they are doing and connect the information to what they have seen or what they are about to do next. The pause and the break from action, gives the teacher the space to make sense of what is being observed. It is often a period of instability as it attempts to unify thought and action. The diary is the most dynamic and creative tool of qualitative research, contributing significantly to the development of the researchers’ reflection. Through the diary technique the teacher becomes more aware of what is happening around him/her, what he/she is doing in each situation, knowing what is unformed in him/her, but also himself/herself as an educator. He/she discovers the wisdom that lies within, confirming or challenging his/her beliefs. Journal writing is natural because of the effortlessness of writing, unhindered by second thoughts or expectations of others (Katsarou, 2016, p. 291). The diary in this research was the most important tool as it preserved events, ideas, concerns, reflections and feelings (Katsarou, 2016, p. 292).

8. RESULTS

The aim of this Action research was for young children to approach art in a natural way, through their own childhood culture and needs. The research, studies the ways in which

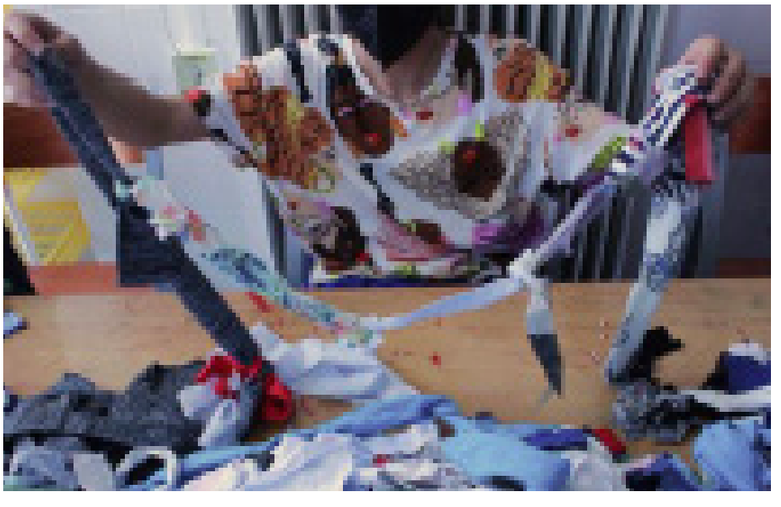
children's aesthetics are perceived and shaped within contemporary everyday material culture, and material culture is considered as the means for a more meaningful connection to aesthetics than conventional real-life detached education based on formal academic art. Children also act participatively within a community, symbolically simulating real life, thus learning cooperation and the right to participate in the decisions of the space in which they live. In addition, by cultivating an aesthetic appreciation of material culture and space through sustainable education with aesthetic implications, children understand their role and responsibility in the environment.

9. THE EMOTIONAL PLACE. THE SHELTER AS AN EXTENSION OF THE DWELLING

In this project students used their old clothes to construct a spatial simulation of a shelter in the school's woodland. They re-cycled by cutting and tying the clothes to form large ropes (Figure 1) with which they wrapped tree trunks together (Figure 2). That project was created by the children's desire to create a sort of habitat for children within the schoolground. Children named it on their own as a hut.

Students created this "refuge-place" with their own hands, ideas and thoughts (Figure 3). For young children it is very important to create "places" and very often they simulate them with the idea of "home ". It was observed, especially in young and middle

Figure 1.
Children re-cycled their own clothes by cutting and tying them to form large ropes



children, that the “hut” meant for them a place where they could isolate themselves, or to bring their friends there. Jay Appleton (1975) bibliografia considers that the concept of shelter is of paramount importance and that it represents the “nest-place” symbolizing protection, security and isolation. Gaston Bachelard (1982) in the light of phenomenology, introduces us to the intimacy and dreaming that the dwelling offers the individual and likens it to a shelter, referring to the ‘poetic images’ of primitive shelters such as the hut, the shell and the cave, “The house where we are born is more than a dwelling body, it is a dream body. Each of its shelters has also housed a dreaming” (Bachelard, 1982, p. 42).

Also, there is a case that children needed to transfer the home environment to the school, representing the family through a symbolic game. And perhaps this symbolic game played the role of a transitional space. That is, that psychological space in between

Figure 2.
Children wrapped tree trunks together with the recycled ropes to form the “hut”

Figure 3.
Children’s desire was to create a sort of habitat in the schoolground. Children named it as a hut

objective reality and its subjective vision, an environment that exists both inside and outside the body, a space of composition that is always already inhabited by many others (Winnicott, 1971). This transitional and safe context, combined with play, gives children the freedom to explore and learn creatively through environments to co-exist with others (Winnicott, 1971). On the other hand, the strong need to create a “shelter” symbolizes the need of communication with others in a special place. Researchers argue that people are attracted to those natural environments that are products of socialization processes (Knopf, 1987). “The house is not at all a concept of architecture, but of sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis (...)” (Pallasmaa, 2020, p. 132).

10. THE RELATIONAL PLACE

The aim through the in-situ installation of the hut in the forest was to transform school space into a place of encounter and interaction, lined with experiences and emotions (Clark, 2010). In literature, middle childhood has been identified as an important stage strongly associated with place (Sobel, 1993; Chawla, 1992; Hart, 1979). Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) suggests that after 6 to 8 years, place experiences consistently accompany children until adulthood as their interest leaves the egocentric internal context and increases for the everyday environment. Place is experienced by the child at its greatest intensity and spatial elements such as paths, hiding places and other special places which are involved in their daily lives more than in any other age period (Ward, 1978, p. 23). While children’s need to create spaces for themselves is directly related to the construction of ‘personal’ space (Wallon, 1984) however, the identity of space is linked to the identity of the ‘ego’ and in this respect it emerges as very important in child development.

The relational meaning of space arises through the relationship between people and places (Lefevre, 1977) and in this sense there is no space that is not characterized from relations. Furthermore, education fails to address the spontaneous and unpredictable teaching situations that emerge from children’s active participation, such as the places that are formed by them as they play (Germanos, 2014). In practice, these situations occur thanks to the freedom that children have in their relationship with space, which allows them to form micro-environments correlated with their interests and behavioural tendencies, that is, to create ‘places’ (Germanos, 2014). Therefore, a space when invested by children’s actions per se, offering opportunities for collaborative and creative interaction that function as learning experiences, can gradually become a place, following the configurations created by the modifications of material elements or the semantic mutations in the context of children’s body movements and wanderings and personal experience (Germanos, 1997). Alison Clark (2010) states that children during a collaborative mode of working acquire an environmental spatial literacy because the places created by themselves function as material fields of education and learning environments, rather than as empty spaces containing standard forms of organization and function that lead to limited predetermined and inflexible educational practices.

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN AS AN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE THROUGH THE FORMATION OF A COMMUNITY

In this work project through participatory-social design and community-based learning, the interaction between the group team and the school community was observed in a

two-way way, with the aim that both sides feel like participants and active players in their own space. The children took action through participatory planning, taking into account the interest of the student community by interacting with other children and teachers in the school. The relationships and symbolic creativity that develop in the children's social environment are interwoven in the context of participatory design, revealing possibilities for transforming relationships. Thus, the catalytic role that interpersonal relationships, multimodal expression and polyphony play in enhancing children's collective symbolic and experiential interdependence with their environment and the people around them is ultimately highlighted (Patsarika, 2020, p. 197). Participatory experience is not just a method or a set of methodologies but a mindset and an attitude (Germanos, 2010). The aim is to shift, from passive to active participation of children and to activate them children in the decision-making process (Gesiou & Sakelariou, 2020, p. 297).

Children, as protagonists and regulators of their daily life at school, make decisions about the space in which they consume about 1/3 of their childhood. Dewey (1907, p. 44) saw the school as an 'embryonic community' which is a thumbnail of society and argued that education should be linked to the real experiences and challenges of the community, providing opportunities for students to be actively involved in problem solving. What creates a sense of community is the expression of children's opinions, the appropriation of the space they live in and the consolidation of their rights in the form of action at the local level (Trikalitis, 2014/2015). Thus, activating the children's school space in a preparatory stage of real life and at the same time hoping for children to become in the future culturally informed and aware citizens (Chapman, 1993). Education should be a collaborative and participatory process that actively engages the community and allows children to interact and participate in shared experiences (Dewey, 1986, 1907). When the educational process is based on experience and interaction then it can resemble a laboratory where students work as a team in a pleasant atmosphere (Dottrents, 1974).

11. A DIALOGIC, ECOSOMATIC AND LIVE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

What usually happens is that students rarely leave the classrooms to do something in the school grounds; the children in this research acted in the real field of the school in a highly interactive way. They took on any task, as demanding as it might be, as long as they were active in the school ground other than the usual classroom. In this energized, dialogic, multi-sensory and playful space, participatory and experiential learning emerged. "Dialogic and playful space emphasize the incomplete, open, in-the-making space, the fluidity, the material and signifying-symbolism of space, while activated space denotes the implicit involvement of space in the child's activities within a collaborative condition of school life" (Tsoukala, 2015).

During the construction of the 'hut' while the children were weaving the fabric ropes into each other to form its casing, they seemed to have invented a kinesthetic body-play (Figure 4). "When we experience a structure, we unconsciously imitate its formation with our bones and muscles" says Pallasmaa (2022, p. 101). The students did not have to say much to each other, they spoke with body language. The children were engaged in this kinesthetic play and hardly needed coordination or any other help from the teacher-researcher in a quite demanding task. They handled the environment with spatial awareness and made appropriate use of their material stock (Figure 5). Eliki Diamantouli and Athina Fousteri (2020, p. 304) say

that “The children’s bodies play and interact with each other. With the catalytic potential of imagination, the ingredients of play are finally stirred into a unified mixture. Space and play are bound together in a special relationship that activates both space and play through performance”. What is observed is that the sense of movement not only gave rhythm to the work but also form to the construction. In a playful and kinesthetic way, the children materialized their movement and transformed it into a tangible yet permeable material substance. The children’s bodies in this case were the tool that manipulated the material medium.

Figure 4.
During the construction of the ‘hut’ while the children were weaving the fabric ropes into each other to form its casing, they seemed to have invented a kinesthetic body-play.

Figure 5.
The children handled the environment with spatial awareness and made appropriate use of their material stock (Figure 6).

What is established is a deep connection between movement and materiality as primitive elements of the environmental arts, with pedagogy emerging as a choreographic force that brings mobility and materiality together in ways that create environments, events, experiences, ecologies of learning and of participation (Rousell et al., 2018). The body becomes part of the experience, speaking now of a live-ecosomatic approach to place. In reality, the body and psyche are shaped according to principles that guide the self-balancing processes of the natural world (Beauvais, 2012). By advancing the ecosomatic approach, knowledge can be formed from both embodied and sensory perception as well as psychology (Beauvais, 2012). A key feature of the ecosomatic-biographical approach is the focus of attention on the relationships between entities and how they mutually interact in the process of their dynamic interactions in the development of meaningful places (Hungrinis & Liapi, 2015). This means that a phenomenon cannot be studied in isolation but only relationally, i.e. in relation to its context, the possibilities offered by its environment and the embodied subjects interacting with it (Ungrinis & Liapi, 2015).

Taking the concept of experience learning a little further, Kyriaki Tsoukala (2015) argues that pedagogy shifts from the active learning student and group dynamics to the universal communication of the child with everything that surrounds it. This communicative intensity and scope are encapsulated in the term relational-centred-experiential-pedagogy by setting it as a prerequisite of operation, the emotional engagement of the child with its environment, both cultural and physical. The relationship with the environment and others, synergizes the intrapsychic with the interpsychic through emotion, that has been caused by the live emotional experience (Tsoukala, 2015). According to Konstantinos Bakirtzis (2000) the experience activates the individual, arouses its interest and “co-motivates” it. Learning is triggered through the emotion of the experience. This emotion influences both the assimilation of knowledge and behaviour. Tsoukala (2014, p. 312) argues that it is the concept of “involvement” which refers to that inner experience characterized by self-concentration, intense and inner motivation, energy current, high degree of satisfaction, contact with the emergence of creative drive, leading to total involvement of the person and full activation of his/her abilities.

12. MEANINGFUL PLACES MADE BY CHILDREN

During the construction of the “hut”, the rest of the school children who happened to be in the courtyard at that time asked if they could also enter the space where the construction was taking place, until one student asked: “How much does it cost to enter the playground? I’ll pay whatever it takes to get in!” From the children’s reactions, it was clear that the construction of the hut resonated with the school community (Figure 4). Although the children had visited fantastic playground facilities in their lives, they longed to enter the hut created by their classmates as if it was a magical place. There is an explanation to all this, however, as prefabricated play spaces have a significant disadvantage in dramatically limiting the scope and development of play (Shackell et al., 2008). Fixed play structures with their predictable, limited options and adult-determined conditions of space use leave little room for children’s mobility and imagination. Play spaces that do not allow the transformations that children bring about, effectively deny them access to the world of imagination (Germanos, 2004). Instead of promoting spontaneity and creativity, playgrounds offer a configuration of guiding objects that inhibit children’s

imagination (Lefaivre & Döll, 2007). On the contrary, spaces that are grafted with elements of the child's world of imagination and personality, but also modified for the needs of play, create the conditions for truly free play (Birbili & Papandreou, 2020, p. 494). The children who watched the construction of the hut may have been so keen to participate apparently because they understood that they could intervene in the project, just like their classmates. Moreover, children apparently identified more with the aesthetic creativity of their peers than with adults. In conclusion spaces that are constructed and conceptualized by children have a greater impact on them than adults' constructions.

13. CONCLUSIONS

This research argues learning that is produced on a relational and affective way, giving the learner a complete picture of the world through holistic perception. The research was applied in primary education where the experiential method is recommended, as at this stage children discover and learn about the world, sensorially and emotionally (Danko-McGhee, 2006˙ ; Schirrmacher, 2002). Through the work projects which developed in the physical spaces of the school, the children showed that they had a strong interaction with the environment, especially in the in-situ constructions or installations. The children loved to be outside of the classroom (as in Greece most days of the year are sunny) and interact with small fields of nature in the school. They managed their material sustainably, wisely and with economy. The material environment of the school is intended to be a field of intense experiences that stimulate children's desires, motivations and interests in order to develop and cultivate their intellectual, emotional and social powers (Tsoukala, 2014, pp. 40-41); Susan Stacey (2020, p. 167) argues that "When children step out of the classroom a whole world of new experiences opens up before them". The results showed that when children experience their world in a free and playful way, they learn more easily, creatively, more complexly and finally they form attitudes and life skills.

During the research and through practical methods of participatory design, the students transformed into individuals who could decide the best solution for the community that would represent its interests (Davidoff, 1965). They created a community culture and worked together with heterogeneities to achieve a purpose, building relationships and friendships. As time went by, the children took more and more initiatives for the good of the community and offered their creations without self-centeredness to the large school community. The children symbolically simulated real life, thereby discovering their right to participate in the decisions of the space in which they live. Additionally, by cultivating the aesthetics of material culture and space through ecopedagogical education, they understood their role and responsibility in the environment. Relational learning, however, did not stay at the level of human relations but moved to an ecological context where all elements of the environment are equal, discovering at the same time the ontological character of material. In this phenomenological approach to material culture, things were understood as events, as consequences of collective actions and practices, in which people, things and places were simultaneously involved (Dan Hick, 2010) (Figure 5).

In this work project a holistic scheme of education is approached, with an intense experiential activity, creative play in nature, kinesthetic action, and ecosomatic perception. The children's aesthetic perception towards material culture and natural environment was developed through participatory action. Pedagogy shifts from the active learner and group

dynamics to the universal communication of the child with what surrounds it, through a relational-centered-experiential-pedagogy setting as a prerequisite the emotional engagement of the child with its cultural and physical environment (Tsoukala, 2015). Relation-centred pedagogy focus on the communicative and interactive functioning of the members on athe school community. By approaching these qualities of dialogic, polyphonic, playful, activated, interactive space, working with materiality and light, landscape and terrain, a new form of learning experience is formed (Tsoukala 2015). This study aims to form a pedagogy with more freedom and naturalness in the school environment. Children should not separate practical life from school life. School should become a natural place of development for children but also be linked to adulthood without creating gaps in the development of the individual. The closer learning is to the physical life of the individual, the easier the child's life can be harmonised with his/her adulthood.

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NO MORE DEBATES ABOUT PARODY. HERE IS THE TRANSPARODY! CHANGING THE TRADITIONAL TERMINOLOGY THROUGH HORROR COMICS.

ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

The concept and content of parody have been studied extensively in literature and to a large extent in the visual arts. A common practice of art theorists and historians, critics, cultural analysts, etc., is to identify intertextual and interpictorial correlations between works and to attempt to classify artistic intentions and methods into taxonomic categories based on older terminologies. The complex parodies of comics, however, in which texts and images are combined and iconic works of art become the subject of a new critique of the "old", may require a new terminology to describe them. Taking the covers of horror comics series Crossed: Family Values and Raise the Dead as examples and tracing in them the interpictorial relationship they develop with well-known visual works of the past, the need to adopt a new terminology is highlighted and the term "transparody" is proposed as being able to encompass this new kind of textual and visual parody that comics achieve.

INTRODUCTION

Let's start with a truism that does not, however, conceal any nostalgia: parody is no longer what it used to be. This does not mean that it was once something we could define with ease and clarity. Intellectuals and theorists in the fields of art, literary and visual criticism, cultural theory, etc., have been trying for years to give their interpretations and describe the mechanisms of production, function and reception of parody. The hermeneutics of parody, however, always requires a historicized perspective. The parody of the past cannot be judged, understood and evaluated with the tools of the present and, even more emphatically, contemporary parody cannot be understood in terms of the past. Every era has had its parody but not every parody could exist in every era.

Parody has always generated debate and controversy for a variety of reasons: Who is its target? Is there a victim and, if yes, who? What are the aims of the parodist? How

do they choose the work to parody? Is parody an insult to the parodied work and the artist who created it? Who enjoys it and who is annoyed? Within what institutional framework is parody possible? What are the legal and ethical issues that arise? Are there works that should be kept out of the body of possibly parodied works or is everything permissible? Is it poaching for the artist to revise past works by appropriating and recontextualizing them? The derivative work is largely signified by the original. But how is the original re-conceptualized by each new version of it? Must we defend the museumization of the work, its rigidity and its totemization (in terms of form and meaning) or is it our duty to deny in practice its consolidation?

2. THE GREAT CONFUSION ABOUT PARODY

Within the postmodern condition, the confusion towards parody and the ambivalence with which it is treated by the public and critics become even more pronounced. The way in which parody is judged in the context of cultural and political criticism by intellectuals such as Fredric Jameson has significantly influenced current views. Interpreted by Jameson, parody has fallen into an endless pastiche ("blank parody") that homogenizes its raw materials by depositing them in a shallow extended sea of works that equate without distinguishing the high values of some of them (Jameson, 1991: 17). Of course, Jameson places the contemporary parody almost in a flattening way in the broader context of generalized postmodern production which he considers to be a typical example of the cultural practice of late capitalism. From different starting points, Jean Baudrillard rejects the representations of postmodern parody as evidence and proof of a cultural recycling that ends in exhaustion (Baudrillard, 1998: 101).

Of course neither of them, and almost none of those who from the point of view of the philosopher or the cultural critic make a polemical critique of parody, take into account the production of comics and of so-called mass culture or pop culture in general, confirming the well-known quote of Art Spiegelman, as reproduced by Roger Sabin, according to which "comics have been great because they have always flown under the radar of criticism" (Sabin, 1996: 7). Even proponents of parody, however, such as Giorgio Agamben (Agamben, 2005: 37-52), if this can be inferred from his overall view, by promoting parody versions of literary works as profane practices, do not refer to comics at all. Even ardent proponents of the genre such as Linda Hutcheon in her series of books and articles (Hutcheon, 1997; 2000; 2006) and Margaret Rose in her book on parody (Rose, 1993) and, most notably, in her more recent book (Rose, 2011) on interpictoriality and postmodern pastiche only superficially deal with illustrated narratives and, perhaps, a little more with cartooning, the illustrated euphemism, etc.

3. TRANSTEXTUALITY, INTERPICTORIALITY AND THE NEED OF A NEW TERMINOLOGY

Another proof of the confusion caused by parody and consequently its evaluation and assessment is the terminology used to describe it and the ambiguity that characterizes its possible (and inevitable?) relationship with humour. If we add to this function as variables the various words used to describe its relationship with humour (for example, applying Sheri Klein's terminology with terms such as association, transposition, transformation, exaggeration, disguise, appropriation, etc.) the difficulty or even complete inability to speak

the same language to describe the same work causes pessimism (Klein, 2007: 13-20). But let us make the taxonomic task even more difficult by introducing Gérard Genette's terminologies from the literary field that refine the established intertextuality (Orr, 2003: 106-112). To overcome the weaknesses of the term "intertextuality", which cannot respond to more subtle distinctions, Genette introduces the neologism "transtextuality", to cover any textual association. Similar concerns about the inadequacy of the term "intertextuality" are expressed by Jonathan Gray who, with reference to the television animated series The Simpsons, chooses to refer to contemporary parody as "critical intertextuality" (Gray, 2006: 4-8). Transtextuality is in turn distinguished by more complex concepts such as "paratextuality", "hypertextuality", "hypotextuality", "metatextuality", "architextuality", etc. (Genette,1997: 1-6). To each of these words Genette assigns a different textual interaction, from quotation to plagiarism and from allusion to imitation.

In Genette's labyrinthine architecture, parody occupies a prominent place in a historicized mode of analysis and interpretation. Even though Genette reiterates that his theory is intended for literary analysis, he leaves some room for reducibility and adaptation to other arts with appropriate modifications (Genette, 1997: 84). One of these arts could be painting. Besides, Genette is not negative towards parody but treats it as one genre among others and not as a dominant practice which imposes itself on the others. As regards the functional distribution of the transtextual work, however, he distinguishes the satirical function, which for the sake of economy of speech he almost identifies with parody in general, from the non-satirical function which he identifies with the pastiche. As regards the corresponding genres of the satirical function he chooses parody, travesty and caricature of which only the first two are classified in the relation of transformation, as opposed to caricature which, together with the genre of pastiche, is classified in the relation of imitation. The last classification, that of the differentiation of transformation from imitation is the structural distribution in which parody seems according to Genette to be differentiated from both travesty and caricature as well as from pastiche. In order to simplify his scheme, he then presents a lighter version of it, with the parody in its function being classified as non-satirical hypertextuality and the relation it enters into being considered a transformation (Genette, 1997: 27). Again, however, he retains his reservations as in this way "serious" parody cannot be included in his classifications. He therefore concludes with a more complex scheme for hypertextual practices in which parody in its broadest possible sense is classified as playful transformation, travesty as satirical transformation, transposition as serious transformation, pastiche as playful imitation, caricature as satirical imitation, and forgery as serious imitation (Genette, 1997: 28). It is worth pointing out here that all the previous formulations concern literary hypertextuality and are irreducible to the other arts, but Genette himself succumbs to the temptation to examine visual transformations, even if only superficially, as:

> *Pictorial transformation is as old as painting itself, but our contemporary culture, more than any other, has undoubtedly developed through its plauful-satiric potential the pictorial equivalents of parody and travesty.*
>
> *(Genette, 1997: 384)*

Parody as a playful transformation of the written text or the painted image, "serious" or satirical, could be used as an "umbrella" word for any recontextualizing

artistic practice which has as a precondition the recognition of similarity with an original. According to Martins and Kolakowski: “Defnitely, for parody to function properly it is absolutely necessary that the reader is able to identify the parodied text or object” (Martins & Kolakowski, 2022: 6) but, at the same time, “the recognition of the parodic relationship constitutes a constant challenge to the reader’s hermeneutic competence” (Martins & Kolakowski, 2022: 6, referring to Hutcheon’s, A Theory of Parody).

4. (POST-), (META-), OR (TRANS-) PARODY?

The analysis and interpretation, however, becomes even more complicated when the association of discourses is not only verbal-textual (Genette, Dentith, Hutcheon) and also not only interpictorial (Klein, Rose) but a complex combination of deliberate adaptation and appropriation (Sanders, 2006). By what criteria and based on what theory can we understand and comprehend parody when it is realized through the coexistence of written text and image? If we want to follow the largely contemporary fashion of adding the prefix “meta” to signifiers whose signifieds are differentiated from past uses, we could call parodies of well-known past artworks from contemporary comics “metaparodies” (by analogy to “metafictions”, “metadata”, etc.) that have multiple goals rather than just one - the original work. Contemporary “metaparodies” can be both playful and humour inducing and satirical in a way that their subject matter addresses serious contemporary issues. And this can be achieved with single images and pastiches in which serious together with caricatures and cartoons coexist.

A difficulty, however, in adopting the term is the confusion that can be caused by the expectations of understanding it as a parody of parody i.e. in a second degree parody. If, on the other hand, we choose a term that should encompass the temporal succession of its content in relation to past practices, perhaps the term “postparody” would be more representative as it would connotatively refer to the widely established term postmodernism. Of course, similar concerns would arise as those raised by the definition of postmodern in relation to modern: is postmodern the break with modern and by analogy is postparody the break with traditional parody? Or is postmodern a version of modern in a new cultural condition so that, by analogy, is postparody the technically differentiated version of parody in a condition that allows uses of traditional works with greater ease? Does “μεταδιαπαρωδία” postmodernism contain the whole history of modernism to transcend it or merely to perpetuate it and, by analogy, does postparody pays homage to parody or repudiate it as obsolete?

Perhaps these doubts and deadlocks are of no particular importance except in overcoming anchors that see parody as a parable. To this end, perhaps the adoption of a new term that includes the prefix trans is reinforcing the overcoming. Transparody (beautifully paraphrased with “transparency”) and in Greek possibly rendered as “μεταδιαπαρωδία” (pronounced “metadiaparodia” - let’s not forget that parody derives from the ancient Greek word παρωδία) may possibly overcome the previous difficulties and be an appropriate word for hybrid parodies that utilize textual-verbal elements in combination with figurative ones. In the remainder of this paper, this term will be adopted as the most representative of the genre it will describe: the horror parodies in contemporary comics that are signified not only by the form of their art but also by the accompanying texts and narratives of which they are the prologues. In this direction, the covers of two horror

comics series with black humour and grotesque: the “Crossed” series, the “Raise the Dead 1”and “Raise the Dead 2” series will be used as case studies.

Crossed: Family Values is a series by David Lapham, Javier Barreno and Jacen Burrows (a creator owned series from Garth Ennis and Jacen Burrows), Raise the Dead 1 is a series by Leah Moore, John Reppion and Hugo Petrus with covers by Arthur Suydam and Raise the Dead 2 is a series by Mike Raicht, Guiu Vilanova and Lucio Parrillo. Both series started in the late 2000’s and early 2010’s, when the new TV platforms brought back various traditional cinematic genres like horror including zombies (e.g. Walking Dead) and the post-apocalyptic condition of survival of the human race after global level disasters due to natural phenomena, diseases, alien invasions, etc.

5. LEAVING BEHIND THE OLD FAMILY VALUES

In the first (Crossed), according to its creator, Garth Ennis:

> *The Crossed are people who - through infection - have given in to the absolute worst instincts that human beings can: murder, rape, torture, cannibalism, all of the most cruel and inventive kind imaginable. They are out of control, really. wTheir number one urge is to get their hands into normal people and commit every ghastly act they can think of - they can’t fight it, and they don’t want to.*
>
> *(Ennis, 2010: no pagination)*

In such an environment of brute violence in which, however, the infected retain basic human characteristics (use of tools, intelligence, strategy, etc.) but no emotions and feelings and are distinguished by an engraved blood cross on their face, the title Family Values sounds comical to say the least. Which family values can survive in this world? These very family values are the subject of the parody covers of the series, as we shall see below. In the second one (Raise the Dead) the main theme is again the post-apocalyptic world which is infested by more “orthodox” and traditional zombies that are hungry for human flesh.

In both series the covers are composed of parodies of well-known and very popular works of art, not necessarily paintings but also sculptures, advertisements, etc. The apparent paradox is that in all the cases to be mentioned below, in series characterized by brutal violence crossing the boundaries of splatter and gore, the covers with parody recontextualizations add a considerable dose of humour, a key feature of postmodern transparody. The message is that on the one hand there are no statutes and values that as taboos and totems should not be touched, but quite the opposite: that everything can be parodied and adapted to new contexts. Moreover, the second characteristic of postmodern transparody is its reliance on the deep sense of defamiliarization it evokes. In all cases, too, the parodies as static images on the cover context are signified by a series of peripheral elements such as the title, the font, etc., but above all by the narrative content on the inside pages which is, usually, loosely related to the cover.

The cover mainly plays the role of a decoy for the buyer, exploiting the surplus value of the original image, the buyer’s knowledge of it and, above all, the deconstruction and levelling of the values it carries at the institutional level. Caution: what is being

parodied is not the self-value of the original but the system within which it is considered something untouchable. The postmodern insolence in such covers finds its appropriate expression in the most obvious way, but not to confirm the horror of the postmodernists' "profane" practices. On the contrary: to remind us that a world based on entrenched and rigid values is boring and mortal as long as it does not challenge them. This is exactly what emerges on the covers of Crossed: Family Values.

The cover of 1stissue (2010) clearly refers to an image of the most recognizable American illustrator of the 20th century, Norman Rockwell, but its meaning is completely distorted. The 1942 Freedom From Want is part of a quartet of paintings (Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Worship, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear) by Rockwell and refer to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's January 1941 "Four Freedoms State of the Union" address, in which he identified essential human rights that should be universally protected.

One of these inalienable rights was the right to food, housing, clothing, and a decent living for all people[1]. In Rockwell's hands this right was illustrated by an average American family enjoying their Thanksgiving Day meal. An otherwise all-white family with three generations comprising it around a clean table with all-white tablecloths and a white airy curtain billowing. The pleasant atmosphere is confirmed by the smiles of the companions of all ages in a composition full of stereotypes: the grandmother serves the turkey wearing her cooking apron which recalls who the cook was while the grandfather, naturally taller, will then cut the turkey with a knife. The table is not full of unnecessary food but is simple, an example of a prudent self-sufficiency that flatters the middle class which in wartime knows how to preserve its traditions and family cohesion but without provoking and exaggerating. This conservative hymn to family values can only be a source of satire in the 21st century.

In Jacen Burrows' art the all-white tablecloth has been replaced by a wooden board. No embellishments, gleaming kitchen utensils and cutlery, gleaming plates, crystal glasses symbolizing purity, etc., are required but only the bare essentials: knives to slice the meal and instruments to excruciatingly cut it. Family peace through the immortalization of special moments and the self-affirmation of traditional American values through the perpetuation of stereotypical family values has given way to the negative as far as values are concerned. The family is still there, the meal is still there, the smiles too. But what its members with the bloody engraving of the cross on their face are about to do only causes horror because the meal could be one of the original family members (Fig. 1). The grotesque content with its dark humour and creepy defamiliarization are indications of postmodern transparody that puts the institutions and values of another era, partly responsible for the likelihood that the content of this image will ever come true. Something similar happens on all the other covers.

Perhaps the most recognizable painting of twentieth century American painting, Grant Wood's American Gothic (1930), captures the values and realities of the interwar period in the American heartland, during a period marked by the Great Depression. A pair of farmers, the man facing the viewer and the woman - presumably his daughter, a little shorter and shyly facing the man, stand in front of their farmhouse. The expressionless faces, indications of a mute internalized sadness and a religious stoicism that will ostensibly

1 Franklin D. Roosevelt Annual Message to Congress, January 6, 1941; Records of the United States Senate; SEN 77A-H1; Record Group 46; National Archives. Available from https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/president-franklin-roosevelts-annual-message-to-congress (Accessed: 22/08/2024).

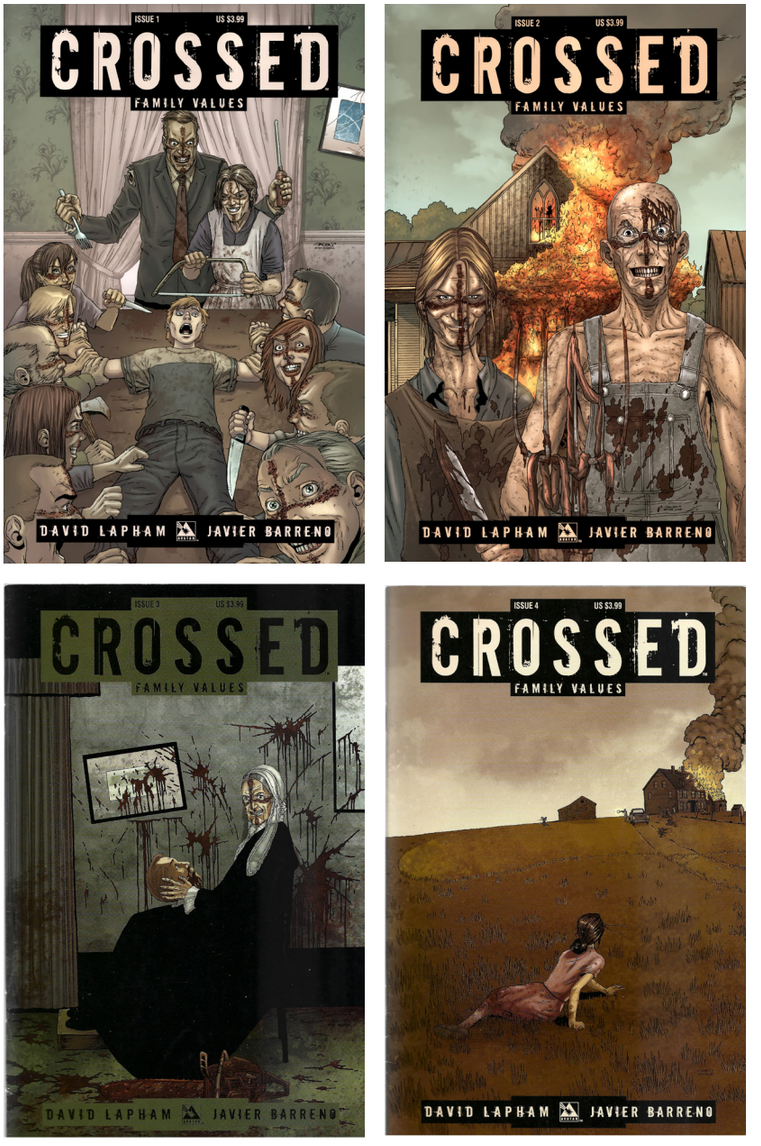
overcome problems through manual labor symbolized by the pitchfork and based in the white American country home, become symbols of patience and mirrors for the viewer who is taught to resemble the protagonists of the play so that he too can make it through a difficult time. From Jacen Burrows in his 2nd issue's cover (2010), this whole didactic composition is blown apart by some unsurpassed details: the two characters smile gleefully because of their achievement, which is none other than what the human entrails on the pitchfork, the woman's bloody knife and the burnt farmhouse (Fig. 2).

