# DESIGN DIALOGUES

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*"The papers in this book, Design Studies, reflect the theme of Design Dialogues that advocates for conversations between designers and those affected by design decisions. The effectiveness of such dialogues suggests the need for participants to understand the language of design and for designers to create new methods of communication. In the Design Studies graduate program faculty and students explore such issues in design studios and through research projects. Clearly, the range of issues addressed in this publication represents a unique departure from the origins of Design Studies."*

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# DESIGN STUDIES
## DESIGN *DIALOGUES*

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**DESIGN STUDIES**

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# PREFACE
## ABOUT DESIGN STUDIES

Introduced as the first graduate program in the field in Turkey, the Design Studies Master's and Ph.D. programs are structured under the Graduate School and the Faculty of Fine Arts and Design at the Izmir University of Economics. The programs provide architects, interior architects, visual communication designers, graphic designers, industrial designers, fashion designers and applicants from related disciplines a unique research opportunity. With studies informed by this broad approach, ultimately, students are provided with opportunities to engage with the projects in a theoretical framework and conduct their dissertation, pursuing careers in both design-related professions and academia.

The programs in Design Studies are structured with the goal that the theoretical and practical aspects of successful graduate education can be effectively joined in a constructive way for graduates of various disciplines. Emphasizing the relations between various subjects and approaches provides the students with a broader professional training that equip them with substantial and creative skills, unique experiences, and specialized knowledge.

Design Studies graduate program students conduct their research in a multi-disciplinary/cross-disciplinary way in the fields of studies and key research topics listed in the website.
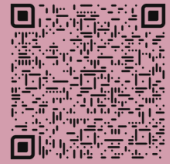
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# EDITORIAL
## DESIGN *DIALOGUES*
DENİZ HASIRCI, DİDEM YAVUZ VELİPAŞAOĞLU

We are delighted to be writing the editorial of the full text book of the Design Studies Symposium, DSS2024, that is a reflection of the Design Studies Master's and PhD programs. In this introduction note, we would like to focus on three topics: The Program, Publishing (in Design Studies), and People. The 3 P's.

### 1. Program:
The idea for the DSS2024 theme - design dialogues- comes from the understanding that, in today's rapid style of living, there is less time for reflection and taking stock, as they say. Effective argument, critical and in depth analysis appears to be a thing of the past and is a value we have been losing around the world. Unexamined output and rushes of information coming through our screens leaves us exhausted and always looking for the next best thing, rather than an analysis and understanding that would give us the boost to leap ahead. In the fast paced Artificial Intelligence induced environment, knowledge has been switched to so called, "content". The focus has shifted from sharing one's word because one has something significant to say, to having to create something for points, likes, acknowledgement. We believe we need to bring back meaning, creation of knowledge in, and the necessary time and need for reflection.

Regarding the DSS2024 theme, the topic of dialogue emerged from a deep need in the Design Studies field.

**DIALOGUE: *dia* "across, between" + *legein* "to speak"**

This year, we looked at submissions that utilize critical design studies to investigate the diverse scales involved in variations in **dialogue**, considering social, cultural, and functional perspectives. Here, the researchers gathered across a broad spectrum, presenting their critical perspectives. This necessitates a cultural morphological  study

beyond looking at ultimate forms. Within this scope, participants explore the complex reality of today, reflecting all cultural and social realities, and everyday life of individuals. In this context, the overarching theme of the symposium, which is *dialogue*, would emerge between the modern identity that engages in research, learning, and critical perspective. Dialogue refers to the interaction where two or more individuals engage in a verbal or written conversation. Dialogue is not a uniliteral action, rather is a mutual concept that evolves constantly according to the ideas of the parties involved. It serves as both a literary and visually representation of such exchanges. This year, we selected submissions that utilize critical design studies to investigate the diverse scales involved in ***dialogue*** variations, considering social, cultural, and functional perspectives.

Industrialization/ urbanization /modernization and as a recent development digitalization were watersheds for societies so that people faced a breakdown in their everyday life habits and methods of social control under the impact of this transition process that led to rise of individualism, yet institutions have played important role for the cohesion of modern societies' individuals. The awareness of the origins of the knowledge and its dynamics that serve for the construction of the vision of societies is one primary articulation of critical pedagogy. Thus, to Joe L. Kincheloe, dialectical authority is the key to the production of knowledge as a mutual action (Kincheole, 2005). However, how mutual production of knowledge could be achieved? Colleges, universities, libraries and museums as the educational institutions are crucial to gather large groups of population including academic staff, students, specialists and the citizens not only with their public spaces, but also with the events, organizations, and occasions set up by the educational institutions. The production and share of knowledge depend on dialogues of each side of societies, and a fundamental concern is the creation of an interaction of different social groups, which would provide integration between all dynamics of society for the sake of maintaining social order through consensus and agreement. Besides creation of interaction atmosphere, an event-centered use of public space of educational institutions would provide not only convey of academic acknowledge, innovations and new artistic trends, but also

creation of knowledge in the hands of all sides of the public. The obstacles of fulfilling work of educational institutions are related to the structure of educational institutions themselves. The program of the educational institutions should let non-governmental organizations, volunteering groups serve in the public space of the institutions in order to gather majorities, as well as marginalized groups, and minorities, or in other words, the affluent, the poor, the homeless, the physically challenged, that would reinforce the platforms of consensus, negotiation and agreement and that would provide consensus and harmony embracing multiculturalism.

The hands of the thematic presentation of this symposium actually captures the moment of touch of God from the painting Creation of Adam by Michelangelo. We manipulated the moment of touch and made it more digital wise composed of frames referring to the digital achievement of humanity of today. The moment flipped and became a bottom up contact with the human with its superior position. In this context, the notion of **_dialogue_** is based on the idea of fostering a more direct relationship between researchers and participants, as well as between designers and users.

Nothing is a substitute for curiosity, science, research, design, and the necessary human dialog to make sense of it all. The need for this connection brought about the theme. The program was structured as varied as possible, with panels, exhibitions, and discussions changing the room physically as the timeline progressed. We had international students joining in this year, and we also had students and advisors from other national universities. Since last year, sustainability issues and AI has taken a greater space in our lives, and has requested more discussion from us.

One thing that gained importance since the previous year, has been attempts to leave more permanent marks for the future. Being able to look back on what we have done. Since our minds our like sieves, we can only hold on to information for so long. We need longevity in what we do in the ephemerality of today. In academia and especially in Design Studies. The requirement for PhD students to publish to graduate, is a necessary for the field, however needs to be introduced to them much earlier. These are some issues that has led to the following point –publications.

## 2. Publications

We wish to support more permanent products, that will support both the students as well as their advisors. Through the program and symposia, we aim to emphasize and keep pushing the culture of writing, documenting, which is at the core of academia. Not fast paced sensation. Meaningful, impactful research. This is the reason we aim to encourage students in the best way, having their names in the program, certificates, and publishing both an abstract book as well as a full text book.

*Abstract Books and Full Text Books*

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*DSS2023:*

Last year's abstract book was published after the symposium (Hasirci, Doğu, Avcı-Hosanlı, Turhan, Taşer, 2023):

https://yayin.ieu.edu.tr/documents/00000-DSS2023_ABSTRACTPROCEEDINGSBOOK-final.pdf

We have had a collaboration with the Institute of Network Cultures from the Netherlands, for an edited full text book of DSS2023, titled, "Localizing Design Studies: Perspectives on Turkey", that is now available as printed and online (Hasırcı, Doğu, Avcı, Turhan-Haskara, Taşer, 2024).

https://networkcultures.org/blog/publication/localizing-design-studies-perspectives-on-turkey/

*DSS2024*:

This year, we had the abstract book ready for the symposium day. It was challenging, but we managed to complete the process on time (Hasırcı, Yavuz Velipaşaoğlu, Doğu, Avcı, Turhan-Haskara, Bayrak, 2024a):

https://yayin.izmirekonomi.edu.tr/documents/00000-DSS2024_ABSTRACTPROCEEDINGSBOOK-13.6.2024.pdf

We find this documentation an important feat for archival purposes, as well as reflection and for the future. This full text book (Hasırcı, Yavuz Velipaşaoğlu, Doğu, Avcı, Turhan-Haskara, Bayrak, 2024b) is composed of selected works from the symposium, and reflects high quality collection of Design Studies research.

We have left the most important aspect to the end.

## 3. People

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the valued members of our university who have helped realize the DSS2024 event and the quality work prepared for the full text book. One may observe great progress in the quality of the graduate work produced in the program, as well quantity. The number of students enrolled in the program enables freedom and increases resources, contributing to the field in small but significant steps.

We are grateful for IUE support in the several units we collaborated with. We would like to thank the director of the graduate school, Prof. Dr. Efe Biresselioğlu, for supporting this event and ensuring we received the necessary funds for this event, and the Graduate School team. We express our gratitude for our Dean Prof. Dr. Ender Yazgan Bulgun who is always a wonderful support of new initiatives and quality work, the Dean's Office, and FFAD team. We would like to thank our moderators and exhibition coordinators, our graduate students as well as their advisors, who have helped not only to put together, but also provided the substance of the discussions. We would also like to express our gratitude for our undergraduate students who have helped realize everything from photography to registration. Most importantly, we would like to thank Gülce Başer and Meltem Yüce from IUE Publishing who have made our publication process of our abstract and full text books, one that has been quite smooth.

These events carry great significance in reminding us of community with its various levels and of the reasons for which we do what we do in design academia. Especially after/during a devastating time for our planet. We would like to close with a note from

Prof. John Woodham; Director of the Design History Research Centre, University of Brighton, and review editor of Journal of Design History. Some readers may know about his seminal book, 20th Century Design.

Upon coming across posts on the event, he wrote a note in support of the program saying: "Best wishes for your forthcoming event. Design history and design studies in Turkey are maturing productively and interestingly around graduate initiatives", in reference to our symposium. We believe that this is a pretty solid endorsement, and thank Prof. Woodham for his encouraging words. Through the collective work of our students and advisors, the framework of the IUE Design Studies program, DSS Symposia, and the related publications we are happy to make our contribution in that direction. We hope you enjoy the critical and creative works depicted in the pages to come.

***Please follow the IUE Design Studies program media for upcoming events and publications. We invite you to actively take part:***
https://www.instagram.com/ieu_design_studies/
https://lisansustu.ieu.edu.tr/tr/news/type/read/id/9074

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# PART I
# NARRATIVES AND
# *DIALOGUES*

# A "VALUE"-BASED NARRATIVE OF THE CONSERVATION THEORY AND THE "*DIALOGUE* VALUE"

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## 1. Introduction

Conservation theory and practice cannot be considered apart from the narratives of "value". Jukka Jokilehto's seminal book *A History of Architectural Conservation* (1999), a prominent source of conservation theory, revolves around the definitions of values.[1] Although most of them are still prevalent, there are new contemporary values that have emerged in the 21st century. This chapter examines the chronological development of value-based conservation theory in three parts: *conventional values*, *evolving values*, and *unconventional and conflicting values*, and introduces the "dialogue value" as a new value.

## 2. Conventional values

Discussions of value (Jokilehto, 1999, pp. 26–28, 34, 72) date back to the 15th century. The Italian architect Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) drew attention to the "educational value of an architectural work", while the Italian architect/engineer Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439-1501) emphasized the "educational value of ruins". They were followed in the 17th century by Pope Alexander VII Chigi (1655-67) who called attention to the "touristic value" of monuments; and in the 18th century by Henri Jean-Baptiste Grégoire (1750-1831), a member of the French Chamber of Deputies, who proposed the "documentary value" of historical monuments.

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[1] These are listed respectively according to their first appearance: symbolic value (p. 5), religious-political value (p. 8), political value (p. 16), artistic value (p. 17), educational value (p. 27), touristic value (p. 45), universal value (p. 49), value of authenticity (p. 50), archaeological value (p. 64), picturesque value (especially of ruins) (p. 51), historical value (p. 127), religious value (p. 127), witness to the past (p. 130), nationalistic value (p. 195), aesthetic value (p. 203), evolutionary value (p. 216), commemorative value (p. 216), use value (p. 216), irreplaceable value (p. 219). Some of these values can be traced back to the 15th century, although most of them were defined in the 18th and 19th centuries. See. (Jokilehto, 1999).

In the 19th century, the English art critic John Ruskin (1819-1900) laid the foundations of modern conservation theory in his book *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) (Ruskin, 1889). Even before that, in his earlier work *The Poetry of Architecture* (1837) (Ruskin, 2019), Ruskin argued that the French, Italian and Swiss summer villas had "national" values and were as important as monuments. This was one of the first discussions of "national" value, and the definition of heritage was extended beyond monuments to include residential architecture. William Morris (1834-1896), an English art critic and one of the pioneers of the Arts and Crafts movement and a pioneer of conservation theory in the 19th century, argued that any treatment of an old building should be "contemporary", that is, "new" additions should be distinguishable, as well as reversible and leave no trace when removed (Scott, 2008, p. 51).

Although Stubbs (2009, p. 42) traces the origins of "historical value" or "age value" to the Italian Renaissance, the definitions of value, developed by the Austrian art historian and conservation theorist Alois Riegl (1858-1905), are considered to have set the principles of modern conservation theory. In *The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development* (1903), Riegl provides a deep and comprehensive discussion of "historical value" and "age value". He argues that "age value" appeals to a wider audience, it is imperfect, incomplete, dissolved, and since the beginning of the 20th century, people enjoy decay because the cycle of transformation has its own aesthetic (Riegl, 1996, pp. 72–73). On the other hand, "historical value" is associated with the intactness of a monument/building, and thus the age value is often ignored. Meanwhile, the "historical value" can also create an "intentional commemorative value": it selects a moment from the past, freezes it, and keeps it alive. In Riegl's words, it creates an "eternal present" (Riegl, 1996, pp. 77–78) (Image 1).

Evolving from the "historical" and "age" values, many variants have emerged over time, however, these evolving concepts can often be contradictory. Hence, many conservation theorists have attempted to categorize what could be defined as the rooted conventional values.  In  his  publications  on the conservation of ancient

**Image 1.** The Celsus Library, Ephesus, Izmir. The library's façade serves as a testament to the concept of the "eternal present", upholding its "historical value". The library subsequently acquired an "intentional commemorative value" due to its status as a prominent photographic subject among the ruins of the ancient city (Wikipedia, n.d.-b).

monuments between 1879 and 1893, the Italian architect-engineer Camillo Boito (1836-1914) divided the classification of cultural heritage into three periods and assigned a different value to each (Boito, 1893, 2009). According to Boito the works of antiquity have "archaeological value" (*restauro archeologico*), the works of the Middle Ages have "picturesque value" (*restauro pittorico*), and the modern works from the Renaissance to the contemporary period have "architectural value" (*restauro architettonico*) (Jokilehto, 1999, pp. 200–201). The Belgian academic and art historian Prof. Canon Raymond Lemaire (1878-1954) also classified the values in his work *Restoration of Ancient Monuments* (*La Restauration des Monuments anciens*)

(1931): "use value," "artistic value", "historical archaeological value" and "picturesque value" (Jokilehto, 1999, p. 250).

Considering the variety of categorizations, it is clear that value definitions may change over time. Bernard M. Feilden and Jukka Jokilehto (1998, pp. 18–21) in 1998 developed a categorization with the following sets of values for the conservation of world heritage: (1) cultural values and (2) contemporary socio-economic values. These two sets are defined by sub-values within themselves, i.e., for cultural values as "identity value", "relative artistic or technical value" and "rarity value" and for contemporary socio-economic values, as "economic", "functional", "educational", "social", and "political". In addition to these, Stubbs (2009, p. 38) later classified "universal", "associative", "curiosity", "artistic", "exemplary", "abstract" and "use" values.

## 3. Evolving values

The concept of cultural heritage and the theoretical frameworks that guide the conservation of historic monuments and works of art have evolved considerably over time. Discussions have led to a diversification of definitions, encompassing a wider range of physical built environments, scales, and cultures. As a result, the concept of "value" is subject to constant revision.

The first charter published on the protection of architectural heritage was the Athens Charter of 1931, which (re)evaluated the values previously defined by the West. Since then, the concept of values has evolved considerably and become multicultural, going beyond the West and canonical monuments. In 1964, the Venice Charter (*The International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*) was published by summarizing the discussions of the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments held in Venice. Founded in 1965, ICOMOS (*International Council on Monuments and Sites*) adopted the Venice Charter as its fundamental doctrine (Feilden & Jokilehto, 1998, p. 12).

In the discourse on the value of conservation theory in the contemporary era, it has been observed that while some values remain on the agenda, others are newly introduced. In the 18th century, there was a growing recognition of the "universal value" of artistic and historic monuments.[2] After the First and Second World Wars, "symbolic value" was frequently discussed (Jokilehto, 1999, pp. 282–285). For example, when the town of Ypres (Belgium) was completely destroyed, three suggestions were made: (1) the ruins could remain as a monument to the destruction, (2) recent developments in zoning and garden-city construction could be adopted, (3) the medieval town could be rebuilt as such. In turn, these arguments express the following values: (1) the "ruin value", (2) the "sustainability value" of a city, and (3) the "symbolic value". The decision was to rebuild the historic medieval town and keep its "symbolic value" (Jokilehto, 1999, pp. 282–285).

Some values defined in history have transformed over time, for example, "historical value" has transformed into "developmental value" acquiring new values in its historical trajectory (Stubbs, 2009, pp. 42–43). An example is Istanbul's Hagia Sophia, which was converted into a museum in the early Republican period, paying respect to all its historic past, Byzantine/Christian and Ottoman/Muslim. As a monument of "universal value", this heritage acquired – and continues to acquire – new values long after and independently of its original purpose. It has "developmental value" in the sense that it has acquired new values throughout history, but the nature of this is now laden with political meanings (Jokilehto, 1999, p. 208). A heritage site can sometimes be legitimized for its "political value", "national value" or "patriotic value". Perhaps with a religious and political agenda of the current Islamist politics, the reconversion of the monument into a mosque and its commercialization in the media reveals that the monument has now acquired a new "political value" (Image 2), which may diminish its "tourism value."[3]

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[2] Over time, the definition of "universal value" has evolved and expanded. Stubbs posited that the advent of the concept of "universal value" can be attributed to initiatives undertaken since the 1960s. See. (Stubbs, 2009, p. 39).

[3] For a deeper analysis on value discussions within the scope of cultural heritage economy and sustainability of urban heritage sites in conservation theory and practice in Turkey, see (Özçakır, 2018).

**Image 2.** Hagia Sophia Mosque, Istanbul. The debate surrounding the conversion of Hagia Sophia Museum into a mosque has highlighted a perceived conflict between its purported "political value", which detracts from its "universal" and "tourism" values (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of Communications, n.d.).

## 4. Unconventional and conflicting values

Despite the growing number of definitions of conventional values, some have unique characteristics. An interesting one is the "value of slowness" following the lengthy conservation of the  Castelvecchio Museum in Verona by the Italian architect Carlo Scarpa (1906-1978). In Scarpa's project, the conservation process itself is defined as a "historical value" because of its slowness, which lasted 12 years, from 1953 to 1965 (Scott, 2008, pp. 210–211) (Image 3).

Another value that is currently deemed highly relevant, albeit "conflicting" is the "use value". Essential for meeting the demands of contemporary life, this value provides that the preserved building remains functional. However, this will conflict with a number of other values because maintenance and repair require alterations. The conservation of the original function may also be a "use value", as can the new function proposed to keep it in  use. In  fact,  industrial  buildings  that  can  become

**Image 3.** Castelvecchio Museum, Verona. The ascribed "monumental value" by Scarpa's contemporary additions and the "value of slowness" due to the lengthy conservation period (1953-1965) (Onniboni, n.d.).

lodgings are more likely to survive if they are used in their new function, and it is the new function that adds the "use value" to them. However, conservation may enhance some functions or values more than others. For instance, a ventilation system added during conservation will make a historic building more comfortable to live in, even if it requires the replacement of some original parts or the installation of insulated pipes (Vinas, 2005, pp. 180–181). This case demonstrates that while the adaptive reuse of the building as a residence will increase its "use value", its "historical/documentary value" will be significantly diminished. A good conservation approach will therefore require negotiation and compromise.

While values are rooted in culture and science, with globalization they need to be considered alongside different social and economic realities, environmental contexts and sustainability policies. There are many variables in the conservation of cultural heritage. An artifact may be unique in its design, craftsmanship and materials, or where these are lacking, it may be valued for the meaning it adds to its surroundings. Moreover, a heritage may transform due to natural aging (weathering, climatic effects, disasters, etc.) or functional use, and these changes may have enriched (or devalued, but added new meaning while devaluing) its historical character. For example, Dunnett (2007, p. 173) argues that a change to a historic building may have a "creational/innovational value", especially if it embodies the principles of the Modern Movement, then this new innovational value is comparable to that of the loss and is therefore acceptable.

In 2019, the discussions on value-based conservation have become more inclusive of global views. The book *Values in Heritage Management: Emerging Approaches and Research Directions* by Avrami et al. became a valuable resource for tracing the positive evolution of the value concept (Avrami, Macdonald, Mason, & Myers, 2019). In this edited volume, Mahdy (2019) argues that despite the current "democratization" of the value-based conservation approach of Eurocentric conservation strategies, cultural heritage conservation focusing on intangible assets created by Arab-Islamic traditions are still overlooked; while Mason (2019) focuses on "traumatic heritage places", where places with tragic or "negative memories" have become culturally significant, challenging traditional value categories and hierarchies. For instance, in the capital city of Turkey, Ankara Railway Station, a heritage monument/site built in 1937 by prominent architect Şekip Akalın in Art Deco style and one of the symbols of the early Republican period in the collective memory of the city, has now acquired a new value as a "traumatic heritage site" (Image 4).

**Image 4.** Ankara Train Station, Ulus, Ankara. Now as a "Traumatic Heritage Place" due to the Ankara Train Station Massacre, a suicide bombing attack on October 15, 2015. The billboard with a statement "democracy" symbolized by a white dove, includes the portraits of some of the deceased (Wikipedia, n.d.-a).

## 5. *Dialogue* value

Although there is a constantly expanding literature on values, the discussions on value-based conservation may often remain subjective.[4] Only when *conventional*, *evolving* and *unconventional* values are all considered in cohesion, the conservation practice will benefit. Here, in addition to a long list of values, one must discuss the importance of the "dialogue value" in participatory conservation.

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[4] The concepts of "value", "function" and "meaning" actually serve the same purpose and that these concepts are often used interchangeably, the difference being a matter of "terminology". See. (Vinas, 2005).

Rapid globalization threatens the loss of traditional and regional identities in design, such as the slow disappearance of local arts, crafts, and traditions, i.e., the cultural heritages of minority groups and at-risk communities. Local communities are often excluded from major decision-making processes in urban transformation. This not only endangers cultural heritage, but also hinders sustainable social change. The 1994 *Nara Document of Authenticity* (Boccardi, 2019) broadened the concept of cultural heritage by recognizing that the concept of value may depend on more than a heritage's use and function (Boccardi, 2019, p. 15), and that a cultural heritage may be endowed with values that take into account traditions and community attachments. The 2005 *Faro Convention* (Council of Europe, 2005) declares that "everyone, alone or collectively, has the right to benefit from the cultural heritage and to contribute towards its enrichment". The 2017 *Delhi Declaration* (ICOMOS, 2017) further promotes "inclusive democratic community engagement processes," emphasizing that heritage is "of all the people, by all the people, for all the people". It also emphasizes community participation in planning, the inclusion of traditional knowledge as opposed to uniform planning, and the use of diverse intercultural dialogues in collaborative decision-making to facilitate conservation. This view shifts the concept of cultural heritage from "witness to the past" to the continuity of cultural traditions – including tangible traditions of ethnic arts, crafts, and daily life practices, and intangible traditions of folk songs, stories, dances, and food consumption, and more. Dialogue-based approaches to conservation tend to focus on the neighborhood scale as a case study. For example, Moulaert et al. (2010) in *Can neighborhoods save the city? Community development and social innovation* examines the need for a neighborhood-scale approach to community development. Similarly, DeFilippis et al. (2010) in *It Takes a Village: Community as Contemporary Social Reform*, discuss community participation in neighborhoods and rural areas.

Understanding the living environment through users' narratives provides a window into their daily lives. These narratives shape the dialogic, value-based approach to conservation that views the neighborhood as being in harmony with them. This consideration fosters a sense of empathy for the local communities and  allows  for  a

diversity of viewpoints, eliminating the potential for personal biases to influence the design process. There are a variety of approaches that consider the "dialogue value": One is the use of digital tools to create an interactive virtual space for storing the "narratives" of local/marginalized groups, with the goal of preserving memory; another is the inclusion of the opinions of marginalized subcultures through informal "dialogues" recorded and shared online. Both aim at sustainable social change in urban transformation initiatives. Another approach is the inclusion of dialogue-based approaches in design/architecture/conservation education.

The multi-layered nature of design is also becoming prevalent in design education through empirical models that incorporate narratives and dialogues. In design schools, the studies and research on post-disaster narratives offer insight into current discussions on design ethics triggered by universal discussions on social justice. Here I conclude the value-based conservation narrative and the "dialogue value" and leave the discussion to the three studies that have more to say about dialogues and narratives in design education in the following chapters. These works aim to introduce new *methodologies* to include dialogues and narratives in urban design, conservation and visual communication. İpek Akpınar, Işıl Uçman, Deniz Canaran, and Zeynep Özkaya İlbey offer a discussion of "Transdisciplinary Design Milieu for Architectural Translation," and Sonat Özcivanoğlu discusses "'Plotting' in Architectural Research: Tracing Possible Futures". Both chapters share experiments in architectural education in Turkey that employ storytelling, narratives, and dialogues. Elia Maniscalco's research, "Design as a Mediator of Languages and Activator of Virtuous Processes," further contributes to global understanding of "dialogue value" in design and conservation processes by focusing on bridging the gap between "traditional knowledge & technological innovation", and "local identities & global development".

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# TRANSDISCIPLINARY DESIGN MILIEU FOR ARCHITECTURAL TRANSLATION

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## 1. Introduction

Communicative context is one of the contexts in which the relationship between the problem of space and the problem of representation in architectural design studies can be conceptualized as a translation problem. When considered in this way, the natural,[1] built, and sociocultural heritage elements of the place can be transformed into a transdisciplinary translation environment through architecture. To what extent can multi-layers of a place be unveiled through architecture? How can a transdisciplinary translation be designed? Given the abovementioned questions, our study aims to create an experimental design studio through transdisciplinary *dialogues*. In order to accomplish this objective, a specific methodology is utilized. The IZTECH Department of Architecture's second-year architectural design studio is established as a communicative learning environment fostering 'multiple design dialogues'. Students were expected to design a "Geo-Cultural Living Laboratory" near Tatar Creek at Gülbahçe Village, Urla, characterized by natural, cultural, archaeological, and historical attributes. In this context, '*dialogue* with place' is initially emphasized. Secondly, since the site is on a university campus, students were asked to design a workspace for researchers associated with the university. Therefore, different stakeholders' thoughts and wishes were considered in the design process. Simultaneously, a *dialogue* was established between users from various disciplines (geology, archaeology, aquatic sciences, architecture, sociology), and stakeholder interaction was ensured through panel discussions and negotiations. Following a brief theoretical framework, our study first depicts a multi-layered place and its context.

Secondly, it unveils a pluralist and dialogue-based architectural milieu and gives the related social actors of this translation platform. Finally, it shares concluding remarks and discusses this experimental journey's process and results. This study, unveiling an experimental and pedagogical journey in architectural design education during a second semester, can contribute to a broader understanding of the setting up of an architectural education process in Turkey and in general.

## 2. Communicative context and *dialogue*-based design approach

The term 'communication' was initially rooted in action but then evolved to signify 'bringing individuals together' and 'transference' (Williams, 1985). Today, it refers to the complex process of exchanging thoughts and meanings between individuals using language as the primary medium. Accordingly, language functions as a system that carries complex meanings, where individuals reflect their knowledge, views, and ideas. In language, words not only describe a concrete and singular phenomenon; they also represent the complex network of thoughts in the mind of the transmitter to the other group. Thus, when communicating through words, layers of meaning are enriched with different contexts and frameworks (Tenbrink et al., 2014).

In the communicative context, it is possible to consider architecture as a field of translation. Colomina (1996) states that thinking about modern architecture involves navigating between the problem of space and the problem of representation. According to this view, modern architecture encompasses a complex process where issues of space and representation interweave. In other words, architecture is an overlapping system of representations (Colomina, 1996). In these representation systems, the built environment acts as an interface in transferring information and becomes a form of expression that carries meaning. In this way, architecture functions not only as a tool that organizes the environment but also as a form of interaction with the environment. The language of architecture transmits layers of meaning to every individual in the community, whether they are architects or not.

The architect also appears as a communicator who addresses the community using this language and constructs the narrative so everyone can read (Mathew, 2008).

Designing an inclusive space within society requires architecture to adopt polyphony and *dialogue* as a field of translation. This polyphony can be effectively addressed through Bakhtin's dialogic concept. Accordingly, the dialogic concept represents a structure where different positions and perspectives coexist. In this way, *dialogue* offers a structure based on the interaction and enrichment of meanings. Bakhtin's dialogic thought opposes monological, single-voiced, closed, and dogmatic approaches. It offers a richness where different meanings constantly interact. Just like in Bakhtin's dialogic context, an architectural design approach focused on *dialogue* creates a space to bring together different possibilities by trying to understand the positions of others (Bakhtin, 1981; Irzık, 2001).

## 3. Transdisciplinary design milieu and architectural studio environment

In order to deal with complex issues and build a comprehensive design framework, dialogue-oriented design approaches also require innovative models such as transdisciplinary collaboration. In this respect, the transdisciplinary approach provides designers a multiple perspective and a comprehensive framework to understand the multi-layered structure of space. The transdisciplinary approach is not limited to the production of disciplines such as architectural planning or restoration, but instead integrates the production of these disciplines as an input into spatial design. This integration results in syntheses that reflect the perspectives of each field (Mery-Ruiz, 2023). In today's world, solving problems requires the collaboration of different disciplines, but approaches with a one-sided perspective make this collaboration difficult.

On the other hand, the transdisciplinary approach supports the production of multifaceted, applicable, and sustainable solutions to complex problems. In this respect, the transdisciplinary approach acts as a tool that helps designers both in  the

production of theoretical knowledge and in the use of this knowledge in decision-making in practice (Lawrence & Despres, 2004).

One of the most important areas where designers use the transdisciplinary approach is the public spaces that are part of everyday life. This approach combines different fields' insights to address the complexity of public spaces. Through this lens, an understanding of the interactions between the social, cultural and physical elements within these spaces is possible. The increasingly changing elements of public spaces make them more than just places; they become important parts of our social life in urban (Mery-Ruiz, 2023). In a transdisciplinary approach and communicative context, architecture functions as a tool for multiple dialogues, and the first step of this approach is taken in the studio environment in architectural education. The studio environment offers many opportunities for *dialogue*, allowing students to understand and internalize professional knowledge and different perspectives.

The studio environment serves as a contemporary internship workshop for architecture students. It offers a collaborative exploration of the design process. Students learn by trial and error and then they develop by sharing their findings. Knowledge gained from public consultation processes – where decision-makers present ideas for urban interventions to the community – can be effectively applied in the studio. In the process, students also develop practical skills such as drawing, engineering, and modeling. This learning space, by its nature, is dialogical and relies transdisciplinary methods of inquiry. Thus, maintaining a dialogic process based on multiple voices contributes to the continuity of the learning experience at advanced levels of undergraduate education (Catina, 2020).

The transdisciplinary approach creates a broader learning space in the studio environment by integrating this communicative context into architectural education. Studio projects can simulate real-life interactions with users and experts. This supports the development of multidimensional thinking and critical perspectives (Tahsiri, 2022). Therefore, students' learning experience and  creative  thinking  skills

will be enhanced by integrating transdisciplinary *dialogue* into architectural design education.

## 4. Aim and methodology

The multi-layered nature of the communicative context in architectural education creates a multidirectional *dialogue* for students. These layers include transdisciplinary communication as well as *dialogue* with the employer and the place. Transdisciplinary *dialogue* supports architecture students to comprehend the complexity of the contemporary built environment and to acquire the necessary skills in this direction (Yocom et al., 2012). The *dialogue* with the employer provides a project orientation in accordance with the expectations and goals of the top management. The *dialogue* with the place involves a comprehensive understanding of the physical characteristics of the environment and designing an architecture that responds to these characteristics, as well as responding to the intangible values of the history, culture, and local community of the place. This multi-layered *dialogue* process allows students to develop their design approach in line with a broader perspective. As a result, students transform their theoretical knowledge into practice and establish a *dialogue* between theory and practice.

This study presents the outcomes of the second-year Architectural Design Studio in the Department of Architecture at IZTECH. The study focuses on a communicative-based approach, aiming for architecture students to develop architectural projects by establishing *dialogues* with the place, engaging in transdisciplinary interactions, and building relationships with both clients and users, as well as bridging theory and practice. The project site, located on the shoreline within the campus of Izmir Institute of Technology (IZTECH), is expected to prioritize research-based design projects.

Throughout the semester, various site visits were conducted to develop a comprehensive understanding of the site. Students attended seminars given by experts from different disciplines who are also potential users of the project area, allowing them to grasp the multidimensional requirements of the project. Additionally,

technical visits to notable architectural examples in nearby settlements helped students develop local and functional awareness within the context of the area. Model-making workshops were organized to enhance architectural communication skills, enabling students to effectively express their design ideas through physical models. Meetings with the project's management were also held to understand client expectations and needs, providing students with the experience of directing their projects based on practical and user requirements. At the end of the term, the completed projects were exhibited, showcasing designs that students developed through the knowledge gained from this *dialogue*-based process (Image 1).
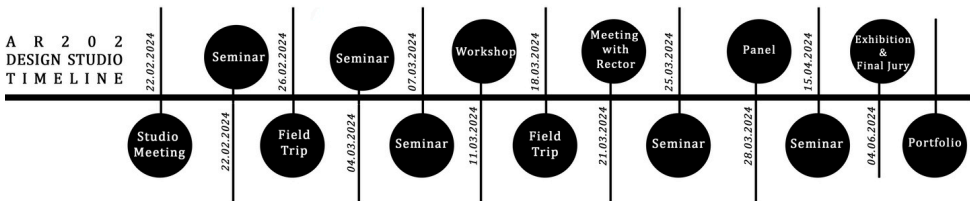


**Image 1.** The methodological approach of the design studio.

## 5. Project area

The project site is located in the Gülbahçe settlement on the northern coast of the Urla-Çeşme Peninsula (Image 2). This area, situated within the boundaries of the IZTECH campus, is home to a significant natural and cultural ecosystem, distinguished by archaeological remains, Posidonia meadows, and natural geothermal features.

The natural environment is extremely rich, the Posidonia Oceanica meadows, in particular. The Gülbahçe bay includes three different P. oceanica types; Tiger Meadows, Atolls, and Barrier Reefs, which makes the place unique in the Mediterranean region. Posidonia meadows extend towards the small island across, 1,5 km from the coast. P. oceanica meadows are habitats that support marine biodiversity, clean the seawater, and produce oxygen. When they die and wash ashore, they prevent coastal erosion. Dried P. oceanica is used as an ecological
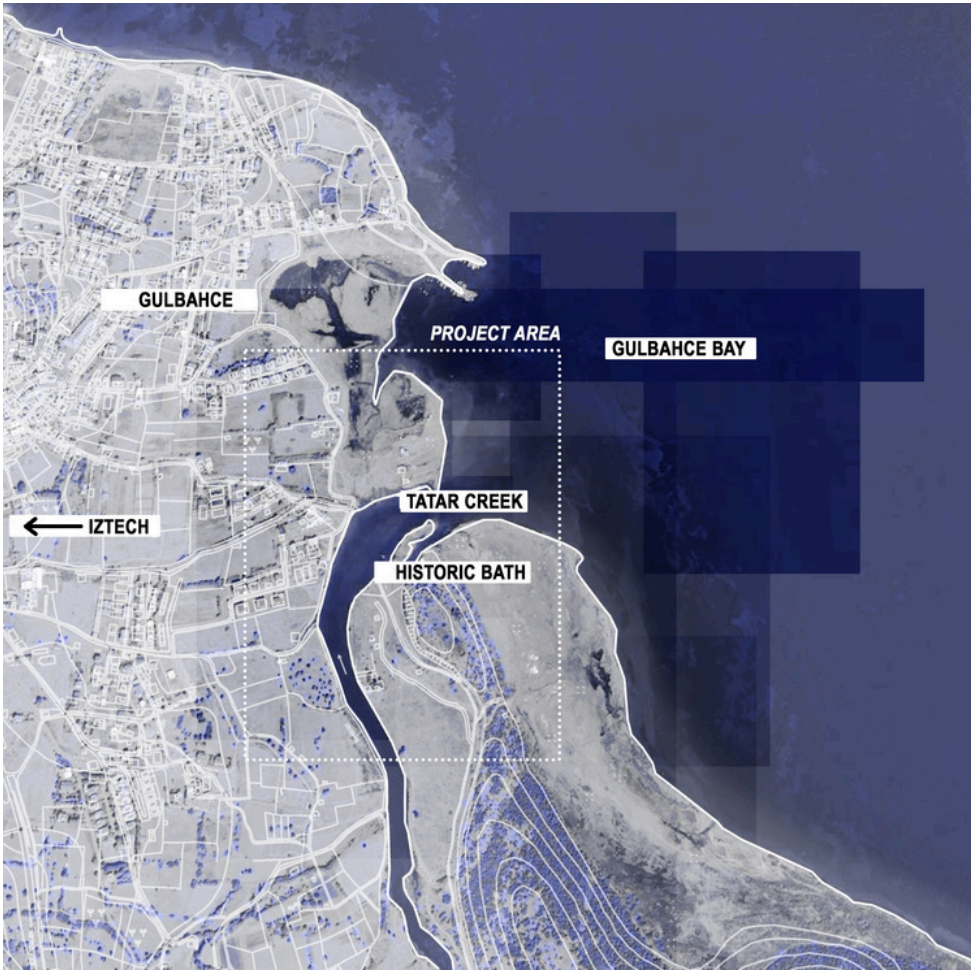
**Image 2.** Project area.

building material for roof insulation, and this is a traditional local building practice that possibly remained from antiquity (Yücel-Gier et al., 2019). The area also features notable geothermal properties, which make the area of focus for the IZTECH Geothermal Research Center. Gülbahçe is also a historically significant settlement, with its origins tracing back to the Early Bronze Age and extending through the Late Roman-Early Byzantine periods. Located at the crossroads of the Ionian cities of

Erythrae, Clazomenae, and Teos (Caymaz, 2023; Çağlıyurt, 2021), the area also features notable historical properties. Close to the project site, a small bathhouse was constructed over a coastal hot spring. The geothermal water source is believed to have been in use since antiquity, while the bathhouse itself is thought to have been built in the 15th-16th centuries (Etlacakuş et al., 2021). This area is also significant for architects, archaeologists, and historians which is highlighted by the restoration of the bathhouse in 2019 by the IZTECH Department of Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage (Image 3).