Figure 1.
Jacen Burrows (cover), Crossed: Family Values #1, 2010 (scanned)

Figure 2.
Jacen Burrows (cover), Crossed: Family Values #2, 2010 (scanned)

Figure 3.
Jacen Burrows (cover), Crossed: Family Values #3, 2010 (scanned)

Figure 4.
Jacen Burrows (cover), Crossed: Family Values #4, 2010 (scanned)



Even more emphatically, using as its raw material one of the most characteristic works of the Victorian era, James Whistler's Arrangement in Grey and Black No. 1(1871) or otherwise known as Whistler's Mother, the cover of the 3rd issue (2010) of Crossed: Family Values deconstructs every detail that celebrates conservatism and assigns to the elderly the role of the dying. The feeling of decay, immobility, decadence and death that Whistler's work exudes (a disembodied figure in rigid profile, loose black clothes that remove all physicality, the predominance of green of mould, ochre and black, lack of any contact with the outside world, absence of any natural light due to a heavy curtain,

frames in the same colors, etc.) is reversed and subverted by the joy of the old woman who holds a head as a trophy in an environment awash in blood, suggesting that what preceded is the totally opposite of the timeless static of the original (Fig. 3).

The concept is similar in the following covers of the series (2010). In Andrew Wyeth's Christina's World (1948) - a work featuring a real person, Anna Christina Olson who, due to her disability, could not walk but chose never to use a wheelchair and moved about the earth through the movement of her arms -, the idyllic landscape is

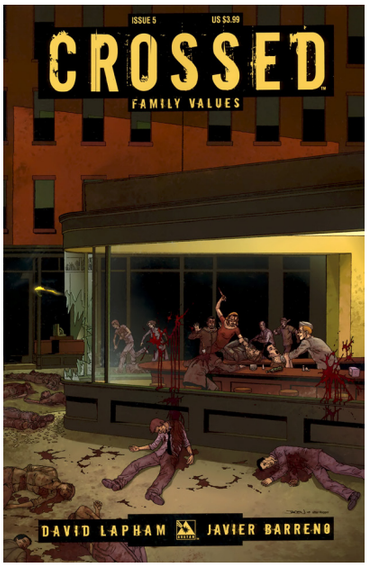


Figure 5.
Jacen Burrows (cover), Crossed: Family Values #5, 2010 (scanned)

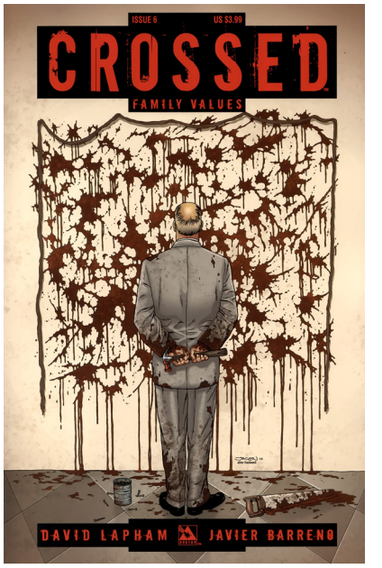


Figure 6.
Jacen Burrows (cover), Crossed: Family Values #6, 2010 (scanned)

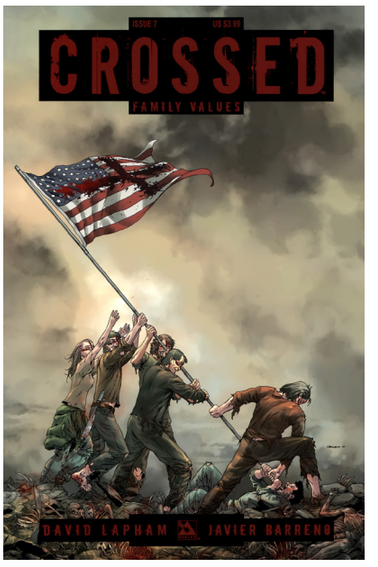


Figure 7.
Jacen Burrows (cover), Crossed: Family Values #7, 2010 (scaanned)

Figure 8.
Arthur Suydam (cover), Raise the Dead 1 #1, 2007 (scanned)

transformed into a place of carnage (Fig. 4), in Edward Hopper's Nighthawks (1942), the tranquillity of the night diner and the sterile isolation of its patrons are transformed into a raging Dionysian bloodbath (Fig. 5), in Norman Rockwell's The Connoisseur (1962), the contemplation and study of the viewer of a work of abstract expressionism have been rendered as an infected butcher's admiration for his macabre work (Fig. 6) and in Joe Rosenthal's iconic photograph of Iwo Jima (1945), the triumphalists are no longer American soldiers in Japan, the hill on which the flag is pinned is made of human corpses, and the flag itself is not a symbol of the United States but a killing tool (Fig. 7).

6. (DON'T) RAISE THE DEAD (TERMINOLOGY)

Moving on to the other series that we include as a case study in this paper, the Raise the Dead series, a similar rationale can be observed with images mostly taken from American tradition, most notably Arthur Suydam's Uncle Sam (2007) rendered as a zombie (Fig. 8) and another symbolic image, The Runaway (1958), of Norman Rockwell which encapsulates a number of traditional American values. In Rockwell's work, a juvenile runaway has run away from home but the clerk in a café is assigned to protect him.

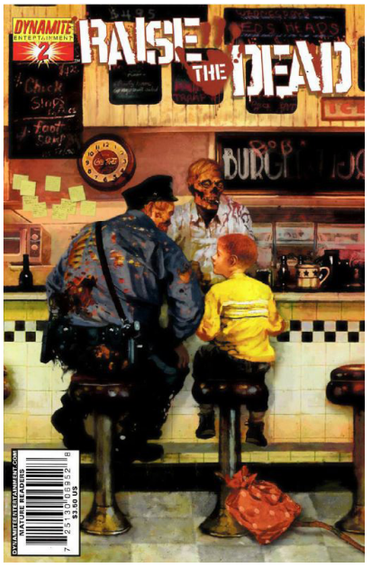


Figure 9.
Arthur Suydam (cover), Raise the Dead 1 #2, 2007 (scanned)

Figure 10.
Arthur Suydam (cover), Raise the Dead 1 #3, 2007 (scanned)

Figure 11.
Arthur Suydam (cover), Raise the Dead 1 #4, 2007 (scanned)

Figure 12.
Lucio Parrillo (cover), Raise the Dead 2 #1, 2010 (scanned)

The bindle resting on the floor betrays the intentions of the youngster whose plan has been thwarted, and a police officer who has been alerted takes on the paternal role of admonishing the boy and leading him to family safety. Closer to contemporary reality, the Raise the Dead Suydam's (2007) cop prepares to devour the kid with only the question of whether to share him with the barman (Fig. 9).

Although without the direct narrative of The Runaway but as a simultaneous deconstruction of a double symbol, we have to notice the transparodic cover of the 3rd issue of Raise the Dead by Suydam (2007). On the one hand, Marilyn as a sex

symbol, which can only be seen as a zombie nowadays in an age when sex symbols are reminiscent of Lady Gaga or anonymous porn stars on Porn Hub, and on the other hand Pop Art, the most genuine American art genre as a precursor of the postmodernism, become the raw materials for revising and refusing to accept the traditional as inevitable in the postmodern age (Fig. 10). Similar reasoning is at work in Suydam's parody (2007) of Nirvana's most famous cover, Nevermind (1991) (Fig. 11), in Lucio Parrillo'sparody (2010) of the poster from Hitchcock's The Birds (1963) (Fig. 12), of Parrillo's (2010) Victory

Figure 13.
Lucio Parrillo (cover), Raise the Dead 2 #2, 2010 (scanned)

Figure 14.
Lucio Parrillo (cover), Raise the Dead 2 #3, 2011 (scanned)

Figure 15.
Guiu Vilanova (alternative cover), Raise the Dead 2 #3, 2011 (scanned)

Figure 16.
Lucio Parrillo (cover), Raise the Dead 2 #4, 2011 (scanned)

Over Japan Day in Times Square (1945), famous photo by Alfred Eisenstaedt (Fig. 13), of Parrillo's Coppertone parody (2011) (Fig. 14) but also in Guiu Vilanova's parody (2011) of Auguste Rodin's The Thinker (1904) (Fig. 15) and even in Parrillo's parody (2011) of Michelangelo's The Creation of Adam (1512) (Fig. 16).

7. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the aforementioned examples similarly found in many other series of

contemporary comics, not only horror, a number of conclusions can be drawn which are briefly developed below. The aim is to adopt a new term capable of describing them and conveying their content, using the aforementioned works as examples. This term "overcoming traditional conceptions" and "operating as an ironic transcontextualisation" (Martin & Kolakowski, 2022: 6) could be the word "transparody".

1. Literary theory and visual arts theory alone, as well as cultural theories of mass culture, are not sufficient for the interpretation of narrative methods and especially their effects in contemporary comics.

2. The terminology used with ease (parody, pastiche, humour, transformation, transposition, satire, forgery, adaptation, etc.) is not always appropriate and not everyone gives the same meaning to these words, resulting in confusion and misunderstandings. It is necessary to adopt new terminology, an example of which could be the term transparody.

3. Transparody goes beyond traditional parody and is differentiated from other versions such as postparody which requires a definition of parody in the "before" and metaparody which requires a secondary level of parody, possibly the parody of a parody. Transparody does not have a vertical relationship to the original nor a horizontal one with other works in a flat space of co-presented works but is intertwined with them in an infinite three-dimensional web.

4. Transparody as a word is aurally similar to transparency and in such a perspective may emphasize the intentional readability of the original or prompt the reader's further investigation to trace the sources of the hypertext. After all, in the vast majority of contemporary parodies, given the plethora of search possibilities for digitally recorded images, the artists' intention is that their work be easily and transparently accessed, that the original be recognized and that the source contribute connotatively to the signification of the derived work.

5. The contemporary parody is something like a pretentious forgery that confesses its aims and seeks recognition. It does not seek to deceive but to question the statutes and make the "art world" wonder. Everything it achieves is reminiscent of what Sándor Radnóti described about forgery. They apply almost entirely to transparody as well:

> *The victims of forgery stories are people from the art world. The art collectors, the experts, the curators, the art historians, the art dealers, the art critics, the editors and journalists of art magazines, the art philosophers, the connoisseurs, the amateurs, the dilettanti, the (other) artists, the reproducers of works of art, the government officials working in the field of art patronage, the visitors to museums, the art enthusiasts and lovers, the audience. The forger's grievance is that he resents that all these people, or a group of them, should have the right to determine what is art and what is not; he wants to prove – to himself, to "them", to the world – that their decisions, which have the effect of producing art by "anointing" some objects to be works of art and excluding others from this honor, are arbitrary and unfounded.*
>
> *(Radnóti, 1999: 56)*

6. Many contemporary horror comics use a) the element of humour to tell a horror story, b) defamiliarization and grotesqueness, c) art history not as a statute, and, d) a profanity against not the originals but the institutional framework that considers them

rigid and entrenched works.It is very limiting to describe them as mere parodies as the complexity of their creation and the demanding nature of their reception as intertextual and interpictorial works goes beyond the old terminology. The term transparody may be able to distinguish these works from traditional parodies and may encompass both linguistic and visual parody.

7. This parody is an integral part of postmodern production in its next stage, especially in the 21st century where horror does not have the characteristics of earlier times but is a means of social and institutional critique and is often accompanied by an ironic and sarcastic humour. Of course, it utilizes, among other things, the method of shock-induction and is not perceived as a mockery of the originals but as a courageous act of desecration. Its preservation and acceptance are practical actions of preserving memory (as regards the originals) but also warnings in a comprehensible way, through the exaggeration and recognition of the originals as to what is to come.

The verification of the horror may not come with prophetic-type post-apocalyptic dystopias nor with eschatological catastrophes as the ones that take place in the transparodic horror comics, but then again, one cannot feel confident about this.

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KEYWORDS
Contemporary Art
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Women's Art
Identity
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PRESENT TO THE LIMITS. TRANSMEDIA STRATEGIES BY FEMALE ARTISTS IN CONTEMPORARY ART AND WITHIN THE kobieTY/woMEn COLLECTION.

ABSTRACT

The work of female artists with their own image, situated against the background of the development of new media art and the false canons of mass culture, explains the legitimacy of feminist contexts. This work based on reclaiming one's own image requires looking into the lens of the camera or playing roles produced by popular culture. Long-term practices with feminist contexts, standing in front of the lens as if in front of a mirror, i.e. in front of oneself and in front of an audience, have identified a group of repeated visual clichés. They now extend into new contexts of social conflict, where mechanisms for reclaiming women's identities have become useful in combating the problem of domination in general.

1. THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Looking at oneself, using one's face and body as a working matter, is deeply anchored in art as self-portraiture. However, the legacy of workshop practices with the self-portrait of women as well as men cannot be judged by one measure. Access to education and artistic practice in a patriarchal world until the 19th century was reserved only for men (Nochlin, 2023). The secondary position of women in the field of art, as indeed in most other fields, has clearly influenced the lack of great female artists in historical records, but also the sharpening of the differences between male and female approaches to many art contexts.

The area of creative self-image work in women's art, with a history significantly shorter than the self-portrait of men, was also subject to socio-cultural mores. From the 16th century, when the development of women's self-portraiture dates, female artists were expected to be reserved and modest. Only the boldness of the twentieth century revealed a path of change in this kind of women's work, which leads from images that are pleasing and subdued to those that are truthful and break down previous boundaries (Borzello, 2016).

It would be difficult not to connect the revolution of the self-portrait created by a woman with the development of new media, which have become an area for women artists to reclaim their independence. The emergence of photography and then film, video, the internet and social media ran almost in sync with the successive waves of feminism. In the new media, women in the arts discovered ways of expressing themselves that men had not managed to establish before them, as they had in the history of drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking and every classical technique in which they had dominated for centuries.

However, it was not immediately that the new media in art brought out the truth about women. The tools that artists began to use quickly built a visual market of advertising and mass media, looking at women through male eyes. This product-based visual canon of women appearing on packaging, billboards, in erotica and pornography soon distorted the cultural image of women in general (Jansen, 2019).

Perhaps this is why the current of self-portraiture in new media art has been so clearly dominated by women. Female artists felt obliged both to create a history of women's self-portraiture and to reclaim the feminine visuality appropriated by the male perspective in mass culture. By stepping in front of the lens, they were not only making up for lost lessons in portraiture, but creating a counterpoint to the male narrative. With the development of new media and the emergence of motion in the mechanisms of real-image capturing, the perspective of women's creative contestation of the female image expanded.

Confronting how woman is presented by the culture of the patriarchal order, through the prism of social norms and stereotypes, the women of the neo-avant-garde felt empowered to create through their private image not only their own portrait, but the image of all women.

However, artistic criticism based on on-camera actions did not end with the changing social awareness of women's rights for two reasons. Firstly, the struggle is not over yet, and attempts to restore old images of women are a typical phenomenon in a polarised society. Secondly, the camera-oriented activity of women artists seems to extend the thematic field well beyond feminist contexts. However, artists coming out of the framework of reclaiming their own identity are still operating on feminist schemas, which the path of development of these practices should bring closer.

2. THE MIRROR OF THE LENS

Hair, face, body, all areas of female visuality became the playing field in the advertising and mass media world of the 20th century. A pretty, well-groomed woman with the right proportions and sex appeal if the image is directed at men, and full of homely warmth and joy if the target audience are families. The consumerist visuality produced a distorted socio-cultural canon of the woman, but the field of art was not without fault in this respect either. The representations of women in the works of the old masters, men, perpetuated a delicate and subdued or erotic image of them. The sum of these phenomena had a significant impact on the notion of female beauty in general, which the rebellious avant-garde artists challenged. The unmasking of such strongly perpetuated visualities became a long-term process of working on one's own image, which, through the art world and cultural institutions, gradually penetrated into wider public awareness.

The crisis of the notion of beauty in art that began with the avant-garde revo-

Figure 1/2/3/4/5.
“To Clean Oneself”, Monika Misztal
video, 2011

lution exerted a stamp on the actions of all artists, but for women artists the notion of beauty had an additional context. Marina Abramović made this particularly clear in her 1975 on-camera performance Art Must Be Beautiful, Artist Must Be Beautiful. The nude artist, as suggested by her bare shoulders and breast, is combing her hair in front of the lens as if in front of a mirror. This process, however, is not reminiscent of the joyful posing in front of a mirror, straight out of a cosmetics commercial or the intimate and romantic painting images of the old masters.

The Serbian artist's hair combing is a struggle, a fight against the thick and dense hair typical among Balkan women, reflecting the difficulty with which artists confront the notion of beauty. Perhaps it is also the struggle of those outside of the capitalist world for which female and male citizens of socialist countries longed at the time. Abramović literally pronounces the words while combing, 'must be beautiful', emphasising the claiming attitude of the cultural world and society, which expect certain standards of female visuality. The artist's movements as well as the tone of her voice seem aggressive at times, which is meant to blatantly express her rebellion against the need to fit into the frame of a good-looking woman with a tidy hairstyle created earlier.

In a similar frame, Monika Misztal sets the camera in front of herself in 2011, adding a hoover, a device culturally ascribed to women whose job it is to keep the house in order, to discipline her look. This cliché still lingers in the very term 'cleaning lady', which, in the Polish artist's action, can evoke a particular association with the wave of female economic refugees from central and eastern Europe who have dominated the cleaning and care sector in the West. In her on-camera performance To Clean Oneself, Misztal uses a switched-on hoover to clean her face and hair in a pose as if she were preparing her image in front of a mirror. However, as in Abramović's work, this procedure does not lead to the expected forms of beauty. The artist's body makes uncontrollable noises as she cleans her face with the suctioning air, and the strands of hair pulled into the tube do not yield to being tidied up; on the contrary, they appear even more tousled. Ultimately, the titular procedure of cleaning oneself does not make the author of the action more orderly, but rather emphasises the expressiveness of the portrait so widely contested in Misztal's paintings.

Creative elaborations of the mechanism of reflecting one's own image in the mirror were reinforced by the technological revolution. The introduction of phone cameras and their subsequent equipping with a second lens reinforced the false canon of the female image. The ubiquity of the selfie and vlogging awakened a narcissistic swathe of society where anyone could stand in front of the lens. Most newcomers were eager to fit into the familiar media canon and went to the extreme of aestheticising their image with available filters, presenting forever smiling faces and flawless complexion. This phenomenon testified to the constant need to reclaim the feminine image, which was responded to by new media artists whose actions formed the current of selfiefeminism. The weeping Audrey Wollen, the freshly cosmetically treated Agata Zbylut or the hyper-realistically sexualised Arvida Byström are all artists from different parts of the world who, on one of the most famous visual social platforms, Instagram, manifest their opposition against the terror of visual norms (Miaskowska, 2022).

Reflecting one's own image in the mirror of the lens has become a formal cliché of feminising artists since the beginning of women's creative work with new media. Critically correcting oneself through make-up, hairstyle or body treatments in women's

Figure 6/7/8/9.
"Consumption Art", Natalia LL
video, 2017

Courtesy of the
ZW Foundation / Natalia LL Archive

creative work has drawn a clear line between the image of women constructed by popular culture and how artists reclaim the truth about ourselves.

3. WORK ON THE ROLE

The pop-cultural ideal of feminine beauty is not just limited to general appearance, but also extends to appropriate behaviour. Depending on the needs, the image of the woman is used to communicate parental values through the figure of the warm and understanding mother or caring values when the woman becomes a nurse, an exemplary housewife and an ideal wife. Nor is the mythologising of the female image limited to these laudable variants, but it also caters to male sexualised notions. All these mechanisms of appropriating the female image, of putting into specific roles, are clearly opposed by neo-avant-garde artists.

Martha Rosler, who, in her 1975 film Semiotics of the Kitchen, sets the camera in her own kitchen in a New York loft, is a forerunner of creative commentary on the roles proposed by mass culture in front of the lens. In an alphabetical arrangement, Rosler presents everyday objects that are culturally ascribed to women. The role played by the artist seemingly fits in with the image of women hosting cooking programmes or food commercials (Mullins, 2019). The kitchen objects, a fork, a knife, a grater, a whisk, however, become tools of oppression in the artist's hands. After the presentation of each object, the artist uses it to make disturbing gestures suggesting acts of aggression for which such objects could be used. Rosler's decoding of kitchen equipment alludes to domestic violence, which, in contrast to the common kitchen roles of women, is rather eliminated from social visuality.

In a similar vein, the screen obedience of women is blurred by Pipilotti Rist in the 1997 film Ever is Over All. The film's female protagonist, in typical Rist visual elaboration, in an airy blue dress and red shoes, joyfully strides down the street in slow motion (Curtis, 2021). At first, everything seems to allude to the pleasing mood of the visuality of delicate people, especially as the protagonist is walking with a flower in her hand, which often accompanied painterly images of portrayed women. Only that, after a while, this prop turns out to be at the same time a solid hammer, with which the woman smashes the windows of cars parked along the pavement. Although the narrative turns from seemingly subdued to anarchic, the pace and music remain completely unchanged, as if all the gestures were planned and even condoned. People passing the vandal, including a saluting policewoman, express their approval with smiles. With her destructive march, Rist deconstructs the prudish and correct disposition of women presented in the media. With time, we notice that the phallic shape of the destructive lily may symbolise power mainly attributed to men, which in Ever is Over All, through both the lead and the role of the policewoman, has clearly been assumed by women.

The obliteration of the popularised meanings of female attitudes, gestures, and images also applies to the sexual sphere, whose cultural schemas have been established by male desires. Sex and eroticism have long been present in art, but it was the women of the neo-avant-garde who began to use the consumerist language of perceiving female sexuality to expose it.

A Polish pioneer of feminist art and one of the first artists to work with a

Figure 10/11.
“Pastoral Fuck”, Kinga Michalska
and Jadis Dumas

Courtesy of the Artists

film camera, Natalia LL, repeatedly used the motif of sexuality and her own body in the process of reclaiming female identity (Jankowska, 2002). In the 1973 film Impresje, the author records herself playing with her body by touching and shaking her own curves, an apparent source of erotic pleasure. Unrestrained sexuality, hitherto mainly compared to pornography, is engaged by Natalia LL for the purpose of art. At the same time, for three years from 1972, the artist carried out the project Sztuka konsumpcyjna (Consumption Art) by photographing and recording portraits of many women who, in front of the lens, deliberately made seductive gestures while eating bananas, kissel or sausages. The advertising poses of the women invited by Natalia LL referred to the objectification of the female image. Revealing feminine sexuality by giving it the status of art dethroned its distorted sense previously created in the capitalist world of male desires.

The destruction of established meanings through the manipulation of conventions also interested a German artist Brigit Hein, who created Kali Film in 1988 using the found footage technique. Using scenes from horror movies, war films and B-grade pornography, Hein stripped them of their narrative context and, by rearranging the material, re-conceptualised the understanding of female sexuality on screen (Curtis, 2021).

By combining erotic fantasies with violence, the artist addressed the low instincts on which cinema preys. At the same time, she invoked the Hindu goddess Kali, who symbolises extraordinary feminine power. With a mixture of violence and eroticism, Hein contradicts traditional sexual roles, thus constructing a new face of female sexuality.

Female artists' work with the camera and footage contested the roles of women in television programmes, commercials and porn films. The mass character of these media took its toll on the entire visual canon of femininity, the recovery of which could not be limited to the discovery of new images. Simulating schematic roles and the reinterpretation of their meanings successively obliterated the stereotypical profile of women on screens.

4. FEMINIST CLICHÉS

The recovery of the female image by female artists has identified a certain group of cultural clichés which, when repeated in front of the lens, are automatically marked by the legacy of feminist struggle. Posing as if in front of a mirror or assuming a pre-created role by a female artist is thus fundamentally a kind of resistance and critique of social conflicts through art. The feminist narrative of on-camera artistic actions thus extends to other contexts of the present. Among those particularly close to the feminine narrative are issues related to nature and climate change.

The ecofeminist formula of protest is an intrinsic combination of the powers of the oppressed against the imperialist mechanisms of a patriarchal world characterised not only by male domination over women, but also by colonial domination, which amounts to the exercise of power over the environment and the plunder of territorial wealth (Kronenberg, 2017).

An interesting example of on-camera actions repeating feminist clichés in the context of extended critique will be the activity of a Canadian artist duo Kinga Michalska and Jadis Dumas. In their 2017 film production Pastoral Fuck, the artists refer to the pornographic schema of female sexuality by comparing it to a similar treatment of the earth. In camp-erotic incarnations, they contest the identity of Native North American

Figure 12/13/14/15.
"Pastoral Fuck", Kinga Michalska
and Jadis Dumas

Courtesy of the Artists

dwellers and their relationship with this place. The artists' nude stylings are reminiscent of tribal tattoos and decorations, but created from contemporary plastic-coloured glitter. However, the idyllic mood of the postcard-like landscapes of nature combined with the frivolous poses of the authors is disrupted when their gestures of approaching nature turn from delicate to aggressive. At that point, the kitsch-fairytale scenery disintegrates, betraying the tackiness of the recording studio, and the shots of the female artists posing against an amateur greenbox take on a perverse tinge. Both America and a woman, often an immigrant, become objects of sexual exploitation, and the destruction of nature is synonymous with sexual oppression of women.

Creative actions extend the critique of domination over women to a critique of man's domination over nature. I therefore add my voice to this narrative in the 2023 on-camera performance Oil Makeup. For the makeup of the title, a ritualistic image enhancement, instead of coloured cosmetics, I use oil from my own car and lawnmower, devices of conscious environmental degradation. I further filter the image reflected in the lens as in a mirror through images corrected by artificial intelligence libraries, thus posing the question of my image in the face of social and climate change. Body oiling itself is a nourishing grooming process, but in the hands of women it is a beauty treatment, an analogue version of enhancing appearance that we now prefer to create virtually by means of digital corrections. They allow us to achieve the desired results faster by replacing cosmetic oils with fossil fuels. Embarrassing oiling with machine secretions is a way to face caricatured everyday life in which we fail to find a balance between technological advances, the environment and the desire to create a better image.

Working in a female duo as in the case of Michalska and Dumas, or the inclusion of Oil Makeup in the kobieTY collection which links intergenerational and feminising activities in academia, as well as many other community-based activities of female artists is part of the participatory context of contemporary women's work.

5. CONCLUSION

The creative attitude to self-image is gendered. The actions of female and male artists have been placed at two different poles, which has been dictated by cultural and moral dependencies historically.

Supporting the female artists in their search for an independent and new way of looking at themselves was the new media, a double-edged tool that has done just as much harm to the very image of women in the mass media space. Female artists, however, embarked on a long-term struggle to reclaim the female image appropriated by popular culture in order to finally draw a line between what is product and what is real.

Women's actions in front of the camera have often been associated with letting the audience into the private sphere, where making the truth public and giving it the status of art has supported the erasure of false canons. For what has always accompanied women's creative work with the image are its contexts. Whether it is the portrait itself reflected en masse, usually through male perspective; whether it is playing out socially produced roles into which female artists did not agree to fit; or whether it is commenting on what affects us all today and resonates with the working mechanism of female new media artists.

Figure 10/11/12/13.
Oil Makeup, Marta Miaskowska
video, 2023

The socially engaged stance of women in front of the camera, who used to denounce the canon of female visuality, has systematised the handling of visual clichés, which are extended into new contexts of critique through art.

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ARTICLE

DISSOLVING THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN INSIDE AND OUTSIDE IN THE DESIGN OF THE CITY.

ABSTRACT

At the beginning of this research, we asked ourselves whether the interior design of spaces that have fallen out of use in the city could contribute to urban regeneration. Is it possible to reinvent the contemporary city from the inside out? This hypothesis led us to the concept of interior urbanism, an approach that seeks to integrate interior spaces with the urban fabric by dissolving the boundaries between inside and outside. This article aims to answer this question. It looks at authors whose projects have been clear examples of integrating interior design with urbanism to improve the quality of life and functionality of cities, transforming these indeterminate spaces into places that encourage social interaction and regenerate the urban environment. We have applied these premises in the projects we are developing and, in all of them, the dissolution of the boundaries between interior and exterior has opened up new possibilities for the design of the urban environment, as we show in the case study. How can cities be reinvented from the inside out? In the beginning, we formulated this question as a starting point and understood that the dissolution of the boundaries between interior and exterior space opened up a new possibility for the design of the contemporary city. The idea of interior space becoming the public space of the city, borrowing from the concept of Inner Urbanism, emerged strongly as a design option for the city. This article explores new actions in the design of the built environment, such as the building being permeable to the urban fabric, that can be traversed, that can be seen from the outside, that generates new routes, and new relationships, taking into account the user's behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary city often offers undefined, empty spaces with no specific use. They are spaces left in buildings or between buildings, empty, isolated, or in disuse outside of urban planning, which is summarized in the concept of "terrain vague", coined by Ignasi de Solá Morales, in an article entitled Present and Futures, published in 1996. The architecture of cities encompasses situations, territories, or buildings that participate in a double condition.

On the one hand, “vague” means vacant, empty, free of activity, unproductive, and, in many cases, obsolete. On the other hand, the term “vague” also means imprecise, indefinite, vague, without determined limits, without a future horizon. (SOLÁ-MORALES, Ignasi de., 1996). Faced with this situation, we wonder if these spaces can be transformed into useful and dynamic areas through interior design, integrated into urban planning, as a possible alternative.

This research focuses on how people colonize these unplanned spaces left in the urban fabric, on the boundary between inside and outside: passages, thresholds, etc., and how they appropriate these urban voids to make them their own. These spaces, which have been left on the border between the inside and the outside, appear as possible spaces that offer the opportunity to generate places where we want to be, stay, or meet, which can be a refuge for the loneliness of those of us who live in the city.

This need is reflected in our search for that place that welcomes us, in that idea of space that we find in the reflection of Lao Tse, collected in The Book of Tea, by Kakuzo Okakura, for whom “the reality of the building does not consist of the four walls and the roof, but in the space in which it is inhabited” (Okakura, 2005).

This joint work aims to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants, encourage social interaction, and revitalize disused urban areas through the interior design of these spaces. Beyond streets and squares, the concept of interior urbanism arose, influenced

Figure 1.
The anonymous city dweller.
Sant Antoni -Joan Oliver Library.
RCR Arquitectes.
Photograph Eugeni Pons.

by American urbanism, to bring the city's design into the interior of the buildings and covered public spaces.

The following is a collection of experiences of authors who integrate the design of interior spaces in their projects and who have turned these spaces into new places for meeting and social interaction, to enrich the lives of citizens.

A new concept of public space appears That is the city, but it is also the interior and it is also the landscape, which leads us to reflect on the dissolution of the boundaries between interior and exterior, which is the focus of this research.

2. FROM ALBERTI TO KOOLHAAS

Leon Battista Alberti, already in 1452, in his treatise De re Aedificatoria (Alberti,1992), stated that 'The city is a large house, just as the house is a small city'. This statement by Alberti makes us think today that we can design the city on a small scale as if it were a house.

Alberti, a Renaissance humanist and architect, believed that both spaces - the city and the house - shared common principles of organization, harmony, and functionality. Humanism placed the human being as the origin and source of the values that regulate life. This reflection leads us to analyze the city project from the individual's point of view.