**Image 3.** Gülbahce Bath. Source: url1

In light of all this information, Gülbahçe stands out as one of the rare settlements distinguished by both its natural wealth and historical significance.

This richness and multi-layered nature make the region a unique platform for bridging different disciplines. The potential for fostering transdisciplinary dialogue is the key factor in selecting this area as the project site.

## 6. Results and discussion

### 6.1. Transdisciplinary way of looking

The multi-layered nature of the communicative context in architectural education creates a multidirectional dialogue for students. These layers include transdisciplinary

communication such as *dialogues* with different disciplines, dialogue the employer and users, and dialogue with the place. Dialogue with different disciplines supports architecture students to comprehend the complexity of the contemporary built environment and to acquire the necessary skills in this direction (Yocom et al., 2012). The dialogue with the employer and users provides a project orientation in accordance with the expectations and goals of the people. The dialogue with the place involves a comprehensive understanding of the physical characteristics of the environment and designing an architecture that responds to these characteristics, as well as responding to the intangible values of the history, culture, and local community of the place. This multi-layered dialogue process allows students to develop their design approach in line with a broader perspective. As a result, students transform their theoretical knowledge into practice and establish a dialogue between theory and practice.

## 6.2. Dialogue with different disciplines

Seminars, workshops, and panels were organized to provide interdisciplinary dialogue. In each seminar, experts from different backgrounds presented their disciplinary perspectives on the field. These areas of expertise include geology, archaeology, cultural heritage, aquaculture, cultural anthropology, and rural sociology. These activities allowed students to integrate information from different disciplines and develop a multi-faceted perspective in their projects. In addition, the information the experts provided helped students make more in-depth and comprehensive analyses of their projects.

The topics covered in these seminars were not limited to theoretical knowledge. They also focused on how this knowledge could be applied in practice. For example, the information provided by geologists had a direct impact on our fieldwork and decisions regarding settlement, form, and mass. The contributions of archaeologists and cultural heritage experts helped us better understand our projects' historical and cultural contexts. The contributions of aquaculture researchers and restoration experts played an important role in terms of sustainability. Cultural anthropologists  and  rural

sociologists allowed us to evaluate the social impacts of our projects and their relations with the local community. In this way, the information conveyed by each discipline enabled the projects to be addressed with a more comprehensive and holistic approach.

## 6.3. Dialogues with employers and users
In addition to various experts, the dialogue between employers and students was also considered an essential input for the project. In this context, a discussion platform was organized where students could interact with employers. In this discussion and transfer platform, students had the opportunity to exchange ideas with upper management (Rector, Vice-Rector, Dean, Assistant Deans Department Heads, etc.). This interaction contributed to the students making their projects more realistic and applicable. Feedback from university employers played an essential role in determining the direction of projects and achieving more effective results.

## 6.4. Dialogue with Place
Engaging in dialogue with the place involved exploring, experiencing, and analyzing the environment. In the initial phase, these analyses aimed to reveal students' individual interactions with the place. Based on each student's experiences, they were expected to represent both the tangible and intangible aspects of the built environment in the area. These experiences—comprising elements such as the natural surroundings, flora and fauna, the physical and cultural environment, thresholds, and boundaries—were documented through on-site sketches (Image 4). This process encouraged students to record their observations and experiences in detail, enabling the in-depth analyses that would serve as the foundation for their projects. In doing so, students developed a comprehensive understanding of the project area, fostering a deeper connection with its unique characteristics and context.

**Image 4.** Field experience and environmental analyses.

In the next phase, a comprehensive digital exploration was undertaken, acknowledging the direct relationship between students' in-depth understanding of the site and the project's success. Working in groups, students revisited each natural and constructed detail of the area. In this process, they were expected to create a solid foundation for their projects by employing digital drawing techniques and analytical methods. Each group modeled different aspects of the site in digital detail, preparing data to be used in later stages of the project (Image 5). This stage fostered the development of students' abilities to work both individually and collaboratively. It also enabled them to apply their technical skills in a way that deepened their understanding of the site's multifaceted features.
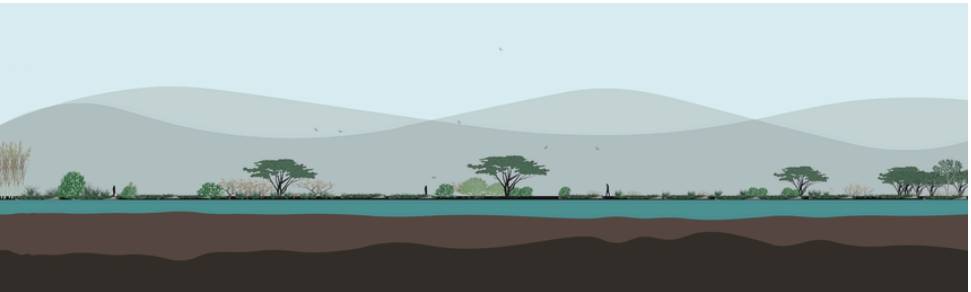


**Image 5.** Digitalisation of the qualities of the area. (Prepared by Alp Buldanlıoğlu, Arda Ekmekçi, Beste Gül Uymaz, Ece Çetin).

## 6.5. Architecture as a translation milieu

Throughout the design process, our studio adopted a conceptual approach centered on establishing dialogues between theory and practice. In this approach, students were expected to consider user needs, environmental conditions, as well as cultural and historical influences when making design decisions. In later stages, students were encouraged to present their conceptual frameworks based on transdisciplinary interactions and site analyses, using architecture as a translation tool to express their insights.

The site's position on multiple fault lines enabled the integration of the concept of "tectonics", one of the primary themes of transdisciplinary dialogues, into the projects. This concept offered a new perspective on how the earth's movements and fractures could be reflected in architectural design. In their projects, students designed structures aiming to reflect geological formations and environmental interaction, symbolically translating tectonic activity into architectural forms. These fractured structures were conceived to be both earthquake-resistant and reflective of the local geography.

The site's location on fault lines also brought geothermal richness, another transdisciplinary theme, into focus. The theme of "geothermal" influenced the incorporation of water wells into the projects, thereby providing student designs with a framework that included the research and application of sustainable energy sources. Given the site's significant historical background, another transdisciplinary dialogue revolved around "cultural heritage". In this context, student projects were connected to the existing Roman bath on-site, and solutions were developed to preserve historical and cultural values. This approach enriched the projects with historical and cultural context while also reinterpreting the social and communal functions of Roman baths within the designs, integrating direct access to the bath area.

The site's natural ecosystem was addressed through conceptual discussions centered on nature, water, and "aquatic life". Accordingly, the region's relationship with water

inspired the design of structures either positioned over or incorporating water. These projects created their architectural frameworks by offering sustainable solutions in harmony with aquatic ecosystems. In other words, these designs not only supported aquatic life by positioning structures on the water's surface but also brought a new, innovative approach to architectural design.

Additionally, the dialogues established with the site led students to prioritize specific design criteria in their projects and seek a design language "harmonious with the environment". Thus, structures were emphasized that aligned with the environmental scale, maintained a distance from neighboring buildings, and were elevated to minimize intervention in natural spaces. Designs that respected public access and use, considering the impact of coastal use on social life and urban rights, were also prioritized. Additionally, structures were designed to create new public spaces within courtyards, accommodate open and semi-open areas with attention to climate, engage with water without infringing on coastal land-use rights, and address potential earthquake risks (Image 6).
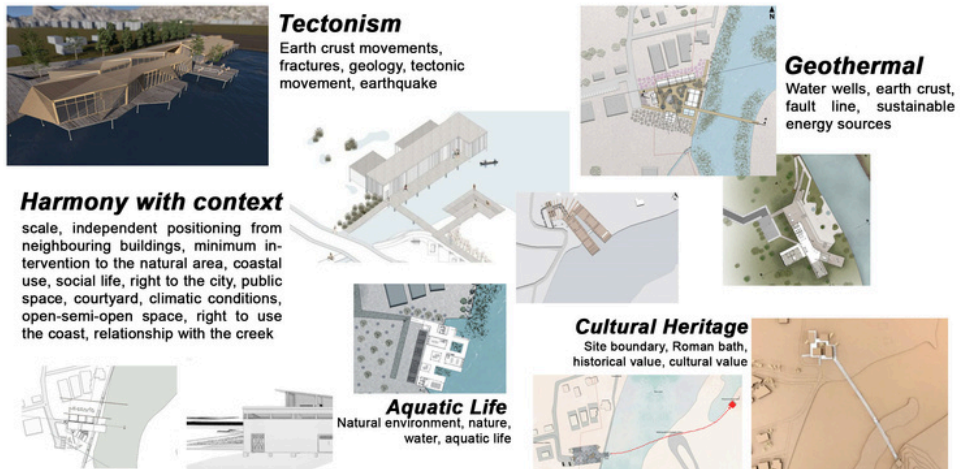


**Image 6.** Architectural translations of theory and practice.

## 7. Conclusion

The second-year architectural design studio of the IYTE Department of Architecture begins with a brief theoretical framework, presents a multilayered place and its context in detail, and defines a dialogue-based architectural environment. Throughout the studio process, the theoretical framework shaped by dialogues with various experts and stakeholders was enriched through deep engagement with the site and an in-depth exploration of its multilayered structure. In this process, concepts that formed the site's essence or held the potential to do so were translated into architectural expressions, giving form to these ideas. Thus, theoretical discussions became integral to shaping architecture, leading to projects where theory and practice interacted harmoniously. This integrated approach contributed to architecture students' ability to develop more sustainable, holistic, and site-oriented designs. This study, which describes an experimental and pedagogical journey in architectural design education in the second year, will contribute to a broader understanding of the architectural education process in Turkey and in general.

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# "PLOTTING" IN ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH: TRACING POSSIBLE FUTURES

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## 1. Introduction

Narratives allow us to make sense of events and experiences, and through the telling and retelling stories, we create meaning and frame the world around us. This study proposes narrative(s) as a tool for exploring human inhabitance, and this paper delves into the potential of narrative as a tool for architectural research. In the first part of the paper, I will introduce the overlapping territories of narratives and architecture and the need for a narrative approach. I will propose the coordinates of a narrative setting as valid frameworks for architectural research. In the second part, the discussion on narratives as a tool will be narrowed down to the act of plotting,[1] the process of weaving together the contingencies, verisimilitudes, and necessities of existence. Informed by this theoretical framework, I will introduce a graduate studio design exercise, "Plotting" in the third section of the paper. This exercise will be further contextualized through a case study, the "Plotting for Care" assignment which was implemented within ARCH502 Design and Research Studio II.[2]

While narrative thought and the act of narration are prevalent in human existence, we can raise the question: When does it become a necessary tool for understanding? In what domains of knowledge is narrative most prevalent and effective? What kinds of subjects and situations are most conducive to narrative interpretation? Narrative becomes indispensable when confronting situations that are marked by multiple

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[1] The term plotting can be used as an equivalent for olayörgüleştirme in Turkish. Following Ricœur's lead in translating Greek muthos as intrigue in French, similar to the English plot, we will use olayörgüsü to refer to muthos. In this context, "the act of plotting" can be translated as "olayörgüleştirme, olayörgüsü oluşturma".

[2] The mentioned assignment was prepared by the author and conducted within the scope of ARCH502 Design and Research Studio II (Spring 2024) in the M.Arch program of TEDU. The ARCH501 and ARCH502 studios were conducted by Prof. Dr. Berin Gür, and Alper Al (PhD student in TEDU Architecture Program). This assignment was shared in a presentation within the *5th International Congress on Ambiances*, with an emphasis on the emplotment in the development of a critical position regarding the practices of care. This paper shifts focus to the broader potential of plotting regarding architectural research.

potential outcomes, uncertainty, and the influence of diverse actors on events with varied motivations. In such scenarios, intentions and conflicts of wishes and interests create a complex web of relationships. A narrative approach allows one to reconstruct these relationships. Narratives are required to make sense of such conditions, identifying what matters at present. The search for kinds of (meaningful) relations between events and bodies/entities can be denoted as the fundamental precondition delineating the presence and indisputability of narrative. As Gary Saul Morson (2003, pp. 60-61) noted in *Narrativeness*, a sequence of events without a meaningful link constitutes a narrative without narrativeness. To illustrate, "The boy ran away and then his mother got sick with grief" constitutes a minimal story, since there is no process but a simple connection. In Morson's words, having a process, "the activity of tracing possible futures from a given past" is essential to have narrativeness (Morson, 2003, p. 61). Moreover, narrative necessitates the sense of presentness; as Morson (2003, p. 61) stated "the present moment must matter. It cannot be a mere derivative of earlier events or dictated by later events".

To further explore the concept of presentness concerning narratives, I will introduce the Ricœurian conceptualization of recounted time and build space. In the article *Architecture and Narrativity*, Paul Ricœur provides us with a reading of narratives that encompasses the presentness; "At the root of narrative time, there is this mixture of simple 'instant,' which is a break in universal time and of the living present where there is only one present: now" (Ricœur, 2016, p. 32). Ricœur had already explained how the living present differs from the universal time of clocks in reference to Augustine's Confessions in the first volume of *Time and Narrative* (1983). Psychological time is an expansion between the 'present of the past' (memory) and 'present of the future' (expectation). Consequently, by assigning the fate of the past to memory and the fate of what is to come to expectation, the present moment is expanded and dialectically engaged. Such a present is neither past nor future, nor the point-like present. Augustine relies on a three-fold equivalence of memory, expectation, and perception (Ricœur, 1983, p. 11). Building on his reading of Augustine, Ricœur conceptualizes "the time of narrative as a rupture and suture

between physical and experienced time", bridging the gap between memory, expectations, and attention. There is an expansion, from the "present of the present" to the "present of past and future". In this framework, the present moment becomes a node from which narratives unfold.

In a manner akin to how narrative time fractures the continuum between universal and experienced time, Ricœur, in *Architecture and Narrativity*, argues that "built space is a mixture between places of life that surround the living body and a three-dimensional geometrical space in which each point is some place" (Ricœur, 2016, p. 32). In that sense, just as the present moment acts as the nexus of narrative time, "the site is the node of space that we create, that we build" (Ricœur, 2016, p. 32). The author also remarks that the "time of the narrative and the space of architecture are not limited to simple parts of universal time and geometrical space" (Ricœur, 2016, p. 32). This remark on the overlapping territory of narrative and architecture suggests that there are non-metric, non-quantifiable forms of knowledge about events.

Both architectural design, research, and construction processes, as well as the act of narration, play a mediative role between humans and the world. Regarding any knowledge of the world, at least three factors play a role: the world itself (*space*), the *subject* addressing it (narrator or researcher), and the *time* in which both are present (instance). As Tahsin Yücel argues in *Anlatı Yerlemleri* (1979), neither architecture nor narrative can be configured independent of these three coordinates. The assertion that narrative can transcend spatial constraints (Bremond, 1980, p. 99) is untenable. As Yücel points out, referencing Bremond's work, this notion collapses under the weight of reality; every action and utterance, whether real or fiction, is rooted in a spatial context. As it is a misconception to think narrative does not require spatiality, it is equally reductive to view architecture solely in terms of space, void, enclosure, and structure. Acknowledging narrative and architecture as fields that produce (or deal with) knowledge about the world, we can look for a more specialized set. This study proposes the sequence of events/actions, characters, and types of relations (whether it is a contingency, exigency, or determinist relation) as constitutive

elements of a narrative and coordinates for setting architectural research.

## 2. The act of plottIng vs. plot as structure

The act of plotting is making a configuration of events in time through the acts of selecting and arranging. The term plot had been conceptualized as a structure, which holds individual events together and makes them understandable (Forster, 1927; Frye, 1957; White, 1973). Within that approach, narratives are handled as arrangements where the meanings of particular actions are gained their meaning through their placement within pre-defined archetypal plot structures. Regarding literary fiction, Northrop Frye proposed that the "plot consists of somebody doing something" and introduces a classification system regarding the hero's power of action, which "may be greater than ours, less, or roughly the same" (1957, p. 33). He suggests that narratives are necessarily emplotted within one of the five modes of Western literature (myth, romance, comedy, tragedy, and satire). An extension of this conceptualization of emplotment beyond its field may recall Hayden White's (1973) examination of historical texts in terms of how they follow one of the archetypal narrative structures.

This study, however, will not focus on emplotment as a structure, as Frye and White did, but on plotting as an operation. Following Ricœur (1983), who emphasizes the act of plotting rather than the plot itself, we will trace the concept of the plot back to Aristotle's concept of muthos, "the organization of the events" [-*è tōn pragmatōn sustasis* (50a5)]. Ricœur (1983, p. 33) shifts the focus on definitions of structures to the processes of structuration: "We must understand by sustasis not 'system', but the active sense of organizing the events into a system, so as to mark the operative character of all the concepts in the Poetics". Muthos is related to composing more than composition or structure. In that sense, Poetics is identified as the art of composing plots (Ricœur, 1983, p. 33).

## 3. Plotting as design exercise in architectural research

Ricœur (1983, p. 33) suggests that time becomes human time only when it is organized through a narrative mode, and narrative, in turn, "attains its full meaning

when it becomes a condition of temporal existence" (Ricœur, 1983, p. 52). In the first chapter of this paper, we emphasized the role of narrative in shaping human experience, particularly its ability to bridge the gap between memory, expectation, and attention. This mediation between time and narrative occurs through the act of plotting. This study posits that the narrative approach, particularly the act of plotting, can enrich architectural design and research. The effort to construct a plot enables researchers to reconsider the data collected from various standpoints. To contextualize this proposal, I will introduce a graduate studio assignment based on plotting the present condition for conflict or post-conflict zones.

## 4. An assignment on the act of plotting for the graduate design & research studio

The *Plotting for Care* assignment was conducted as a part of the Graduate Design and Research Studio II,[3] which focused on the issue of care. Each studio participant had already chosen a specific post-disaster or post-conflict zone to investigate in the first semester of the studio. The assignment, *Plotting for Care*, aimed to clarify the need to care, for whom, and what for, and the identification of the matter and (re)configuration of relations to propose a ground for counter-intervention. The participants were expected to plot the problem, struggle, or conflict that affects all living and non-living systems. The exercise requires them to employ both human and nonhuman characters and to shift perspectives through varied narrative voices. The choice of the medium was left to the participants, but they were reminded of the medium dependency of narratives. The workshop, spanning three weeks, began with an introductory session on the concepts of narrativeness, narrativity of architecture, and presentness. Participants were then assigned the *Plotting for Care* exercise. They were guided to consider emplotment as structuration of events  through  identification

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3  As stated in the course syllabus, promoting situational, relational, and systemic design approaches, the studio ARCH501 explored how the ethics of care, a position cultivated by social justice activists and eco-feminists, can inspire alternative social, spatial, and environmental futures. Architectures of care are expected to be searched for from various perspectives by considering the term's political, social, and historical implications. As a continuation of the fall semester, ARCH 502, the graduate Design and Research studio II, calls for defining a critical position in dealing with post-disaster and post-conflict zones by developing a strategic design approach and raises the question, "How can thinking architecture with care shape alternative social, spatial, and environmental futures, employing situational, relational, and systemic design approaches?"

and reconfiguration of the links between event(s), actors (human and non-human), and research field. It can be stated that the assignment provoked researchers to re-configure the situations and kind of relations linking events with subjects regarding conflict zones that have been studied.

## 5. Reflections on the assignment

### 5.1. Fictional façade as a plotting mechanism

Through the project *Generational Trauma: Right to Remember*,[4] we will explore the manner in which past experiences imprint themselves upon memory and how plot construction relates the present of the past (memories) to the perception of the present and the perspective of the future. The participant investigated the conflict in the Balkans probing the question "how not to forget". Instead of studying memorials and monuments devoted to loss, the participant suggested finding new ways to ensure that the past is not forgotten. She examined the scars left by heavy weaponry on buildings to understand how the city's residents remember the past and the variation in their attitudes toward these marks. Through a comprehensive review of diverse sources, such as academic studies, reports, diaries, and interviews, the participant's early research provided a multifaceted understanding of the commemoration of wartime experience. Within the workshop, the participant transformed her research into a collection of stories narrated through a semi-fictional façade (Image 1). The façade is constructed by bringing various fragments of the city together. The openings on the façade serve as portals to different stories belonging to inhabitants.

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4 The project Generational Trauma: Right to Remember by Belkıs Sena Top (M.Arch Graduate Student) is accessed from: https://www.architecturesofcare.com/belkis-sena-top

**Image 1.** Collection of the stories, the semi-fictional façade, and openings working as a portal to stories.

It is possible to locate a shift in this participant's use of narratives for research with the introduction of the assignment. The collection and compilation of existing stories formed the initial phase of the research; at that stage, she employed fiction to explore and engage with urban wartime experiences. The plotting assignment posed the challenge of transforming this pile of stories into a coherent whole for this student. At that point, the façade construction served as a narrative device that changed the way the compilation of stories communicated with the possible audience of this research. It can be stated that the semi-fictional façade is the plot structure of the overall narration, weaving together various perspectives on memory and remembrance, the presence of the past with the present. What is unique to this plotting mechanism is the way it reveals the inhabitants, the way it engages readers with their lives and memories, rather than the existence of a narrator's voice who reads each of the stories. Plotting reveals the divergences in subjects' experiences of events, together with memory and expectation in an extended present.

## 5.2. Matrix of encounters as the narrator

The project, *[Un-]registered Ege: Ship as an Agency of Care*,[5] focused on the archipelago of the Aegean Sea, specifically exploring the theme of forced displacement. Defining the Aegean Sea as a "third body manifesting in physical and political realms" and "the body of water as a witness to displacement, misplacement, and replacement", this participant proposed a reinterpretation of the "unseen border architectures and politics of maritime space between Turkey and Greece". In response to the given assignment, the participant reproduced the data on "institutionalized acts that utilize the water body as an element of aggressive interventions" through planimetric instance drawings. Subsequently, she assembled a movement matrix of the vessels (Image 2) by combining a thick layer of maps with instances depicting various encounters between bodies, land, and power. The matrix depicted a spectrum of movement from inflatable boats or overcrowded immigrant vessels to the Coast Guards.
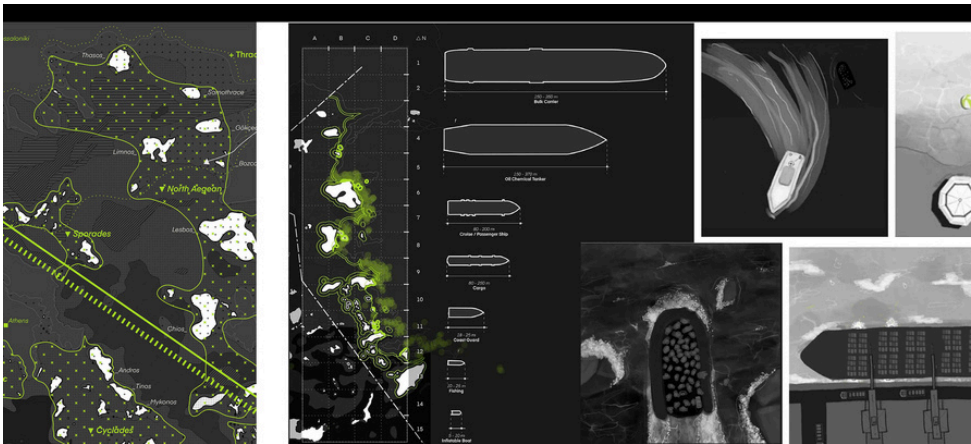


**Image 2.** Map and the matrix of vessel acts & encounters: Institutionalized acts that utilize the water body. Source: Produced by Deniz Yeni (2024).

5  The project [Un-]registered Ege: Ship as an Agency of Care by Deniz Yeni(M.Arch Graduate Student) is accessed from: https://www.architecturesofcare.com/deniz-yeni

Dealing with a fluid and ambiguous zone, a field shaped by the identities who encounter it, the participant's narrative departs from conventional plot structures. Frames/instances, together with maps, (re)construct the landscape of possibilities.

## 5.3. Glitch: Narration of Error

In contrast to other participants' plot constructions, this case, *Error: Displacement and Loss of Heritage*,[6] demonstrates that not all urban narratives strive for coherence.

Participant's research focused on Hasankeyf; a historical site situated along the Tigris River in southeastern Turkey. Despite its archeological significance, the town and its surrounding sites were partially submerged beneath the rising waters of the Ilısu Dam project. The ancient settlement was partially relocated before it was flooded. For the assignment, the participant focused on these relocated historical structures' sudden displacements. Her narration took the form of an animation with a series of glitches (Image 3), in which an abrupt shift in the spatiotemporal qualities of the town was revealed. This project enabled us to view displacement from a unique perspective; through the eyes of relocated structures like the minaret, these events appear as disruptions in the fabric of space-time.
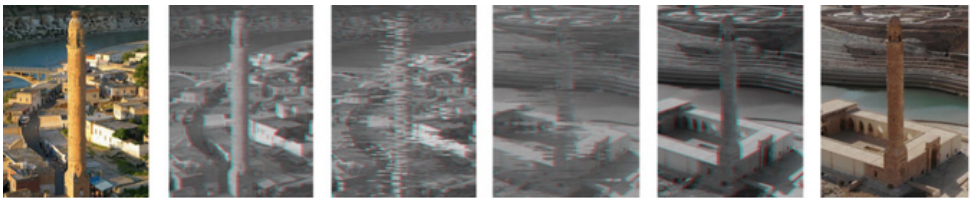


**Image 3.** Stills from the animation by the participant. Source: Produced by Esra Durmaz (2024).

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6 The project Error: Displacement and Loss of Heritage by Esra Durmaz (M.Arch Graduate Student) is accessed from: https://www.architecturesofcare.com/esra-durmaz

## 5.4. Spatial Engagement of the Narrator through Comic Book

Through this researcher's case, *Control Over Body in Prison Architecture: Spatial Extremities*,[7] we can see that the plotting exercise is well-suited for the engagement of the narrator with spatio-temporal experiences. Without having a territorial focus, the participant studied the institutions of control over the body in the studio. The investigation covered four distinct institutions: prisons, zoos, refugee camps, and police stations. He classified these institutions based on their control and restriction mechanisms through spatial arrangements. The resulting profiles were compiled into a dossier (Image 4). Within the workshop's scope, he focused on prison architecture and investigated the spatial extremities. Moving from the format of a dossier to a comic book, the participant framed his research into an escape story (Image 4). He utilized the previous documentation of spatial configurations to narrate the experience of these arrangements.
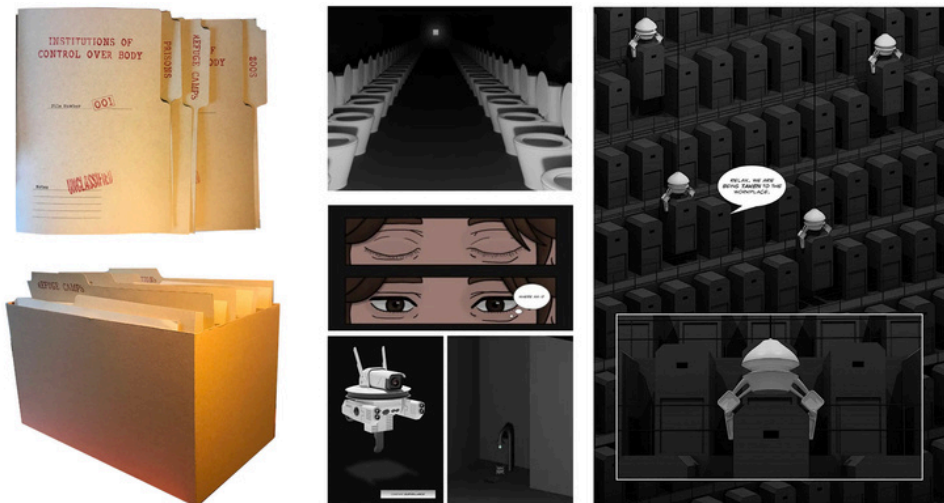


**Image 4.** Profile of the institutions of control and the first page of the graphic novel.
Source: Produced by Ekin Meşe (2024).

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7 The project Control Over Body in Prison Architecture: Spatial Extremities by Ekin Meşe (M.Arch Graduate Student) is accessed from: https://www.architecturesofcare.com/ekin-meşe

The participant transitioned from an archival documentary approach to fictional storytelling. The shift was prompted by the meta-spatial nature of profiling and its limitations regarding the engagement with the experience of spatial and temporal limits enforced by control mechanisms. The comic book he created during the workshop encompasses bodies and their motivation, expectations, and experiences.

## 6. Evaluation of the assignment

The *Plotting for Care* assignment can be regarded as an experiment in integrating narrative techniques into ongoing architectural research studies. Through this example, we can identify the following contributions of plot construction to the ongoing research processes in ARCH502:

a) Critical reframing: Reconsideration of the types of relations between events (contingency, verisimilitude, necessity) and moving beyond the simplistic cause-effect relations enabled participants to re-evaluate the conflicts.
b) Beyond black and white: The narrative mode encouraged participants to move beyond binary judgments and embrace the complexities of real-world situations.
c) Multiplied perspectives: Identification of the characters and the selection of narrative voice (possibility of being absent from the narrative or inside of it as in first-person stories) and the organization of shifts between the time of narrative and the narrated time enabled participants to develop a more nuanced understanding of the conflicts and practices they are examining. In that sense, rather than identifying who to care for, the act of plotting allowed participants to adopt multiple perspectives regarding care.

As discussed in the second part of this paper, this research investigates the potential of the act of plotting to reconfigure relationships rather than imposing plot structures. Consequently, participants were not required to transform the data they previously extracted to a predetermined organization. Instead, they were encouraged to revisit their prior acts of selection, arrangement, and synthesis. This shift in the conceptualization of the plot aligns with the participants' narrations that diverge from archetypal plot patterns.

## 7. Conclusion

This study explores the potential of narrative in the general sense as a tool for investigating human experience across spatial and temporal dimensions and, more specifically the act of plotting for revealing new layers of meaning regarding human-nonhuman coexistence. It proposes plotting as a design exercise for integrating the act of narration into architecture education and research. It is believed that the effort of plotting makes researchers reconsider their present position in the light of the past and future. To narrate a plot construction, one must analyze the field under examination as a series of events, the individuals involved in these events, and the spatial and temporal context of these events. Narrative construction necessitates a reimagining of the relation between space-time-subject, in other words, transcending geometrical notions of space and universal time.

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# DESIGN AS A MEDIATOR OF LANGUAGES AND AN ACTIVATOR OF VIRTUOUS PROCESSES

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## 1. Introduction

Globalisation's homogenising pressures have put local craft traditions and regional identities in jeopardy worldwide (Monteiro, 2020). Amidst these critical scenarios, new design paradigms have arisen as mediators of knowledge and processes (Bistagnino, 2008). This new design approach is able to bridge traditional knowledge and emerging technologies, local identities and global developments. The evolution we observe in the epistemology of the design practice is the direct consequence of a paradigm shift in the contemporary global ecosystem marked by increased interconnection between peripheries and their cultures (Noel, 2023) and in a global-scale process of decolonisation of cultures and identities (Watson & Davies, 2019).

This study starts from the need to examine and clarify the complexity at the intersection of contemporary design and crafts that result in a new hybrid design discipline we call *New Design Craft*. This refers to a hybrid approach in which designers and craftspeople actively conduct ongoing research on sustainability issues and focus their work on the creation of new materials, processes, and products. This multidisciplinary dialogue serves as the foundation of the virtuous activation and empowerment of local communities whose agency is restored by design (Franzato et al., 2013). This research maps out instances of hybrid design on a European scale to systemically curate an abacus of new models and processes. It suggests the need for a redefinition of design as a mediator of cultural languages able to optimise processes that promote the creation of more just and sustainable futures.

Industrial design – identifying itself with the principles guiding the First Industrial Revolution – has traditionally mirrored the Western industrial model (Papanek, 1984). This system has been both a catalyst for global development but also a driver of cultural homogenisation. If it has been a  propellent  for  the  advancement  of  global

economies, it has also made local traditional craft practices and regional identities extremely vulnerable (Monteiro, 2020). Under the pressure of this and other sustainability issues, contemporary designers have started looking for alternative design paradigms more aligned with the idea of working with and for nature.

On the other hand, the advent of portable technologies enabling at-home, hand-made self-production processes has brought design and crafts closer together than ever. The classical contraposition between technical mass production and artisanal small series – that for over a century has been the foundation of the argument that sees crafts as less evolved creative disciplines due to their inability to satisfy the needs of the masses in an economically competitive way – is weakened by the evidence that contemporary hybrid design practices are reconnecting with their most experimental roots defining a new discipline that is neither industrial design nor traditional crafts (Fry et al., 2019). This new discipline expresses itself with small technical series and highly experimental products that deny the imposed uniformity of industrial production and rediscover new languages celebrating the identity and heritage of smaller and culturally diverse communities (Izidio et al., 2018) (Image 1).
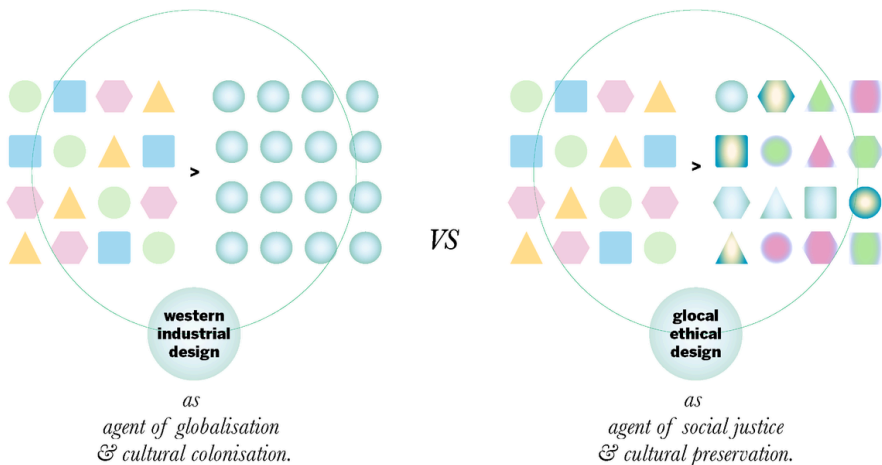


**Image 1.** The socio-cultural effects of Western Industrial Design vs more ethical approaches to Design.

## 2. Sustainability: Anatomy of a wicked problem

This research explores the role of what we have defined as *New Design Craft* as a hybrid, alternative model rooted in cultural sustainability strategies. The challenges inherent in building sustainable strategies lie in sustainability's nature of a wicked problem (Murphy, 2012) as, within a closed ecosystem, what benefits one community may harm a neighbouring one. This inherent conflict prompts a need to move beyond conventional sustainability frameworks which often consider only one dimension at a time – such as the environmental or economic spheres – and aspire to more holistic approaches to what has been defined as restorative sustainability (Weber, 1958) (Image 2).
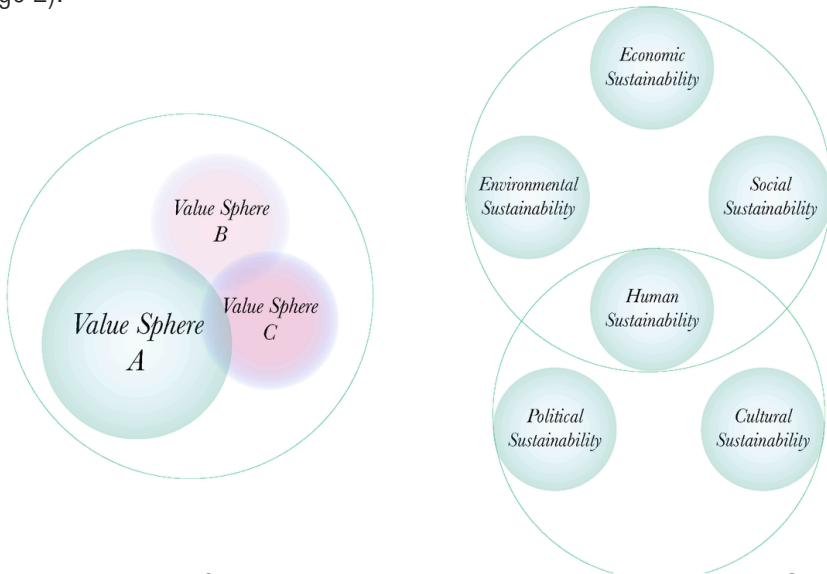


**Image 2.** Anatomy of a wicked problem: In Weber's theory, the intrinsic *Spheres of Values of Sustainability* are constantly in mutual tension.