From this position, we conclude that both cities and houses must be designed

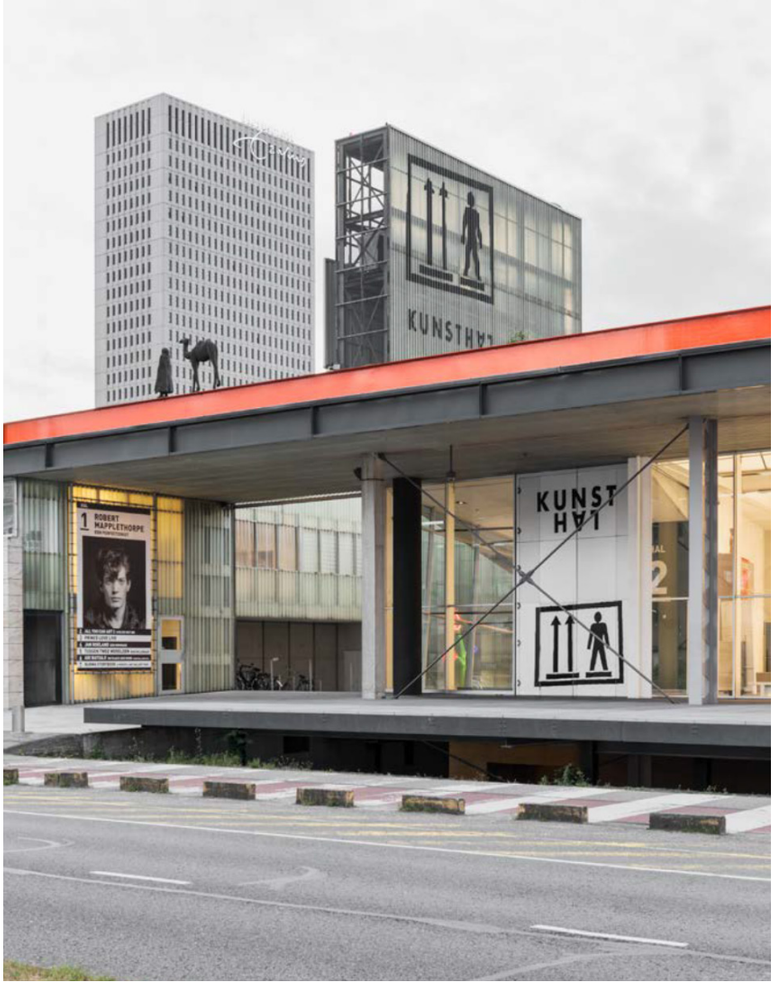


Figure 2.
OMA's Kunsthal in Rotterdam,
Rem Koolhaas and the New Europe

with the well-being of their inhabitants in mind. This approach to the design of the city from different scales, from the conception of a macro-scale (City) to a micro-scale (House = Interior Space) allows us to establish a dialogue with the existing city, with what has already been built, from the particular to the general and thus, attending to design criteria from how to access, to how to cross a square, can give us a new, more human perspective of an environment.

Kevin Lynch, in his book 'The Image of the City' (LYNCH,1998), argues that the city is a construction in space, but it is a construction on a vast scale. To understand this , we must not limit ourselves to considering the city as a thing in itself, but the city as it is perceived by its inhabitants.

This concept of Variable Scales was also raised by Rem Koolhaas in his book S,M,L,XL (KOOLHAAS,1995) and has been a constant in all his intervention projects in large cities, projects of the 1990s, such as Euralille in Lille, a complex project in terms of infrastructure but which maintained in its essence the idea of space as a generator of an environment, or the Kunsthal Museum in Rotterdam, a new concept of an articulating and transparent enveloping space.

Koolhaas proposes the dissolution of the limits between inside and outside and develops his projects as a whole, an enveloping spatial volume that expands in the place and generates an area of influence, which he claims as his own, in the territory.

Through various design strategies, such as making the building permeable to the urban fabric, allowing it to be crossed, to be seen from the outside, to generate routes, he manages to turn the interior space into a public space in the city.

Koolhaas states that we must consider not only individual buildings (S and M), but also entire cities (L and XL). He proposes a constant interaction between the building and the urban environment.

3. INNER URBANISM

This idea of interior space as public space in the city is related to the concept of interior urbanism. In a recent article published in Archdaily, 'Inner Urbanism: the implications of covered public space', Ankitha Gattupalli talks about the growing importance of inner urbanism in the design of the built environment and poses the following question: How can cities be reinvented from the inside out?

The author explains that public spaces, which are inside buildings, are essential elements for urban life, highlights the importance of these spaces to encourage public activity and community interaction, and takes as a reference Charles Rice, who in his book 'Interior Urbanism: Architecture, John Portman and Downtown America' (Rice 2016), highlights the influence of Portman's projects in the decade between 1960 and 1970 in the United States. From the analysis of Portman's model, atriums, galleries, and covered public spaces for the American city, we extract the idea that it is possible to design the city from the inside, that the interrelation between interior and exterior public space generates an intermediate sphere where urban life develops.

Redefining this concept of interior urbanism, for European cities as opposed to traditional urban landscapes, poses the dissolution of the boundaries between interior

and exterior, transforms the way we experience the city, influences the design and organization of the interior spaces of buildings, and establishes a new relationship with the urban environment that surrounds them.

In the apparent intrinsic contradiction between the terms Urbanism and Interior lies the strength of the concept. Interior urbanism proposes a new way of making the city, new areas appear that are interior and exterior at the same time, and there is a fluid connection between interior and exterior spaces, promoting spatial and visual continuity.

Interior courtyards, semi-public - semi-private intermediate spaces, such as lobbies and gardens, appear in the buildings, as places to stop, and the most recent digital detox spaces, in the journey through a space, as an opportunity to generate new spaces of interrelation.

The re-naturalization of these spaces, introducing or prolonging green spaces in the interior, is another of the project strategies, which will also contribute to sustainable urban design, which also involves the use of ecological materials and natural ventilation.

These interior spaces that are generated must be functional and flexible to respond to the changing and plural needs of the users, from the design of flexible furniture and multifunctional spaces.

Transparency, natural light, the use of color, and materials must be carefully considered to contribute to the well-being of the users and enhance their experience.

Interior urbanism, also contemplates the participation of the community in the design process, ensuring that spaces respond to the needs and desires of their users.

Ezio Manzini in his book ‘Habitar la proximidad’, (Manzini, 2023) comments that there cannot be a resilient and sustainable city in physical and social terms without high-quality neighborhoods, introducing the concept of a city that cares, a city built from the lives of citizens, an idea of liveable proximity.

A city in which functional proximity is accompanied by relational proximity. A city in which people have more opportunities to get to know and support each other means creating places where these encounters are possible.

In short, a city built on the concrete life of its inhabitants.

Urban regeneration involves paying attention to the users who enjoy it, by proposing new uses that meet current needs.

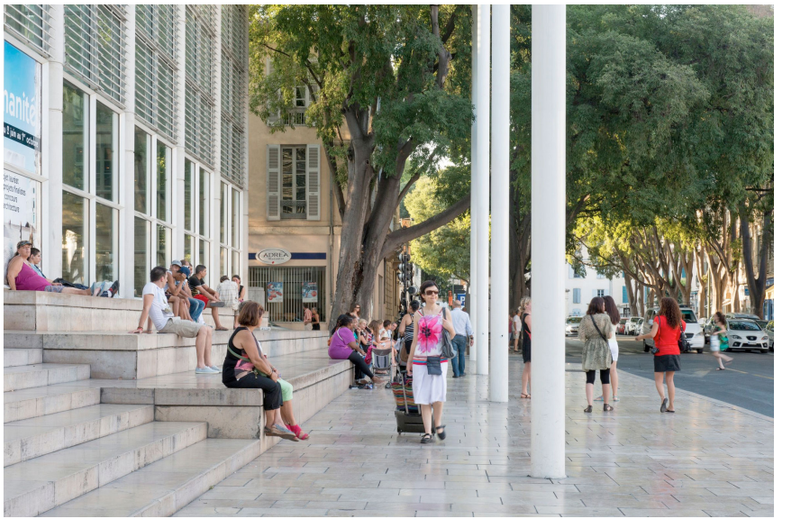
4. THE DISSOLUTION OF THE INTERIOR-EXTERIOR LIMITS

Based on the concepts outlined above, situations, places, and views on points of the city, which for various reasons required special attention in the urban project and were worked on from Interior Design, are presented here.

Some contemporary examples of the design of interior spaces allow us to better understand these concepts, on how to generate these dynamics of the relationship between interior and exterior, access spaces, transit spaces, and intermediate spaces, which become spaces that make the city, to promote social interaction in the urban environment, where the conventional notions of public spaces or private spaces are also transcended.

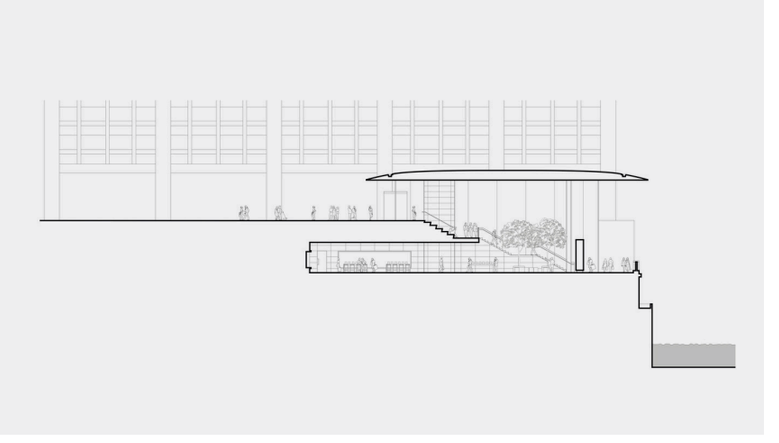
Norman Foster's 1993 design for the Carré d'Art, Museum of Contemporary Art in Nîmes, was conceived on the premise that the urban space should be an integral part of the project. The space in front of the building was extended to create a pedestrian area: a new social approach and an appropriate environment for the Maison Carrée. This example shows how an architectural project can revitalize the social and physical fabric of a city.

Figure 3..
Carré d'Art – Musée d'Art Contemporain.
Foster + Partners.
Photograph Nigel Young.



This initial idea was taken up by Foster's team in 2017 for Apple Michigan Avenue in Chicago. A new, wide public staircase is created to lead down from the plaza to the river, a sequence of levels between the exterior and the interior that creates dynamic spaces where people can sit around the forum, the center of Today at Apple (creative activities organized every day at Apple) and a living source of creativity, training, and entertainment between the city and the river.

Figure 4.
Apple Michigan Avenue Chicago.
Foster + Partners.
Photograph Nigel Young



Light streams through the walls of the glass building, dematerializing the building's enclosure and connecting to the lively center of the shop, protected by an incredibly thin carbon fiber roof supported by a minimal stainless steel structure.

Jonathan Ive, Apple's chief design officer, said that Apple Michigan Avenue is about removing the boundaries between inside and out and reinvigorating important urban connections within the city.

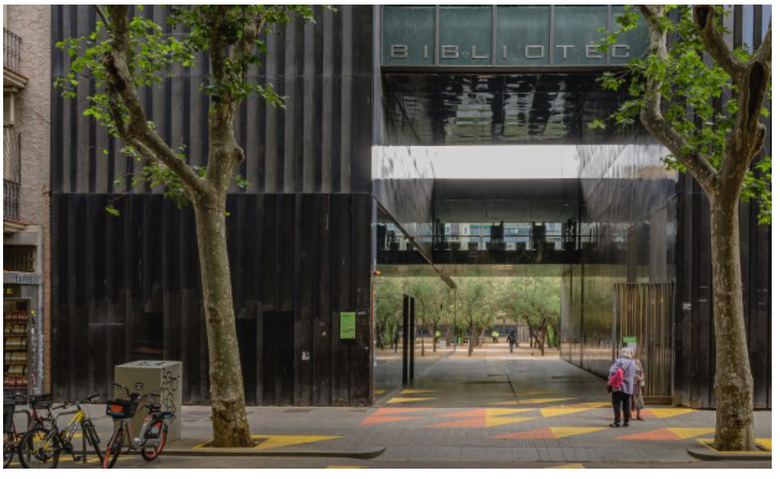
An example of small-scale design would be the design of the Prada shop in Soho NY, designed by Rem Koolhaas and his firm OMA (Office for Metropolitan Architecture).

Opened in 2001, with an innovative concept, it meant much more than a retail space, it became a cultural and relational space. A significant element of the design was the staggered wave of wood, the stands as a hybrid space between exterior and interior, articulating the circulations, acting as a meeting agora and at the same time as an exhibition space. The shop represented a paradigm shift in the design of commercial spaces in the city center.

Figure 5.
Prada Store Soho NY,
Rem Koolhaas – OMA

In this respect, the design by RCR Arquitectes in Barcelona in 2007 for the Sant Antoni-Joan Oliver Library is noteworthy, in which the authors recognize that they have managed to create a socially dynamic, urban complex, as they explain, 'The library, as a gateway and chill-out reading space, the retirement home, as a public space façade, and the interior of the block as a playground for children, with a wealth of space and relationships for a socially dynamic urban complex'.

Figure 6.
Sant Antoni -Joan Oliver Library.
RCR Arquitectes.
Photograph Eugeni Pons



The library could be considered as a new, mixed-use, to dynamize urban complex, which recovers the interior space of a block of buildings constructed in the Eixample district of Barcelona, which in turn acts as an element of social cohesion by strengthening the relationship between the users of the library and those of the interior courtyard.

5. CASE STUDY: SAN PEDRO NOLASCO MARKET

These premises are the starting point for many of the projects we develop in the Interior Design Department of the EASD Valencia. At the beginning of each academic year, urban environments are proposed to us to work on and buildings appear that become protagonists without them having sought to do so. This is the case of the San Pedro Nolasco Market, located in the Morvedre neighborhood, in the La Zaidia district of Valencia.

We received a proposal from Valencia City Council for the refurbishment of the market. Almost as the only point of the briefing, it was suggested to us that: 'The action should revitalize the neighborhood, turning it into a meeting point that would dynamize the whole area'.

A market currently in danger of disappearing, which was located in a strategic point of the neighborhood that had fallen into disuse, and only the resistance of a vendor kept it open. It was not just a question of rehabilitating a given space, but the action should revitalize a neighborhood that is currently very run-down, with a large number of plots of land and dwellings in ruins and/or occupied.

Figure 7.
Photographs of the current state of the San Pedro Nolasco Market. TFG final degree project EASDValencia by Araceli Landete

We put the above strategies into practice, taking into account the needs of the neighborhood and its inhabitants, as well as the current purpose of the building. Based on this analysis, several uses were proposed.

One of the options was to transform the traditional market model into a gastronomic multi-space, as a way of updating its traditional use to the new trends and consumer behaviors, as it is believed that it would attract people in different time slots, which would generate a new flow of circulation of users through the neighborhood and, in turn, keep alive the memory of what the building was.

Another option proposed by the neighbors was to convert the space into a cultural space that would accommodate neighborhood associations with a social objective.

The following is an example of Araceli Landete's final degree project, a proposal

for a gastronomic multi-space. At the start of the project, the following questions were asked: Where is the square located, what would the square be like without the market, what sensations would we have in it, and what would an open-air market be like?

The intervention consisted of creating a covered plaza and connecting the interior and exterior in such a way that the street would enter into the interior space.

Two resources were used for this: the first, to create a glazed perimeter interior street through a visual connection with the street; and the second, to open up the box to create a covered plaza through a light plane. The market stalls, which were directly connected to the street, as they were in the past, would generate perimeter exterior circulations.

The pedestrianization planned for the area was a factor that favored the idea of the project, as it enhances the fluidity between inside and outside and creates a large pedestrian transit area which, in the future, with the complete rehabilitation of the surroundings, will provide the neighborhood with an important meeting point.

Figure 8.
TFG final degree project
EASDValencia by Araceli Landete

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The final solution proposes a light and open building. The original wooden exterior enclosure is recovered and brought inside. The central area will be the heart of the market, where there will be cooking and selling stalls, and where many colors, flavors, and smells can be appreciated. The stalls are conceived as heavy monolithic elements.

In this way, the project allows the market to become a permeable building that aims to be a city with a public character and thus to function as an activator of the city.

What is it intended to convey to the user?

The intervention must restore the value of the market to the place and the people, and bring the square back to life as a public space for meeting, exchange, and enjoyment. At the same time, the square is introduced into the interior space delimited by the light roof, which is both open and exterior at the same time.

From a pedagogical point of view, our methodological proposal focuses on: ‘Learning through experience’ and, to this end, we work in city neighborhoods that have a special significance, either because of their configuration, their history, or their current situation, with real cases, and we teach students to value the built heritage and its relationship with the city and to make a social commitment to its recovery.

6. CONCLUSION

The interior design of undefined, empty, and unused spaces left in the contemporary city plays a crucial role in urban regeneration. These spaces that act as transition zones between indoors and outdoors are presented as potential places that offer citizens the opportunity to create spaces where they feel like being, staying, or meeting.

Through the analysis of several authors and the proposed case study, the concepts presented here highlight the benefits of integrating interior design into urban planning. The aim is to set out some basic actions to carry out this action in urban environments. This includes the joint study of access, pedestrianization, lobbies, and transition areas that facilitate the circulation of people and allow the development of activities indoors and outdoors.

This work has explored how the design of these intermediate spaces visually and physically connects the interior with the exterior and how the design of these spaces allows for the revitalization of deteriorated urban areas by dissolving the boundaries between interior and exterior.

In turn, sustainable development is promoted through the reuse of these spaces, which reduces the need for new construction and encourages the rational use of existing buildings. Furthermore, interior design, through its strategies, such as the integration of natural materials that provide warmth, the study of color, light, and shapes, as well as the tendency to re-naturalize spaces through interior gardens, makes it possible to recover these degraded areas of the city, encouraging social interaction and making them accessible to everyone. In short, it contributes to the well-being of citizens.

In short, the adaptation of these spaces through interior design is essential to create a sense of connection with the urban environment. A welcoming design revitalizes an urban area by providing comfortable, safe, and stimulating places for social gathering and activity, inviting citizens to use and enjoy it, thus reclaiming their city.

Future research should focus on long-term impacts and explore how this joint work in diverse urban contexts can further validate these results, to generate a more integrated and liveable urban experience.

IMAGES REFERENCES

Figure 1. *The anonymous city dweller. Sant Antoni-Joan Oliver Library, RCR Arquitectes.* Photograph by Eugeni Pons. Retrieved from https://www.archdaily.cl/cl/624142/biblioteca-sant-antoni-joan-oliver-rcr-arquitectes

Figure 2. *OMA's Kunsthal in Rotterdam, Rem Koolhaas.* Pataky, T. (2023). *OMA's Kunsthal in Rotterdam: Rem Koolhaas and the new Europe.* Park Books.

Figure 3. *Carré d'Art – Musée d'Art Contemporain, Foster + Partners.* Photograph by Nigel Young. Retrieved from https://www.metalocus.es/es/noticias/carre-dart-musee-dart-contemporain-por-foster-partners-cumple-30-anos

Figure 4. *Apple Michigan Avenue, Chicago – Foster + Partners.* Photograph by Nigel Young. Retrieved from https://www.archdaily.cl/cl/888559/tienda-apple-michigan-avenue-chicago-foster-plus-partners

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Figure 6. *Sant Antoni-Joan Oliver Library, RCR Arquitectes.* Photograph by Eugeni Pons. Retrieved from https://www.archdaily.cl/cl/624142/biblioteca-sant-antoni-joan-oliver-rcr-arquitectes

Figure 7. Photographs of the current state of *San Pedro Nolasco Market*, located in the Morvedre neighborhood, Zaidia district, Valencia. *TFG final degree project: San Pedro Nolasco Market*. EASD Valencia. By Araceli Landete.

Figure 8. *TFG final degree project: San Pedro Nolasco Market*. EASD Valencia. By Araceli Landete.

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KEYWORDS
Aesthetics
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Eugenio Trías
Symbolic Forms

ARTICLE

ART FRONTIERS: TERMINUS AND LIMEN.

ABSTRACT

Eugenio Trías “philosophy of the limit” is the starting point for a historical analysis of the concept of border or “limes”, understood in its essence as end and beginning in topological reciprocity. The being is exposed as the limit of the world, positioned facing the mystery or non-world, demonstrating critical reasoning when in dialogue with its “shadows”, as well as the ability to create symbols, which mediate resources that, indirectly and analogically, send out antennae to this hermetic enclosure. Thus, this borderline being, whose “human condition” can only be achieved if this being freely chooses to reject ‘inhuman’ behaviour, whether deficient or excessive, and finds in ethics and aesthetics the foundations that, in due measure, will guarantee the right to a ‘good life’ in freedom, peace, justice and respect for others.

INTRODUCTION

In the era we live in, the proposed theme is recognisably topical. Between positivity and negativity - dominant in the West -, sunk in all kinds of sensory requests required by the means of production of mass hyper-consumption to achieve instant pleasure, superficiality and excess, we have decided to draw on the reflections of someone who has spent most of his life addressing these issues. And he did so in a singular, unique way. We would like to point out that the following quotations are literal translations of the Spanish texts.

2. AN IDEA OF LIMIT

The Spanish philosopher Eugenio Trías, particularly in *Lógica del limite* (1991), reflects on the concept of limit, a topic of such importance that took him around 30 years of in-depth research. He has written a prolific and fruitful number of works that were truly astonishing in content and form, where the innovative, daring and powerful Philosophy of the Limit was forged. And which is an unavoidable reference in our paper on the subject.

According to the thinker, the Romans called *limitanei* to the inhabitants of the limes or frontier areas that separated Rome’s empire from the lands inhabited by barbarians, or strangers, whose language and culture were considered savage, inferior.

The *limitanei* formed the front of the army that defended the frontiers of the Empire on the frontiers of conquered and occupied territories. They were soldiers and farmers at the same time and, on these spacious *frontier* areas, on the one hand they found separation, on the other hand they experienced a strange phenomenon of cultural miscegenation where the values and customs of both sides merged, making those living there culturally richer. Thus, the *limitanei* (or inhabitants of the *limes* or *frontier*), usually soldiers/farmers, cultivated the land in times of peace, swapping the plough for weapons when war came. Despite the permanent instability, contacts and exchanges took place between the two sides, which led to the Romanization of the barbarians by the *limitanei* and, at the same time, these becoming also *barbarians*.

So, instead of closing, the *frontier* was also an inhabited strip or passage zone to the other side, the unknown side, shrouded in mystery, presenting itself as a challenge, inviting people to cross over. As if a hypnotic curiosity was the greatest mark of a hidden power that belonged to this shifting fringe, fit for the most fearless and adventurous. While the barbarians aspired to gain Roman citizenship, the frontier Romans wanted to conquer more land; they wanted to extend their domains by subjugating the neighbouring peoples who lived on the other side of the frontier. Thus, the *limes* were established as the limit of the empire and, at the same time, as the limit between the Roman world and the barbarian jungle that extended beyond. On “this” side there was a civilised Rome or rational world, on the “other” side there was uncivilised, lawless, irrational barbarism. In literal translation: “therefore the limes shared the rational and the irrational, or the civilised and the wild. It was an intense and conflictual space of mediation and liaison. In turn, it brought together and split roman and barbarian spaces; it acted as coupling and disjunction; It was conjunctive and disjunctive” (Trías, 1991, p. 16).

Trías also used the ancient rituals that the Romans applied when founding a new city to support his *Philosophy of the Limit*. These rituals, followed by peoples long before the Romans, particularly the Etruscans, were a complex web of religious ceremonies; they emphasised the sacredness of the boundaries of the land, protected by the god Terminus, whose violation entailed harsh penalties for those who committed it.

Joseph Rykwert, in *La idea de ciudad* (2002, pp. 39-87), takes a masterly approach to the complex ritual of founding a city, namely Rome. In the text, he describes the opening of the *sulcus primigenius* as the most important act of this founding ritual. According to the author, it was up to the founder, covering his head with the flap of his toga, to trace this initial furrow on the ground to delimit the perimeter of the city. Holding the tines of a bronze plough, pulled by a white heifer and a bull (the heifer was on the inside, i.e. on the left, while the bull was on the outside of the furrow).

Going anti-clockwise, the plough had to be tilted slightly so that all the earth fell into the furrow. If it didn’t, the attendants would put all the lumps of earth that had been left outside in their place. Whenever he reached the site of one of the gates, the founder would raise the plough in the air (*portare*) to interrupt the furrow, then resume it until the entire perimeter of the city was completed. Walls or ramparts were then erected over the furrow opened by the plough. Because the limit was considered sacred, anyone who crossed the *sulcus primigenius* was immediately killed; only the gates, which were not sacred, allowed access or exit for people, animals or goods, and the cemetery remained outside the enclosure. Therefore, all traffic out or in was only done through the gates.

However, before the *sulcus primigenius* was laid out (*designare*, to draw) there was a rite called *inauguratio* (good omen), which included the so-called *contemplatio* (contemplation), carried out in a lengthy manner by the augur or priest who, from the top of an elevation near the chosen site, observed the sky; first trying to understand the positioning of the celestial temple or perfect, ideal temple, which served as a reference for the construction of the earthly, real temple, crystallised in the city to be built. Then, he studied the position of sunrise and sunset, determining an axis called the *decumanus*; crossing it at an angle of 90 degrees to determine the *cardus*, in the North/South direction, an axis also designated as night by the position of the North Star. This study, all of it imbued with a sacred character, formalised the good or bad omen for the new city to be built there which followed the resulting coordinates. Afterwards the augur, while pointing with a stick and describing the physical elements that his gaze encompassed and which would be the references of the limits of the space to be inhabited, would utter phrases or words of magical-religious meaning (*verba concepta*), most of the time incomprehensible. And he would draw a circle on the ground, where the two axes (*cardus* and *decumanus*) crossed, to direct the positioning of the new city. The projection of the celestial temple idealised in the act of contemplation was symbolically drawn on the ground. For his part, the *haruspex* (pagan priest) studied and read the positive or negative auguries in the winds, clouds and birds' - both indigenous and migrating - liver and entrails. That place would become a sacred space when the plough drew the initial furrow of the new city, as described above. And the good omen for the new city was guaranteed.

Using these metaphors of *limes* and *sulcus primigenius*, the philosopher devised a bold and innovative conceptual theory that he called the philosophy of the limit. In this, the central space is occupied by the *frontier enclosure* or founding enclosure which, in turn, unfolds into the *appearing or world enclosure* and the *hermetic enclosure*. Forming a trilogy of enclosures, in dissonance with previous philosophical currents based on a dichotomous or dual relationship. But the great philosophical novelty lies in the ontological character of the *limes* or limit: the being is this limit or frontier, assuming itself as the *limit being*, or inhabitant of the *limes*, of the frontier. Therefore, the subject or being, given existence, is the *very limit* that unfolds in the other two enclosures. As "*frontiersmen* we are the limits of the world", states the philosopher, of this phenomenological world that we inhabit, arrange and know, standing before the mystery of the *hermetic enclosure*, place of the unknown, the enigma, the unknowable, of everything that is sacred or secret and transcends us, the domain of unreason, of nothingness.

In other words, as existents we dwell on the frontier between the world and mystery, between reason and unreason, between being and nothingness. We are the embodiment of this *frontier* state of being that, within itself, feels the ambivalence of this intense interaction between *coupling* and *disjunction,* between union and split of two poles. The meaning of the preposition between must be emphasised due to its importance in the relationship with the pairs of attached nouns, embodying the role of frontier between the two concepts or enclosures. This *frontier* positioning gives it the substance immanent to the *frontier enclosure* which, as mentioned before, by being the founding entity, it unites and separates the two enclosures in a continuous dynamic process. This process implies the presence of *coupling forces* and *disjunctive forces* in an intense interplay, both of which constitute the core of the *frontier being*. It is this internal dynamism of constant connection and splitting that gives the *frontier* subject the vital importance of eternal renewal. It implies

a coexistence of the two forces that act permanently, without one being able to render the presence of the other ineffective. If this action were to happen, the very concept of limit would be greatly damaged, and its existence would be cancelled. The philosopher calls this internal dynamism the *principle of variation*, similar to what happens in music.

Eugenio Trías, in the sentence "the being of the limit that recreates and varies itself", puts forward a philosophical proposition that defines the *philosophy of the limit*. By using the verbs recreate and vary, he qualitatively determined a principle of permanent renewal and reinvention, contrary to any abulic or lethargic practices. Topologically, the being, as the *being of the limit*, is constituted as the limit of the world it inhabits, facing the *mystery* which, in its hermetic way, constitutes a realm that resists any effort by logical reason to clarify it completely. This *hermetic enclosure*, which is impossible to access directly, is the self-enclosed place where mysterious *shadows* dwell, where everything that escapes and is hidden from logical or factual reason fits. Therefore, there is a limiting boundary that prevents reason from accessing this impenetrable enclosure.

In order to solve the problem, the philosopher opens up logical reason to its own internal criticism, in other words, reason recognises its own limitations by flatly refusing to tackle issues from the irrational sphere. This self-reflexive critique, made at the limit, opens reason to dialogue with its *shadow*, the *unreason*. Reason then becomes *frontier reason*: by opening itself up to dialogue with everything that makes up this immense universe of shadows called *no-reason*: madness, myth, sacredness, divinity, religion, magic, passion, divination, occult, exorcism, palmistry, intuition, witchcraft, sinisterness, in short, metaphysics. Even so, *frontier reason* alone does not guarantee complete access to this enclosure of *shadows*, at the cost of the most daring and profound lucubrations. Something else was needed to make this opening possible. In the *symbol*, Trías found the third vertex of the proposal named *ontological triangle*: in it, the *being of the limit* forms the upper angle, while the frontier reason and the symbol correspond to the two lower angles. The *frontier reason* and the symbol are the two ways of *exposing* the *being of the limit*.

As a result, the philosopher had found the master key to achieving the desired access, albeit always precarious and in an *indirect and analogue* way, as he postulates; so that the *frontier* subject could establish bridges or contact with this dark and irrational universe. Therefore, the *great leap* was made so that existence could rise to its condition of *being of the limit*, or *inhabitant of the frontier* between the world and the mystery, between reason and unreason, between being and nothingness. From now on, the deepest yearnings, dreams, utopias and all the other unrealities that can be invoked have the possibility of being summoned in person in the sublime guise of the symbol. Indirectly and in an analogue way and also partially, it must be emphasised. Because both the *frontier reason* and the *symbolic supplement* endow the *frontier* with very special powers.

In *El hilo de la verdad* (2004), Trías sets out the *being of the limit,* broken down into seven sequential categories, connected to each other, in an effort to synthesise concepts developed by reason, which he *redefines as frontier reason:* matrix (naturing nature), existence (world), limes (or subject in relation with the limit), logos (or factual reason), frontier reason (criticism), symbol (or the mystic), and being of the limit. The seven categories, working as a whole, define the *being of the limit*. Thus, the *being* comes from the matrix or nature, is given to existence, becomes conscious as a subject put to the test by the limit, accesses the logos (word, writing, meaning and intelligence), endows itself

with a frontier reason in critical self-reflection on the forms and contents of factual reason, and, using the symbol as a partial, indirect and analogue bridge, launched into the mystery of the hermetic enclosure, finally assumes itself as a *being of the limit: or inhabitant of the frontier* between the world and the mystery, between reason and unreason, between being and nothingness. If the matrix is the foundation of everything, described as the principle of principles, it is also the end or the final destination that awaits us once we have reached the limit of our physical existence: it corresponds to the *hermetic enclosure.*

The word *limit* can have various etymological interpretations. On the one hand, it can be understood as *terminus* or final *limit*, term, termination, end of what is on this side; on the other hand, it can function as *limen*, that is, threshold, sill or place of passage to the other side. So this ambivalence of meanings reveals the dynamic nature of the *limes*, where *coupling* and *disjunction* forces clash, without there being any hegemonic result for one side. Therefore, the Limit is both *terminus* and *limen*. Therefore, it can be inferred that the *disjunctive force* of separation is defined in the *terminus*, while the *coupling*, in turn, can act in the *limen*. To put it more clearly: in the limit, understood as *terminus*, the *disjunctive forces* work, and the limit is assumed to be a limiting end or final; in turn, in the limit, understood as *limen*, the *conjunctive forces* work, so the limit, understood as being a kind of threshold or sill of a door, is now a place or zone of passage to the other side. This is of paramount importance for understanding the concept of limit. Without it, the internal dynamic that vitalizes it is lost.

The *philosophy of the limit* enshrines the concept of *frontier*, without it being understood as a simple dividing line between two territories. If that were the case, it would simply be a dead, lifeless line. On the contrary, Eugenio Trías presents it as a wide inhabited zone or *frontier enclosure*, like a fringe of land full of life where the *frontier* exists and acts. A *frontier* where people live, sometimes in intense harmony, other times where the turbulence seems to reach a critical point of rupture in the relationship established with the other side. In this harmony/entropy opposition, perhaps the most natural state is that of a relationship established in *dynamic equilibrium.* An intense equilibrium between rest and movement, between concord and discord, between acceptance and rejection, between inclusion and exclusion, between philia and phobia, between union and divorce, between consensus and dissension; ultimately, between love and hate, between war and peace.

Therefore, the *frontier*, which cannot be a place of split or rejection, is based on the interaction between two opposing spheres, characterised by a reciprocal relationship between identification and differentiation. Or, in simpler terms, between identity and difference. Delving into the *ontological, topological and philosophical turns of the limit,* Trías, in *El hilo de la verdad* (2004), states that the slash (/) placed between two opposing words or ideas cannot be understood as just a line (literal translation): “it is not a simple linear line. It denotes a space or an area, or an inhabitable fringe. The Romans called it limes. It projects an idea of the subject, or our condition. This slash designates the limit; it is the sign that designates it. It is its very emblem” (p. 114). Therefore, in the proposition formulated by the philosopher - *being of the limit that recreates itself* - the relation being/nothingness corresponds to *ontological truth*; in turn, the relation sameness/alterity corresponds to *topological truth*; and finally, the relations unity/multiplicity or rest/movement correspond to or define *philosophical truth*. To quote (again in literal translation): “the limit is thus *said of being* (and its reference, which is *nothingness*); of itself (and its own *otherness*); and of ‘everything’ that, through this nexus of the limit with itself and with

its otherness, is promoted: the eternal return of the same; the recreation and variation of the same limit that is given (as being) in existence" (p. 115).

Returning to the slash (/), in the relation being/nothingness, for example, it incorporates the idea of the limit between the two concepts. But it does so in a vivid way because, in essence, the slash is the limit itself, and the latter is animated by *coupling* and *disjunction* forces at the same time, it means that the limit as *terminus* splits the being from nothingness; but, in the same way, the limit as *limen* opens or connects or refers the being to nothingness. So, it follows that the limit functioning as *terminus* is of a *disjunctive* nature, and in the role of *limen* it is invested with a *conjunctive* nature. We can split the two functions for a better understanding; however, in absolute terms, they cannot be a matter of reflection unless they function as a whole, where both act at the same time, in permanent dialogue and conflict.

3. FRONTIER ETHICS AS *PRAXIS*

Addressing ethics nowadays means taking risks by daring to touch on a subject that, if not taboo, has been consigned to a long silence, determined by circumstantial convenience. It has become an uncomfortable and inconvenient word, to be avoided as if it caused leprosy, or something similar. For our part, it should be enthroned as a goddess. Is it worth it? We think so, above all for the opportunity to get in touch with the philosopher's thoughts on a subject that is as problematic as it is important today, despite the surrounding silence.

The *being of the limit*, as the limit of the world, is subject to the quality of the actions it takes. Because it lives in a community regulated by norms and laws that, at all times, determine the behaviour of everyone in the group. Freedom, right to a good life, equality, solidarity, compassion, dignity, safety, justice and peace, among many other values, can be said to be part of the *human condition*; all of which can be understood as universal moral qualities. And if morality can be recognised in the just nature of actions, it is because they describe the *human* side of the *human condition*. Unlike this, the *inhuman*, by pretending to be *absolutely infinite*, although it is admitted by *frontier reason*, rejects it in praxis. Because the *inhuman* is opposed to the human condition.

Trías, in *Ética y condición humana* (2000) states that ethics corresponds to the "practical use of reason". But, (continuing in literal translation): "it is a question of developing what can be understood by ethics from a reason that is conceived as frontier reason; or the order of motivations and goals that, from this way of conceiving reason, mediate the sphere of action, or praxis. Both the character and nature of the principles that govern it and the objective and purpose that can be given to this action are radically changed if this reason is understood as practical frontier reason" (p. 27). And then the philosopher argues that a possible frontier ethics is right, as a logical consequence of the type of actions that are in line with frontier reason.

It is part of the *human condition* to live an existence determined by the Limit: to live in the *world*, or near phenomenological happenings, raised to the limits of that world through *frontier reason,* in a privileged situation of dialogue with the shadows of mystery of the *hermetic enclosure*. In this way, our existence is, from the outset, "marked and designed by this Limit that determines and defines it. A Limit that establishes its own Measure, and it is, at turns, distant from its natural, native origin and its ultimate border, in which it is

inexorably attached to the *hermetic enclosure*. In this limiting Measure, our own existence finds the indicator sign of its own condition, to which corresponds to the *humana conditio*" (p. 34). For the philosopher, this means that the concept of Limit intrinsically implies "that *humana conditio* that all ethics must presuppose". Therefore, the infrahuman degradation of the inhuman cannot be understood as a genuine *praxis* of ethics. Ethics, which cannot be imposed or regulated, has its fundamental and irreplaceable foundation in Freedom.

This raises the question: how can the concepts of good life and *freedom* be combined? Is there freedom in a way of life that, because it is a *good life* in the ethical sense, strictly excludes all those practices that are typical of the *inhuman*? Isn't that an irrefutable contradiction? This is the so-called *ethical aporia*. So how do we get out of this crossroads? According to Trías, it is clear from the approach taken to the human condition that "it is clarified through the concept of what we are as inhabitants of the frontier" (p. 40). And, as mentioned before, the limit determines its own Measure, which the thinker explains: "Human measure 'recognises itself' then as the frontier between the animal and divine condition, or between the defective inclination that remains in the physical matrix or the *excessive* inclination to occupy the place of the gods. The good life can only be achieved by 'being', through the mediation of an imperative (such as the Pindaric), which man 'already is' virtually (inhabitant of the frontier, equidistant from the physical and the metaphysical, or from the animal and the divine)" (p. 41). So, it is inferred that the ideal of good life corresponds to a frontier position between *excess* and *defect*: the balance or good measure is in the middle, where what exists is neither *too much or too littl*e. In other words: *prudential intelligence* or *frontier intelligence* knows how to determine that point of ethical balance in human actions that define the good life, preventing it from being distorted by either *excess* or *defect*.

Eugenio Trías knew how to find this true pinnacle of his *philosophy of the limit*, which he called the *ethical imperative* or *ethical proposition*. As a product of frontier reason, "it proposes what the agent must respond to through the orientation of his action or the turn that can be given to it. This response determines the agent's possible changes of fortune or the adventures of his behaviour. The ethical qualification of the action depends on whether or not this response harmonises with what the imperative form *proposes* (towards the realisation of the human; towards the propagation of the inhuman). This response induces and leads to action, *praxis*, suitably guided by prudential intelligence, towards a good or bad life. The latter derives from all complicity in the generation of the *inhuman*" (pp. 46-47). In this way, the philosopher clarifies the nature of ethical behaviour of the subject of the action, in the sense of human or inhuman, in order to describe the content of the proposition, stating that it corresponds to the *linguistic expression of the practical use of frontier reason*:

"*Work in such a way that the maxim that determines your behaviour and your action fits your own condition as a frontier inhabitant*" (p. 47).

This is an empty formal command, in other words, it does not specify the content of this command. It only vaguely states that one's work must conform to the condition of being a frontier inhabitant. Nothing more. Therefore, the subject of the action has complete freedom to choose one's behaviour and actions. As for the meaning of one's actions, the subject also has the freedom to choose: opting for behaviour that is both humane and inhumane. Therefore, the subject has the power to decide freely

whether one wants a good life or, on the contrary, one to live at the mercy of excesses of all kinds; or by default, to remain in a kind of natural vegetative state, clinging to the things of this world.

The imperative sentence, which the philosopher postulates, is one, unique, universal (it is intended for all *frontier individuals*), it is prescriptive in that it invites a free response from each *ethical subject*; being unconditional in that it does not state any kind of prescription or norm, it opens itself up to a plurality of responses, so it is intended for all frontier crossers; and one must respond individually, in a radically singular way and in absolute freedom. In doing so, the response fulfils the *materialisation* of the ethical proposal, leading the ethical agent to define one's conduct, with the possibility of choosing between the human way and its opposite or inhuman way: one can choose decisions and actions in clear contradiction to their condition as *inhabitants of the frontier*, so this possibility is the guarantee of freedom in the response. And, as Trías says, "there is nothing more *human* than *inhuman* behaviour. What is more, only man, as Schelling understood, is capable of inhuman attitudes, behaviour and ways of life. Just as the brute or the beast are never brutal or bestial (but man is), neither can infra-human beings ever behave in an inhuman way or manner. But in the case of man, this way of behaving is not exceptional; it is often the rule. And all this is so because only man is free" (p. 48).

Only the human being has the capacity to hear or accept this ethical proposition, and from this comes the corresponding *elevation* to the status of *ethical subject*. Therefore, as the owner of a frontier reason, one can and must respond to this imperative proposition which, in a more simplified way, says: "Be frontier; be right in behaving as you are, limit and frontier (in relation to indeterminate "infinite" *excesses* and *defects*)" (p. 49). Thus, in fulfilling the imperative, if these excesses and defects are rejected, in a free act, one will have opted for the *good life*, in accordance with *human condition understoo*d as the *matrix foundation* of ethical conscience. As the philosopher puts it: "And the *matrix* cause of ethics guides and directs action in the direction of achieving a good life that is in accordance and harmonious with the imperative itself. Since this good life is achieved, within the real conditions of human behaviour, if one complies with the said imperative (in terms of the 'pindaric imperative', or orientation of elections and decisions towards that limit between two extremes of amorphous indeterminacy, by excess or by defect)" (p. 50).

It is reiterated that *ethical elevation* is only achieved if there is total freedom of conscious decision when choosing between the two possibilities: the *human* and the *inhuman*. If this freedom does not exist, due to internal or external pressures, there will no longer be an ethical subject. Then, the *human* will only be achieved at the cost of a fierce struggle with the possibility of the *inhuman*; without this struggle, there is no freedom. In the philosopher's words: "Only the human is achieved and conquered in a *fierce and obstinate struggle* with the possibility of the inhuman, which is the fearful possibility that leaves open the greatest treasure of the human being: his non-negotiable and inalienable freedom" (p. 98).

Therefore, the *humana conditio* is the foundation of ethical awareness, its matrix, an indelible mark of humanity. Without this mark, the human being, losing the condition of frontier inhabitant, and losing frontier reason, cannot free himself from the centripetal forces that, by default, bind him to mundane, physical, natural events. Or else, dragged down by the excessive and overflowing power of the centrifugal forces, undermined

by the Faustian desire to find (infinite) answers to everything, he ends up exceeding all limits, losing this notion of humanity in favour of inhuman practices. In this sense, the limit implies the presence of *frontier intelligence* (or *passionate* and *prudential intelligence*) so as not to lose this mediating position between world and mystery; between reason and unreason; between being and nothingness. Based on this reasoning, ethics emerges as the guarantor of the just measure that leads to *eudaimonia*, that timeless philosophical principle that enshrines the inalienable and universal right of human beings to *good life* in freedom. However, this *good life* implies ethical commitment, that supreme principle, without which humanity may run serious existential risks if it pursues an ungoverned path of complete bewilderment, among paroxysmal excesses of all kinds.

Ultimately, everything expressed here can be understood as a series of questions about the possible ethical criteria formalised by the philosopher. And perhaps it can be useful to position ourselves "in the face of nihilism, which wants to demolish all guidelines of value, or all ethical criteria (and also aesthetic or epistemological ones), and in the face of moral relativism, which does not accept any ethical proposal with universal and unconditional pretensions..." (p. 128). We might ask ourselves. Should "everything is relative" exclude a minimum of "critical sense"? Is everything possible in the name of freedom? Or is there a frontier freedom that corresponds to frontier ethics?

4. *FRONTIER* AESTHETICS

Eugenio Trías, in his posthumous work, *La funesta manía de pensar* (2018), writes «Wittgenstein adduces that "ethics and aesthetics are the same" or literally "are One''» (p.127). In this text, the Spanish philosopher justifies the existence of the *ethical imperative proposition*, unlike the German thinker. According to him, both the ethical and the aesthetic were "inexpressible", existing only in silence.

We are interested in the idea of the sameness of ethics and aesthetics, even though the two concepts are different. However, despite this difference, the two need each other and cannot be separated: they imply each other. This leads us to believe that, for the Greeks, *eudaimonia* meant a good life, this good life went far beyond a life of material success alone. We think it refers to the quality of a *beautiful* life, in an ethical sense too: in the beautiful actions or decisions, in the just behaviour and attitudes of the good citizen. In the same way, the aesthetic work implies the presence (albeit concealed, veiled, silent) of *ethics*. So it stands to reason that a *good life* will be one in which all the moments that make it up are beautiful in themselves (aesthetically speaking) and good or just (ethically speaking). Otherwise, ethics and aesthetics *would not* be the same.

We return once again to Eugenio Trías to go through the intricacies of the so-called "Labyrinth of Aesthetics", masterfully explained in *Ciudad sobre ciudad* (2001). We're going to open a small parenthesis to address a concept that is very dear to the philosopher and that he dealt with in *Lo bello y lo siniestro* (1999a). In this work, he states that "the sinister is the condition and limit of the beautiful. Insofar as it is a condition, there can be no aesthetic effect without the sinister being present in some way in the artistic work. As much as it is a limit, the revelation of the sinister ipso facto destroys the aesthetic effect. Consequently, the accident is both a condition and a limit: *it must be present in the form of absence, it must be veiled. It cannot be unveiled*" (p. 17).

Having closed this parenthesis, we will return to the same concept of the sinister, but now in *Ciudad sobre ciudad* (2001). Trías states that the sinister, exposed in an open manner, self-destructs art, by revealing the mystery of the sacred (secret) without mediation and limits between the *hermetic enclosure* and the *enclosure of appearance or world*. Only symbolic mediation, at the limit, allows us not to violently force the mystery that must remain enclosed in the *hermetic enclosure*. It will therefore be necessary to mediate between the sinister and the beautiful in order to produce the *aesthetic effect* of the beautiful or the sublime. “In this sense, art is, like beauty, a veil; a produced veil (a veil of illusion) that undoubtedly allows the mystery to be glimpsed, without allowing it to expand immediately and without limits; but which at the same time preserves the mystery by always promoting it through mediations that are produced at the limit; indirect and analogue (or symbolic) mediations” (p. 174). In other words, without symbolic mediation, mystery is transformed into something astonishing, inhospitable, unheard of - sinister. And the sinister destroys art.

The nature of art raises questions, many of them unresolvable, and is an area where complexity and controversy go hand in hand. The answers are few and far between. So, the question arises: what is the factor that determines that a certain object is a work of art? Where does the artisticity of the work lie? In the company of the philosopher, we are at the beginning of the Labyrinth. And in order to make a prudent entrance, we must carry Ariadna’s thread to help us return victoriously. We will discuss it later.

In the first section of the labyrinthine path, according to Trías, we come up against what in microphysics is called *the principle of indeterminacy*: the paradoxical way that exists between understanding and explaining the work of art: if we understand it intuitively, we cannot explain it rationally; if we can explain it, we do not understand it. This difficulty raises a contradiction that the philosopher calls the *aesthetic aporia*. “Aesthetics is spontaneously confronted with this aporia; it always arises and reappears, interspersed between the question of artisticity and the eventual answer with which one wants to satisfy it” (p. 198). But there is a second antinomy or contradiction between understanding and explanation: “It so happens that the understanding (intuitive, in general terms) of a work as a work of art always takes place in relation to a perfectly individuated work. (...) This determination does not proceed through a generalisation in relation to a multitude of ‘concrete cases’. (...) Understanding is not only intuitive; it is also radically singular; it is always related to a work whose singular nature cannot be avoided or overlooked, and about which there can be no attempt to establish a possible ‘law’ valid for all cases” (p. 199). So, in the work of art in question, there is a kind of law or *internal guideline* that, coming from within itself, from the interior of this singular work, makes it a work of art.

Therefore, this internal guideline can only be applied to this work, only to this work and to no other; what’s more, this law that applies only and only to this (radically singular) work is of an unknown nature and essence, but has to do with the character of the work itself that is present there. Furthermore, this law is universal in character, as the thinker says: “In the same way, its character of ‘universality’ (its capacity to be recognised as such through the infinite induction that can take place in reception; for example, through the infinity of explanatory approaches that it can unleash, or the infinite hermeneutics that it tends to promote. A law is always postulated, specific to the work in question, the nature and essence of which is unknown. Or of which only its effects and consequences are

known" (p. 200). We can see the presence of this second antinomy between an unknown norm and its application to a *radically unique* work, i.e. a second face of the aporia.

As the philosopher points out, the internal guideline, although generalised, only governs the individual work; it is therefore *non-transferable* and *non-delegable*. It can never be applied in other cases, absolutely not.

In the second section of the labyrinth, the dialogue established with the work of art, knowledge is clarified and enriched by the degree of uniqueness and differentiation it presents. At the same time, in this relationship, feelings, sensations and emotions are aroused, both through the physical plasticity of the work itself and through the desire for knowledge that it motivates. In other words, contemplation gives pleasure at the same time as the process of knowledge typical of empirical experience takes place. Trías calls this symbiosis *intellectual hedonism*. "What appears in the work of art in disjunctive form in the relationship between intuitive understanding and rational knowledge, or between the empirical singularity of the object and the postulated universality and necessity of the hidden norm that rules over it, is exchanged in *conjunctive* form in this unexpected union of what is usually separated: enjoyment and understanding, pleasure and knowledge, feeling and intellect" (p. 204).

In this way, the core of the aesthetic aporia is reached, which, as the philosopher points out, is at the centre of all aesthetic reflection. The limiting boundary (as *terminus*) that appeared on the two sides of the aporia in a *disjunctive* way, this same boundary, now invested with the quality of *limen* (threshold, passage), establishes the coupling between knowledge and enjoyment or pleasure. "Here the limit is limes: the space or place of coupling; the space and place where what is always separated is brought together. In this sense, it can and should be said that all aesthetics is always and by necessity the aesthetics of the limit" (p. 206). Because in it we always come across the idea of a frontier - limes - which is inhabited from within by the aforementioned *conjunctive forces* and *disjunctive forces*, in situations of extreme complexity such as the aporia that we are trying to unravel here, following the shortcuts proposed by the philosopher. This is what happens with the aforementioned internal guideline or law, which can only be understood partially, precariously, and on the assumption that it *springs* from the single object or specimen in question: only what is possible can be known of this law, and only after the object exists; it is therefore a knowledge that is formed a *posteriori - as an effect and result of the artistic work itself*. It therefore has a physical body. It follows that knowledge involves the coupling of intellectual operations and sensibility, between the *sensible* and the *intelligible*. From this fusion, sensible ideas are born, completely rooted in the sensible, physical world of events. In art, these are called *aesthetic ideas*. "What is specific to the work of art is the transmission, in and from this intrinsic framework in the universe of sensible forms, of an aesthetic idea without which there can be no leap into the properly artistic universe. The aesthetic idea is, in a way, the *intelligible* content that unleashes what I previously called the "internal guideline" of the work, which it governs as the principle from which it can be determined in its strict artisticity. And this aesthetic idea is not forcibly added to the work or aesthetic object; it springs spontaneously from its own sensitive exposure" (p. 212).

The questions arise again. What is the resource that makes this *coupling* of the sensible and the intelligible possible? How can aesthetic ideas merge with the sensible forms of the work of art? How is this mediation possible without falling into abstractions?

In the text, Trías writes that Kant "calls this resource a *symbol*. And he considers that this produces the genuine 'exhibition' (in the sensible) of the 'aesthetic idea'. And he adds that this union is not biunivocal. It is not a union such that each separate part of the idea corresponds to a separate part of the sensible segment" (pp. 212-213). This term-by-term correspondence is characteristic of metaphor and allegory. Trías, therefore, in line with Kant, states that this correspondence is *indirect and analogue*. "This notion of symbol serves as a decisive clue to guide us in the thorny and difficult territory of aesthetics, which has its peculiar Minotaur in what I have called the 'aesthetic aporia'. Aesthetics is therefore a veritable labyrinth centred around the threatening central presence of the monster. Perhaps the symbol can serve us as Ariadna's thread to pass through this labyrinth without fear" (p. 213).

We return to the idea that symbol means "to throw together" two parts or halves: one concerns the *intelligible*, the power of intelligence as the engine of ideas, decanted into an *aesthetic idea*; the other is rooted in the sensible, in the physicality of the forms that are presented, configuring the body of the work. It follows that, in the symbol, aesthetic ideas merge, or become embodied, or are *exposed* in the sensibility of the physical forms of the work. This coupling takes place at the *limit*, because this is where the Ideas of reason open up to *frontier reason*: they are therefore very special ideas, frontiering on the limit of what can be known. The philosopher calls them *limit ideas*: "These limit Ideas, situated at the limit, are so in relation to the great enigmas, or aporias, of frontier reason: man and his freedom, the world and its determination, the enigma of the ultimate meaning, or of the 'maximum value', relating to the principle of man and the world. Ultimately, all questions lead to the question of what we are (what is man? as Kant knew how to understand)" (p. 214).

It becomes all too clear that, in this *philosophy of the limit*, the limit ideas are fundamental for the work to be considered truly artistic; otherwise it will be an object with merely decorative functions, and therefore superficial, with no real intellectual breath. Perhaps it's even an object without a message (worthy of the name), or one that only manages to unleash that kind of commonplace ideas revolving around innocuous and circumstantial themes in vogue: in other words, without a voice, which may even arouse pleasure or enjoyment. But the same can't be said for emotion: on the contrary, it can be emotionless. And if there is no emotion in the act of perception, if we intuitively have no emotional sensations, it's because the work doesn't fulfil the conditions required by the artistic factor.

As Eugenio Trías finally proposes: "These questions bark vibrantly, under indirect and analogical (by symbolic) forms in the truly artistic work; but these problem-ideas (as Kant called them) are always implanted in figures with radically sensitive forms, always singularised, always open to aisthesis. And in this openness they make possible, precisely in this symbolic intersection that takes place in the limes, an explosive junction of enjoyment, emotion and intellection that serves as a criterion for detecting and determining the appearance of the artistic work" (p. 214). We must emphasise the central importance of *the limit ideas or intellection, jouissance and emotion*. They truly constitute, according to the philosopher, that explosive trilogy that gives artisticity to a work so that it can access the status of a work of art.

This brings us to the end of this *aesthetic labyrinth*, travelling a complex and

thorny path, from stretch to stretch, slowly, as required by the intricate evolution of the thought of the author of the *philosophy of the limit*. In 1995, the Spanish philosopher was awarded the F. Nietzsche career award, the philosophy equivalent of the Nobel Prize. There is no need to invoke other arguments to size up the creative legacy of this true giant of contemporary philosophy. So, there's little more to say on the subject that has been proposed to us. Given the scope of the *philosophy of the limit*, it presents itself as a bottomless pit that can be explored continuously, descending further and further in a journey that seems to be infinite, no matter how far down you go. Within this well, another mine opens up, that of Aesthetics, with labyrinthine, shifting and dark contours, as we have seen. Where the answers, given their aporetic nature, allow for nothing but new questions. Which appear disguised even when the words seem to be more assertive.

So, it's worth asking one more question: can there really be no limits to art in contemporary aesthetics? Is the phrase "everything is relative" the confirmation of this impossibility? Is it not up to art to seek beauty to infinity? Is it enough for the artist to say "this is art" for it to be art? If so, what isn't art? Or does any object displayed in a museum acquire the status of a work of art? Is aesthetics an absolute end? Or is it a means to a certain end? And what role will ethics play in the formulation of aesthetics? Or can this relationship never exist?

If we think of the limit only as *terminus*, end, final, we think that this limit shouldn't exist. Likewise, if the limit is understood only as limen, threshold, sill, place of open passage to the beyond, we also understand that it should not exist. And the reason for this is simple: because, in the *philosophy of the limit*, when it is understood as limes, it always fulfils both functions at the same time; it must be both end and beginning. In the same way, ethics implies the defence of actions with a human face, those that distinguish themselves from inhuman practices that violate all limits. But, as has already been said, when deciding on actions, the *inhuman* must be present if there is to be freedom of choice. There must always be a frontier fight between the human and the inhuman. Always. And in order to get due measure, the inhuman must not be open or given free passage, but the sinister, as the "limit of beauty", can appear in disguise, in a veiled, indirect, symbolised way. Because if it is literally denied, we are also denying its aesthetic presence.

It is perceptible that the key hangs on the side of ethics. According to the philosophy of the limit. But there are aesthetic movements based on "total freedom for art". Therefore, there are no facilities in the field of aesthetics. And life, despite the magnificent gift of being able to face it by living. We live under the impulses of a nihilism that seems to be undermining the West in particular. The power of reason, pushed to its limits, denies everything that it cannot justify; on the contrary, by opening itself up to all kinds of excesses, it ends up justifying everything because "everything is relative", even deifying itself on the splendid throne of techno-science.

It allows us to dream and create utopias, or to feel compassion for others: without ever accepting war as truth, or rejecting the power to decide on the lives of others in the name of some covenant. Could it be that there is an existential void in a world without values, amoral, without truth of any kind, and that we seem to be living in a moment of celebration or apotheosis of the inhuman? Culturally and socially politicised? You'd better think not. That would be too radical. And painful, because it would confirm that we are not radically unique: as the *frontier beings* we are, we are

constantly recreating ourselves, facing something that transcends us. So, art may have no limits within the *human*, but the inhuman must be kept at a distance to ensure the criterion of freedom and this is fundamental.

The message (in the limit-ideas) should be conveyed through in *symbolic forms, indirectly and analogically*, never expressed directly and logically, as happens in allegory. Art will always be a symbolic dialogue with the sacred, operated at the limit. And the silence of the ethical will be there, voiceless, in that kind of silence that is felt even when polyphony is deafened. Let's hope that the sinister nuclear death never happens, as Rafael Argullol masterfully questions in *El Fin del Mundo como Obra de Arte* (1991). Never.

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Un Mundo Feliz

WAYS OF DEPROPRIATING IMAGES.

INTRODUCTION

Looking is a conscious act, a political act, which demands a slow tempo. The gaze is altered by the direct experience of the observer and by the social context in which the image is inscribed, establishing a non-mechanical relationship between art and its context. What defines each epoch is its way of looking and *depropriating*, of questioning limits and expanding the thresholds that limit us. But what is the way of looking in our times? How can we freely create a new activist sphere with real subversive power?

1. DEPROPRIATION: A COLLECTIVE METHOD

Marcus Boon (2013, 31) defends the cultural and social value of the copy and sees 'depropriation' —an exercise of subtraction that maintains a double contradictory movement of appropriation-expropriation— as a tool that allows other forms of sociability to be modelled and a device that favours freedom of expression through the creative exercise of counter-appropriations in order to bring forth 'one's own'. Boon raises the problem of the possible uses of the terms 'appropriation', 'reappropriation', 'misappropriation', 'ex-appropriation' and 'de-appropriation' or 'inappropriable'. Emphasising that the idea of appropriation is intimately linked to the gift, the free gift, the ultimate 'gift of being' of sentient things. Depropriation allows things to happen freely, without imposing closed rules or conditions, it functions as a 'flow of being' that manifests indifference to possessing. It belongs to an ethics of giving that is opposed to ownership. It is a form of 'renunciation' (Boon 2013, 224) that leads to liberation and independence from people and things, in the case of visual activism, from images. While this may all seem very positive, Boon reminds us that this can generate a situation of terror of the emptiness of the self.

Depropriation, in our opinion, becomes a model of seeing images, of assuming them with a logic that allows for countless versions of something that can be shared by a group of people without the need to claim authorship, of an image that can be unrecognised and even misidentified. There is in this model a sense of improvisation, temporality and subversive misrepresentation that can be very useful for activism. The Internet is the 'space of appropriation' because the code allows it, and its ubiquity, interactivity and accessibility offer the possibility of being able to share any kind of textual and audiovisual information, which gives it great potential for political struggle. Marcus

Figure 1.
Continuous reuse of Un Mundo Feliz pictogram by the collective Salva Lo Público as a stencil and by workers of the Madrid Public Health Service on banners.
© Un Mundo Feliz and © Salva Lo Público

asserts that 'depropriation means learning to relax' (Boon 2013, 230). In this way, by eliminating the exclusive or privileged use of something, we are opening it up to the use of many others. Thus the possibility of re-appropriation of a wealth that only belonged to a few arises. The activist philosophy that promotes the free exchange of culture argues that such appropriations are possible, that the new logic of the 'multitude' and its forms of life (Virno 2003, 42) as a commonplace is the 'enjoyment of the copy'. Once again we are confronted with the possibility of making possible and accessible an 'economy of the gift', 'gift economy', 'freeconomy', etc. The most subversive value of the copy-as-gift is that it is cheap - free for the one who produces it and totally free for the one who receives it. It is useless in a utilitarian —commercial— sense, and yet it has an expressive potential based on improvisation, on the encountered experiences it provokes. This can be seen in the subcultures based on the exchange and gift of fanzines and other self-published objects.

Depropriation as cloning is a method of great activist use. Its potential for paraphrasing, copying, falsifying, revalidating and re-presenting gives it a special place for visual critique because it allows a praxis of continuous re-use of concepts and images for the construction of new utopian constellations. Its value is not aesthetic but strategic as a generator of conflict and counter-power. The aesthetic language of economic and political power, its logos, its messages and its philosophy are cloned through fakes or false images. But the system also uses these counter-messages to its advantage in order to sell more with guerrilla marketing and pseudo-activist commercial campaigns. That is the idea, cloning confuses the opponent and blurs the opposition between the conflicting parties; it is a *give and take* that is endlessly repeated and duplicated. Cloning

Figure 2.
Iconic depropriation through the recontextualization of images from popular mass culture. Three examples: Disney, Barbie and Hello Kitty.
© Un Mundo Feliz

allows symbols to remain in time. The student occupation of Tiananmen Square in 1989 as a spontaneous and critical reaction against the official Chinese communist regime is replicated by the occupation of new symbolic spaces with the Arab Spring in Egypt, the 'City of Sun by 15M or the Occupy movement on Wall Street. Cloning occupations and their messages are forms of communication that start from symbolic public spaces and create a shared experience of greater significance than the local event. This is a recurrent feature of international activism. Cloning Chinese Communist Party posters in Beijing to criticise the system and spoofing or replicating capitalist commercial advertisements for critical purposes has become a widespread tactic. The May 68 demonstrations with graffiti, posters and banners have been a recurring example for contemporary dissident graphics. The main reason is that it uses media that are cheap, accessible and socially and collectively effective. The key possibly lies in its potential for self-expressiveness. People like to get their hands dirty and participate. Visualise their opinion and participate creatively with words and images. An example that shows us the most intimate communication is in the photos taken by mobile phones. It is a format that is widely replicated due to its simplicity in its production and dissemination on the networks. Selfie-photos and selfie-posters use the self-portrait technique to express a personal opinion, support and opposition to different causes that the person believes to be important.

Like Katsiaficas (Jacobi 2012, 71), we can argue that copying and cloning is not a medium in itself, it is essential that what is cloned and replicated retains the values of the original in order for the messages to remain meaningful. The concept of 'cloning' is strongly inspired by the relativist and capitalist postmodernism of the 1980s. However, critical activism when playing with iconographies recreates new histories and appropriates

Figure 3.
Typographic depropriation through glyph manipulation and mash-up. Three examples from the political types project: Impact(o), Stencil Mix and Arial Symbol.
© Un Mundo Feliz

the symbols that social and political movements have created over time, continually taking them up and giving them new interpretations and uses. All critical cloning is the aesthetic reuse of images and symbolism imposed by the powers that be, in order to critique those same powers. Many of these emerging artistic strategies share these same premises: appropriation art, because appropriation is not only a way of questioning the authenticity of the work and the author, but a critique of cultural history. The most important thing about appropriation, from a critical point of view, is that it is a method that allows us to re-contextualise meanings.

A question repeated by many of the radical communicators is, is it worth recovering or reviving elements of the past or is it better to create entirely new material? From our perspective activists know that there is an immense variety of socialist, communist, anarchist and libertarian images waiting to be revived, images of people reclaiming their right to free speech, to struggle, to food, to life, to love.... Very recognisable images such as the fist or the dove of peace are loaded with a predefined meaning. Whenever we revitalise these images we can tap into all the emotions and hopes that are already imprinted in people's consciousness. In short, if we recover these images, it is because they are recognisable.

2. RECURSIVITY: A CREATIVE MODEL

The Internet is recursive. The concept of recursion is linked to repetition. But in order to repeat itself, recursivity needs something to happen previously and, in this way, it is associated with

other previous and subsequent repetitions. According to Padilla (2012, 43-44), recursion is a great creative resource because it produces something new through consecutive repetitions. In communication design, recursion occurs when messages and images are nested within other phrases and images in potentially infinite chains. In a recursive system the parts possess properties that transform them into a whole. The elements are independent and yet share the same characteristics as the total system. Their way of growing is by integrating elements into a larger whole. The consequences of a recursive system is that it eliminates hierarchies as each fragment is a complete whole. It presents itself as something open-ended that continually replicates and multiplies. It allows potentially infinite images and messages to be constructed from a limited number of resources.