## 3. Radical indigenism: Principles for restorative sustainability

An example of a restorative sustainability framework, Radical Indigenism suggests the need for the simultaneous balancing of the social, cultural, economic, and environmental spheres of sustainability, all of which are deeply interconnected (Watson & Davis, 2019) (Image 3). This view challenges Western models that compartmentalise these dimensions, advocating instead for a holistic and

interdependent approach, where each aspect of sustainability is restored and respected. A central concept in Radical Indigenism is that of the so-called Indigenous and Local Ecological Knowledge (ILEK), a term encompassing the traditional know-how and practices developed over centuries through harmonious interaction with specific ecosystems (Mellegård & Boonstra, 2020). Examples of ILEK, like the construction of suspended bridges using just the aerial roots of *f. Elastica* and skills passed down over centuries, reflect an organic integration of social, cultural, and ecological knowledge (Watson & Davis, 2019). Within this framework, local craft traditions can be seen as ILEK, embodying unique cultural expressions and practical solutions developed in response to environmental conditions (Image 3).



RESTORATIVE SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES

ILEK PROMOTION

CRAFTS = ILEK CARRIER

ILEK: Indigenous and Local Ecological Knowledge

For hundreds of years, the Khasis of Meghalaya have manipulated the aerial roots of the rubber fig tree (Ficus elastica) to build sturdy bridges.

**Image 3.** Radical Indigenism as a model for Restorative Sustainability and ILEK Promotion.

The initial hypothesis guiding this research is that *New Design Craft* can embody a model of design that mediates between diverse cultural languages, promotes ecological knowledge, and fosters new approaches to sustainability that diverge from the capitalistic, product-oriented focus of Western industrial design. In this approach, designers position themselves as facilitators of dialogues and mediators of processes

of cultural empowerment (Bistagnino, 2008). This change is part of a broader cultural shift characterised by the decolonisation of local identities and the attempt to blend traditional crafts and emerging technologies (Mainsah & Morrison, 2014).

In examining *New Design Craft*, this paper argues that a hybrid approach in design is necessary to address today's socio-environmental challenges. In contrast to mass industrial production, which often sacrifices local identity and creativity in favour of uniformity and scalability, New Design Craft celebrates diversity and locality, aligning itself with contemporary movements of design activism toward a decolonised and sustainable future. Ultimately, the research wants to find an answer to the following question: *How can hybrid design practices blend local crafts and emerging technologies to support environmental and cultural sustainability, adopting a Design Justice approach that enables more just and sustainable futures?*

More specifically, it investigates the differences and similarities in the epistemology of making in crafts and design, the role of emerging technologies in the hybridisation of design disciplines, and the role that hybrid design practices can play in pursuing socio-environmental justice. The research objective is to reconstruct an analysis of the new paradigms we can observe in the contemporary design landscape and derive general principles to be summarised in a New Design Craft Manifesto, guiding future interventions of restorative sustainability.

## 4. Methodology

The research is rooted in Post-Positivism. In this paradigm, we move beyond the idea of one objective reality and embrace complexity, assuming that there are multiple perspectives and truths. In this case, this starts with the acknowledgement of our Western biases which often derive from unconscious assumptions imposed by the Western Privilege.

### 4.1. Secondary Research: Research themes

To provide a holistic understanding of the dynamics at the intersection of design, crafts, and societal evolution, the research adopts both deskwork and fieldwork research. The approach to the research combines the analysis of case studies and

surveys to collect data from both primary and secondary sources. At the core of the deskwork, a literature review is carried out to investigate the intricacies of the link between design and craft. This investigation goes beyond the analysis of the philosophy of Western industrial design to understand design's changing position in contemporary society and includes new definitions of sustainability as that offered by the *Design Justice Movement* (Costanza-Chock, 2020) and the *Lo-Tek movemen*t (Watson & Davis, 2019). From the main focus on Design & Craft, originated a network of connected topics exploring the role of design in today's complexity, effectively described with the concepts of *Designing for the Pluriverse* (Escobar, 2018), *Liquid Design* (Bovo, 2022), *Design Panism* (Lorusso, 2023), *Liberatory Design* (Carey, 2020), *Design for Social Change* (Noel, 2023), *Design for Belonging* (Wise, 2022), and *Design for Ambiguity* (Small & Schmutte, 2022) (Image 4).
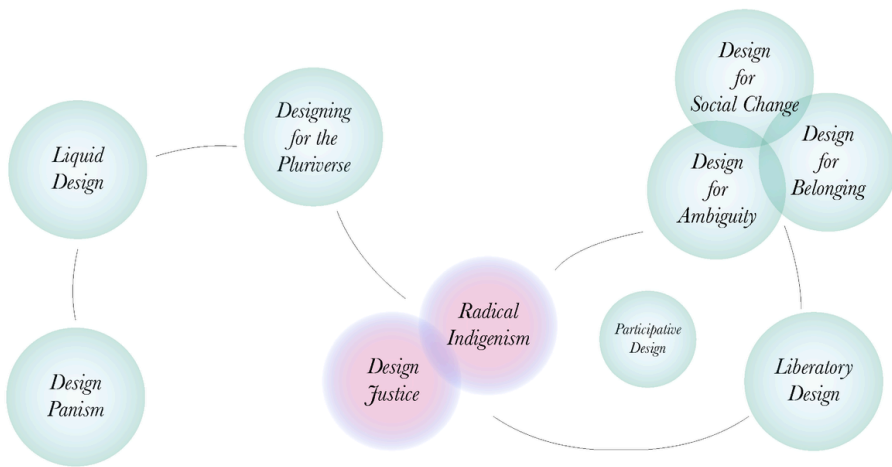


**Image 4.** Visual mapping of the thematic literature review.

## 4.2. Primary research: Inclusion/exclusion criteria

Simultaneously, the fieldwork involves a multifaceted process that includes the identification and curation of 150 case studies. Inclusion and exclusion criteria are used to choose case studies that are relevant to the study objectives. Specifically, the research includes European and Ukrainian design studios and independent designers actively involved in the areas of self-production, bio-materials, local

identities and material culture, spanning across the last 50 years but with a special focus on the Made in Italy movement compared against representatives of the contemporary European landscape. On the contrary, we exclude from the study, the projects falling outside of the geo-historical coordinates and/or involving initiatives of feigned promotion, mass production and distribution, and disregard of the Sustainable Development Goals defined by the UN Agenda 2030 (Image 5).



**Image 5.** Primary research: Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

## 4.3. Flow and methods

The channels utilised for the selection of the case studies include (Image 6):

- Academic channels, such as specialised conferences and journals,
- Non-academic channels, such as scraping of forums and self-promotion media (websites/social media),
- Direct networking, via social media and specialised events.

Screening questionnaires are distributed to the selected sample, with the double goal of further filtering the case studies and kicking off the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. This phase culminates with 50 in-depth sync or async interviews with

the most interesting cases. These interviews seek to gather insights by adding a qualitative dimension to quantitative data derived from the first questionnaire. The goal is to extract factual information as well as tacit knowledge and experiential wisdom from the narratives of the selected case studies.

The main topics explored in the interviews were:

- The studio/designer's Demographics;
- The studio/designer's Mission;
- The studio/designer's Values;
- The studio/designer's Process;
- The studio/designer's Social/ Political Sphere of Influence;
- The studio/designer's Outputs.

The study also includes an action research approach which aims to shift from observation and analysis to proactive intervention, through the facilitation of workshops with key stakeholders to contribute to the definition of a *Manifesto for New Design Craft* (Image 6).
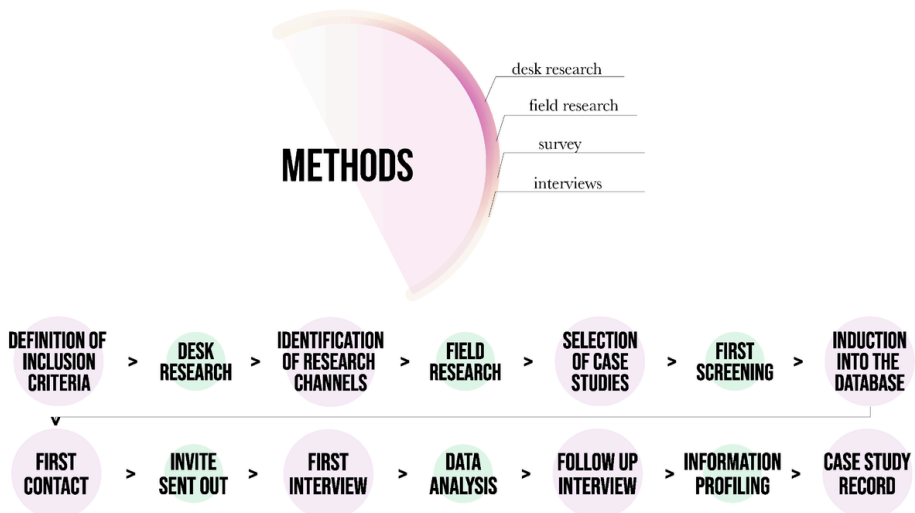


**Image 6.** Primary research: Workflow and phases.

## 4.4. Addressees of the research
The research recognises the significance of engaging diverse stakeholders such as designers, craftspeople, local communities, policymakers, and marginalised groups, to foster a holistic approach to just and sustainable futures.

## 4.5. Elements of Innovation and Scientific Relevance
The proposed research has strengths in both originality and scientific significance. Starting with the relevance of the topic: the potential of hybrid design approaches for sustainable development. The research adds to the continuing discussion about global challenges in line with the priorities defined by the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. The research is rooted in methodological diversity – with a mix of qualitative and quantitative research – which improves the validity of the results.

Lastly, the research acknowledges and investigates its own limits demonstrating a commitment to the continuous improvement of the suggested solution to the complexity inherent in sustainability issues.

## 5. Results

## 5.1. Database entries and looking for patterns

The first outcome of the primary research was the construction of a comprehensive database of case studies (Image 7). One of the most interesting aspects that emerged from our analysis was the distribution of design research topics per country that highlights the existence of great affinities on an EU scale.

Such design initiatives can be categorised into six main areas with a strong recurrence around the analysed territory (Image 8):
- Bio-Materials Design
- Re-Use of Waste
- New technologies for crafts
- Social Design
- New applications for traditional crafts
- Ecologic Culture Promotion

**Image 7.** Results: Database of case studies.

The second aspect that emerged from this analysis is the relational nature of today's design whose processes are redefined by a hybrid approach in which designers and craftspeople, public administrations, and other stakeholders actively conduct ongoing research on sustainability and apply its principles to the creation of new materials, processes, and products. Here we see how this multidisciplinary dialogue serves as the foundation of the virtuous activation and empowerment of local communities whose agency is restored by design (Franzato et al., 2013).

Bio-Materials Design

New technologies for crafts

New applications for traditional crafts

Re-Use of Waste

Social Design

Ecologic Culture Promotion

**Image 8.** Results: Thematic distribution of design research topics on a European scale.

## 5.2. A new kind of designer: Hybrid design as cultural conservation

*New Design Craft* becomes a hybrid discipline that learns some lessons in sustainability from crafts, and some lessons in process optimisation from design, all while staying mindful of sustainability issues and technological advancement. We mentioned how craft is by definition a carrier of ILEK as opposed to Western industrial design. This derives from the industrial disconnection between the creative act, the execution of the idea and its context. On the other hand, the artisanal model is rooted in the deep immersion of the creative act in its environmental and socio-cultural context. *New Design Craft* learns a lesson from the artisanal methodology and starts to mediate a cultural process that prioritises local knowledge and brings it into the future with an approach that's local in its respect for the tradition and its resources, but also global and blended with emerging technologies. But it also learns a lesson from radical indigenism and restorative sustainability, making a point in solving the intrinsic conflict characteristic of the Western industrial model, which sees

local identities as something to demonise and nature as something to conquer and exploit.

Where industrial design typically centres on mass production, scalability, and cost-efficiency, often leading to cultural homogenisation, New Design Craft expresses itself in limited small technical series, customisation, and alignment with local materials and material culture. If the mass production of the industrial model can lead to cultural abuse and environmental strain, *New Design Craft* reinvigorates local economies and respects cultural identities by creating context-specific designs (Image 9).
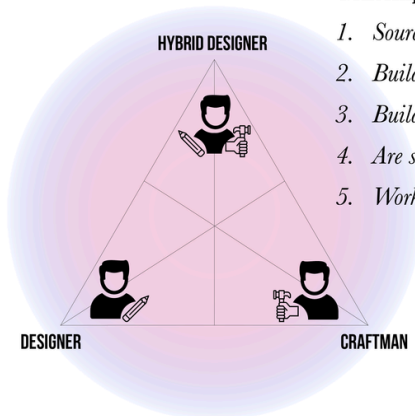


**Contemporary hybrid designers**

1. *Source or produce their own materials from local resources or waste;*
2. *Build new Know-How through direct experimentation;*
3. *Build new tools and techniques;*
4. *Are strictly connected to their cultural roots*
5. *Work on a small productive scale where imperfections are allowed.*

**Image 9.** Results: Identikit of *New Design Craft*.

Moreover, Western industrial design is often a top-down discipline that focuses on innovation for innovation's sake, often resulting in projects which are disconnected from the actual availability of resources leading to environmental exploitation. ILEK, integrated within *New Design Craft*, favours bottom-up knowledge, where practices evolve from long-term, ecological interactions within a specific environment. Additionally, tech-centred design may unintentionally disrupt local communities by focusing on productivity alone, while New Design Craft fosters community-based innovation, blending technology with both cultural sustainability and ecological constraints. Lastly, while Western industrial design defines itself as user-centered and

focuses on meeting specific consumer needs, *New Design Craft* prioritises a humanity-centred or community-centred approach. It incorporates local know-how to address local needs by prioritising longevity, repairability, and alignment with sustainability values.

## 5.3. New processes for sustainable futures: restorative sustainability through justice and mediation

*New Design Craft* results in being a mediator of cultural languages able to optimise processes and empower local communities. Its commitment to project them into the future is rooted in social justice, ethical approaches and restorative sustainability. The core tenets of this cultural mediation are the decolonisation of design methods and languages, the rejection of the imposition of Western industrial models, and the promotion of locally relevant, culturally diverse solutions.

New Design Craft emphasises the importance of adherence to local traditional knowledge, material culture and local resources, blended with emerging technology and prioritises community well-being, celebrating diversity, adaptive management strategies, and collaborative problem-solving. The analysed case studies reveal the potential for measurable improvement of various sustainability spheres of value, such as:

- The revitalisation of local economies through *New Design Craft* initiatives,
- The preservation of local material culture,
- The advocacy of social inclusion for marginalised communities,
- The adoption of sustainable practices using local materials and techniques.

*New Design Craft* stimulates the collaboration between designers and local stakeholders to prioritise indigenous local ecological knowledge and cultural heritage and embraces a transformative role in its ability to shift from design's classical fields of application to policymaking and systemic change. The ability to bridge the gap between local needs and global trends results is particularly relevant in this scenario, placing design at the forefront of the advocacy for more just and sustainable futures (Image 10).
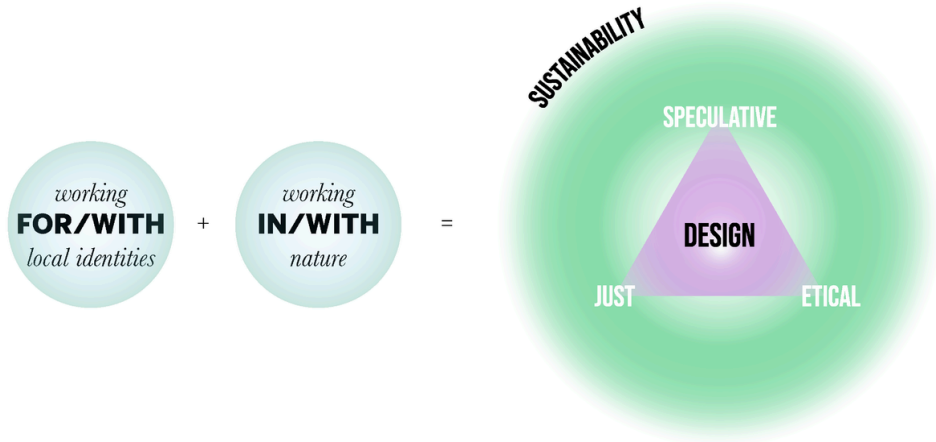
**Image 10.** New processes for sustainable futures.

## 6. Conclusions

The study illustrates how *New Design Craft* blends traditional knowledge and emerging technologies to empower local economies, revitalise material cultures, and advocate for inclusive, sustainable solutions. However, the research is subject to limitations. First, the geographical focus on European and Ukrainian case studies, especially within the Italian and broader European design traditions, narrows the scope and may not reflect the full spectrum of hybrid practices in the global context. Secondly, heavy reliance on self-reported data can become a doorway to biased insights since participants could unintentionally emphasise just the positive aspects of their practice; while excluding mass-produced projects may limit the insights into how large-scale design could adopt *New Design Craft* principles. These limitations offer suggestions for future developments of this research that could expand the geographic diversity of the case studies to provide a richer comparative context. Additionally, future iterations could integrate more historical data to monitor the impact of hybrid design practices over time. Lastly, examining larger-scale production projects aligned with *New Design Craft* principles could reveal if it is possible and how to maximise production without sacrificing local identity.

## *Acknowledgments*

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PART II
**BOOK**
*DIALOGUES*

# DESIGN *DIALOGUES*
# THROUGH CRITICAL BOOK REVIEWS

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## 1. Introduction

Critique is the most common and possibly the most significant aspect that is unique to the design process and practice. This assessment process requires a full comprehension of a design product at any scale, from initial conception to idea development, production, delivery, and use, and is not taken lightly by anyone in the field (Hokanson, 2012)

The "product" here, may be defined in a wider sense, encompassing not only a physical product, but also a cultural and social one. The review of design books may also be considered an extension of the habit and culture of critique in the design field, and the need to not replicate what exceptional leaders do, but understand and emulate how they think (Martin, 2009), having the tools to apply the knowledge to developing technology (Löwgren and Stolterman, 2004), and visualizing the pattern in another unique situation. A critique of the embodiment of critical thought itself as a book on design, sheds light on a variety of aspects regarding design; definition, literature, research, an attempt to be free in thought which is enough to have a word to say.

Similar to as well as utilizing scientific method, and involving discovery and negation, designers ideally encourage themselves, learning reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983) as well as how to cope (Anthony, 2014) and one another to welcome critique (Blythman, Orr, and Blair, 2007; Martin, 2007), as they know it is a generous act that aims to enhance their design. This section represents productive results of the PhD course, Integrated Design Approaches. The course introduces students to a variety of issues related to design studies, ranging from codesign to interactive design or ethical design. Within the framework, one may dwell on these topics  as  a  means  of

of awareness, but find commonalities among them, taking a step back and looking at them through the backgrounds of each student.

## 2. Becoming a Doctor of Philosophy in Design

Book reviews are important as a basis of PhD dissertations in design. Dissertations need to be critical, yet so many of them that are produced are mere summaries, rather than critical assessments. Oftentimes, they begin and end on the same note, and receive assistance from Artificial Intelligence software which has extrapolated the critique out of the critic, giving the critic a role and a focus on delivery. Book reviews provide a preparation for younger designers and design researchers to better manage this future academic landscape. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) have explained that only human beings possess human intuition and perception, and this fact will be the reason they will not be replicated by computers. However, today there exists a different challenge altogether. One speaks of consciousness on a whole new level with layers of nuances between the definitions of these terms. This is a new time for academia and is likely to bring a plethora of shifts, redefinitions, as well as several challenges.