Images have an unlimited expansive capacity. The content and goals of activist communication are formalised using meaningful political rhetoric and aesthetics in tune with society and produce a much bigger image than an artist or designer acting independently. This idea of an expansive image makes it possible to think and act as a group and in a collective and collaborative way so that symbolic political communication is possible. The expansive effect is brought about by the mass media —television, telephone, computers— which make the growing wave of global protests visible. The new social movements make effective use of the new technologies, endowing them with a strong symbolic power. The images of occupied squares around the world are

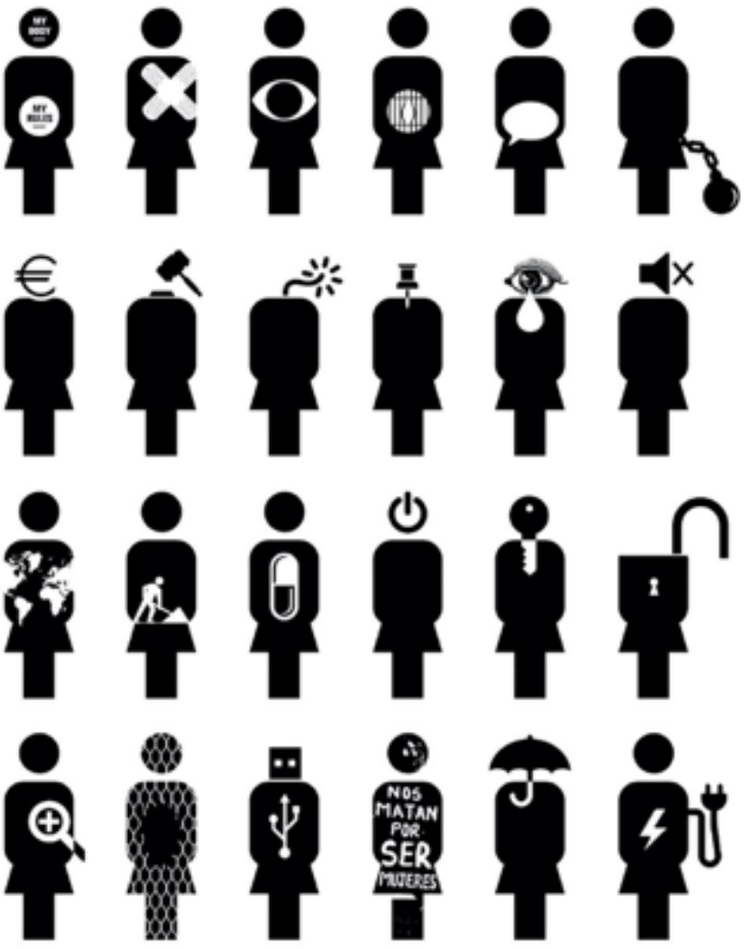


Figure 4/5.
Pictomontage, mixing of several pictos, as a creative form of recursivity. Protest Peace dingbat font and Woman Sans.
© Un Mundo Feliz

Figure 6/7.
Sticker Bombing Project and Okupazion festival. Temporary occupation of a public space, freestyle exhibition, random installation of stickers and free distribution of stickers and fanzines.
© Un Mundo Feliz and © Okupazion Collective

Figure 8/9.
Sticker Bombing Project and Okupazion festival. Temporary occupation of a public space, freestyle exhibition, random installation of stickers and free distribution of stickers and fanzines.
© Un Mundo Feliz and © Okupazion Collective

so convincing that it is no longer the number of direct participants that matters, but the number of followers. There are two levels to these activist demonstrations, the micro and the macro. The micro is what happens in the performative space itself where the collective executes the performance-images, where the form is the message. The macro level is the one that communicates the images that are already distanced from the experience, it is the spectacular representation that is retransmitted.

3. AUTONOMY: A FORM OF ACTION

According to Katsiaficas (2009) the concept of 'autonomy' has been used to refer to the 'independence of individual subjectivity' although the use that interests him is that which refers to collective relations within social movements. She gives as an example of the autonomous feminist movements that put forward a 'politics of the first person' where individuals act according to their own will, from a self-managed consensus. It was in the 1970s, in Germany, that the activists of the anti-nuclear movement called themselves autonomous in order to defend the logic of the new spontaneous forms of militant resistance. Most of the autonomous groups we know today are represented by radical pacifists, counterculture and squatters, who, according to Katsiaficas, are guided by a form of direct democracy endowed with 'conscious spontaneity' to change everyday life.

Autonomy makes it possible to create contesting spaces outside the territory of dominant politics to generate the 'phenomenal forms of contemporary radical activism'. Their own logic leads them to be an invisible movement organised in small self-governing communities and specialised in direct-action. These two reasons place them outside the system and they are seen by public authorities as 'dangerous' anti-system groups. This is a complex issue because the 'spectacular' visualisation of the movement comes from the most radical and extremist sectors. Autonomy makes it possible to construct a marginality that can be positive or negative, depending on how it develops. For the media and the powers that be, marginality is in itself the confirmation of its dangerousness. However, the margins in which the autonomous model moves are the most propitious for promoting social creativity. Being on the margins means being able to move freely, not having to take anything for granted. It allows us to take advantage of what is different and to actively promote dissidence. Working on the margins gives the possibility of inventing paths that have not been trodden. It allows us to get confused without having to explain ourselves. It is the ideal place for experimentation because the margin does not belong to anyone, it is the genuine place of passage, the frontier without a border.

Another interesting contribution of the autonomous is its resistance to uniformity, systematisation and order or the grid. In this sense, what unites the autonomous as a movement are the differences, each group defends its own lifestyle, its own clothing, its own idea of politics, creates its own rules and lives its life outside a society controlled and limited by the consumption of ideas and 'uniform forms'. The autonomous movement stands for individual freedom and critical non-conformism in the face of individual freedom based on consumption.

For Katsiaficas (2009) these 'marginals' are 'central to social change' because, despite being a silent crowd, they work to produce alternative models based on other values (feminism, sexual liberation, equal rights for foreigners), other forms of social organisation

Figure 10/11/12.
Self-publishing and fanzines as a creative expression of self-management
© Un Mundo Feliz

Figure 13/14.
Pictopia Stencil, instant poster self-printing workshop using stencils and Crit-Icon Stencil, free distribution project and use of different graphic material.
© Un Mundo Feliz and © Espacio_E Gallery

—shared group lives, self-directed employment and study programmes,cooperative work relations— that over time influence the evolution and improvement of static institutional models. The sum of all forces (movements, tactics, ideas), their configuration and sudden activation in a given context connecting a group of people 'at essential levels of life' is what Katsiaficas calls the 'eros effect'. This effect works instinctively driven by a 'rationality of the heart' if the situation is right. It is a passion for social transformation. In the words of Katsiaficas (2009): 'The eros effect refers to the sudden, intuitive awakening of solidarity and mass opposition to the established system'.

4. SELF-MANAGEMENT: A POLITICS OF EMANCIPATION

Many networked activisms design unfinished devices where participation is key. Their philosophy is to allow and motivate other nodes to make their own decisions and act autonomously. They are forms of agency for emancipation and the construction of

Figure 15/16/17.
Exhibitions: Towapo at Centro Arte Complutense of Madrid and A.R.S. Anti Rape School at Insituto Leonés de Cultura in León and A.R.S. Anti Rape School at ESAD Matosinhos, .
© Un Mundo Feliz and © Instituto Leonés de Cultura

subjectivities that manifest the new liberating politics of which Alain Touraine speaks when he states that ‘we no longer want a democracy of participation; we need a democracy of liberation’ (Sandoval 2003, 50). According to Padilla, many hackers and activists are setting up ‘politically oriented enterprises’ born out of the precarious option. These activist and non-profit initiatives base their economic model on personal and collective sustainability, managing resources, infrastructures and service provision with an alternative strategy. They are in the market in an ambiguous way, as their work is very much anti-business and their services are based on a social model where work and militancy seek to be compatible (Padilla 2012, 107-108).

Another model is presented through the personal initiatives of what Margarita Padilla calls ‘anyone’. Here new rules appear where the small and open is an enormous potential factor for change because it allows a direct connection with other ‘anyone’, giving rise to ‘emergency phenomena’ (Padilla 2012, 111). Graphic creativity applied to causes has a logical existence and seeks spaces in which to develop. Society needs these visual manifestations and demands new spaces - physical and virtual - for their practice. There are many culturally regulated models such as competitions, graphic biennials and exhibitions in institutional spaces, but what becomes more interesting is when it takes the form and resources of the underground and the ‘anybody’, thus avoiding control. When criticism is authorised, the most authentic and radical values and perspectives are always lost. That is, those with the greatest transformative potential.

5. THE GIFT: A DEVICE FOR CREATIVE REBELLION

Marilyn Strathern (1988) in The Genre of the Gift notes that the characteristics of the gift ‘are defined in their interrelationship’ and that the logic of the gift is the ‘production of social relations’. This premise is very similar to that of Caroline Humphrey and Stephen Hugh-Jones in their analysis of the ‘peaceful’ activity of bartering (Humphrey and Hugh-Jones 1997). What is remarkable about these social customs is that over time they have coexisted with other more formal economic transactions. The gift and exchange as marginal activist practices have great value. We are interested in emphasising that, although it may have use and exchange value, its main reason lies in its capacity to question capitalist political-economic relations. The gift functions with an autonomous logic that allows for bewilderment, play and ‘the construction of autonomous modes of relation within the framework of cultural capitalism’ (Claramonte 2011, 25).

Implicit in these forms of social outreach are the concepts of free exchange and the gift economy, which as Gregory Sholette suggests can become activities of great subversive power or ‘gifts of resistance’ (Sholette 2008). On the subject of art and the gift economy there are very interesting projects such as ‘The Gift. Generous Offerings, Threatening Hospitality’ (2002/2003), ‘Exchange rate of bodies and values’ (2002), ‘What we want is free: generosity and Exchange in recent art’ (Purves 2005), ‘The work & the Gift’ (2005), and the work of the *Temporary Services* collective (1988), which proposes many of its proposals from this experience of gratuity, erasing the dividing line that exists between art and everyday life. The main idea underpinning this model is free circulation and generosity as a practice of reciprocity (Jacob 2005, p.6) exemplified by the mountains of sweets and posters of Felix Gonzalez-Torres,

the culinary events of Rirkrit Tiravanija, the collaborative project 'Food' (1971) led by Gordon Matta-Clark and the gift-experiments 'Free Manifesta' and 'Free Biennial' by Sal Randolph. It is important not to forget that generosity is not something passive, it requires the responsibility of the participants to provoke a real creative rebellion.

For activists, the free gift becomes an act of disobedience and 'passive resistance', and an example of non-violent struggle against the dictatorship of capitalism. The gift is a subversive activity of boycotting the market economy. The ghost-paintings spray-painted by Alan Gussow in New York as a critique of the military attacks promoted by Ronald Regan in 1982 (Sholette 2008), the International Shadow Project projected by Donna Slepack and replicated all over the world thanks to a DIY publication. The white painted bicycles used as street furniture by *Visual Resistence and The Street Memorial Project* that would later inspire the New York Ghost Bike as well as in cities around the world such as Canada, Austria, Brazil and the Czech Republic. The importance of these DIY and fringe creative manifestations is beyond doubt. They are an example of creativity that develops on the fringes of the market. They mark a path to be followed by activists looking for other scenarios and other messages. Pedagogies of resistance and informal social production are a form of re-appropriation and creation of a common space. A commonplace that is not productive and yet is able to create a culture of 'free cooperation' through 'tactical means'. As Gregory Sholette states, these gifts of resistance come with instructions: study it, use it, and then please re-gift it generously to others (Sholette 2008). However, we cannot forget that the value of these projects lies in enabling 'informal social production'. And if they succeed as commercial objects, then this is a symptom of their failure.

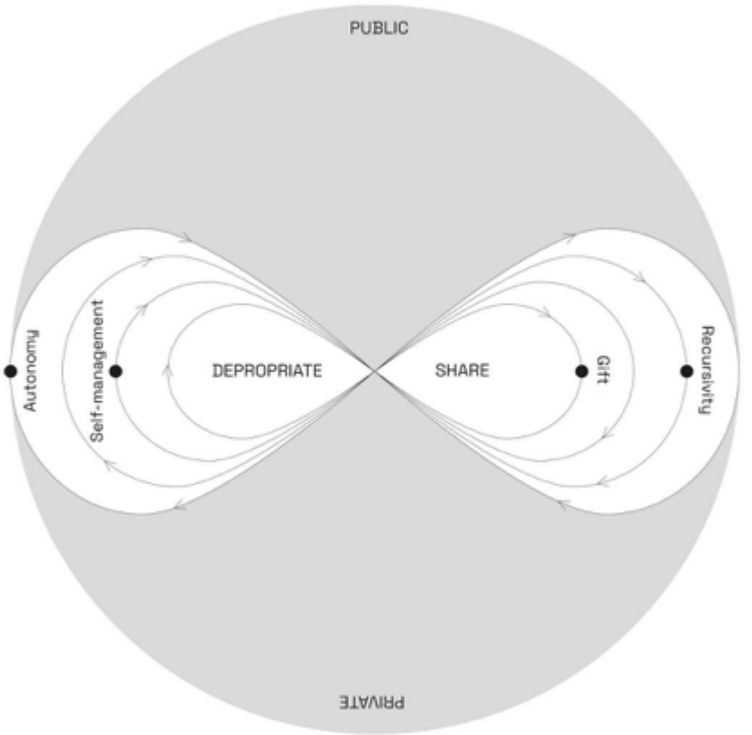
6. EXPOSING ONESELF: EXHIBITIONS AND POLITICAL POSITIONING

As we have already reiterated, the way we see the world depends on our frames or mental structures and these frames shape our goals and action plans. Cultural frames shape cultural and social policies; but when these do not fit our needs we should propose a change. According to George Lakoff (2007, 17) 'to change our frames is to change all this. Frame change is social change'. For the Un Mundo Feliz collective the objective has always been clear, to think differently is to speak and act differently. If we consider design as a public activity, it should always and manifestly intervene in the development of life in society and express political and cultural values. Our approach is based on a social model according to which, as Pierre Bernard (2001) points out, 'the social responsibility of the graphic designer is based on the desire to take part in the creation of a better world.'

Un Mundo Feliz's exhibition projects are situated in the debate on cultural production from a political and social perspective. That has always been our commitment as curator-designers: to provide clarity, because 'when the ideology of an exhibition is not recognized as part of the exhibition itself, its sociabilizing potential is sacrificed for the sake of formal values.' To prevent this from happening, Olafur Eliasson states that, it needs to be made 'manifest in some way to the visitors' because it is a matter of commitment to make this representation visible. For Eliasson (2012, 51), 'an exhibition cannot remain outside of its social context' and must 'be of the time'. This is our main political commitment.

7. CODA: THE BEST WAY TO DISAPPROPRIATE IS TO SHARE INTANGIBLE GOODS

The digital revolution, according to Margarita Padilla, has brought a new set of resources: immaterial goods. These new goods do not follow the logic of material goods as 'they are abundant because the cost of copying tends to zero and because copying does not wear out the original', they can be easily shared, self-produced and duplicated, and the more they are used the more social value they accumulate. The success of this immaterial strategy is due to the fact that its production is the result of remixing, recycling and recombining material already given that it is not destroyed in the process of continuous reworking. This model is genuinely political and proposes a new economy of sharing and enjoying abundance, which in turn fights against the censorship of copyright, artificial



Flowchart of free subversive-activist circulation in a new public-private sphere.
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scarcity and obscurity imposed by the codes of established power. This new system extols 'the massive and generalised possibility of consuming-producing videos, audios, images, designs, ideas, conversations...' (Padilla 2012, 62) in a totally free way, creating a new public-private sphere of great subversive power (Zafra 2010).

In 2005, the online platform *Sharing is Good* (Hacktivistas.net 2011) proposed a radical philosophy based on achieving many effects at little cost. Their struggle focused on combating all kinds of privatising forms of cultural production. In their manifesto 'sharing is good' they argued that creativity is protected by sharing it, that this action of sharing culture, knowledge, technique and power is a legitimate and legal right.

The fundamental contribution of Hacktivists is the defence of copyleft, where all their production is public and open, that is, in the public domain (Padilla 2012,

101). The concept of free circulation makes a difference because many visual activists maintain an idea of ownership and authorship that, due to its restrictions, may no longer make sense in the 21st century.

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VISUAL ESSAY

LEROS: A PALIMPSEST OF CONFINEMENT (2017)

ABSTRACT

This photographic series explores Leros through its layered history of confinement and reform, with a particular focus on the Royal Technical School—a key landmark embodying the island's legacy of control. Captured during a 2017 visit with a National Broadcasting Corporation (ERT) crew, these photographs document restricted and decaying spaces tied to Leros' complex past, including the Royal Technical School and its surrounding structures. The series investigates the material and symbolic traces of institutionalization, reflecting the island's transformation from an Italian naval base to a re-education camp, psychiatric hospital, and, more recently, a refugee hotspot. Through the lens of photography, the project engages with the physical remnants of confinement, exposing layers of memory and history embedded in the architecture. By transforming these spaces into sites of remembrance, the project challenges viewers to confront the island's dark legacy while contributing to broader discussions about the intersections of space, memory, and historical consciousness. Leros emerges not only as a physical location but as a palimpsest of trauma and resilience, where confinement and exile continue to inform its identity and collective memory.

INTRODUCTION

This photographic series explores Leros through its layered history of confinement and reform, with a particular focus on the Royal Technical School—a key landmark embodying the island's legacy of control. The name of the island of Leros is often employed as shorthand for the psychiatric institute which has been operating there since 1958. To a considerable extent, this "Leros" subsists in our collective unconscious as a guilty secret (Karydaki 2020). Over and above the psychiatric institution, this is due to an ongoing traumatic history of incarceration and exclusion which begins with the prewar Italian military garrison, includes the creation of the Royal Technical Schools in the post-civil war years, up to the use of the same buildings as places of exile and imprisonment under the Junta.

Leros reflects a complex palimpsest of control and exile, marked by cycles of occupation, institutionalization, and confinement. Historically impoverished, Leros

housed an Italian naval base in 1927, generating an economy dependent on military presence. After unification with Greece in 1947, it became the site of the Royal Technical School, a re-education camp for sons of leftist parents. This facility operated until the 1960s, training around 5,000 young men, many of whom were orphans, under strict ideological conditioning. The strain of Greece's Civil War soon led to the establishment of a psychiatric hospital in 1957, transforming Leros into a rural "Psychiatric Colony." Thousands of psychiatric patients and developmentally disabled individuals were sent to live under inhumane conditions, denied even the dignity of names. During the junta from 1967 to 1974, the island further housed political prisoners alongside psychiatric patients, separated by mere wire fences, creating haunting scenes of suffering. The infamous 16th pavilion, known as "the pavilion of the naked," emerged in 1985, embodying the island's harshest conditions of confinement. Gradual deinstitutionalization began in the 1990s, allowing patients some autonomy as they moved to free-standing homes. In 2016, Leros became a Regional Asylum Office and a refugee hot-spot has been established, adding a new layer of containment in its ongoing legacy of human confinement and control. As Neni Panourgia (2020) has put it, "I am speaking of a specific node which I call 'Foucault's node', the node of violent and enforced movements which bear the still oozing stigmata of barracks, reformatories, political prisons, camps of exile, psychiatric institutions, of emigration and of refugees. I speak of Leros".

2. THE ROYAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL OF LEROS

Between 1947 and 1950, the Queen's Fund operated fifty-four *paidopoleis* (children's homes) across Greece, caring for around 18,000 children during the Greek Civil War. These facilities were located in various cities, including Athens, Thessaloniki, and Patras, as well as on islands like Corfu and Rhodes. The *paidopoleis* utilized diverse spaces, such as abandoned army barracks, former hospitals, villas donated by wealthy Greeks, and even a casino. While officially housing orphans and abandoned children aged four to sixteen, some facilities also included older children, possibly partisans, who were under state care. Although many children were deemed "orphans," evidence suggests that some had living parents who were imprisoned or exiled leftists.

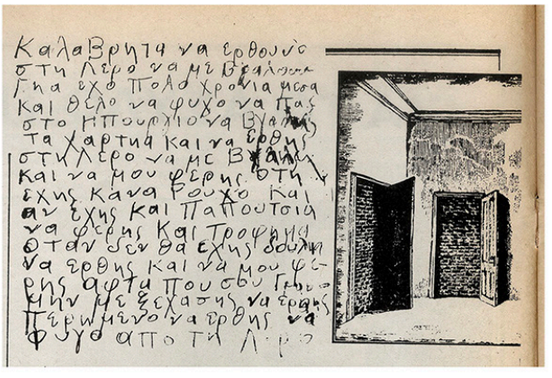
Living conditions within the *paidopoleis* varied significantly. Initially, many children lived in challenging environments with tents and limited food, bedding, and clothing. Conditions improved as the Queen's Fund acquired more resources, allowing for the development of age and gender specific *paidopoleis* to better meet the children's needs, though keeping siblings together was not always feasible. Each institution was managed by a director and assistant, with group leaders overseeing groups of twenty-five children, often organized by teachers or religious figures. Staff included doctors, nurses, cooks, and various support personnel. Modeled as "total institutions" (a concept discussed by Foucault and Goffman), the *paidopoleis* maintained a strict daily regimen similar to military life, featuring scouting activities, uniforms, and the use of corporal punishment.

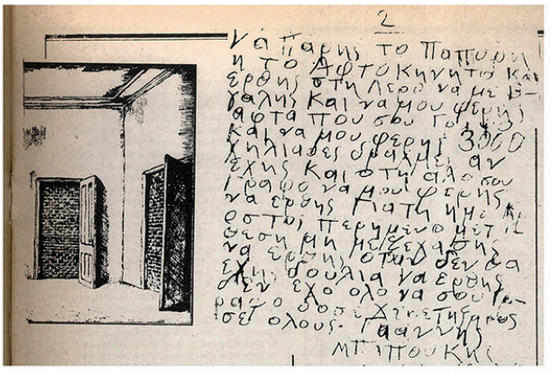
Life at the *paidopoleis* emphasized Greek nationalism and discipline. Children's daily routines included prayers, raising the Greek flag, exercising, attending school, and participating in work details, such as tending gardens and caring for animals. The *Paidopoli* of Saint Alexandros at Ziro in Epirus exemplified one of the most well-organized *paidopoleis*, supported by the Swiss Red Cross. With dormitories, classrooms,

The Royal Technical School of Leros


Ο ΘΕΟΣ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΘΕΟΣ ΓΙΑΤΙ ΕΚΑΝΕ ΤΟ ΨΩΣ


ΤΑ ΑΓΑΘΑ ΚΟΠΟΙΣ ΚΤΩΝΤΑΙ





dining halls, and healthcare facilities, it housed 250 children, mainly boys, who were divided into groups named after Civil War battle sites, adding a layer of militaristic symbolism. Children at Ziro wore standardized clothing, kept their few personal items in small wooden boxes, and rarely left the premises, only permitted to do so for supervised excursions or parades on national holidays.

In 1947, King Paul founded the Royal National Foundation to improve Greeks' moral, social, and educational standards, establishing royal technical schools in Crete, Kos, and Leros. These institutions were closely affiliated with the *paidopoleis* and supported by the Queen's Fund, reflecting the broader national mission of instilling discipline, patriotism, and technical skills among Greece's youth during this tumultuous period.

The Royal Technical School of Leros, the best-known of three such schools established by the Royal National Foundation, opened on March 2, 1949, shortly after the Dodecanese islands returned to Greece following Italian rule. The institution housed young leftists, many captured partisans, and boys aged fourteen to twenty from *paidopoleis* deemed the most difficult. Later, juvenile delinquents and repatriated refugee children from Eastern Europe were also sent there. Its purpose, dubbed a "bandits' children's home," was to "reeducate" and "rehabilitate" young men with communist affiliations, with the goal, as stated by King Paul, of integrating them back into the "national family" (Hourmouzios 1972: 215). Queen Frederica (1971: 102, 125) framed it as an "experimental reeducational" institution, offering an opportunity for these "young bandits" to transform into "useful members of the community". As Danforth and Van Boeschoten (2012) note, this "rehabilitation" mirrored the ideological reeducation practiced at the adult internment camp on Makronisos, notorious for extreme violence against those with suspected leftist beliefs (Voglis 2002: 101).

In March 1950, Lady Norton, the British ambassador's wife, noted that the Leros school aimed to "civilize" and "eradicate" the rebellious traits developed during the Civil War. She viewed welfare programs like this as politically motivated, designed to prevent communism's spread by offering hope of a decent life. The importance of persuading refugee children that they would fare better in Greece than in Eastern Europe was also emphasized, as discontent could fuel communist sentiments. Lady Norton remarked that this approach made Greece the only country where welfare was actively combatting "the cancer of bolshevism" (Danforth and Van Boeschoten 2012: 102).

The Royal Technical School of Leros operated in former Italian military barracks, training about 1,300 young men as carpenters, bricklayers, painters, tailors, and electricians. Unlike the *paidopoleis*, Leros was run by specially chosen Greek Army officers, with stricter discipline, poorer food, and a more restrictive and explicit ideological environment. Graduates received diplomas signed by King Paul, but their experiences with these credentials varied. Some found the diploma helpful in securing jobs through police connections, while others were stigmatized as leftists and faced discrimination.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, several *paidopoleis*—Saint Dimitrios in Thessaloniki, Saint Sofia in Volos, and Saint Andreas in Athens—offered better conditions. These urban *paidopoleis* were well-resourced, with good food and proximity to high schools, allowing children with strong academic performance to continue their education. The Queen's Fund took pride in the successes of graduates from these institutions. These successful stories highlighted the accomplishments of the *paidopoleis* system, contrasting sharply with the experience at the Royal Technical School of Leros, which was marked by ideological indoctrination and militarized discipline. In addition to fostering a sense of Greek nationalism, the staff at the *paidopoleis* aimed to assimilate children into middle-class Greek society, to "civilize" them from "backward" peasants into model citizens. Queen Frederica, after visiting the Royal Technical School of Leros, remarked that the children initially seemed "subhuman," likening them to "animals." She wrote, "The impression they made on me was that they were subhuman. They looked like animals" (1971, 102 quoted in Danforth and Van Boeschoten). This perspective reflected the broader goals of the Queen's Fund, which prioritized minimal education, sufficient only to reintegrate children into village life rather than prepare them for advanced opportunities. A Macedonian child who attended the Leros school recognized this

The Royal Technical School of Leros

intention, observing that the education aimed to teach only basic skills, ensuring they could simply “settle” back in their villages.

Following the end of the Greek Civil War in 1949, the Queen’s Fund began repatriating children from *paidopoleis* (state orphanages) back to their villages. While the initial plan was immediate repatriation, it was delayed until summer 1950 to allow the children to complete the school year. The repatriation policy reflected political concerns: only children from “nationally healthy” families could return, while those whose parents were leftists, in exile, or imprisoned were kept in the *paidopoleis* as “orphans” to shield them from communist influences (Vervenioti 2010). On June 3, 1950, the first group of children returned to their villages, and a celebratory ceremony in Athens honored the Greek armed forces

for “saving” these children from communism. Over the next decade, some refugee children who returned from Eastern Europe struggled to adapt to rural poverty and were sent back to *paidopoleis* or to the Royal Technical School of Leros, often encouraged by local authorities as part of a broader government effort to “reeducate” them. This initiative aimed to integrate the children into a “family atmosphere” and “restore” them as model Greek citizens free from “anti-national propaganda.” While some repatriated children saw this as a chance for a better life, others resisted, fearing they would lose their cultural identity.

Many repatriated refugee children sent to the Royal Technical School of Leros found the experience harsh and alienating. Macedonian children, in particular, described it as a “reformatory” focused on instilling Greek identity, where they were called “Bulgarians” and forced to publicly denounce their lives in Eastern Europe. Some children viewed their time on Leros as a “waste,” receiving an education inferior to that provided abroad. The government aimed to ease their resentment from the Civil War, with one child likening the experience to being put “in quarantine” to settle them emotionally.

Quoted in Danforth and Van Boeschoten (2012), the testimony of a young Macedonian reflects a complex, bittersweet experience at the Royal Technical School of Leros, highlighting both disappointment and adaptation. Initially, the speaker’s father sought to enroll him in a royal school in Athens to “make you a human being” while also instilling royalist values, though due to their time in Eastern Europe, they were sent to Leros instead. The school, he remembers, was filled with children from diverse backgrounds—orphans, street kids, and even juvenile delinquents—but it provided little in the way of meaningful education, leading the speaker to describe it as “a complete waste of time” (ibid: 144). Life on Leros was strict and restrictive, yet familiar, having been through similar experiences before (“We adapted quickly because we knew all about that kind of life” [ibid]). Although the school offered meals and activities like sports, the speaker found Greek customs foreign, especially the mandated religion classes and church visits, recalling how they puzzled over prayers and questioned the priest, eventually learning to blend in with Greek traditions. He felt that, despite their varied knowledge, they were held back (“People in Greece didn’t want us to get ahead” [ibid: 145]), noting that life in Eastern Europe had been comparatively “freer.” Although life on Leros was manageable, the overall sense was one of resignation, with limited opportunities and the dismal realization that leaving would only bring new challenges.

In another testimony (ibid: 10-171), the speaker recalls the harsh realities of life in the reeducation camp, beginning with the ever-present uncertainty about his family’s fate. Communication was tightly controlled and letters were being censored, so they avoided personal sentiments like “I miss you very much,” learning through the “rumor mill” that even minor complaints could lead to disciplinary scrutiny. The camp, with its fenced-in buildings and date trees which they had never seen before, was organized with “units” and “group leaders,” following a strict military-like regimen. Days began early with whistles, “exercises,” and standing at attention, yet they lacked basic amenities: There wasn’t enough water, and they often had to wash in the sea due to poor sewage facilities. Meals were meager, with breakfast just “a chunk of bread and a cup of tea,” and there was no money to buy anything else. Amid these conditions, he found solace in small accomplishments like time spent in the library or attending public school, noting that, despite the challenges, they were sometimes able to “exchange ideas” and “do different things.” At night, they had military-type bunks, with mattresses filled with

The Royal Technical School of Leros

“straw or wood shavings” and uniforms mostly old recycled military stuff. In moments of reflection, he admits, “I missed home,” but values the resilience and perspective gained from “being exposed to other people.” By 1950, after the war, 16,000 of the 18,000 children in *paidopoleis* returned to their villages, while the remaining 2,000—orphans or those with imprisoned parents—stayed in the remaining institutions.

3. THE PROJECT

The photographic series, captured in 2017 during a visit with a National Broadcasting Corporation (ERT) crew, aim to explore the layered history of Leros through its spaces of confinement and reform, particularly the Royal Technical School. The visit was part of a documentary project aimed at exploring Leros’ dark legacy, granting access to restricted and often forgotten areas, including the now-collapsing buildings of the Royal Technical School. Through these images, the project seeks to document the tangible remnants of the island’s past, revealing the layers of institutional control and the memories embedded within the decaying structures. The photographs do not merely depict abandoned spaces but evoke the lives and experiences of those who once occupied them, offering a poignant commentary on the intersections of space, memory, and history.

This project also holds a deeply personal resonance. My father was among those confined in one of the *paidopoleis* during the Greek Civil War. His so-called “reeducation” included a brutal incident where a guard shattered his pelvis with a kick, leaving lasting physical and emotional scars. This connection to Leros and its institutions is not just an abstract historical interest but an intergenerational reckoning with the traumas inflicted by these systems of confinement. The personal history intertwined with the broader narrative of Leros sharpens the focus of this work, transforming it into both a documentary of a collective past and an intimate exploration of familial memory.

Photography serves as a vital medium for engaging with the past, particularly in places like Leros, where history often remains hidden or suppressed. The Royal Technical School, once a site of ideological reeducation for children of leftist parents, now stands as a haunting relic of a time marked by political indoctrination and exclusion. The peeling walls, crumbling ceilings, and scattered debris bear silent witness to the lives that passed through these spaces, echoing their struggles and resilience. Each photograph captures not only the physical traces of the past but also the intangible weight of memory, urging viewers to confront the enduring legacy of systemic confinement and control.

The act of photographing such spaces transforms them into sites of remembrance, preserving their stories against the erasure of time. In Leros, the Royal Technical School is more than a ruin; it is a palimpsest of confinement, layered with the narratives of young men who lived under strict discipline and ideological conditioning. By visually documenting these spaces, the project underscores the importance of bearing witness to histories of marginalization and exile. The resulting images aim to be not simply records of decayed buildings but also portals into the complex and often painful histories they contain, challenging viewers to reflect on the social, political, and ethical dimensions of confinement and its impact on collective memory. In this sense, the project contributes to an ongoing dialogue about the role of space and photography in confronting difficult pasts and shaping historical consciousness.

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KEYWORDS
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Gazing
Metamorphosis
Storytelling
Pictorial Turn

THE BOUNDARIES OF BEING IN THE EYES OF FRANZ KAFKA'S METAMORPHOSIS: A CREATIVE ADAPTATION BY ESAD´S DIGITAL ARTS AND MULTIMEDIA STUDENTS FOR FILM, ANIMATION AND GAMING.

ABSTRACT

The presented artwork projects evoking the centenary of Franz Kafka´s death (1924-2024) were developed at the end of the academic year 2023/2024 by students from the Digital Arts and Multimedia degree programme at the College of Arts and Design (ESAD, Matosinhos - Portugal) in a collaborative initiative with the University of Design, Innovation and Technology (UDIT, Madrid - Spain). The event provided experimental approaches relating to storytelling and narrative forms for cinema, animation and gaming, seeking to understand, in the eyes of Age of disposable people (Rey Chow, 2010), to what extent, in the realm of moving pictures, is it possible to evoke the tension between belief and disbelief. Meaning, the depicted real and the constructed reality, wherein sentimental returns or sentimental fabulations, merge with the boundaries of being. In this particular, Franz Kafka's Metamorphosis stresses the need to debate film´s major role, and the daily uses as primal scenes, questioning mediation and immersive experience, focusing on memory´s literacy today.

In brief, the presented Artwork projects aim to foster critical thinking upon the Metamorphosis´ main protagonist Gregor Samsa, namely major existential concerns. After a century of history and cinema being seen as an Art form — which depicts space, time and causality — it is still the subject of constant evolution today.

INTRODUCTION

The presented Artwork projects, evoking the centenary of Franz Kafka´s death (1924-2024) were developed at the end of the academic year 2023/2024 by students from the Digital Arts and Multimedia degree programme at the College of Arts and Design (ESAD, Matosinhos - Portugal), in a collaborative initiative with the University of Design, Innovation

and Technology (UDIT, Madrid - Spain). The projects stress the need to debate film´s major role, and the daily uses as primal scenes, questioning mediation and immersive experience as memory´s literacy today. Over time, Kafka's seminal work, which deals with philosophical and existential questions related to identity, alienation and the absurdity of existence, has had the effect of inspiring directors, animators and screenwriters to explore these concepts within visual and narrative frameworks, given their symbolic significance.