In the fast paced academic environment, with the strong incentive to publish, and now backed with artificial intelligence, the emphasis has shifted from sharing the word because there is something important to say, to having to create something to say as content. However, still, nothing is a substitute for curiosity, science, research, design, and true dialog. The design dialogues theme that was adopted for the Design Studies Symposium in 2024 comes from the understanding that, in-depth dialog is much diminished in quality and meaning is slowly and steadily being lost. Critique, thus, suits this theme perfectly and needs to remain alive in the field of design.

## 3. The significance of the rhetorical triangle

An understanding of rhetoric is of key significance in academic delivery just as much as any piece of literature. Design as a science highly prioritizes method, but it goes hand in hand with the delivery of the sciences. Dorst (2008) mentions a paradigmatic revolution in the design sciences, which was reflected through shifting paradigms. Today, with ever-developing technologies, design sciences might be on the verge of yet  another  revolution.

One thing never changes, and that is the power of communication and dialog of the scientific process with all components.

Aristotle highlights the significance of the "rhetorical triangle". The rhetorical triangle presents an overview of the three rhetorical appeals for the audience or reader. For the philosopher, the three pillars of an effective argument are, ethos, pathos, and logos (speaker, audience, and message). The dialogue can only be valid and complete when all three find their place, and it takes a considerable amount of time; years of assessment and critique, as well as the means of delivery to perfect this skill (McLuhan, 1964; Vygotsky, 1978; Visscher-Voerman and Gustafson, 2004).

Ethos refers to the Greek term for "ethics", and highlights the credibility of the person making a communication. This is the speaker, and her/his ethos is established through a variety of factors. These include statues, awareness, professionalism, endorsement by (a) member(s) of the community, research, and a value given to trust between the speaker and audience. Ethics is about one's own ethos, character or way of life. The term also describes the guiding beliefs and ideals that characterize a community, nation or ideology. Pathos is actually the Greek term for "emotion". Although this is the case, the term has been made to represent the feelings and experiences of the audience, having come across a message. The emotion may consist of excitement, anger, sadness, motivation, jealousy, and other human emotions that may result in expected behavior as well as receipt of the message. As the last pillar, logos refers to the Greek term for "logic". The term represents the facts, evidence, research, and other message components that take on the role of supporting a claim. Logos enriches the message, so that it is more believable and convincing for the audience. The audience is comforted and believes that the message is well-researched and well built, and thus the delivery is worth their time.

Not much has changed since Aristotle's clear depiction of an effective rhetoric, and critical writing in design carries the same essential aspects, regarding the speaker, audience, and message. The only difference might be the fact that the components are applied to a contemporary value system, specific to the design field.

## 4. The books that make or break us

There exists a special quality in children's books that guide one on their developmental journey. On a personal note, one of those formative books is the following (Image 1).



**Image 1.** Anna Seghers, Who Makes the Cloth, Closet, and Book? Gözlem Yayıncılık (1977)

"Who Makes the Cloth, the Closet, and the Book?" (Seghers, 1977) is a children's book written with the best intentions, obliging children to treat clothes, furniture, and books with respect, among all other human production. It was translated into Turkish by Ümit Kıvanç and embellished with the illustrations of Seydali Gönel in the most sensitive way to communicate humanistic and sustainable values to children. The author talks about ordinary and relatable behavior that can clearly be understood by a younger demographic. It is written and delivered well through successful translation and graphic design. A true dialog was established with any child who devoted time to read this book in the 70s, and its message carried a lifetime. A power any design research paper would strive for. These are the dialogs that shapes each person.

Design books carry significance in that they too have to be designed in an enriched manner like a children's book, imbued with the knowledge that it will be handled by designers, critiqued not just regarding the content but for all the elements regarding the mode of delivery. The critique of books, and design books in particular, is also important for this very reason. It requires being immersed in design culture, and an understanding of permanence and ephemerality. The difference between fact and belief is highlighted, and data, knowledge, insight, and lastly, wisdom are hierarchically aspired to be reached. Meaningful design research requires critique, so that one is not drowned in data that is devoid of meaning.

Academia is the place of knowledge creation, so not only students but also advisors have the responsibility to have full knowledge of publishing in the field, and practicing publishing as well. Effective argument and dialog are at the core of the practice.

## 5. Integrated design approaches

In terms of background; the aim within the framework of this particular class in which students prepared book reviews is; to ensure that PhD students with various design and/or disciplinary backgrounds develop a common and integrated design understanding through philosophy, culture, history, theory and contemporary discourse, and also by considering the interactions between arts and science fields. Moreover, they need to develop their own creative, theoretical and practical abilities for developing a critical and interdisciplinary insight into design. Extending students' design knowledge and understanding within an interdisciplinary approach, and familiarize themselves with a wide range of interdisciplinary research is also a requirement. This type of critique also enables one to individually and collectively analyze and discuss the history, theory, philosophy and discourse of different design disciplines together at an advanced level. Although the book reviews are individual takes on an issue, when shared, critique enables forming and working in multi-disciplinary design teams. The process ends with producing a high-level academic outcome (paper, project etc.) that synthesizes the knowledge acquired from the course; hence the book reviews. The topics that have opened the gateway to enriched discussions and provided a base for the book reviews include; design thinking,

design and science, design ethics, mixed methods, equality, social justice, participatory design, user-experience design, and experiential design, as the umbrella themes that encompass several other related titles underneath.

## 6. Book review focus points

This year, the books chosen by students of the Integrated Approaches in Design course, relate to a variety of interdisciplinary topics such as, urban design, social innovation, and the pluriverse. If one makes a review of the reviews over the years show that, the chosen book topics have been transforming from the product to the process, and from the material to the immaterial, social, and cultural. The book review presentations are valuable in that, they aim to raise more questions than answered, striving to become wiser in design thought, honing a variety of skills derived from literature, design research, and interdisciplinary practical knowledge.

These authors have been preparing for the book reviews for one semester. Each student has chosen a book that connects to their field and relates to one or more of the topics we have discussed within the semester. The book review presentations are valuable in that, they aim to raise more questions than answered, show much promise regarding where design studies as a field is headed, and invite design researchers to actively participate in what appears to be an increasingly creative dialogue. A critical approach to design research requires a culture of writing, documenting, which is at the core of academia -not sensation.

It is clear that the critical book reviews presented in this section exemplify a step in that direction and that our students have gained insight from this experience. The word now belongs to the critiques of, Sena Adalı, Beyza Cennet Batır, Ayşıl Sara Kerimi Bodur, and Anıl Dinç Demirbilek.

## 7. Conclusive remarks and beyond

The current state of design affairs, especially through the effective use of artificial intelligence, point to the lack of two key features related to dialogue; first being a critical stance and assessment regarding the topic in the process -an internal dialogue. This will undoubtedly affect the input involving the production of the design,

what is fed to the "machine" that is partly internal and based on past dialogues. Second, is the external delivery of the message. Assuming designers are involved in more dialogue than design, it makes sense to wish for this dialogue to be of high quality. Book reviews are a significant step in that direction. The aim is to be acquainted with the particular format of book reviews, consider a book that has an integrative approach, and its author in a critical manner.

Critique is at the center of the design field in every sense, and today although software enables better results compared to even ten years prior, the critique aspect is diminishing in skills. It is essential that we strive to emphasize critique to the core of design research, and support the questioning of hard truths accepted in the design field. This is the only way we can contribute to the field of design sciences -through rigorous research and effective dialog.

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# BOOK REVIEW: DESIGNS FOR THE PLURIVERSE: RADICAL INTERDEPENDENCE, AUTONOMY, AND THE MAKING OF WORLDS

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## 1. Introduction

As the world turns, so does the swirling fragments of the complex dimension which we called our lives, challenged every single day with the tension upon the demand of paradigm changes and alterations. We live in a world that the rapid globalization and the infrastructural capabilities, especially on the digitalization process, create ripple effects which eventually interlinks to multiple domains of everyday life. It is vital to recognize the interconnectedness within this postmodernist period and the contemporary realm came out of this perception. Every single decision comes out with a significant result, whether the outcome is positive or not, on an objective basis. This nature demands the attention of several domains and intellectual fields before diving into the praxeology of designated plans and milestones for the future of our generations to come.

Today, the journey towards the realization of an equalized or a justified world is being confronted with the crises, which are interconnected with each other, utilizing the emerging dynamics of techno-sociological spectrums. Since the discourse upon inequalities within the social realm suggested by Jean-Jacque Rousseau (Dunning, 1909), the retro-perspective look upon the historical accumulation towards the estimation of emerging crises within humanity is evident. When people decided to define civilized societies, the concept of unjustified and unequalled dynamics began to emerge and take place (Shklar, 1978). The introduction of class struggle within the theoretical scope of industrial capitalism from Karl Marx also occupies one of the most significant places within this transition as well. Thus, the path towards the change and healing, there must be a collaborative effort, which would welcome multiple fields and domains to realize a resistant intellectual and practical dimension against this emergence.

However, so far, the conventional way to approach this situation always contained a two-way dynamic, which eventually defines the issue and the possible method on the realization of a potential solution, no matter how or through which aspects. So, in a way the so-called answer makes us stand still at the same spot, which we define as the new beginning, only to result into a different problem which would create yet another circle for us to dwell upon. Would it be possible to provide a new understating towards knowing, doing and finally a new definition of being, before deciding on what to do and propose as an impulsive behaviour? That's what the Colombian American anthropologist Arturo Escobar reflects his perception upon, in his book entitled as Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds". As the name suggests, within the scope of his approach, Escobar utilizes one of humanity's most influential virtue to elaborate on his perspective within this complex structure; "design."

As an inherited knowledge and an ability, which can be traced within humanity (Cross, 1999), design has been defined as one of the main theoretical and practical backbones within Escobar's discourse. A significant selection, which makes total sense and fits perfectly within the framework since design is also a crucial domain which ventures and pierce through this interconnected postmodernist paradigm on various levels, such as politics, education, economy, environmental issues and so forth. Furthermore, design has been articulated as a bonding agent within his discourse to explain and develop his perspective towards the emerging issues which the world faces.

While highlighting the book's vital contribution to design theory and how the potential change towards the realization of a better future is real and waiting to be integrated to our perception on an ontological basis, Escobar suggests striking questions, each supplementing the other to define a holistic approach, which defines the overall tone and the structural manner of it:

*"Can design's modernist tradition be reoriented from its dependence on the life-stifling dualist ontology of patriarchal capitalist modernity toward relational modes of knowing, being, and doing? Can it be creatively reappropriated by subaltern communities in support of their struggles to strengthen their autonomy and perform their life projects? Can ontologically oriented design play a constructive role in transforming entrenched ways of being and doing toward philosophies of well-being that finally equip humans to live in mutually enhancing ways with each other and with the Earth?" (Preface)*

Such bold and vital questions indeed, ones that demand a clear and controlled manner to approach them, not to lose its initial starting point from a theoretical standpoint. Suggested framework also challenges the undisturbed and stabilized status of design and its operative aspects within multiple layers of the world, which we inhibit and demands the necessity of change and alteration through its unique capability of shaping the reality around us. Embedded within this vision, Escobar signifies the current positioning of design field under the oppression of colonialization, capitalist expansion, patriarchal point of views and ongoing technological developments, which he describes as "defuturing" practices, rather than carving the way towards the idealized ways of living. As a complementary proposition to this outlined framework, Winograd and Flores (1986) provides a supplementary perspective and suggest that we, as human beings create and design our own status quo as representations of intellectual properties, which eventually changes our methods on designing and articulating design-based knowledge, as a counter effect.

On top these theoretical foundations, attached to the provided introductory flow by Escobar, the general discussions venture through several preliminary contributions from the literature to strengthen the estimated positioning of the book and its intellectual content. Here we get to see an homage to the previously established discourse of Victor Papanek and his book entitled as "Design for the Real World",

which has been utilized as a title by Escobar for the following sections, this time providing a critical essence to distinguish the fabric of reality attached to the terms of "world" and "design" within the postmodernist and defuturing domain. Since Escobar elaborates on the current positioning of the design field at the centre of unsustainable structures, under the effect of the capitalist and colonized modern world, given book represents his attitude towards the issue from an ontological standpoint.

## 2. The dialogue between anthropology and design

As a brief overview, I would like to mention several aspects regarding the main reason on the selection of this book for this discursive, informative, and critical review. Selected book stands as an example of a crucial contribution to the field of design from an anthropological perspective. Specifically speaking, the anthropological lens pointed towards the scope of the design by Escobar through three main fields as: anthropological design, ethnography as design and design anthropology, provides an all-around innovative research framework. According to Escobar given connection on an academic level is still evolving and shows potential to be further evaluated. Within the general outline of this review, it is appropriate to acknowledge the striking integration of anthropological insights to the field of design, a field which welcomes varied range of research spectrum to its own body as an interdisciplinary manner. Following figure (Image 1) represents this attitude to further elaborate on the mentioned dialogue and relationship between each respective field.

After recognizing the evolution of design within the explained paradigm, Escobar dives into an ontological outline, where he attempts to link the ontological perception and the core knowledge of perceiving the very fabric of reality with design. Regarding this phase, Escobar establishes this contribution through the "biology of cognition" shaped by Maturana (1980) and Varela (1987), which will be evaluated on the following sections of this review, in terms of the relevance and the metaphorical link between the general outlined framework and Escobar's perspective. But perhaps the most vital aspect of this secondary section in the book is its core claim and criticism towards the western dualist ontology and understanding. While placing the

"rationalistic tradition" at the centre of his discussions, Escobar challenges the Cartesian dualism to extend the notion of his interconnected pluriversal perspective. Throughout this critical approach, it is possible to detect the repetitive manner on highlighting the power inconsistencies on a global level, caused by the rationalistic approach, fuelled by the internalization of Western Cartesian dualism. Thus, design and its definitive aspects becomes obedient to this ongoing framework and allows Escobar to propose the notion of "Whether is it possible to re-define an ontological outline of design, without the chains of this dualistic manner, which eventually deteriorates the structural integrity of the way we live."

This strong yet broad question indeed requires several theoretical components to be able to pierce through the previously mentioned, western oriented world view and establish a strong argument while re-shaping design from a cultural perspective. Thus, Escobar places design as an essential element of ontological understanding and consider the given field as a backbone on creating ways of being. Here, it is important to emphasize the articulation style of Escobar on the topic, through the utilization of two main theoretical foundations. To place design within the study of
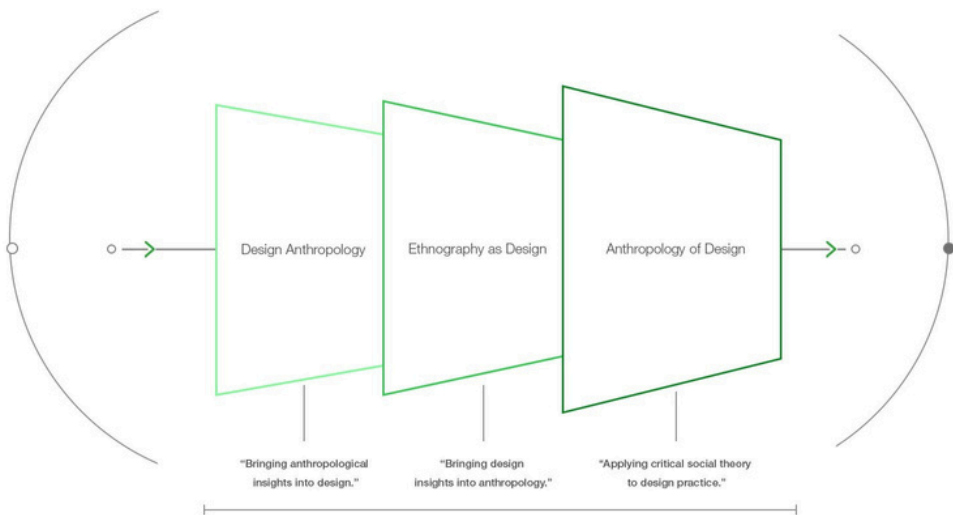


**Image 1.** The dialogue between anthropology and design.

existence and propose its indispensable effect on creating the way we live, Escobar mentions the "ontological design" framework by Willis (2006). Similar to what Winograd and Flores (1986) proposed, Anne-Marie Willis's work establishes the main pathway of Escobar from a theoretical standpoint, eventually proposes the nature of design on creating the methods of designing. On the other hand, it becomes possible for a reader to also witness the utilization of Tony Fry's framework on the transition from "sustainability" to "sustainment", which serves as catalyst to Escobar's propositions to show the effectiveness of ontological design's main framework.

Here, the book openly suggests thinking about ontological design in an abstract manner and as a crucial emergent factor against the neoliberal modernity. Thus, Fry's proposal on the suggested transitive approach to the sustainment of the modernist spectrum of design, becomes a driving factor for Escobar, which adds significant amount of motion to his narrative power and the overall structural flow of the chapter. The power of this writing style relies heavily on Escobar's initial idea towards the realization of a pluriverse and becomes embedded to his selective manner on the outlined preliminary contributions from the literature. While rejecting the one-world ontology, caused by the destructive features of the colonial perspectives, "designs for the pluriverse" points out the beneficial aspects of thinking and designing from the local approach and considers locality as a prioritized factor to establish the ontological design discourse.

## 3. Theoretical background of the book

So far, the overall flow of discussions has scratched the surface of this so called "transitional thinking" and its overall scope. But what happens when it comes to the establishment of this ontological design perspective, on the road to establish a pluriversal manner through the given thinking style? To estimate this reality Escobar provides several initiatives and examples on a practical level over past decade on the third chapter of the selected research. As an ironic manner, Escobar utilizes several examples from both Global North and Global South regions, in a dualistic manner to further elaborate on the practical potential of transition thinking as an integral tool for the realization of a pluriversal perspective, which refers to world within worlds.

However, at the same time Escobar provides rich and resourceful examples from both regions to justify his notion on the effect of this transitional thinking method on the general theory of design and its praxeology. Terminologies like "degrowth", "conviviality" and "commoning" are being introduced here and articulated as the driving forces behind each given example and the overall comparison between each geographical regions on a global scale.  While considering both the social and the economic spectrums, Escobar articulates on the transitional thinking as vital and as a necessary element for local communities to develop and grasp their unique ways of living through the power of design.

The introduction of the autonomous design framework by Escobar, restates the emerged crisis within the western-oriented modernist view and further elaborates on the need of a collective initiative, starting with the small, scaled communities, both sociological and political levels. Again, the criticism towards the Cartesian dualism is evident within the structure of the chapter and it is possible feel the essence of an empowering manner provided by Escobar towards the realization of this desired ontological understanding.