The intersection of Franz Kafka's Metamorphosis with cinema, animation and gaming presents a profound study challenge of how literature can be adapted and reimagined across different media. The metamorphosis of Gregor Samsa, the protagonist who inexplicably turns into an insect, poses a unique challenge for artists to visually depict the indescribable, a task Kafka himself deemed impossible for the illustrators of his book. Thus, in the eyes of Age of disposable people (Rey Chow, 2021), the above-mentioned Artwork projects seek to perceive to what extent in the realm of moving pictures is it possible to evoke the tension between belief and disbelief. Meaning, the depicted real and the constructed reality, wherein sentimental returns or sentimental fabulations, merge with the boundaries of being. In other words, to what extent do images shape the design of landscape memory? The boundaries of being as a way of self-expression in the form of film, animation and gaming, intends to unveil the fear and anxiety of losing identity values. After a century of history and cinema being seen as an Art form — which depicts space, time and causality — it is still the subject of constant evolution today.

In conclusion, the presented Artwork projects not only look forward to depict dialogues, ellipses and amnesias evoking Kafka's Metamorphosis, but also foster critical thinking concerning experimental approaches relating to storytelling and narrative film forms; and consequently, impacts in the sense of belonging the sympathy of things among "disposable" people and spaces.

2. THE BOUNDARIES OF BEING IN THE EYES OF FRANZ KAFKA'S METAMORPHOSIS

Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis is a profound exploration of the human condition, mirroring the concept in Rey Chow's work, where marginalized groups are alienated and excluded from mainstream society, in a globalized world, delving into the existential crises that define modern life. Kafka's novella presents, precisely, the transformation of Gregor Samsa into an insect. As a metaphor for alienation and seeking for identity amidst the limits of the absurdities of existence.

Therefore, Kafka's narrative challenges readers to consider the fluidity of identity and the societal pressures that shape our perceptions of self and others. Although the author presents a cautionary tale that highlights the risks and existential dread that can accompany drastic change, the Spanish philosopher Eugénio Trías, on the other hand, provides another framework for understanding the boundaries dimensions of the human existence within which transformation can be ethically navigated, offering a sense of hope and direction. Trías' philosophy, rooted in the concept of limit, posits that human existence is perpetually on the threshold between the known and the unknown, the finite and the infinite, the physical and the metaphysical (Trías, 1991). This liminal state is where humans encounter the ethical imperative, a call to moral autonomy within the constraints of their limited condition (Trías, 1999; 2000). Kafka's Metamorphosis, on the other hand,

delves into the sudden and inexplicable transformation of Gregor Samsa into an insect, symbolizing the alienation and absurdity of modern life. Both works grapple with the theme of transformation, but while Trías sees it as a boundary to be navigated, Kafka portrays it as an irreversible and isolating metamorphosis.

The “Ethics of the limit” in Eugenio Trías, suggests that true happiness and ethical living arise from recognizing and respecting the inherent limitations of human existence. It is through the practical application of reason and the embrace of symbolic rationality that one can reconcile the tensions between heteronomy and moral autonomy, finding fulfilment not in utopian ideals but in the measured reality of human limitations (Trías 2000). Kafka’s protagonist, however, is thrust into a transformation that is both physical and existential, leading to a profound disconnection from his previous human life and relationships. The metamorphosis serves as a stark commentary on the loss of identity and the dehumanizing forces at play in society. When these two perspectives intersect, a complex narrative emerges. It is one that acknowledges the transformative potential of the human condition as seen through Trías’ lens, while also recognizing the often-tragic consequences of such transformations as depicted by Kafka. The ethical imperative in Trías’ philosophy could be interpreted as a call to adapt and evolve within the confines of our reality, whereas Kafka’s Metamorphosis may be seen as a warning of the potential for alienation and loss of self in the face of uncontrollable change.

3. THE ARTWORK PROJECTS

At the turn of twenty first century, the term “viewer” is adopted once she or he is the one to take participation on the cross-modal events reading and viewing characterized by a gradual and dynamic filmic narrative process: establishing a relationship between narrator, narrative and narrate, the viewer “reconstructs” the filmic narrative through the principles of narration and the film forms applied. Originally, interpretation was fully understood as a verbal process. In the course of time, the term has shifted involving any art form that building, inferring and delivering meaning allows to comprehend Ars intelligendi (the art of understanding) and to interpret Ars explicandi (the art of explanation) filmic narrative.

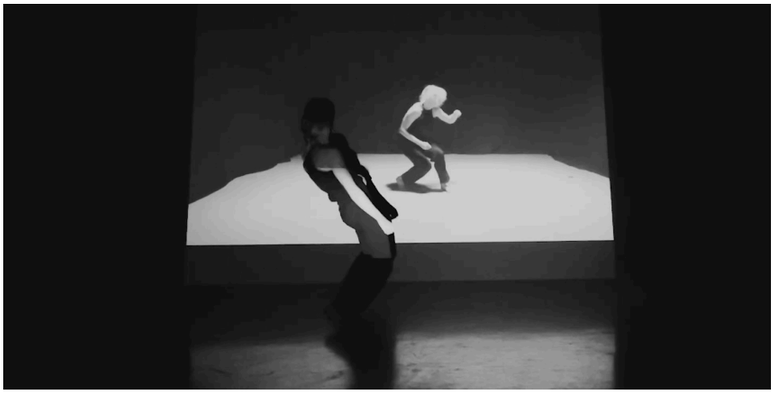
The selected Artwork projects focus mainly on storytelling, both linear and nonlinear narrative, stressing self-expression through pictures, time and causality, unfolding two major cinematic dimensions - the real and constructed reality - evoking the boundaries of being: Echoes of Solitude; Meet Me; Inhibit; I Have Become Nothing.

Thus, the main goals placed to be attained, and expected conclusions to be critically observed, concerning the above-mentioned student projects, is based on the following leit-motif based on research built-criteria: to what extent it is possible to understand the concept of authenticity and illusion regarding images shaping the design of landscape memory, towards storytelling and cinema seen as an Art form?

In sum, and in this particular, Franz Kafka’s Metamorphosis emphasizes the importance of discussing the significant role of film, and the daily uses as primal scenes questioning mediation and immersive experience focusing on memory´s literacy today. The presented Artwork projects focus on viewers perception and ability to decode narrative discourse, comprehending visual representation towards “reading”, “viewing” and “interpreting” process.

Figure 1/2/3.
Echoes of Solitude (2024).
Screenshots from the short film
by André Peneda, Christoph Wanderer,
Diogo Cervantes, Pedro Carvalho.

Figure 4/5/6.
Meet Me (2024).
Screenshots from a video art
from Zofia Bochenska.



Evoking Kafka's Metamorphosis, a mind map was developed along with students at the launch of the pre-production proposal project. In order to deliver a script to be produced and directed in short-term, a collaborative in-class work was performed, based on the following dichotomous key concepts observed, as follows: Absurdity; Alienation; Absence of conscience; Transformation; Identity; Family relationships; Oppression and Loneliness. On the one hand, in the eyes of Echoes of Solitude, a short-fiction narrative produced and directed by students André Peneda, Christoph Wanderer, Diogo Cervantes and Pedro Carvalho, evokes Kafka's Metamorphosis main protagonist Gregor Samsa´s anxieties. It means, by approaching his greatest fears to reach out for help, settling visually speaking with giving the character white eyes, Echoes of Solitude intends to address both metaphorically and visually storytelling, in particular how the character is unable to see a way out of the predicament he finds himself in: loneliness, transformation, isolation. The sound design aimed to create sensory experience for the viewer, stressing the above-mentioned predicament the main character finds himself in, allowing to become more immersed in a way that is relevant to experience the narrative memory attachment.

On the other hand, the Artwork project entitled Meet Me, produced and directed by student Zofia Bochenska, evokes Kafkas' Metamorphosis sentimental fabulations in the eyes of exploring video art narrative boundaries, centering viewer's experience on Kafka's Metamorphosis main protagonist Gregor Samsa´s anxieties. This creates a sensorial experience, merging down image and choreographic movements aligned with an inner-state of mind based on the following inner-thoughts: Alienation; Absence of conscience; Transformation. Meet Me questions the boundaries between the real and the constructed reality. That takes place addressing an elliptical narrative structure, wherein sentimental

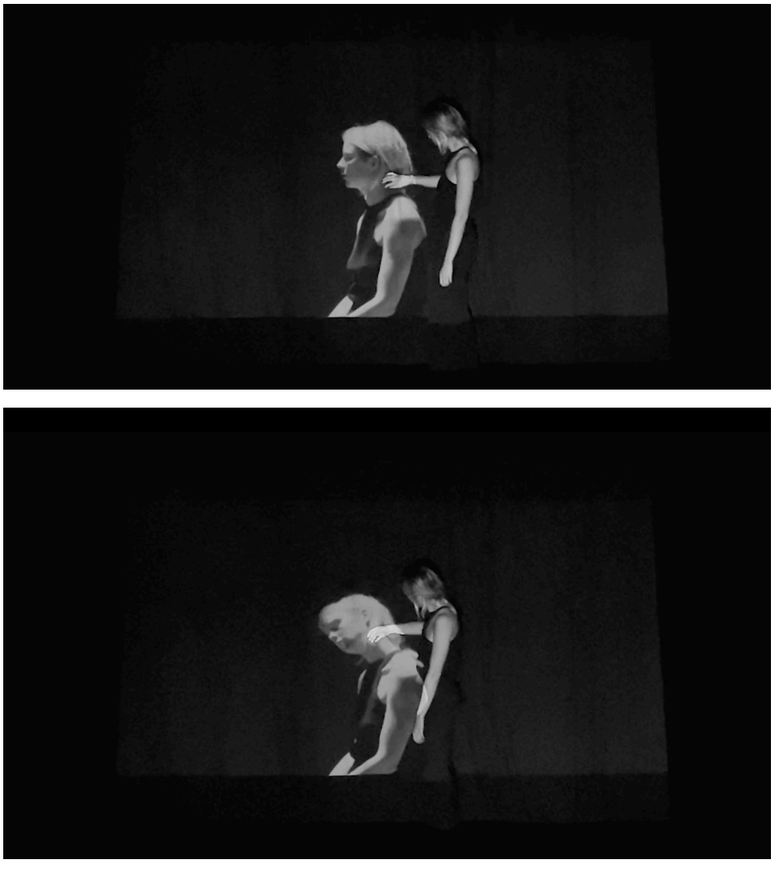


Figure 7/8.
Meet Me (2024).
Screenshots from a video art
from Zofia Bochenska.

Figure 09/10/11.
Inhibit / Repressão (2024).
Screenshots from
the short animated film
by Érica Amorim, Guilherme Gomes,
Mara Silva.

returns or sentimental fabulations are conveyed through an immersive filmic experience, memory and identity. In brief, Echoes of Solitude and Meet Me focus the viewer's attention on "reading", "viewing", and "interpreting", based on film-viewing experience.

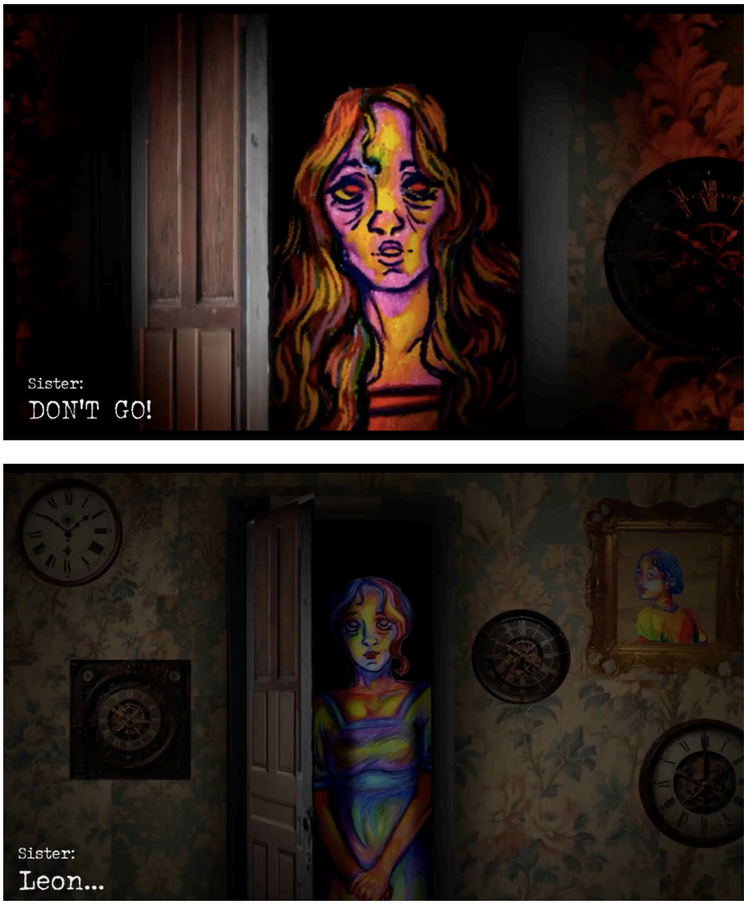
On the counterpart, the art of animation, with its ability to transcend the limits of realism, offers a unique platform for exploring complex and abstract themes, most of which are bound up with philosophical and existential issues. In the animated short film Inhibit, produced and directed by students Érica Amorim, Guilherme Gomes, Mara Silva, the theme is centred on the concept of alienation and repression, represented by a character who clamps his mouth shut as a sign of his inability to live freely for fear of not being accepted by others. According to the students' perspective, the idealisation of repression was portrayed as a psychological concept that refers to the suppression of thoughts, feelings or desires that are considered unacceptable or threatening. In the social context, repression can manifest itself as the suppression of freedom of expression and the imposition of silence. In Inhibit, the act of stapling one's own mouth results in a visceral image that symbolises this suppression, representing the impossibility of speaking or expressing oneself freely. The artwork project focused its visual and narrative exploration on metaphors, shapes and movements that intensified the feeling of suffocation, silencing and alienation.

Expanding the capabilities of animation, the project I Have Become Nothing is presented as a short psychological horror game, conceived by students Michaela Gripenstam, Lourenço Silva, Normando Rabelo, Raquel Gouveia, which evokes Kafka's Metamorphosis through an immersive, non-linear narrative. This 2D game allows players to become Leon Kaufmann, the game's protagonist, who sets off on a journey, facing harsh realities of physical

Figure 12/13.
I Became Nothing (2024).
Screenshots from the video game by Michaela Gripenstam, Lourenço Silva, Normando Rabelo, Raquel Gouveia.

Figure 14/15/16.
I Became Nothing (2024).
Screenshots from the video game
by Michaela Gripenstam,
Lourenço Silva, Normando Rabelo,
Raquel Gouveia.

Figure 17/18.
I Became Nothing (2024).
Screenshots from the video game
by Michaela Gripenstam,
Lourenço Silva, Normando Rabelo,
Raquel Gouveia.



and existential transformation, experiencing his reactions to his new and unwanted form of existence. The game consists of 3 chapters, each with unique controls, objectives and art styles that emphasise the character's transformation, as well as his relationships with the different members of his family. In I Have Become Nothing the non-linear narrative enables players to explore the story at their own pace, while letting them explore different aspects of the story and make choices that influence the course of events. In addition, the combination of different artistic styles and mechanics enriches the experience, making it more immersive and emotionally impactful. This approach enhances the experience of psychological horror, by immersing players in a disconnected and disturbing narrative, allowing them to express themselves and experiment being in the protagonist's shoes.

These last two projects allow us to realise that the intersection between animation and Kafka's Metamorphosis proved to be fertile ground for artistic and academic exploration, decoding narrative discourse and understanding visual representation in the sense of the process of reading, visualising and interpreting. In Inhibit, it was possible to bring complex metaphors to life through a personal perspective on repression and alienation. As for I have become Nothing, interactivity provided a deeper connection between the player and the narrative, allowing for a more personal and introspective exploration of the themes addressed by Kafka. This crossover not only enriched the students' understanding of Kafka's work, but also allowed them to explore storytelling approaches and test the limits of animation and game design as an expressive and meaningful art form, capable of creating a rich and emotionally resonant experience.

4. CONCLUSION

In brief, the presented Artwork projects evoking the centenary of Franz Kafka´s death (1924-2024) intend to shed light on the need of debating filmic object´s post-mediation and its immersive experience today. It becomes evident that pictorial turn is understood as an age of simulation (W. J. T. Mitchell, 1992). The moving image, through its dynamic interlacing of space, time, and causality, has not only transformed the landscape of memory but also redefined the contours of identity and self-expression. As cinema continues to evolve as an art form, it persistently challenges and reshapes our perceptions of existence and authenticity.

In the margins of the age of global visibility, the presented Artwork projects seek to perceive to what extent in the realm of visual representation is it possible to observe the frontiers of believing. By its turn, the depicted real and the constructed reality are influenced by Kafka´s existential inquiries, meeting sentimental returns or sentimental fabulations. These lead to the boundaries of being, memory and identity. His exploration of self-expression, alienation, and the absurdity of existence resonates deeply within the cinematic realm, inspiring a myriad of interpretations and adaptations. These artistic endeavours, which often draw upon Kafka's Metamorphosis, serve not only as a reflection of the human condition but also as a catalyst for critical discourse on narrative experimentation and the role of memory and identity in a rapidly changing world. Furthermore, the projects mentioned, such as Echoes of Solitude and Meet Me, underscore the significance of the viewer's engagement with the filmic text. The act of 'reading,' 'viewing,' and 'interpreting' becomes a participatory experience, where the audience is invited to navigate the complexities of narrative forms and the nuances of visual language. This engagement is particularly poignant in Inhibit, where the animation medium allows for a vivid and personal manifestation of metaphorical concepts. As for I have become Nothing interactivity provided a deeper connection between the player and the narrative, facilitating a more personal and introspective exploration of themes addressed by Kafka. Such cross-media adaptations not only enhance comprehension of Kafka's oeuvre but also push the boundaries of how stories can be told and experienced in the digital age. In the eyes of Age of disposable people (Chow, 2021), this dialogue is crucial in understanding the impact of visual media on our collective and individual identities.

In conclusion, the intersection of film, animation, and gaming with philosophical and existential themes presents a rich opportunity for exploration. It is a domain where the sentimental fabrications of being are continuously woven and unwoven, revealing the fears, anxieties, and aspirations of a society in flux. As we navigate this ever-evolving landscape, the questions posed by Kafka and the challenges presented by the medium of moving pictures remain as pertinent as ever, urging us to trigger critical thinking on the essence of our being and the realities we construct and seek to comprehend.

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KEYWORDS
Education
Design
Creativity
Creative Writing
Tool

VISUAL ESSAY

TOOL´N TELL: VISUAL ESSAY ON CREATIVE WRITING.

ABSTRACT

The present visual essay addresses tools of work in the educational domain, specifically within the realm of creative writing. It assumes a metaphorical approach based on an analogy between tools from different fields of activity: it draws a parallel between the operational means of workshop construction and the conceptual means of writing. In this context, ideas such as order, discipline, and organization are still regarded as opposites to creative work. Paradoxically, it is common for the tools, means, and tasks to be perceived by those who use them more as obstacles rather than facilitators. Added to this are stigmas and misconceptions about words, writing, text, and, by extension, books, and authors, whose deconstruction is a workshop task. It is in this sense that the present work is oriented, aiming to create proactive conditions for raising awareness, exploration, reflection, and analysis, seeking to requalify the experience, perception, and self-knowledge. Specifically, it involves recoding a message of awareness to encourage personal and interpersonal engagement in writing, as well as implementing conceptual tools for guided experimental activities.

INTRODUCTION

In pragmatic terms, the workshop is a particularly fertile space for highly programmed tasks, but also for creative wandering, seeking—and finding, even without searching—bridges, connections, and possibilities. The analogy between tools related to physical labor and conceptual work is nothing new. However, we believe it is necessary to revisit it to dispel stigmas. Two examples: a) countering the idea that writing is purely a matter of thought, aiming to avoid the risk of mental and psychological overload and thus mitigate its harmful effects; b) promoting the idea that the writing workshop, like workshops for metalworking, carpentry, or auto repairs, shares the need for discipline and the concatenation of procedures to solve concrete problems.

In the words of David Lodge, “As spiders make webs and beavers build dams, so we tell stories.” (2002: 15). Interested in the relationship between human consciousness

and literature—specifically, the novel—Lodge examines António Damásio's proposals regarding consciousness as self-awareness, the extended consciousness inherent to the autobiographical self. In the taxonomy proposed by the neuroscientist for levels of consciousness, language only comes into play at the highest level: "Language — that is, words and sentences — is a translation of something else, a conversion from nonlinguistic images which stand for entities, events, relationships, and inferences." (Damásio, 2012: 107). Returning to Lodge's statement, it illustrates and confirms the human impulse for narrative, and more importantly in our context, frames this predisposition from the perspective of construction, of an activity, of a craft.

WORK, RELAXATION, DON'T THINK — these are the three fundamental principles for writing, according to Ray Bradbury (1996: 147). The author expresses his conviction that "For if one works, one finally relaxes and stops thinking. True creation occurs then and only then"; he argues: "The sculptor does not consciously have to tell his fingers what to do. The surgeon does not tell his scalpel what to do. Nor does the athlete advise his body. Suddenly, a natural rhythm is achieved". Stephen King (2012) suggests that writers construct their toolbox so that "instead of looking at a hard job and getting discouraged, you will perhaps seize the correct tool and get immediately to work". (2012: 82). This is because, according to the writer, "good writing is also about making good choices when it comes to picking the tools you plan to work with." (2012: 93).

BUT WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Colum McCann, warning young writers about the "black dogs of the mind," suggests that writing should avoid closure and seek openness: "Write so the world doesn't close in upon you. Write so you eventually open new directions." (2017: 144)

OPENING, DRILLING: SOME TOOLS DO THIS IN A MATTER OF MINUTES.

Paul Auster recounts a story from a precarious episode in his life, as a night telephone operator in the New York Times office in Paris: "The phone didn't ring very often, and mostly I just sat at a desk, working on poems or reading books. One night, however, there was a frantic call from a reporter stationed somewhere in Europe. "Sinyavsky's defected," she said. "What should I do?" I had no idea what she should do, but since none of the editors was around at that hour, I figured I had to tell her something. "Follow the story," I said. "Go _where you have to go, do what you have to do, but stick with the story, come hell or high water." She thanked me profusely for the advice and then hung up." (1997: 69).

HOLD IT, DON'T LET GO: SOME TOOLS MULTIPLY A SMALL FORCE.

These two analogical examples should suffice to suggest the sense and potential of the exercise we propose to develop from these images. They form a mosaic, a texture. Their order in this document is merely conventional—they are the first collection to be expanded and systematized collaboratively. Their application involves contextually associating exercises ranging from fieldwork to storytelling, from life stories to character construction. Writers operate in an elliptical space, taking on alternating, repeated, sequenced, and resumed tasks: writing, rewriting, cutting, eliminating, recovering,






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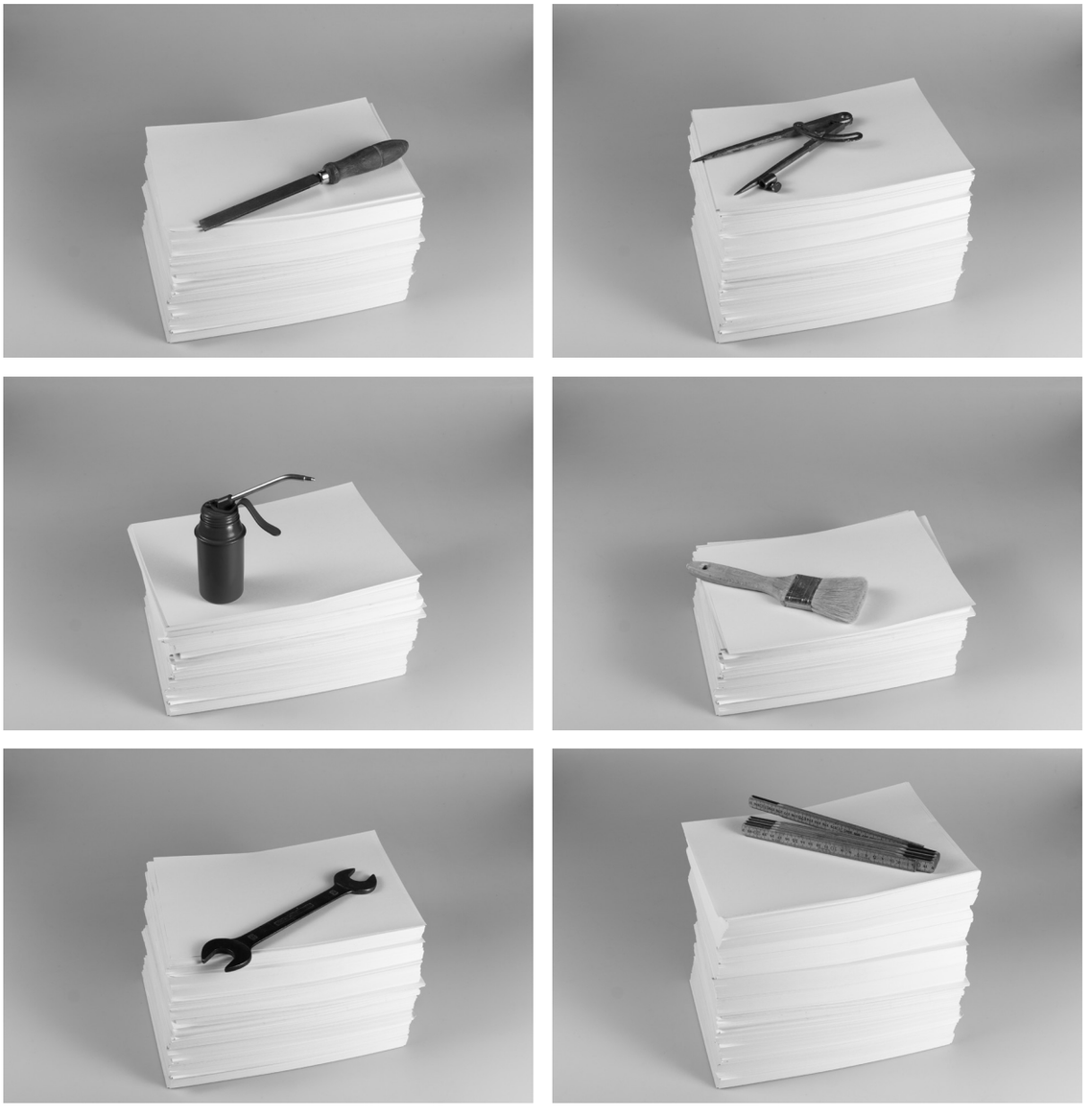

researching, and persisting; for those who write, verbs play the structuring role in language that we recognize them for. However, here we seek to draw attention to action verbs, to experimentation, and inherent procedures.

James Friel outlines a set of suggestions for implementing rewriting: «Be kind, be Patient, be Calm, be Colourful, be Versatile, be Curious, be Heard, be Flexible, be Cautious, be Meticulous, be Dependent, be Independent, be Stealthy, be Intent, be Subtle, be consistent, be Heard (again), be Vigorous, be Mean, be Restrained, be Meticulous, be Watchful, be Precise, be Active, be Decisive, be Done (2001: 261-269). In this context, we seek a proactive foundation for work, an attractor of theoretical-practical exercises on creative writing. Through these images, we aim to open a dialogical space around writing activities, and the intra- and interpersonal relationship with physical and conceptual tools. The seemingly prescriptive nature of this proposal helps us start precisely with the idea of prescription to deconstruct established beliefs; in other words, it begins with a negative task, retreating to a situation that allows for moving forward with greater awareness and benefit. One of the “thoughts and habits not conducive to the work”... “requiring specific tools or equipment to do the work” (2023:139). Although the illustrated tools bring their specificity, we do not intend to limit the activity to impersonal techniques, but rather to problematize starting from this simplification.

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KEYWORDS
Artzine

noop_090-ath

ABSTRACT

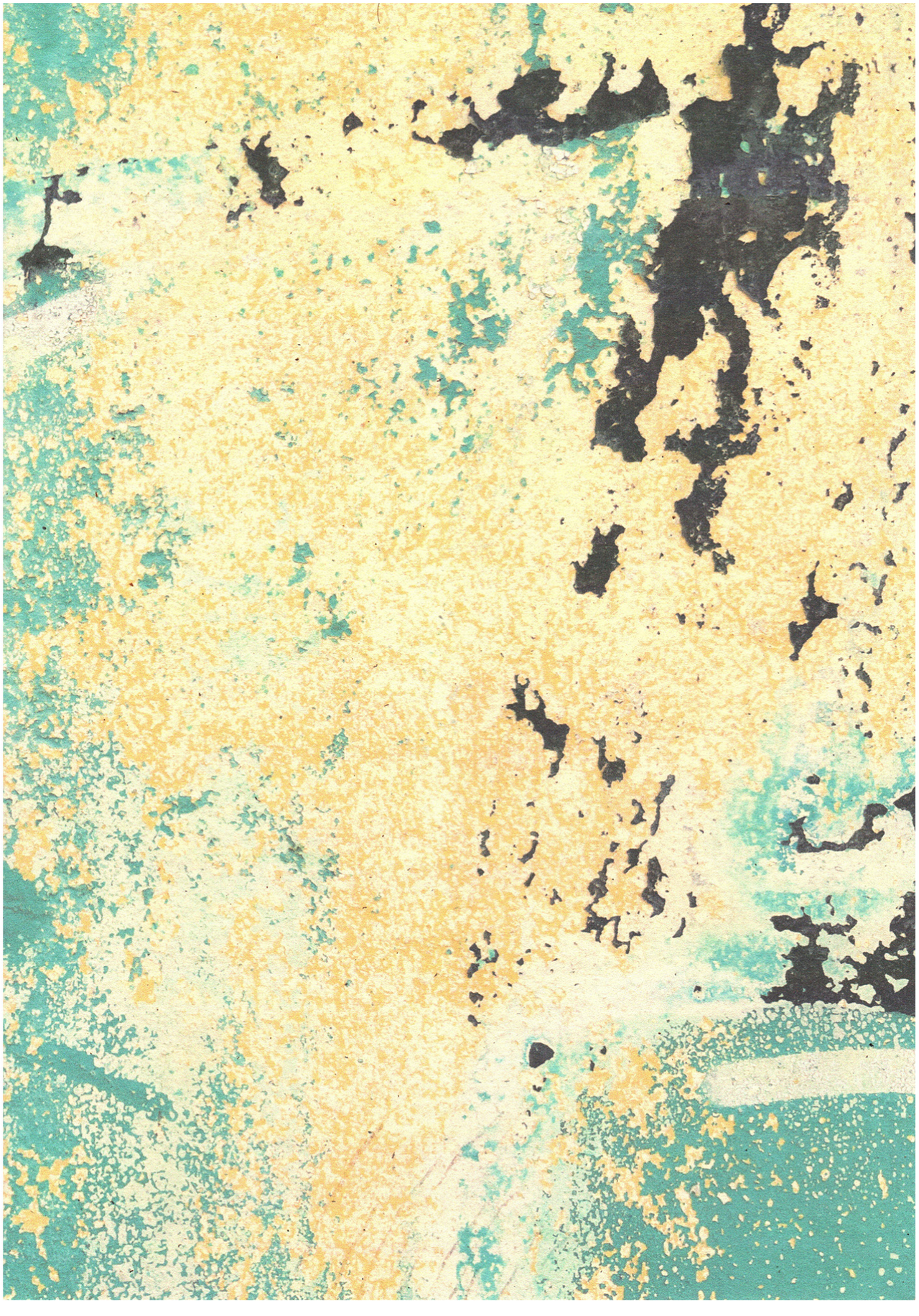
An artzine is a self-published, limited-edition creative outlet rooted in DIY culture, embracing experimental approaches to content and design. It defies traditional publishing norms throug unique visual styles, reflecting the vision of its creators. ‘noop_090-ath’ exemplifies the artzine ssence by exploring 1990s nostalgia through a blend of urban photography, poetry, and reflectiv texts. It captures subcultural expression and societal critique with raw aesthetics and intimate narratives. By bridging past and present, ‘noop_090-ath’ invites readers to engage interactively, highlighting the artzine’s role in amplifying alternative voices, fostering artistic freedom, and preserving cultural memory.

DESCRIPTION

An artzine—short for “art magazine” or “art fanzine”—is a self-published, often limited-edition publication that acts as an intimate and highly personalized creative outlet for artists, writers, and cultural enthusiasts. Rooted in DIY (do-it-yourself) culture, artzines embrace an experimental, independent approach to both content and design. Unlike mainstream publications, artzines defy traditional publishing norms, often opting for handmade or unconventional visual styles that reflect the unique personalities, ideologies, and artistic visions of their creators. They are not bound by commercial constraints or editorial gatekeepers, making them a dynamic space for self-expression and the exploration of alternative narratives.

At the heart of this subculture is the commitment to authenticity and originality. Artzines are often produced in small batches, creating a sense of exclusivity and intimacy. The tactile nature of their creation—whether through hand-collaged covers, offset printing, or digital manipulation—enhances the personal connection between the creator and the reader. They often blur the lines between art and literature, combining photography, drawing, poetry, essays, and other forms of expression to craft a multidimensional experience. These publications exist outside the boundaries of mass media, allowing for greater freedom and diversity in content, from raw political statements to personal explorations of identity and memory.

“noop_090-ath” is a perfect embodiment of the artzine ethos. It encapsulates the essence of an artzine through its dedication to a specific theme: the vivid and sometimes raw nostalgia of the 1990s. By drawing inspiration from the urban landscape,



cultural shifts, and societal movements of the time, it brings together a collection of works that reflect both the energy and the imperfections of that era. Artzines, like “noop_090-ath,” tend to evoke a deep sense of time and place, pulling readers into the emotional undercurrent of the past while encouraging them to reflect on how it shapes the present.

The inclusion of urban photography is one of the standout features of “noop_090-ath.” Its gritty, street-level imagery—featuring graffiti-covered walls, worn-out cityscapes, and fleeting moments of daily life—speaks to the DIY spirit of the zine culture that emerged from the punk and underground art movements of the late 20th century. These movements were not just about aesthetics but also about personal expression and social commentary, often taking aim at mainstream culture and corporate hegemony. In this sense, “noop_090-ath” aligns with these earlier movements, both in form and function, while offering a fresh lens through which to view a pivotal decade in recent history.

But what truly sets “noop_090-ath” apart is its blending of diverse mediums—urban photography, poetry, reflective essays, and other creative writing forms—into a cohesive, sensory-rich experience. This fusion of text and imagery turns the zine into a multi-dimensional exploration of memory, identity, and the passage of time. The inclusion of poetry and reflective writing adds a layer of intimacy to the visual content, guiding the reader through the emotional landscapes of the 1990s while inviting them to reflect on their own personal experiences. Each issue becomes not just a document of the past but a living, breathing conversation between the creator and the audience.

At its core, “noop_090-ath” does more than celebrate the raw energy of the 1990s; it also fosters contemporary perspectives, building a bridge between the past and the present. The zine format itself encourages a kind of participatory engagement that is less about passive consumption and more about an interactive experience. Readers are invited to bring their own interpretations, insights, and memories to the content, transforming the zine into a dialogue rather than a monologue. This participatory nature is one of the defining qualities of artzines, which often seek to involve their audience in a deeper way than traditional publications.

The zine’s focus on themes of nostalgia and memory speaks to a broader cultural phenomenon: the way in which the past continually shapes our understanding of the present. The 1990s, with its distinctive cultural touchstones—grunge music, early internet culture, the rise of alternative subcultures—are ripe for revisiting in this format. But rather than simply looking back, “noop_090-ath” invites readers to engage with these memories in a way that is personal and transformative, allowing for a collective exploration of identity, place, and time.

In summary, “noop_090-ath” stands as a powerful testament to the enduring relevance of the artzine tradition. It amplifies alternative voices and nurtures artistic freedom, creating a space where the boundaries of genre and medium are constantly pushed. Through its rich visual storytelling, its evocative writing, and its celebration of the 1990s, it not only preserves the spirit of artistic exploration but also challenges readers to reflect on the past while considering how it resonates in the present. In this way, “noop_090-ath” embodies the best qualities of the artzine: a deeply personal, yet universally resonant, exploration of cultural memory and self-expression.

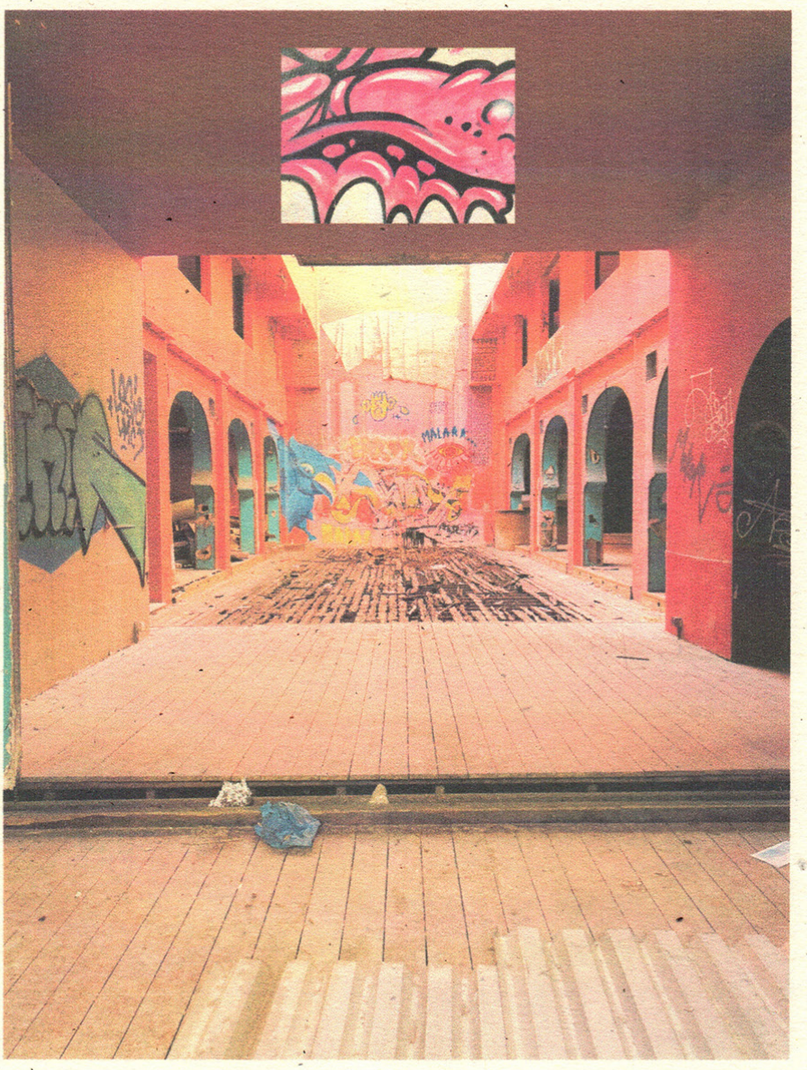
Sul sul!

Type rosebud for unlimited happiness.

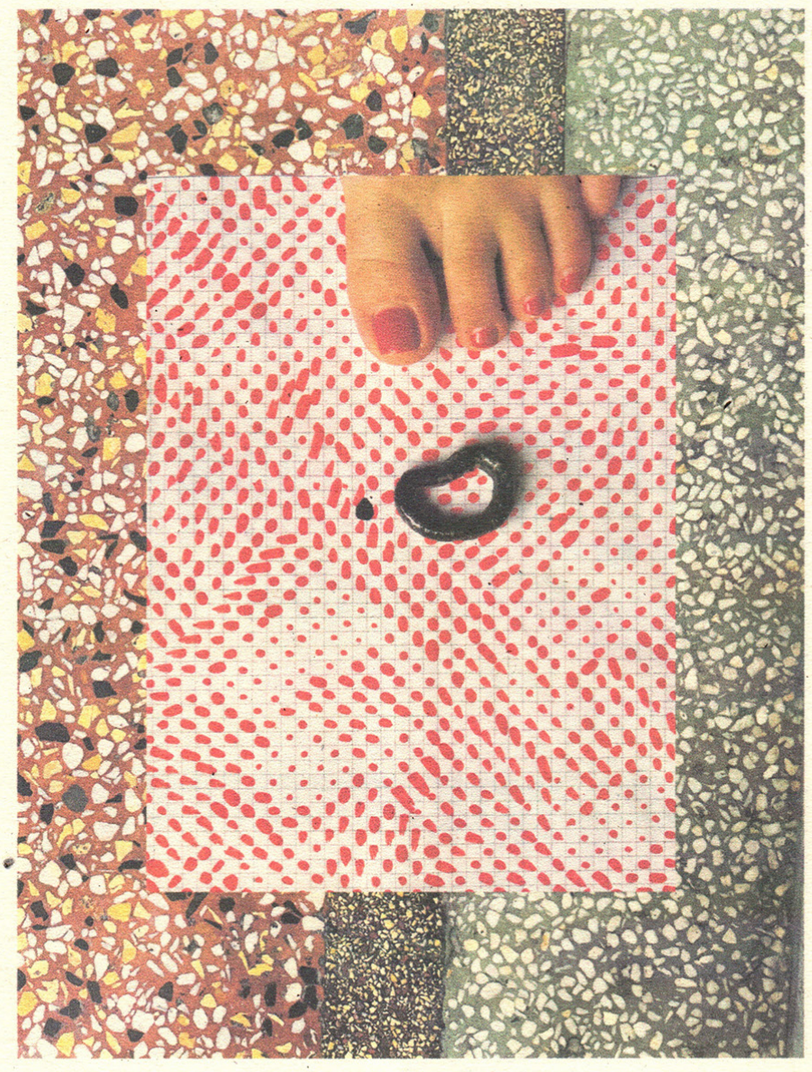
oh feebee lay

ο ηλεκτρισμός φτάνει
στην καινούρια πολιτεία
οι καμπάνες χτυπούν
ηλεκτρικά
στα προάστια δάση
από τηλεγραφόξυλα

τώρα καθιερώνονται
νυχτερινοί περίπατοι κλέφτες
αδέσποτοι ερωτευμένοι
σε πάρκα του συρμού αυτόφωτων
αστέρων πυρακτώσεως
και τζαζ

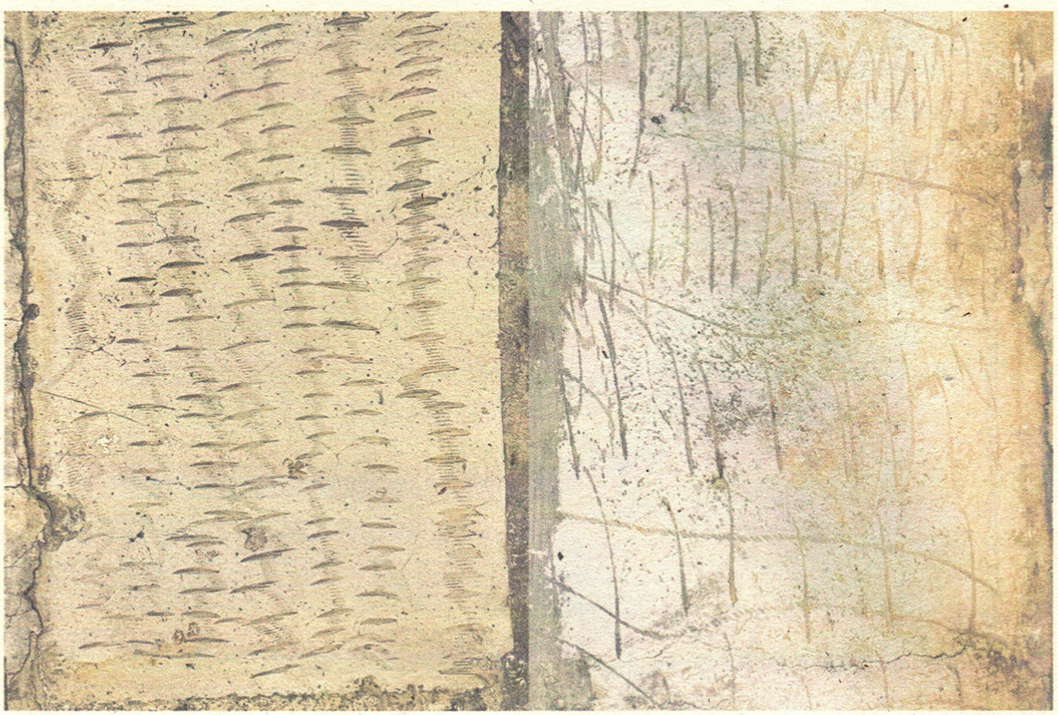


Pepper spray in the eye. Fuchsia hair and checkered miniskirt at the toilettes of the corporate building. I fall forever from the window of the top floor.



Looking for a bed & breakfast at Sonoma Valley to relive my childhood.

Please DM me.

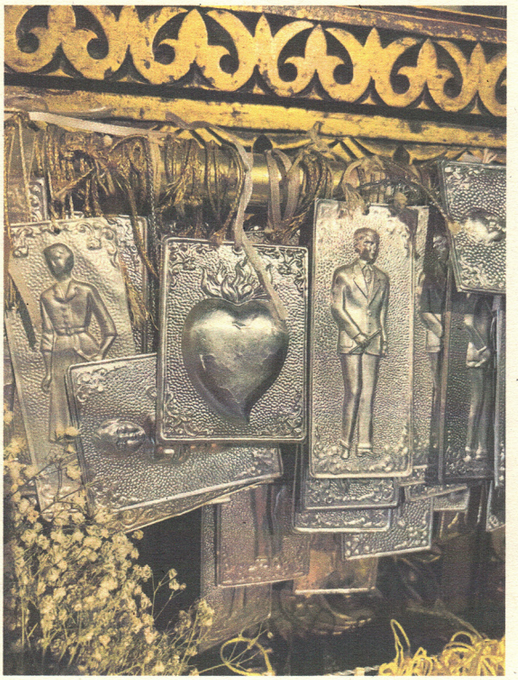


atohteh: I really have to pee

Create a new terrain. Less mountain. More fun.

Kids being parents, playing (with) god.
The river flows.
The merchants arrive.
A city is being born.
An animal throws its' pants
and guides me through technology.

Ονειρεύομαι με λέξεις. Οι λέξεις γλιστρούν επάνω στην άσπρη λάκα και αναπηδούν στα ασπρόμαυρα πλακάκια, ένα πρωινό του ενενήντα, καθώς ο ήλιος ανατέλλει μεγαλόπρεπος στον καθοδικό σωλήνα.



Live life. Go in shadow.

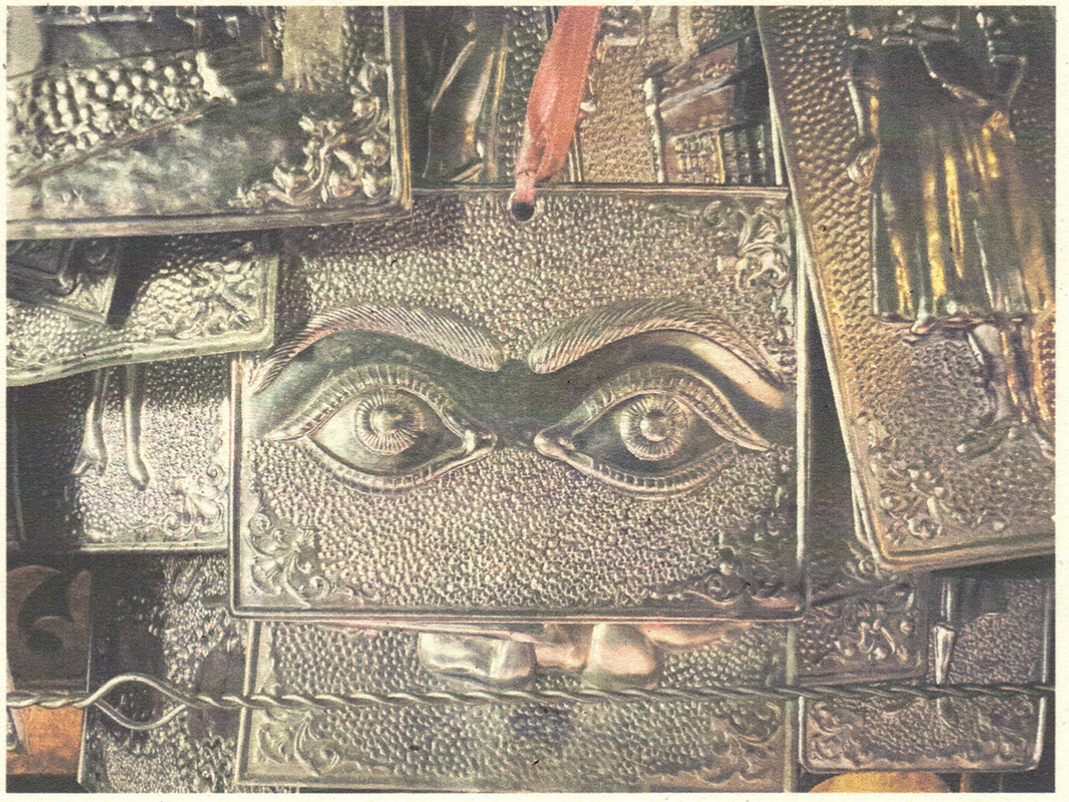
Come apart. Go dark.

Από πόλη
σε πόλη παλιά
με κανάλια
ανάερα κι άλλοτε
πλημμυρισμένα
από βροχή και κατοίκους
του ενενήντα

Κλείδωσα τον μπάτλερ στο ψυγείο γιατί η αθόρυβη παρουσία του με τρομοκρατεί.

Θα σε τιμωρήσω πολύ αυστηρά στο όνομα του φεγγαριού.

Thank you Chris Cunningham, Mark Romanek, Stéphane Sednaoui, Sophie Muller, Baillie Walsh, Melodie McDaniel, Walter Stern for nurturing the artist I am today. Fuck academia.



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KEYWORDS
Design
Product Design
Industrial Design
Higher Design Education
Product Design Practice

MAPPING PRIORITIES IN PRODUCT DESIGN: STUDENT INSIGHTS ON COURSE CONTENT AND PROFESSIONAL RELEVANCE.

ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

This article presents findings from the 2023 survey titled “Study Futures for Product Design,” conducted by three faculty members from ESAD College of Art and Design. The survey aimed to gather and analyse insights from one hundred undergraduate and postgraduate students regarding their experiences and expectations within their product design education. This research was motivated by ongoing observations within ESAD’s Master’s program in Product Design, as well as contemporary studies on design education for the 21st century by scholars such as Michael Meyer and Don Norman. The findings underscore the evolving nature of design education, particularly the need for curricular adjustments that align more closely with the demands of the modern professional landscape. By emphasising student feedback, this article advocates for a reevaluation of current pedagogical approaches, aiming to better prepare students for the diverse and dynamic challenges of the design industry. The study calls for a shift in focus towards teaching content that enhances relevance to professional applications and optimises employment opportunities in the field of product design and related industrial specialisations.

INTRODUCTION

As Meyer and Norman (2019) noted, *“Designers are entrusted with increasingly complex and impactful challenges.*” This article addresses these challenges by exploring the future needs of product designers and discussing the emerging skills required to perform effectively within the Fourth Industrial Revolution[1]. In response, educators, particularly within the polytechnic system, must observe these trends, analyse them, and propose

1 “Fourth Industrial Revolution”, “4IR”, or “Industry 4.0” is a buzzword and neologism describing rapid technological advancement in the 21st century.

new educational content that prepares future generations of product designers for the evolving demands of the design market and industry.

As early as 1971, designer, educator, and author Victor Papanek stated; *"Education for designers is based on learning skills, nourishing talents, understanding the concepts and theories that inform the field, and, finally, acquiring a philosophy. It is unfortunate that our design schools proceed from wrong assumptions. The skills we teach are too often related to processes and working methods of an age that has ended."* (Papanek, V. J. - 1971).

Meyer and Norman further assert; *"When we examine what and how our system teaches young designers, we discover that the most valuable elements of the designer's perspective and process are seldom taught. Instead, some designers grow beyond their education through their experience working in industry, essentially learning by accident. Many design programs still maintain an insular perspective and an inefficient mechanism of tacit knowledge transfer."* (Meyer, M. W., & Norman, D. - 2019).

In May 2023, three Industrial Design Specialists[2], lecturers for the Master's, postgraduate, undergraduate, and technical courses in Product Design at ESAD College of Art and Design[3]—formed an autonomous research group to critically examine the pedagogical activities, methods and tools currently employed in higher art and design education. Their primary focus was on the Master's program in Product Design and the Postgraduate Specialisation courses in Furniture Design and Mobility Design at ESAD. The initial objective was to reevaluate the titles and descriptions of these courses, along with the content presented on the institutional website and social media platforms. However, the discussions soon evolved, leading to a broader examination of the program structures and the consideration of alternative approaches to the expected teaching and learning outcomes for students.

As the discussions evolved into brainstorming sessions, two significant avenues for investigation emerged. The first was to engage with leading design institutions and robust industry influencers to observe emerging trends and expectations. The second was to analyse the relevance of the current curriculum and propose new expected teaching and learning outcomes to meet product design market needs.

Over a period of two months, data was gathered, analysed, and organised into a concise report outlining potential new directions for Master's and postgraduate design courses. This report includes proposed changes to course titles and content, incorporating terms such as innovation, circular design, and intelligent systems. It also compiles keywords that comprehensively represent product design as a discipline, drawing insights from leading higher education design institutions worldwide. The report acknowledges the integration of UX and UI[4] design into the product design process, emphasises the role of business strategies in developing new products, and highlights the importance of virtual consumer testing before product development. Additionally, it underscores the

2 The title of specialist, awarded by polytechnic higher education institutions, proves the quality and special relevance of the professional curriculum in a given area for the exercise of teaching functions in polytechnic higher education.

3 ESAD College of Art and Design (Escola Superior de Artes e Design), based in Matosinhos (near Porto), Portugal, specialises in Design and Digital Arts, and since 1989, has stood out for its prestigious teaching staff, quality facilities and successful graduates it has taught.

4 In digital design, user interface (UI) refers to the interactivity, look, and feel of a product screen, while user experience (UX) covers a user's overall experience with the product.

need to embrace new technologies, including generative artificial intelligence tools[5], to enhance design workflows in both text and image formats.

However, to propose the integration of this material into our existing curriculum, it was necessary to establish a hierarchy of this information to determine the appropriate level of intervention within our current courses. To further validate the study and prioritise these proposed changes, it was decided to conduct an online survey targeting current undergraduate and postgraduate product design students at ESAD in 2022/23, as well as graduates since 2016, to assess the relevance of the study and identify key priorities for future teaching and learning objectives.

2. METHOD

This survey aimed to quantitatively assess students' knowledge, vision, and suggestions regarding various aspects of product design, offering twelve questions with various response options to capture their preferences. The questions were organised into four parts of inquiry, gathering data on students' current perceptions of product design, emerging trends and technologies, pedagogical methods, and teaching and learning outcomes. The survey was written and published online using Google Forms[6], and distributed by the researchers, inviting ESAD product design students and graduates to participate.

In addition to the provided response options, ten of the twelve questions included an 'Other' option, allowing participants to suggest alternative responses. Furthermore, seven of the twelve questions permitted participants to select three, five, or eight responses—approximately one-third of the possible options—enabling us to identify response priorities when analysing the data in conjunction with other participant responses. Lastly, the survey was produced in both Portuguese and English to clarify specific design terminology and include participation from Erasmus[7] students who attended the product design courses.

PART 1 - CURRENT PERCEPTIONS OF PRODUCT DESIGN

This section of the survey allowed participants to briefly identify their current working status in product design education or graduation. This identification helped categorise participants' experience levels as novice, moderate, or expert in product design. Our intention was to focus on participants with more product design experiences, so invitations were distributed to those in their second year of undergraduate study and beyond:

Question 1. What is your current working status?: Undergraduate student; Postgraduate/Master's student; Recently graduated; Other (please specify);

Question 2. What does product design mean to you? (select five options): Aesthetics; Business; Development; Engineering; Ideation; Industry; Materials; User-centred; Process; Research; Society; Strategy; Sustainability; Technical; Other (please specify).

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5 Generative artificial intelligence is artificial intelligence capable of generating text, images, videos, or other data using generative models, often in response to prompts.

6 Google Forms is a survey administration software included as part of the free, web-based Google Docs Editors suite offered by Google.

7 The Erasmus Programme is a European Union student exchange programme established in 1987. Erasmus+, or Erasmus Plus, is the new programme combining all the EU's current schemes for education, training, youth and sport, which was started in January 2014.

The latter question aimed to understand students' perceptions of their chosen discipline. While all the response options—and more—were relevant, the goal was to identify preconceptions or practical realities regarding the primary skills needed for product design. This result would be particularly interesting to cross-reference with part four, questions eleven and twelve, to observe commonalities between students' initial perceptions and their specific expectations for teaching and learning outcomes.

PART 2 - EMERGING TRENDS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Questions three to seven present alternative course titles for the product design field, informed by research trends from other higher education institutions and emerging technical curricular units within product design programs, primarily in Europe. These alternatives were also supported by suggestions from respected product design professionals and industry leaders. The questions explored potential new titles for our current courses—Product Design, Furniture Design, and Mobility Design—assess the relevance of UX design within a product design curriculum, and investigate students' knowledge of and preferences for digital tools:

Question 3. In your opinion, which course is most appealing or relevant for specialising in designing 4.0 product solutions by embracing new technologies? (Select up to three options): Product Design; Industrial Design; Advanced Product Design; Design for Industry; Product Innovation Design; Product Design and Development; Product Design Interfaces; Product Design Interaction; Product Design Strategies; Other (please specify);

Question 4. In your opinion, which course title is most appealing or relevant for specialising in designing sustainable products for various local industries? (Select up to three options): Circular Product Design; Design for Industry; Furniture Design; Industrial Design; Integrated Product Design; Product Design and Development; Sustainable Product Design; Other (please specify);

Question 5. In your opinion, which course title is most appealing or relevant for specialising in designing future mobility solutions for moving people and goods? (Select up to three options): Automotive Design; Mobility Design; Smart Vehicle Design; Transportation Design; Vehicle Design; Other (please specify);

Question 6. In your opinion, UX design is primarily for?: Product designers; Communication designers; Both product and communication designers; Other (please specify);

Question 7. Which digital tools do you consider important for product design? (Select up to five options): Adobe Illustrator[8]; Adobe Photoshop[9]; Autodesk Alias[10]; Autocad[11]; Autodesk Fusion 360[12]; Autodesk Inventor[13]; Autodesk 3ds Max[14];

8 Adobe Illustrator is a vector graphics editor and design software developed and marketed by Adobe.

9 Adobe Photoshop is a raster graphics editor developed and published by Adobe for Windows and macOS.

10 Autodesk Alias is a family of computer-aided industrial design software predominantly used in automotive design and industrial design for generating class A surfaces using Bézier surface and non-uniform rational B-spline modelling method.

11 Autocad is a 2D and 3D computer-aided design software application developed by Autodesk.

12 Autodesk Fusion is a commercial computer-aided design, computer-aided manufacturing, computer-aided engineering and printed circuit board design software application, developed by Autodesk.

13 Autodesk Inventor 3D CAD software provides mechanical design, documentation, and simulation tools.

14 Autodesk 3ds Max, formerly 3D Studio and 3D Studio Max, is a professional 3D computer graphics program for making 3D animations, models, games and images.

Blender[15]; Catia[16]; Figma[17]; KeyShot[18]; Onshape[19]; Rhinoceros 3D[20]; Sketchbook[21]; Solidworks[22]; Other (please specify).The primary goal of these questions was to gauge student's preferences on the extent to which technological and sustainable trends are integrated into their courses, and whether these themes should be highlighted in course titles or emphasised within course descriptions. Additionally, over the past decade, user experience—originally coined by Don Norman in the 1990s (Uddin, N. 2023)—along with the study of human factors and ergonomics from the 1940s and 50s, has evolved from focusing on the tangible aspects of a product to encompassing digital experiences and screen interfaces, making it an essential part of product design today.

> *"The fusion of emerging technologies with industrial design has catalysed a fundamental shift in the aesthetics, user experiences, and service frameworks of products in the Industry 4.0 era. Simultaneously, this convergence has heightened the demands placed on the technological integration competencies of designers."* (Zhang, M., Zhang, X., Chen, Z., Wang, Z., Liu, C., Park, K. - 2024).

Understanding student preferences can guide investment in these tools, especially given the limited teaching hours for this subject. Additionally, this research indicated that Adobe and Autodesk software programs dominate within higher academic institutions due to their extensive menu of digital tools and availability of educational licences. However, industry is increasingly recommending alternative software programs for their specialised functions, some of which are free or open-source, providing an open data culture to product design workflow.

An ecological mindset should also be reinforced within the product design discipline by promoting methods and theories of sustainable design. Sustainable design is defined as *"an approach to design that consists of a variety of sustainable design principles, all of which are centred around extending product lifespans and avoiding the depletion of natural resources"*. (Kramer, L. 2021). This topic should be analysed not only with students learning the product design discipline, but also with business and industrial collaborators who will eventually support their projects or produce their products.

PART 3 - PEDAGOGICAL METHODS

The next three questions explore students' preferences regarding how they wish to be taught, focusing on their desired access to teaching staff and the degree of

15 Blender is a free and open-source 3D computer graphics software tool set that runs on Windows, MacOS, BSD, Haiku, and Linux. It is used for creating animated films, visual effects, art, 3D-printed models, motion graphics, interactive 3D applications, virtual reality, and, formerly, video games.

16 CATIA is a multi-platform software suite for computer-aided design, computer-aided manufacturing, computer-aided engineering, 3D modelling and product lifecycle management, developed by the French company Dassault Systèmes.

17 Figma is a collaborative web application for interface design, with additional offline features enabled by desktop applications for macOS and Windows.

18 KeyShot is a 3D rendering program developed by Luxion, Inc. It is designed to create photorealistic images of 3D models quickly and easily.

19 Onshape is a computer-aided design software system, delivered over the Internet via a software as a service model.

20 Rhinoceros is a commercial 3D computer graphics and computer-aided design application software that was developed by TLM, Inc.

21 Sketchbook is a raster graphics software app intended for expressive drawing and concept sketching also for making animations.

22 SolidWorks is a brand within Dassault Systèmes that develops and markets solid modelling computer-aided design, computer-aided engineering, 3D CAD design and collaboration, analysis, and product data management software.

freedom they have to choose or influence learning experiences based on their personal ambitions or design career goals. This flexibility is primarily relevant in project design classes, which utilise more practical teaching methods and can therefore be customised to meet individual student needs. However, this approach could also extend to laboratory, theory, or technical classes, depending on the number of course candidates and the resources available to support such customisation:

Question 8. Design project classes typically account for a significant portion of most design courses (40% of contact teaching hours). Would you prefer: One specialised teacher; Multiple specialised teachers; Other (please specify);

Question 9. For project classes, would you prefer: The same design briefing for all students; Tailored design briefings to meet students individual needs; Other (please specify);

Question 10. For future Master's and postgraduate courses in design, would you prefer: The regular curricular program; To customise your curricular program; Other (please specify).

Michael Meyer and Don Norman state that *"Design is an applied field, and our students must practise the application of a good design process, often within a studio environment, on actual project work."* Consequently, learning from design experts and industry specialists can effectively transfer real-world experiences into design education. The survey aims to gather student opinions on this approach.

PART 4 - TEACHING AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The last two questions focused on what students and graduates expected to learn from a Master's-level product design course, compared to the skills they considered important for professional practice. These questions are interrelated, approaching the same topic from different perspectives, and aligning response options to better understand participants' interpretations and priorities.

Question 11. Which learning experiences do you consider important at the Masters and postgraduate level in product design? (Select up to eight options): Design strategy; Design process; Design business; Research; Brainstorming methods; Design thinking; Sketching and rendering; Materials and processes; Circular design; Sustainable design; Industry collaboration; Creativity; Multidisciplinary; Using artificial intelligence; Making/testing models and prototypes; Analysing user-data; Technical communication; Colour, material and finish (CMF); 3D digital tools; Interview and portfolio; Design management and budget; Leadership; User-experience (UX/UI);

Question 12. Which skills do you consider important for a professional product designer? (Select up to eight options): Design planning; Design stages and activities; Design marketing; Informative studies; Discourse and visual dialogue; Cognitive methods; Visual representation; Components and assemblies; Circular industrial methods; Environmental issues; Projects with business and industry; Inspirational activities; Cross-disciplines; Working with AI; User-interaction; Using tables and charts; Mechanical feasibility; Product aspect and user-feel; Virtual modelling; Formal presentations and speaking; Organising time and costs; Group cooperation; Digital products and screen experiences.

Similar to question two, we could have expanded this list with many more response options. To ensure a comprehensive yet manageable set of choices, we reduced

the survey to twenty-three options, carefully combining related learning characteristics. This approach was based on common course philosophies and descriptors found in reputable higher education institutions. The objective was to analyse and cross-reference these responses to prioritise students' preferred learning outcomes.

3. RESULTS

The survey, titled "Study Futures for Product Design," was produced and distributed to students via email. In some cases, researchers encouraged participation during classes to help achieve quantitative results. This research was conducted as an in-house initiative, so participants were exclusively ESAD students from the product design course, ESAD graduates with a product design degree, or Erasmus students who attended the product design course at either the undergraduate or postgraduate level. A total of ninety-six students participated in the survey, and the results were presented in graphical form.

It was noted that several students expressed satisfaction with this research initiative, particularly appreciating the potential customisation of course material, the inclusion of emerging technologies, and the emphasis on sustainability issues.

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 1 - WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT WORKING STATUS?

From this diagram, Figure 1 - Students' Working Status, it can be observed that the distribution of participants among undergraduate, postgraduate, and graduated students was almost equal, thereby providing a balanced basis for analysing responses from novices, intermediates, and experts within the product design field.

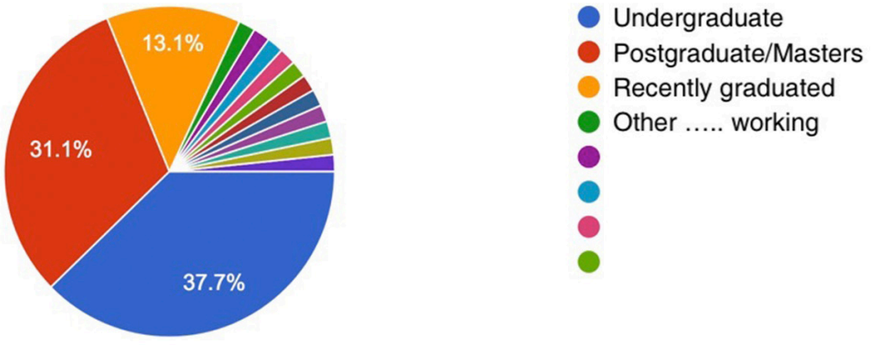

Figure 1. Students' Working Status (Aston 2023)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 2 - WHAT DOES PRODUCT DESIGN MEAN TO YOU?