Before diving into each respective chapter for further analysis and review, here it is possible to discuss Escobar's self-reflection towards the discourse he has proposed within the theoretical borders design. Introduction of term of "autonomy" to the readers can be confusing in the sense that, design at its core demands human intervention and creativity, derived from the intellectual capabilities of our cognitive systems. Thus, he slightly tunes his initial research question, which signified the foundation of his hypothesis and suggests the following question.

> *"Can design be extricated from its embeddedness in modernist unsustainable and defuturing practices and redirected toward other ontological commitments, practices, narratives, and performances? Moreover, could design become part of the tool kit for transitions toward the pluriverse? What would that imply in terms of the design of tools, interactions, contexts, and languages in ways that fulfil  the*

*ontological design principle of changing the ways in which we deal with ourselves and things so that futuring is enabled?" (Escobar, 2018)*

From now on, Escobar continues with Tony Fry, and establishes his discourse upon the defuturing aspects of design among the modernist period (Fry, 2015). One of the repetitive terminologies comes from the work of Fry within the writing style of the given Book's approach and Escobar picks the terms of "sustainment" from a rich theoretical foundation. Then, we shift our focus to another complementary source, this time adds up to the essential pillars of the book from a larger perspective. Dunne and Dunne et al., (2013) become introduced to us for Escobar to tune his perspective through the field of speculative design and critical thinking within the domain of design.

But what about technological advancements and the usage of our capabilities, fuelled by design? Here Escobar mentions the "question concerning technology" from Heidegger (1977) to focus on the relationship between design, technology and defuturing practices. It is possible to understand that Escobar strongly claims that the design-based technological advancements within our capitalist and Euro-centric world, we have created more destructive results than we could have ever imagined. This is why his discourse ventures through the propositions from Dilnot (2015) from a contemporary perspective, where he discusses the artificial strings of our reality, provided by us for the sake of innovation, development, and the articulation of design.

## 4. Design for the real world: A contemporary approach

Escobar tackles this rich framework through three essential chapters. Let's venture through each of them to proceed with this review within a consistent and concise manner. Victor Papanek's "Design for the Real World" established a striking foundation within the development of the theory of design and its potential role on shaping real worlds, ontologies, and uses of designed instruments. It's vital contribution to the literature is undeniably powerful and one to  be  considered  going

forward. But a certain question from Escobar makes us question the original piece, at least its focus, the world itself. So far, designing for the real world can be considered as a blindfolded perspective, focusing only on going forward and beyond with our capabilities. What happens during this process? Or more specifically, what is "real" and which world are we discussing and shifting our focus towards to? Escobar, while raising these critical questions, makes the reader venture through the contemporary dynamic of the design field within the so-called real world during the narrative structure of the first chapter.

Throughout the general flow of the first chapter, Escobar ventures over three main topics to signify the main effective areas of the field of design, when it comes to the shaping of our modernist reality, which does not specifically or explicitly provide a criticism towards the initial hypothetical framework. Here, Escobar opens his discussions, stating with architecture, urbanism, and the realization of vernacular architecture. From a socio-political standpoint, through these each field, where we get to see the diffusion of design, Escobar builds the first pillars of his theoretical bridge between design and politics. To highlight the importance of architecture as a field of design within the social theory, Escobar utilizes the prior contributions from Turpin (2013), when it comes to the realization of the given field as an integral component of globalization, urbanization, the environment, modernity, and media and digital culture, representing the backbones of the given framework. On the other hand of this rich spectrum, it is also possible for a reader to understand the re-evaluation of the concept of space, whit the introduction of the vernacular systems within architecture.

## 4.1. Sustainability by design

Venturing over the field of architecture and the effect of contemporary urbanism within the real world, Escobar shifts our focus towards the term "sustainability" and its exploited use over the years, from its emergence from World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) to preserve the ecological balance for future generations of our kind. According to Escobar, sustainability it an essential factor in design within the modernist spectrum as it has been considered as a way forwards and a vital factor in the realization of new design propositions and ideas. However, at

the same time it is possible to read and acknowledge his critical perspective towards the issue as well, from an anti-capitalist perspective. Escobar dives into the complex realm of the given spectrum, by stating that, throughout of its development the scope of sustainability has become nothing more than a destructive tool, infused with a capitalist perspective to suggest greenwashing practices as the design articulated its own knowledge and practice on a global scale.

To strengthen the discourse towards locality within the spectrum, it is possible to mention several theoretical aspects towards sustainability and ecological design. As van der Ryn and Cowan (1996) explains the general scope of the ecological design perspective, Escobar also acknowledges a much more constructive approach through sustainable practices within the medium of design. Reflected upon an anthropological standpoint, ecological design suggests a specific design process which is structured as a collaborative one with the nature, accompanied by the cultural development as well. This way, a total change and shift can potentially be applied to the practitioners of design, thus supporting a total change not on an ambiguous level but also within a solidified manner. Referring to the living systems theory for regeneration and revitalization of the ecological balance, ecological design according to Escobar, has the potential to eliminate an expert-driven design attitude within a colonialist manner, can support a participatory, open and a democratic approach to enhance the notion of locality.

## 4.2. Critical design perspective towards humanitarian field
Regarding the estimation of our contemporary world from an anthropological design perspective, chapter takes us to the last piece dedicated to the given discourse, which is the critical design perspective within a modernist structure. Escobar considers the current approach of criticality within the field of design as his hypothesis's backbone to propose his initial research question within the given perspective. Specifically stating the emergence of "wicked problems" caused by the relationship between design and the creation of unequal, insensitive, closed, and destructive social structures, given discursive approach of critical and speculative design attitude enhances Escobar's positioning within the general flow of the research scope.

Given chapter result through a significant re-evaluation of the humanitarian design field as an emerging spectrum to further establish a link between the capitalist tradition from a post dualistic approach, contributed by the destructive usage of design within a global scale. Within the scope of the section, it is vital to realize the retrospective approach towards the United Nations Development Report (1951) as a decisive moment on the current social, political, ecological, and modernist dynamics. Escobar investigates on the issues and suggest that the overall development process started back in 1951 and applied upon the continents of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, contained a strong Euro-centric approach within a colonialist manner, which benefits the outsider, the one who brought the so-called technology and design as a saviour (Schwittay, 2014). Thus, the initial dream and goal towards the re-vitalization of these global regions as instances, turned into an exploitative ground through interventions on locality, ecological fabrics, and indigenous populations.

## 4.3. Political ecology of design

To build a theoretical bridge between the cultural approach on design and the ontological re-orientation of design, Escobar establishes three main fundamental pillars for his discussions, which we can refer to them briefly to better understand on the general framework. Staring from Marxism as a base and ventured over the system theory to post structuralism, next figure (Image 2) illustrates the overall theoretical foundation, dedicated to the political ecology of design within the scope of Escobar's main discourse.
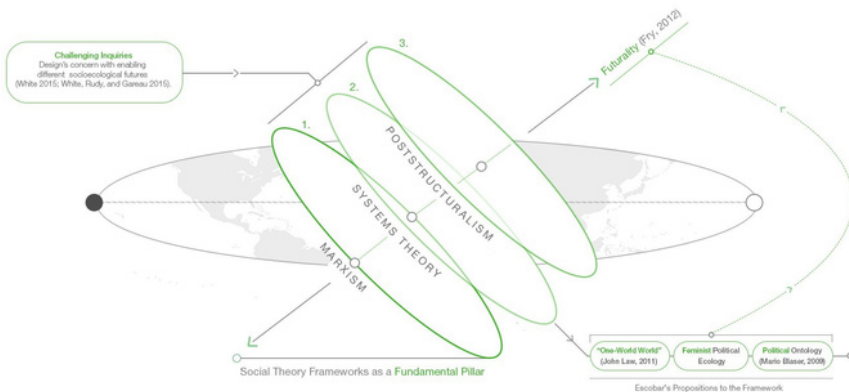


**Image 2.** Political ecology of design.

As it can be seen from the overall representation, the challenging inquiries of the design field (White, 2015; White, Rudy, and Gareau, 2015), regarding the view of a political lens of the design field within a modernist layer, Escobar's overall narrative flow gives birth to three main propositions to strengthen the shift towards the ontological re-orientation of design as a result. To provide a strong theoretical foundation to his hypothesis, as readers we get to understand the critical approach through John Law's "One-World World" approach as a strong criticism towards post dualistic approaches, signifying the separation between mind and body, nature and culture as the world revolves into a singular form of operative aspect within a colonial perspective (Law, 2015). Following this attitude, the feminist political ecology becomes an integral element within the overall flow, utilized by Escobar as a certain critic towards the patriarchal perspective among the global scale as a destructive element towards world building and the realization of a significant pluriverse. Thus, the feminist approach towards the intersection between ecology, social dynamics and political realm becomes a signifies of hope, nurturing and revitalization element by Escobar as an essential component for the realization of an idealized form of living and sustaining. As a complementary approach, the final component of political ontology emerges within the spectrum as a term coined by Blaser (2009), to elaborate on the struggles within the contemporary level, when it comes to defend or re-create varied worlds and domains that retain important relational and communal dimensions.

Having established a critical and an informative perspective towards the contemporary status of the field of design, infused with the cultural dynamics derived from the respective field of anthropology, the overall narrative follows through the ontological re-orientation of design throughout the second chapter of the selected book. Here Escobar invites us to ask the question, "Why should design be considered ontological"? A significant question which demands further elaboration on the necessity of this consideration in a holistic manner. Thus, it is possible for us to remember the initial perspective provided by Winograd and Flores (1986) and their explanation on the constant back and forth relationship between the way we design tools as human beings and the ways of being within our reality.

## 5. Design's ontological reorientation

On top of this essential outline, Escobar visits the theoretical approach of Willis (2006) to estimate the necessity of such consideration. According to the idea proposed by Anne-Marie Willis, while we design our own world, the world act back on us to design ourselves as well, possibly both on a positive and a negative manner. What we give to our own reality, reflects right back on us as circular and as an ongoing manner. Given perspective fits perfectly within the initial framework proposed by Escobar and as a writer he utilizes on these preliminary contributions in a masterful manner to justify his initial hypothetical approach and strong criticisms. Accompanied by these discussions, Escobar takes as step further and proposes that, "We design tools, and these tools design us back. Thus, design designs" (Escobar, 2018, p.110).

When it comes to the theoretical outline of the "ontological design", Escobar establishes his discursive attitude once more on a triad of essential onto epistemologies from the literature. Following figure (Image 3) represents this approach and provides a both way spectrum on both the current ontological drivers, which shape our contemporary cognitive understanding towards the world and the optimum approach on realizing a good way of living through the power of ontological design.
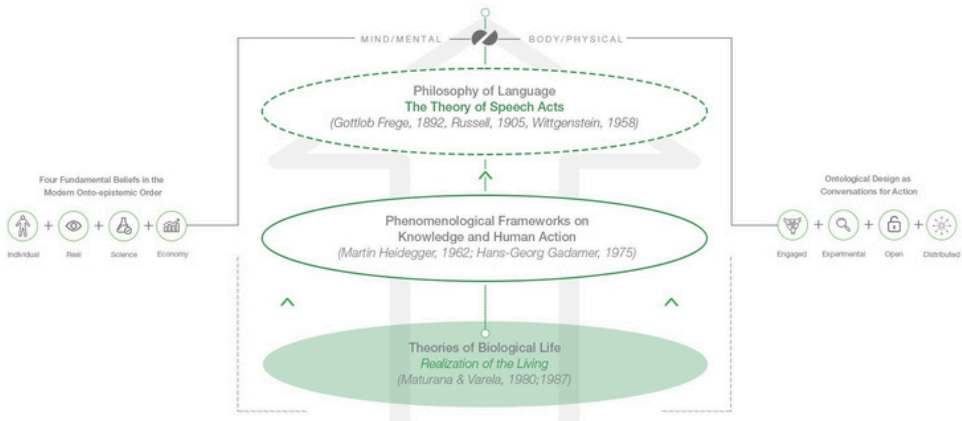


**Image 3.** Theoretical outline of ontological design.

The theoretical backbone of the ontological design framework greets the reader with a rich content, in terms of its main structuring and integration to the overall research scope. Here, it is possible to estimate Escobar's approach from bottom-up perspective, initiating with the theoretical approach towards the biological life, provided by Maturana and Varela, 1980;1987). As an anthropologist, Escobar considers the given theory as a foundational element for the overall outline of the framework. Following this established structure, the phenomenological frameworks on knowledge and human action becomes elaborated through Heidegger (1962) to refer to the ontological understanding, compiled through rationalist attitude on the ontological estimations. At the top layer, it is possible to track the dissemination of knowledge and the meaning of being in the world, specifically as a design-based method meets the reader to estimate the exact positioning of Escobar within the academic spectrum.

## 6. The transitive design framework

This takes us into the last piece of Escobar's hypothetical discourse, where readers get to witness the real-life manifestation of a transitive design framework, complimented with the previous discussions and theoretical foundations. Chapter three ventures within this scope and allows Escobar to reflect upon the contemporary utilization of ontological design framework through modernist transitions on various levels. Staring from institutional aspects to educational practices, given chapter signifies the need to re-design the designing culture, starting from individual perceptions to large scale ecosystems. To reflect upon the evolving field of ontological design framework, Escobar utilizes a significant comparison between global north and south, estimating the transitive dynamic on a global scale.

Utilization of these two different geographies allows the reader to understand the contemporary usage areas of the field and allows the author to justify his initial hypothetical approach, regarding a potentially applicable practice. During this comparison process, it is possible to re-consider the "Brandt Line" defined and structured by Willy Brandt back in 1980. This consideration allows us to also reflect upon the initial criticism from Escobar towards the  dualistic  and  rationalistic  nature,

since this divisive line not only defined the differences between underdeveloped and so-called modernist Euro-centric countries, but also allowed the foundational bedrock for a colonial perspective to become disseminated through the dynamic nature of design, like an unstable matter.

## 6.1. Essential transition discourses

Throughout this comparison as a brief case study within the book, Escobar defines his overall narrative as transition discourses to signify a holistic perspective, containing both activist projects and theoretical contributions around the globe. Thus, it becomes possible for one to grasp this attitude just like on the following figure (Image 4) to illustrate both global spectrums and this holistic attitude on building upon the outline of the ontological design framework as a transitive manner.
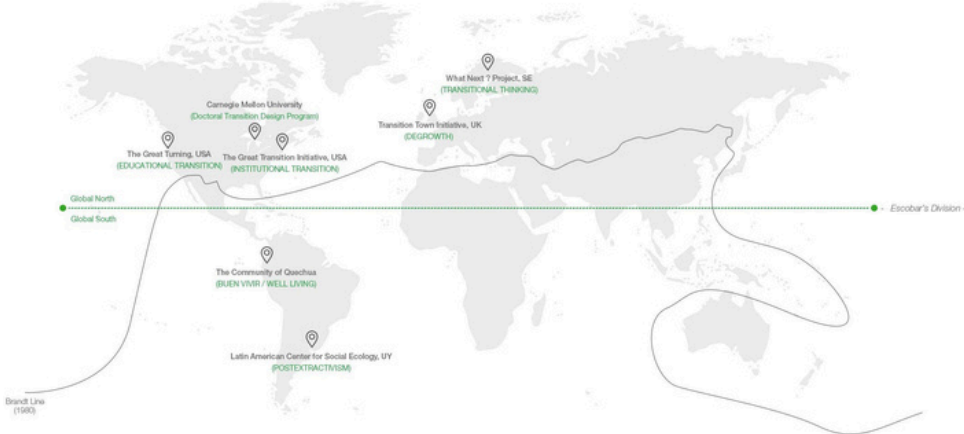


**Image 4.** Transition discourses.

As it can be seen from the figure above, Escobar's main division separates not only the spatial aspects of each unique ecosystem, but also signifies the crucial initiative around the globe regarding the realization of the re-orientation of design from an ontological perspective, complimented within the overall discourse of a transitive culture. Given figure compiles several highlights from Escobar's narrative and demand further investigation as separate bodies to further evaluate and estimate their contributions to this discursive nature. However, within the scope of selected book,

I would like to shift the focus to three of these exemplified structures, which can be considered as vital contributing aspects for Escobar to proceed with his overall narrative.

"Buen Vivir" or also known as "Good Living" (collective well-being according to culturally appropriate conceptions; sumak kawsay in Quechua and suma qamaña in Aymara) is strong concept which Escobar in repetitive manner, utilizes within the given frame, as an initial component within the selected triad. As a counter argument, emerged from the transitional design discourses of the south, Buen Vivier suggest an alternative approach to post-developmental practices, where we see the care, respect and compassion applied on the ecological systems (Escobar, 2018). According to Gudynas and Acosta (2011), Buen Vivir emerged out of the essential struggles of indigenous people, towards poverty, health, well-being and sheltering, signifying the vital scope of design and its necessary intervention within an optimized manner. In a way, Buen Vivir appears to be a strong proposition towards a collective construction of a new form of living, without the destructive characteristics of the postmodernist period (Acosta, 2010).

## 7. Autonomous design framework

As we enter the rich narrative of the last chapter from Escobar, it is appropriate to reflect upon all of these provided discussions in a concise manner. Having established the contemporary positioning of the field of design, both theoretical and practical among the postmodernist and dualist nature within the Euro-centric system, the harmonious relationship of anthropology and design took us through the theoretical outskirts of the ontological understanding of our realities and shift our vision towards a world within worlds, a pluriversal structure, derived from a transitive approach among the global scale. Shaped upon this narrative, the third and the last chapter of the selected book introduces the "autonomous design" framework and its general scope within the field of design.

It is striking that, the initial page of this chapter starts with the following quote or slogan from "Zapatistas" the Army of National Liberation, the far-left militant group founded as a guerilla element against the globalization and neo liberalization and has been active since 1983.

*La tierra manda, el pueblo ordena, y el gobierno obedece. Construyendo autonomía.*
*"The earth commands, the people order, and the government obeys. Constructing autonomy."*

This specific construction of autonomy, as mentioned within this radical slogan, also signifies the most striking and critical piece of Escobar's narrative, especially when it comes to the evaluation of the general flow of the book and its overall structure, since as readers we get to understand an innovative contribution to the field of design, derived from the theories of biological life (Maturana, Varela, 1980; 1987) and also Arturo Escobar's re-evaluation on the politics of relationality and the communal aspects.

Again, we get to the small glance of the sustainment concept from Tony Fry and his essential theory on futuring practices through the power of design. This containment of previously established resources and their re-use scenarios within Varela's definition, does not have to signify the sustainability aspect within the field of design in a specific manner. On the other hand, Escobar takes this concept a step further and add the autopoiesis concept within his narrative. On a basic understanding, the given concept refers to a self-operating, never-ending circular model, which theoretically refers to an infinite biological framework.

## 7.1. Theoretical Outline of the Autonomous Design
When it comes to creating the connection between the field of design within the postmodernist period of our history and with this essential biological theory, the autonomous design framework and its theoretical outline greets the reader in a systematic manner. Escobar touches upon the social and cultural domain of life to re-evaluate this proposed concept, specifically on how it would contribute to the way we live and survive. Thus, one of the fundamental perspectives from Gustavo Esteva comes into this research spectrum to define the main role of autonomy, if it were to

be utilized as an essential tool to realize a collective attitude among societies and communities. It is possible to track the categorization from Esteva (2015) in three main situations (Escobar, 2018, p. 172).