In Figure 2 - Students' Perception of Product Design, it can be observed that "Development," "Process," and "User-Centred" were the top three options selected by participants, with "Aesthetics," "Research," and "Sustainability" close behind. While this may not represent a comprehensive list for product design, it is reassuring that the essentials were highlighted, particularly "Design Process" as a primary competence to master in this discipline. Interestingly, "Development" topped the list, yet "Engineering" and "Technical" options ranked near the bottom, despite their importance for product development. This suggests some misunderstanding or irregularities in students' perceptions of the subject. Additionally, "Business," "Industry," and "Society" scored relatively low, likely because the

question focused on ‘What is product design?’ rather than ‘Why do we do product design?’ A rephrasing of the question could potentially have yielded significantly different results.

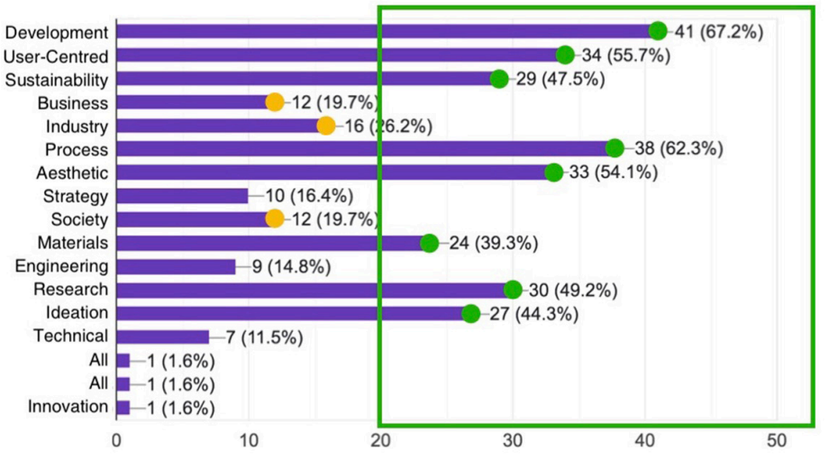

Figure 2. Students’ Perception of Product Design (Aston 2023)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 3 - IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH COURSE TITLE IS MOST APPEALING OR RELEVANT FOR SPECIALISING IN DESIGNING 4.0 PRODUCT SOLUTIONS BY EMBRACING NEW TECHNOLOGIES?

In alignment with the top response from the previous question, Figure 3 - Most Appealing Course Title for Product Design 4.0, shows that “Product Design and Development” scored highest among students and graduates, followed by “Product Innovation,” and “Advanced Product Design.” This highlights students’ preference for integrating a technological edge into the course title, reflecting an evolution from traditional product design. Although titles featuring “Interfaces” and “Interaction” received above-average consideration, it was surprising to see that titles including “Industrial” or “Industry” were less popular, since they are more commonly associated with product design.

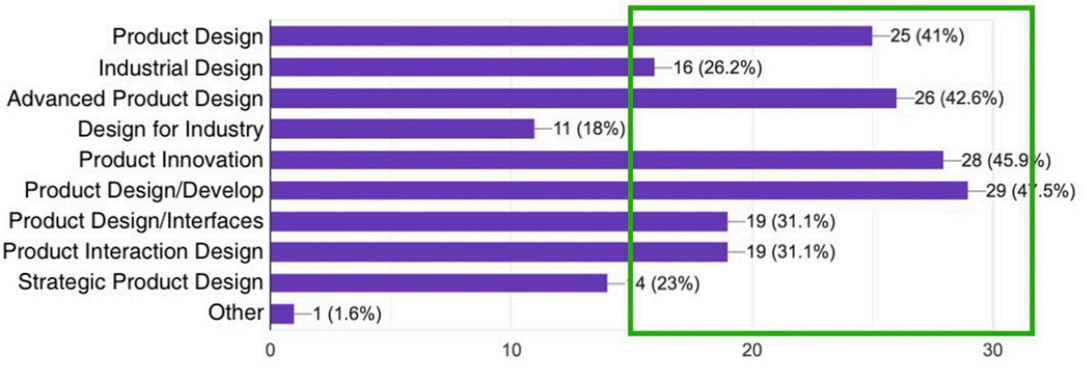

Figure 3. Most Appealing Course Title for Product Design 4.0 (Aston 2023)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 4 - IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH COURSE TITLE IS MOST APPEALING OR RELEVANT FOR SPECIALISING IN DESIGNING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS FOR VARIOUS LOCAL INDUSTRIES?

According to the diagram, Figure 4 - Most Appealing Course Title for Sustainable Product Design with Local Industry, course titles containing the words “sustainable,” “circular,” and “development” scored the highest. Once again, titles including “industrial”

or “industry” received fewer responses. Similarly, “furniture design” had a below-average response, though it was intended to identify a type of local industry. If the course title had been “Sustainable Furniture Design,” it might have scored higher in this question.

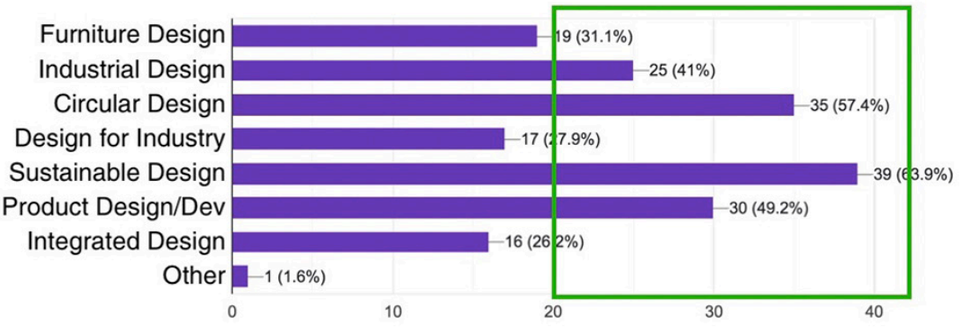

Figure 4. Most Appealing Course Title for Sustainable Product Design with Local Industry (Aston 2023)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 5 - IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH COURSE TITLE IS MOST APPEALING OR RELEVANT FOR SPECIALISING IN DESIGNING FUTURE MOBILITY SOLUTIONS FOR MOVING PEOPLE AND GOODS?

Illustrated in this question, Figure 5 - Most Appealing Course Title for Future Mobility Solutions, students’ preferred course title was “Mobility Design,” followed by “Smart Vehicle Design” and “Transportation Design.” Interestingly, the weaker responses were for “Automotive Design” and “Vehicle Design.” This may indicate that students prefer course titles that communicate broader mobility concepts and the systems that support them, rather than focusing solely on vehicle styling.

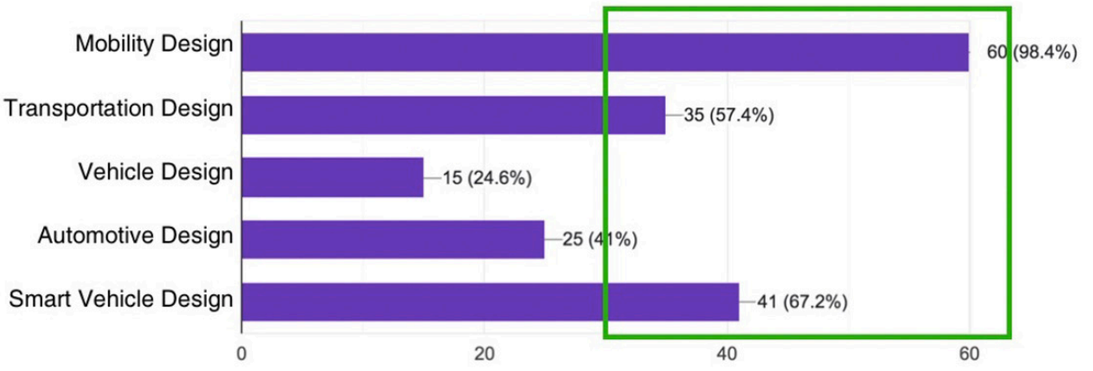

Figure 5. Most Appealing Course Title for Future Mobility Solution (Aston 2023)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 6 - IN YOUR OPINION, UX DESIGN IS PRIMARILY FOR PRODUCT OR COMMUNICATION DESIGNERS?

The diagram, Figure 6 - UX Design for Product or Communication Designers, clearly shows that the majority of student responses favour UX design as a discipline for both product and communication designers. Unfortunately, communication designers were not invited to participate in this survey, and their inclusion would likely have impacted the results. However, this outcome highlights the need to incorporate UX design activities into future course study programs for product design.

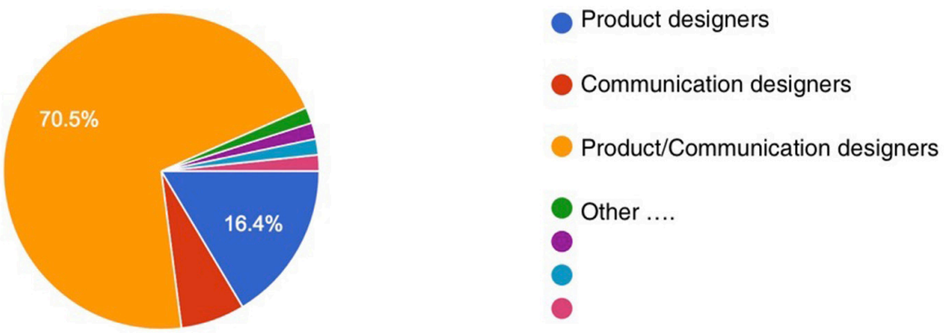

Figure 6. UX Design for Product or Communication Designers (Aston 2023)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 7 - WHICH DIGITAL TOOLS DO YOU CONSIDER IMPORTANT FOR PRODUCT DESIGN?

Given that the survey participants were product design students and graduates, their responses were based on the software programs they were currently learning, using for their study projects, and considering employment demands or compatibilities. Interestingly, the diagram, Figure 7 - Digital Tools Considered Important for Product Design, shows that image editing software, typically associated with communication design, ranked higher than computer-aided design (CAD) software, which is commonly used for product design, development, and prototyping. This might suggest that students and graduates are more focused on the ideation or presentation of product design concepts rather than technical development. While it is good practice for product designers to use both image editing and CAD software, future surveys might benefit from analysing these digital tools in separate questions to provide clearer insights.

Additionally, online collaboration platforms and generative artificial intelligence software were not included in the responses to this question, as research indicated they were not formally taught in product design courses at the time. However, tools such as

Google Workspace[23], Miro[24], ChatGPT[25], Midjourney[26], DALL-E[27], and Vizcom[28] have emerged in classroom settings and are increasingly used informally, despite lacking formal training.

23 Google Workspace is a collection of cloud computing, productivity and collaboration tools, software and products developed and marketed by Google.

24 Miro, formerly known as RealtimeBoard, is a digital collaboration platform designed to facilitate remote and distributed team communication and project management.

25 ChatGPT is a chatbot and virtual assistant developed by OpenAI and launched on November 30, 2022. Based on large language models, it enables users to refine and steer a conversation towards a desired length, format, style, level of detail, and language.

26 Midjourney is a generative artificial intelligence program and service, generating images from natural language descriptions, called prompts.

27 DALL·E is a text-to-image model developed by OpenAI using deep learning methodologies to generate digital images from natural language descriptions known as “prompts”.

28 Viacom is an Ai-powered creative tool designed for design and creative professionals. It offers a transformative approach to concept drawing, enabling users to enhance visuals and workflow.

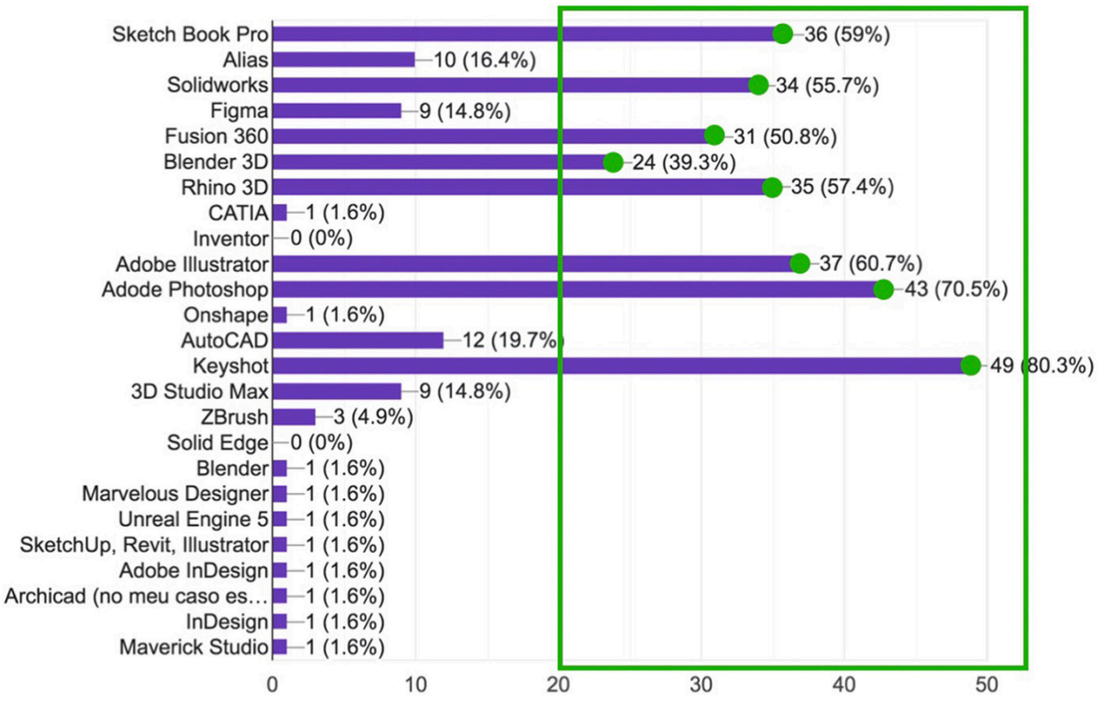

Figure 7. Digital Tools Considered Important for Product Design (Aston 2023)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 8 - DESIGN PROJECT CLASSES TYPICALLY ACCOUNT FOR A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF MOST DESIGN COURSES (ABOUT 40% OF CONTACT TEACHING HOURS). WOULD YOU PREFER ONE OR MULTIPLE SPECIALISED TEACHERS?

According to the diagram, Figure 8 - Preferred Teaching Format—One or Multiple Teachers for Project Classes, there is clear evidence that students and graduates prefer multiple teachers for project classes. Additionally, participant responses in the 'Other' category mentioned a preference for lead teachers supported by assistants and invited specialists, further reinforcing the preference for a multiple-teacher format.

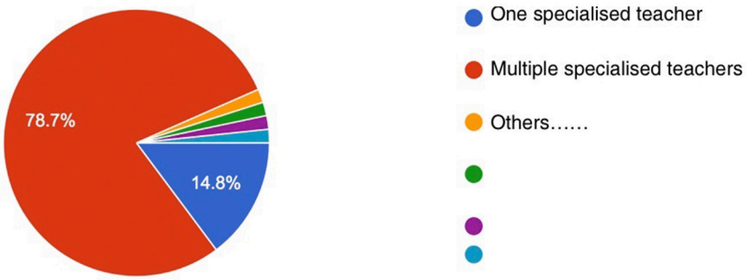

Figure 8. Preferred Teaching Format—One or Multiple Teachers for Project Classes (Aston 2023)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 9 - FOR PROJECT CLASSES, WOULD YOU PREFER THE SAME DESIGN BRIEFING FOR ALL STUDENTS, OR A TAILORED DESIGN BRIEFING TO MEET STUDENTS' INDIVIDUAL NEEDS?

As shown in the diagram, Figure 9 - Preferred Design Project Briefing—Common or Tailored, over two-thirds of the students and graduates preferred a tailored design project briefing. While both formats have their advantages and disadvantages, this raises questions about the feasibility of allowing students the liberty to choose topics and

themes, as well as the logistical challenges teachers may face in implementing the tailored option. Nonetheless, this result is valuable for analysing the potential for customising project briefings for students, individuals or groups.

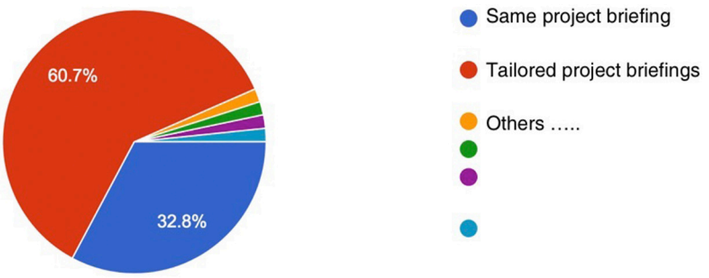

Figure 9. Preferred Design Project Briefing—Common or Tailored (JHA 2023)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 10 - FOR FUTURE MASTERS' AND POSTGRADUATE COURSES IN DESIGN, WOULD YOU PREFER THE REGULAR OR CUSTOMISED CURRICULAR PROGRAM?

It is clear from the diagram, Figure 10 - Prefer Regular or Customised Curricular Program, that nearly 80% of students and graduates prefer to customise their curricular program, tailoring their learning experience to set options or individual requirements. This aligns with the results from the previous question, where a preference for tailored design project briefings was evident, and further reinforces the need to analyse students' ambitions in specialised areas of product design.

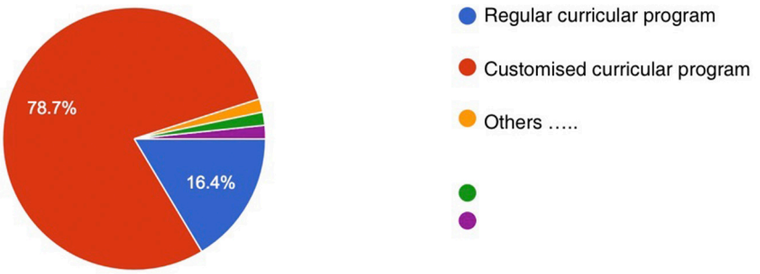

Figure 10. Preferred Regular of Customised Curricular Program (Aston 2023)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 11 - WHICH LEARNING EXPERIENCES DO YOU CONSIDER IMPORTANT AT THE MASTER'S AND POSTGRADUATE LEVEL IN PRODUCT DESIGN?

This question presented twenty-three responses, from which product design participants were asked to select their preferred eight. As shown in the diagram, Figure 11 - Preferred Learning Experiences for Product Design Masters, the top five preferred response options were a mix of design processes, methods, tools, and skills: (G) Sketching and Rendering, (B) Design Process, (K) Industry Collaboration, (O) Making/Testing Models and Prototypes, and (S) 3D Digital Tools. On the other hand, the less popular responses included: (Q) Technical Communication, (V) Leadership, (I) Circular Design, (P) Analysing User-Data, and (N) Using Artificial Intelligence. As mentioned earlier, all the response options presented are commonly found in descriptions of other product design courses, and our objective was to prioritise these based on student and graduate preferences. Interestingly, the most popular responses align more with what students typically learn during an undergraduate

degree, while the less popular options should be emphasised in master's courses as more advanced design methods, particularly for design research and product development.

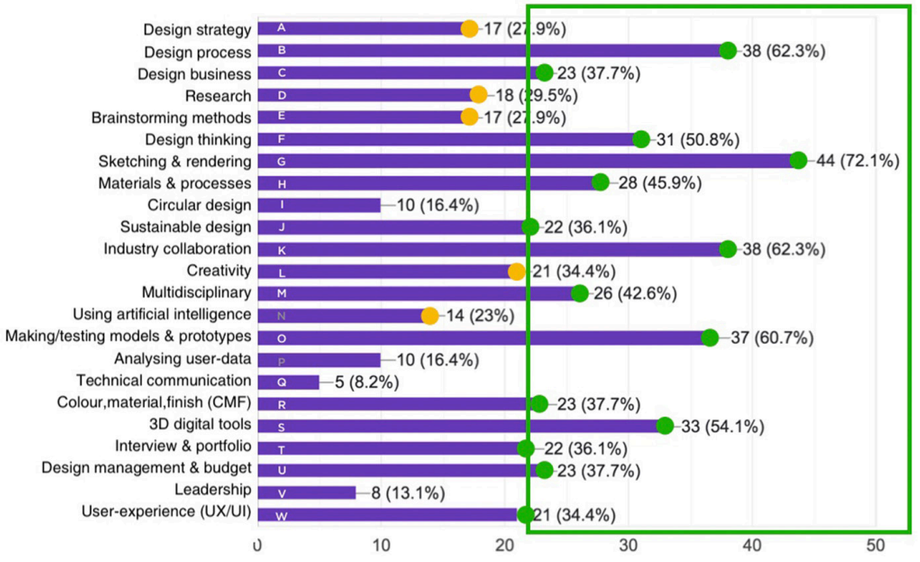

Figure 11. Preferred Learning Experiences for Product Design Masters (Aston 2023)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 12 - WHICH SKILLS DO YOU CONSIDER IMPORTANT FOR A PROFESSIONAL PRODUCT DESIGNER?

In this question, product design students and graduates were asked to select eight of the possible twenty-three responses. These responses were similar to those in the previous question, with slight rephrasing for cross-referencing purposes. The diagram, Figure 12 - Preferred Skills for Professional Product Designers, shows the top five responses as: (K) Projects with Business and Industry, (A) Design Planning, (G) Visual Representation, (O) User-Interaction, and (V) Group Cooperation. Notably, three of these—K, G, and O—are common with the previous question's top responses. The least popular responses were: (P) Using Tables and Charts, (D) Informative Studies, (F) Cognitive Methods, (H) Components and Assemblies, and (W) Digital Products and Screen Experience, with one common response, P, overlapping with the previous question.

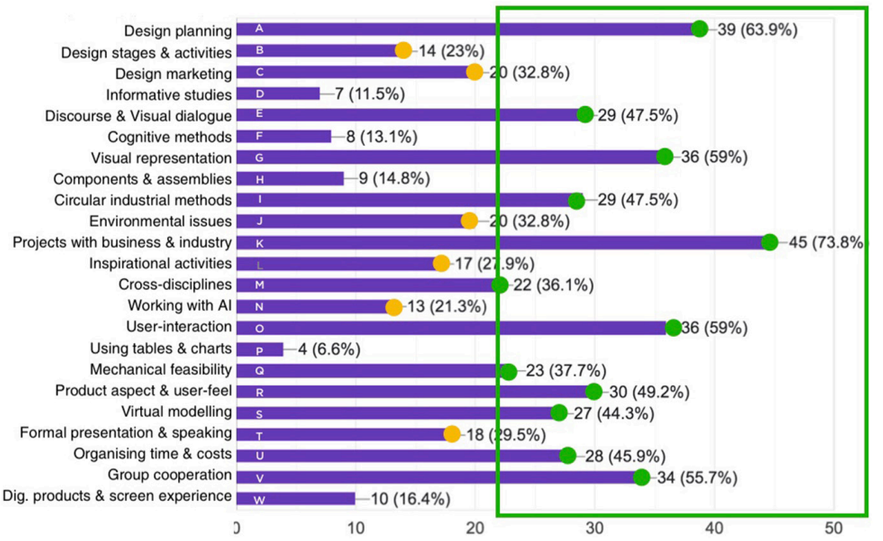

Figure 12. Preferred Skills for Professional Product Designers (Aston 2023)

MERGING RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS 11 AND 12 - COMPARING PREFERRED LEARNING EXPERIENCES WITH PROFESSIONAL SKILLS FOR PRODUCT DESIGNERS.

When comparing the results from questions eleven and twelve, distinct patterns emerge in the responses from students and graduates. In the diagram, Figure 13 - Comparing Responses from Learning Experiences and Professional Skills for Product Designers, we observe that the responses fall into two categories: those with similar levels of popularity and those with opposite levels of popularity. For instance, response (K) – Industry Collaboration/Projects with Business or Industry – which scored the highest, showed similar popularity across both questions, indicating that product design students prioritise practical learning experiences and challenges that involve collaboration with real-world industries. Similarly, response (P) Collecting and Analysing User-data/Using Tables and Charts, scored the lowest in both questions, therefore the least popular. In most cases, comparisons that showed opposing responses could be averaged to find a balanced consensus. However, when comparisons resulted in conflicting data—such as with response (V) Leadership/Group Cooperation— the phrasing of the response options were reviewed, even though the individual response to the question was still valid.

This comparative analysis aims to identify similarities between what students expect to learn in a master's course in product design and what they need for professional practice, prioritising these responses accordingly. The five most popular responses were: (K) Industry Collaboration/Projects with Business or Industry, (G) Sketching and Rendering/ Visual Representation, (O) Making and Testing Models and Prototypes/User Interaction, (S) 3D Digital Tools/Virtual Modelling, and (R) Colour, Material, Finish (CMF Design)/Product Aspect and User-Feel. The least popular responses were: (P) Collecting and Analysing User Data/Using Tables and Charts, (N) Using Artificial Intelligence/Working with AI, (Q) Technical Communication/Mechanical Feasibility, and (W) User Experience and Interaction (UX/UI)/Digital Products and Screen Experience.

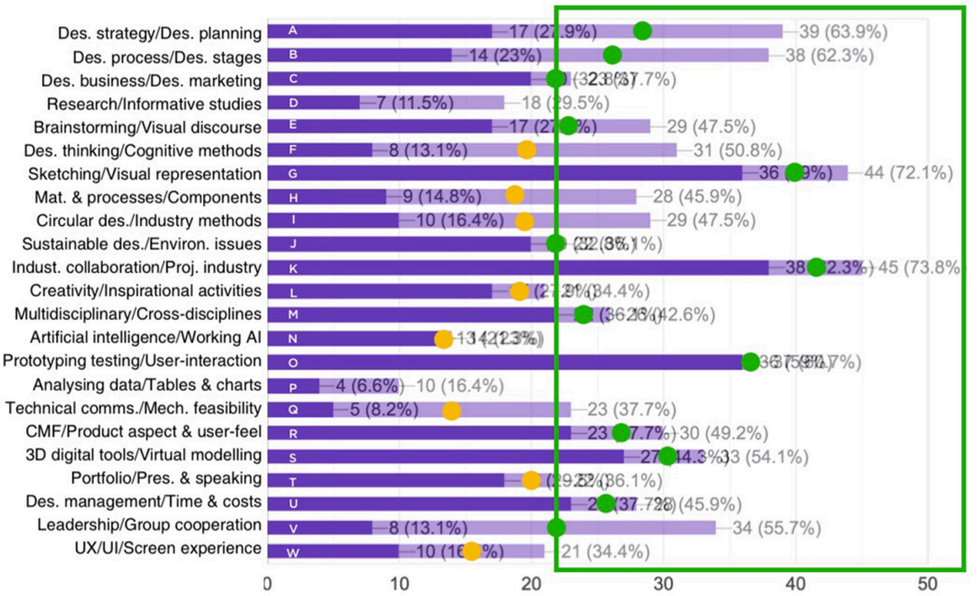

Figure 13. Comparing Responses from Learning Experiences and Professional Skills for Product Designers (Aston 2023)

These results offer valuable insights for discussing future learning objectives in product design courses. For instance, it is evident that participants prioritise industry

collaboration, which promotes applied product design practice, enhances portfolio quality, and increases potential employment opportunities. This practical teaching methodology aligns well with the Portuguese polytechnic system. Additionally, the high scores for (G) Sketching and Rendering/Visual Representation and (O) Making and Testing Models and Prototypes/User Interaction suggest that students and graduates place significant value on advanced drawing and making skills for visually representing and developing their product design ideas. However, these three experiences or skills are currently emphasised in the undergraduate product design curriculum, which could explain their popularity. However, this preference may reflect students' familiarity with traditional design education rather than emerging industry trends and demands, such as Generative AI, UX, or CMF Design.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this research was to map the priorities for product design higher education by observing the current landscape and integrating students' insights into course content and its professional relevance. The survey results provided valuable insights, highlighting clear trends while also raising some uncertainties. Although the participant pool was limited—comprising primarily ESAD product design students and graduates from 2016 to 2023, most of whom were Portuguese, broader distribution could have yielded more diverse perspectives. Nonetheless, the findings offer useful information that can be further developed and serve as a foundation for discussions on future curriculum enhancements.

The participants' initial perception of product design was analysed, revealing a preference for established practical activities over more technical ones. This suggests a tendency towards a 'learning by doing' teaching methodology rather than focusing on more complex theory. However, if the analysis were segmented into participant groups—novice (undergraduate), moderate (master's), and expert (graduated and working)—the results might better reflect their experiences and provide more accurate insights. This could also indicate the need to increase technical activities in the latter two groups. Additionally, it's worth noting that some graduated participants were working in other design areas, such as interior design. This suggests that product design courses might benefit from a more holistic approach, incorporating design methods and tools that are applicable to various specialisations, such as interior, furniture, mobility, and UX design.

This holistic approach is further evidenced by participants' preferences for emerging trends and technologies, as seen in their favourable response to course titles featuring terms like 'sustainability,' 'innovation,' or 'smart.' The acceptance of UX design and the integration of various digital tools to enhance the ideation, development, and presentation of product design concepts also reflect this broader perspective.

Regarding pedagogical methods, the survey results clearly indicate a student preference for curricular diversity and the ability to customise their learning outcomes within the product design course. While ESAD's current Master's program offers some choice in the second year through options such as final projects, dissertations, or internships, this flexibility is less present in the first year. These findings suggest that extending customisation and learning flexibility to the entire program could enhance the overall learning experience.

Lastly, the participants' preferred teaching and learning outcomes for a master's in product design, particularly when comparing expected learning experiences to professional skills, open a debate about the program's future direction. While the results are clear, a deeper analysis of the content and meaning is necessary to understand the potential priorities and relevance. The survey indicates that most participants gravitated towards 'safer' or more 'commonly known' aspects of product design, rather than embracing the 'riskier' or less familiar options. For instance, topics including UX design, Generative AI, and CMF design, which are increasingly highlighted by industry professionals as critical for product design roles, received only moderate interest from participants. This underscores the importance for product design course administrators to introduce or adapt curricular content to align more closely with industry needs, thereby enhancing students' employability.

This research provided valuable insights into the potential future of product design education. As many esteemed designers, educators, and researchers have noted, the field of design is encountering new challenges driven by industry and societal demands, necessitating educational adaptation. This survey served as a pilot study to gather evidence for this evolving landscape, some of which has already been implemented within our design courses. However, we plan to refine this research further and present it to a broader audience in the future to validate the priorities for product design education and ensure their professional relevance.

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HOW TO APPLY SOCIAL
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NO MORE DEBATES ABOUT
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They have curated exhibitions of the work of creators Félix Beltrán, Alain Le Quernec, Pekka Loiri, Teresa Sdralevich, Michel Bouvet, El Fantasma de Heredia, Onaire, Mirko Ilic, Pilar Villuendas, Óscar Mariné, Pepe Cruz Novillo, Manuel Estrada and others. Their work has appeared in more than 90 editorial projects and has participated in numerous international projects, events and exhibitions in Madrid, Barcelona, Paris, New York, Berlin, Buenos Aires, etc.

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MAPPING PRIORITIES IN PRODUCT DESIGN: STUDENT INSIGHTS ON COURSE CONTENT AND PROFESSIONAL RELEVANCE.
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Jeremy Aston

Jeremy Aston is an award-winning designer with a multidisciplinary approach to design, teaching, and research. With over two decades of professional experience, he has worked across various industrial sectors, including construction, education, electronics, healthcare, textiles, and transport.
Born in the UK and now a Portuguese citizen living near Porto, Jeremy holds a Specialist Degree in Industrial Design (2016) and a Master's Degree in Vehicle Design (1996), and since 2016, has been the coordinator for the masters product design program at ESAD College of Art and Design in Matosinhos. He is passionate about the intersection of design, social trends, and emerging technologies, seeing it as a powerful opportunity to redefine the role of designers in business and industry. Jeremy co-authored the book Collective for Design (ERASMUS+), which explores innovative teaching methods, collaborated on the BioMask project (PT2020), which led to a patented biodegradable product for healthcare professionals, and led design efforts for the FACS project (Future Automotive Cockpit and Storage) in partnership with Simoldes Plastics, Ceiia, and PSA Group Stellantis (PT2020). Specialising in industrial design, Jeremy is committed to collaborative, forward-thinking projects that enhance people's lives by improving products, vehicles, and services for a sustainable future.

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Luciana Barbosa is a versatile designer and consultant with expertise spanning multiple fields, including furniture, metalwork, interior decoration, textiles, sustainability, and innovation. Her exceptional talent has earned her several accolades, such as 1st and 2nd place in cutlery design for Herdmar in 2012, 1st prize for kitchen knife design at ICEI in 2014, and an honourable mention for her "Metamorphosis" chair in the "Excellent Product Design — Furniture" category at the prestigious Design Award in 2023. As a dedicated educator working at ESAD College of Art and Design in Matosinhos, Portugal, Luciana shares the wealth of knowledge and experience she has gained both in academia and through her professional practice. She believes that design is more than a profession—it's a way of life. Her vision is to foster a world where humans, plants, and animals coexist in harmony, with equality and respect for historical heritage. Her approach to teaching and design is rooted in dedication, excellence, and a commitment to creating meaningful projects that contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive future.

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