- *Ontonomy*: When norms are established through traditional cultural practices; they are endogenous and place specific and are modified historically through embedded collective processes.
- *Heteronomy*: When norms are established by others (via expert knowledge and institutions); they are considered universal, impersonal, and standardized and are changed through rational deliberation and political negotiation.
- *Autonomy*: when the conditions exist for changing the norms from within, or the ability to change traditions traditionally. It might involve the defence of some practices, the transformation of others, and the veritable invention of new practices.

While signifying this regulatory approach through each three of these situations, Escobar defines an abstracted bridge between the concept of autopoiesis and autonomous design framework, as it can be perceived as a method on "changing traditions traditional" as if it was a singular entity within a biological framework, which eventually evolves and transforms into a better, advanced being. But through this framework, how would this dualistic and Euro-centric world would become effected? In an inevitable perspective, given design model suggest the recognition and preservation of communal practices and indigenous groups and outlines the necessity of an anti-capitalist, decolonial perspective in a bold manner. This takes us into the general overview of the autonomous design framework as it has been presented on the following figure (Image 6) to better articulate the general disturbance on the Cartesian dualism, caused by the piercing critical eye of Escobar.

To define the general outline of the given design framework, selected chapter provides several aspects as the practical backbones for the given theoretical model to be further evaluated and applied on real life scenarios. Within the scope of this review
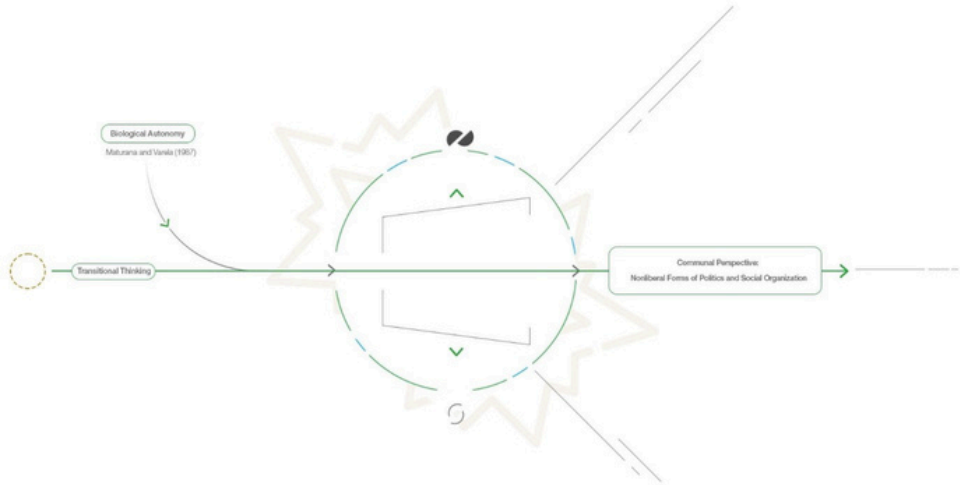
**Image 5.** Theoretical outline.

process, in a brief manner the general outline of the framework consists of the following aspects according to the discussions provided by the author.

- *Naturality*: Refers to the process of the natural occurrence of design within unique communities, as it is vital for every community to practice the design of themselves.
- *Epistemological Trust*: As communities and people design, they create their own knowledge and realities, thus through the essential utility of design, the creation of desired results demands the critical eye of the practitioners themselves.
- *Multi-layered Thinking*: As the system theory established the backbone of this selected book's theoretical approach, the interconnected and multi-layered structure of autonomous design perspective must not become a forgotten element, when it comes to the realization of a sustained societal model.
- *Decisiveness*: Refers to a crucial element of the designer personalities, the decision-making process and the correct approaches on defining problems suggest care, caution and optimized methods on designing and implementing the abstract propositions.

Through each of these essential aspects, the outline of the autonomous design framework becomes established within the scope of the book for Escobar to bring together all previously established frameworks and propositions, in a collected manner. This way, the realization of a culturally and ecologically sustainable development vision becomes a more solidified concept within the overall hypothetical approach. Towards the end of this designated chapter, Escobar introduces a conclusive model to illustrate the inseparable link between each previously established theoretical foundation to shape the total outline of the autonomous design model. Following figure (Image 6) highlights this representation as an adapted model from the discursive statements of the author.
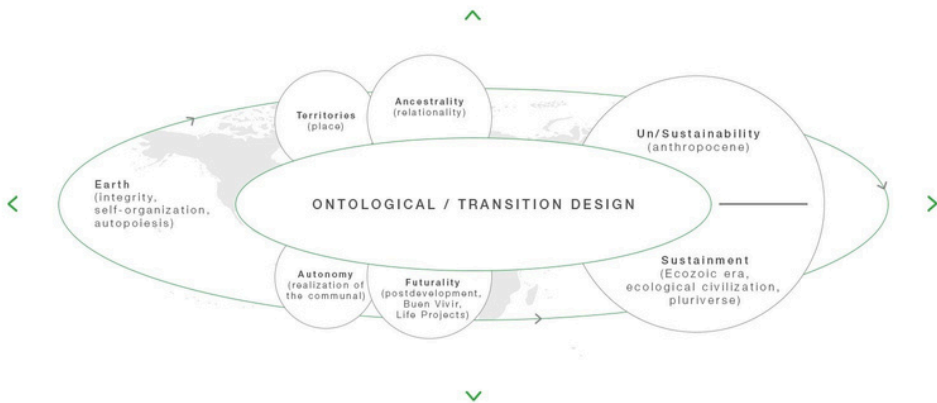


**Image 6.** Autonomy, transition, sustainment. A framework for autonomous design and design (adapted from Escobar, 2018, p.189).

In concise manner, provided model can be followed as a straightforward representation of a cumulative perspective through previously established frameworks. According to Escobar, the main route to the transitional perspective begins with the introduction of design and its general scope. This initiation not only points out the transition to sustainment but also to the "Ecozoic Era" as Berry (1987; 1999) defines this significant period as a metaphorical understanding through biological framework to signify the preservation and enhancement of integrity of life systems and mutual relations. Thus, to realize a total pluriverse system, design's main

goal should be re-designed as well to eliminate the struggles of sub-communities and indigenous societies, which would directly transform the unsustainable practices into futuring practices for life-time integrities.

## 8. Critical evaluation

As a conclusive statement to the provided review, it is vital to reflect upon several issues and topics within this rich and deep narrative provided by Arturo Escobar. Firstly, it is important to once again highlight the significant contribution from the author to the field of design, as the overall research scope bring forth a strong dialogue between the respective and well-established field of Anthropology and Design. This communicative aspect within a theoretical field, not only strengthens the still evolving research spectrum of the field of design but also refers to the growth of the total development of humanitarian field on the long run. Within this sense, selected book enriches one's ability to perceive his or her contemporary status quo and opens multiple options for anyone to further develop new research frameworks on top of the given dialogue.

It is appropriate to mention the well-crafted narrative of Arturo Escobar at this point, which directly effects the articulation of this dialogue in a candid, bold manner. The overall flow of the book is strong, fluent and clear to understand, even for someone who does not have a background within the humanitarian studies. Moreover, the structuring of the book and the overall division of each chapter and sub-sections act in a complimentary manner, without any significant gaps between multiple and varied narratives. Even though the general structure provides an optimized attitude through an explanatory and a critical perspective at first glance, the usage of multiple theories during the overall research flow can be considered as an overload of clashing abstract discussions, which has a potential to be perceived as an overwhelming narrative style. Thus, several theories such as phenomenological estimations and language theories become structural bridges to allow Escobar to connect his critical perspective with the ontological re-orientation in a vague manner, when compared with the other discursive elements.

Following with the general proposed framework of transition design and the autonomy perspective as a follow up concept, it is important recognize this crucial proposal in a concise manner as well. During the specific section dedicated to the critical perspectives towards designing with or without futures, Escobar provides his personal perspective towards how it would be possible for us to convert the defuturing practices into a revitalized framework. However, in an ironic manner, when we estimate his though process, again we get to see the essence of a dualistic and a linear manner on a rationalist approach, the initial aspect he has criticized in a strong manner. Furthermore, even though the transitional perspective provides the most significant aspect within Escobar's discourse, it is not possible for the reader to understand and estimate the practical outline of the given design framework and ideological model.

Certainly, the world we live in demands further evaluation and re-consideration through dialogues between such fields, if we want to sustain and enhance our realities, while acknowledging other worlds and communities. Within this sense, given book from Arturo Escobar still stands as a rich, bold and a strong example, weaves together multiple theories to make us question ourselves and the way we design, create and survive. Even though the future holds multiple uncertainties, Escobar allows us to remember it is still our own responsibility to change and create other options to eliminate the feel of uncertainty, through design and its ontological capabilities, such as defining better and sustained world.

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# BOOK REVIEW: SOFTWARE TAKES COMMAND - EXTENDING THE LANGUAGE OF NEW MEDIA
## BEYZA CENNET BATIR [1]

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## 1. Introduction

Manovich is one of the leading theorists in media and culture, currently a Presidential Professor at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. He is also the director of the Cultural Analytics Lab, which studies the growing role that digital culture and media, in general, have in our social environment.

In this book, Manovich examines how software, since the dawn of the digital era, has transformed and impacts media, design, and art making. He claims that software is really beyond the notions of an author and expertise; hence, design practices have gone democratic and can be performed and accessed by a wider community. In other words, the book aims at studying larger cultural influences of software; what technology takes the shape to formulate social as well as political arguments, and how it leads toward more enhanced rollouts of algorithm cultures. He further investigates how it has transformed artistic practice and audience-art dynamics in doing art. Notably, in his work, he gives out various big questions around how software is bound to reshape the cultural landscape, and that eventually how innovation, art, and design are to be brought together into a new dialogic discourse in the digital era.

A collection of Manovich's ideas was compiled in combination with those recognized within the fields of communications, visual media and design research. Then the design context was examined in order to explain the role of software in it. Views and reviews about Manovich's book, published between 2013 and 2019 were also included in the research data. Furthermore, the discussion of Manovich's point of view about the possible changes in design and creativity in the future, with  regard  to

new technologies like AI and virtual reality, was explored. This research develops a better understanding of how software changes design practices and cultural production.

Lev Manovich's Software Takes Command (2013) is a seminal work on how software has significantly influenced media, culture, and creativity; thus, it provides a much-needed framework for understanding digital transformations. As one of the prime architects in the discussions on digital culture and media theory, Manovich investigates the genesis of design and creative content creation as spurred by the advent of software. This paper, through an inclusive approach to review from voices across the board on the import, will critique the notes laid by Manovich toward the implications that would be entailed in his work.

This book (Image 1) constitutes the central contribution analyzing the transformative consequences of software on media, cultural contexts, and creative practices. Manovich, being a premier digital culture theorist and a media theorist, probes the changes in design and authorship that have been occasioned by software. This paper assesses the work comprehensively by bringing in diverse scholarship in assessing the broader implications that the ideas used by Manovich may have.

Manovich's book was a magnum opus of the history not just of software in general but more specifically, its effects on the advent of the digital age. He spoke of how software had democratized creativity and had shifted the foundational grounds in regard to authorship and skill. According to Manovich, software allowed more people to take part in the creation of media, thus changing culture, art, and design during the time of digitization. He also pointed out the rise of the age of algorithmic culture, where software is at the helm not only in helping create but governing social and political talks.
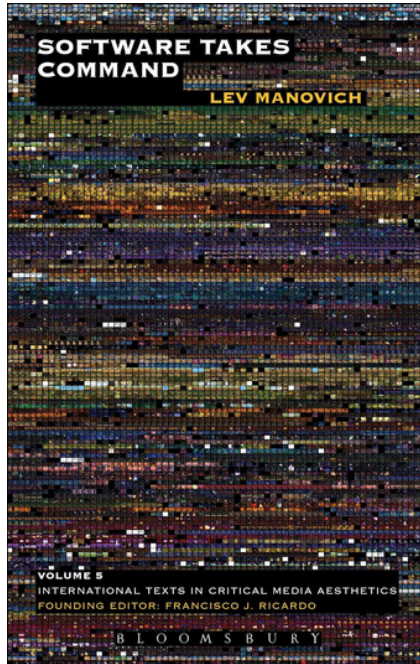
SOFTWARE TAKES
COMMAND

LEV MANOVICH

VOLUME 5
INTERNATIONAL TEXTS IN CRITICAL MEDIA AESTHETICS
FOUNDING EDITOR: FRANCISCO J. RICARDO

BLOOMSBURY

**Image 1.** Book cover of Software Takes Command by Lev Manovich, 2013.[1]

## 2. Structure

Book consists of introduction and conclusion sections within three main parts with their rich subheadings. It can be considered as a book that does not tire of the language on the subject, either for those who want to learn the program or for those who want to learn the software's cultural structure and medium in society.

In the introduction part, Manovich opens his book with an overview of basic software, thus helping a reader from any background follow his book and understand the central principles of software understood therein. He discusses the relationship between media software and society and goes further into the media software organizing tools for communication and expression and also the role of media software in culture. He expands on the significance of software in contemporary societies as seen in both the interfaces of communication platforms and their

[1]Source available at: https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/software-takes-command-9781623567453

infrastructural use. Knowledge on software studies is also given, together with the cultural, social, and political significance of software. The section on cultural software illustrates just how software would shape a cultural setup through words. There are several applications to cultural setups that are discussed, from design tools to social networking platforms that demonstrate that the current society is drowned in media software. The transformation of media is also a subject of analysis as patients use software to take media performances from traditional static documents to dynamic performances. This entry indicates the complications and challenges in documenting the history of cultural software, considering that it is an ephemeral set that is always culturally irrelevant. Finally, the overview of the themes of the narrative is provided with that of the topics within the narration.

In the first half of the chapter, we put the issues of media software in perspective and look at its roots and basic ideas starting with the very origins. Alan Kay's visionary ideas, especially his "universal media machine" vision, belong here as well. We discuss the relation between form and function, the central notion of simulation in the Dynabook, beside inherent flexibility and Kay's idea of the computer as a metamedium. This section looks into the nature of metamedia, the balance between form and function, and the importance of simulation in the Dynabook concept. It further looks into the principle of perpetual expandability, the faith in software as the common denominator, and the distinction between media-independent and media-specific approaches.

In the second chapter, we look more closely at the way different types of media intersect and the way software may serve needs that are not perceived before they are possible. The discussion looks at the contrast between hybridity and multimedia, presents examples and ways of hybridization, and looks into the role of algorithms and data structures in this process. It investigates whether the impact of algorithms and data structures is such that it makes that unit of use all that much bigger, challenging the notion of medium and exploring whether the best unit of use is a dominant metamedium, or best approached as one medium. The chapter examines

the progression of computer metamedia, mapping out the advancement of media variations and exploring the impact of algorithms on this progression.

The third part directs attention to media design and how software is implemented in real-life practice. The software perspective is made to consider the effects of such instruments as After Effects, the creative potential of combining different styles, and the flexibility provided by software interfaces. Also, elaborated is the complexity of design processes, 3D space associated with creation, and the enhancement of artistic expression in the video essay. Finally, I consider how this software, hardware, and social media interplay, and in essence, this relationship, will impact how media might evolve in such a software culture, both philosophically and overall, pursuit-wise.

The conclusion brings together the undermentioned themes that should offer the reader an understanding of the role software plays in creating modern societies and of why media is leaving its old forms for other ones in continuity.

## 3. Software culture

Manovich's book digresses into the understanding and the vast dimension that digital technologies have created within the media sphere. Manovich states his argument on the work of Alan Kay. Inspired by the contribution by Alan Kay, he argues that the computer is the first "metamedium" rather than a new medium. By this, Alan Kay simply meant that the computer is a mix of the extant medium, new media, and a potential media form. Manovich builds onto this premise as the fundamental basis for his writing (Manovich, 2013).

In software, a "medium" is a suite of particular operations upon which a user may perform: procedures for inputting, editing, and outputting content. The word "access" is intended broadly, to include such newer kinds of activity as navigating, browsing, viewing, listening, reading, and interacting. Softwarization means virtualization of traditional techniques and development of novel ones, taken together as a computer metamedium. Each specific medium uses a subset of these techniques and proliferates new ones, and indeed the character of each medium is continually in flux,

as new software tools and techniques are introduced. Every revision of software constitutes a new metamedium for its users, within the domain of commercial media software that adopts that particular form of the metamedium (Image 2).
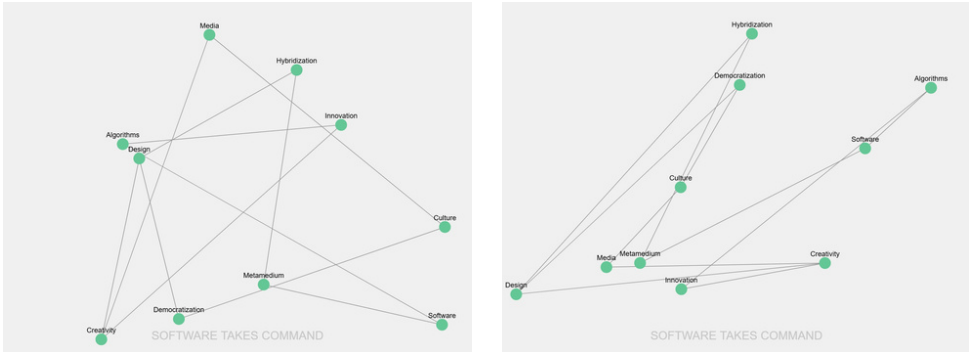


**Image 2.** (left-right) Dynamic word map coded in JavaScript representing continuously updated distances of creative anchor points in the context of "Software Takes Command", 2024.

Manovich also brings up:

> *"What we identify by conceptual inertia as "properties" of different mediums are actually the properties of media software —their interfaces, the tools, and the techniques they make possible for accessing, navigating, creating, modifying, publishing and sharing media documents." (Manovich, 2013).*

Continuing along this line of thinking, a media object's properties don't just depend on its content and file formats; they also depend on the software used to view the object. For example, the qualities of an image are quite different whether it is being presented through a generic media viewer, a consumer-level media program or professional editing software such as Photoshop.

The computer metamedium comprises two classes of techniques: general-purpose techniques, independent of particular media, hence able to operate consistently across media (examples include select, copy, search, filter, and so on); media-

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[2] Source: Author. Available at: https://editor.p5js.org/beyza_batir/full/miFXNWXgo

specific techniques can operate only on some specific data structure (example: amplitude of sound track, or number of vertices in a 3D shape, but not the other way around). Most of the software "mediums" combine general-purpose and media-specific techniques.

Manovich argues that the features we imagine for different types of media are in fact, based on the software used to access media. This allows the importance of software interfaces, tools, and procedures. For example, an image may possess entirely new traits if it is viewed in a paint program, a word processing application, or a simple image viewer, as opposed to looking at it inside Photoshop or another sophisticated editing app.

Buckland (2014) admires the historic perspective provided by Manovich on software, considering the ways in which the book outlines the progression of software tools from the early days of computers to modern forms of digital media. Buckland notes the importance of Manovich's assertion that software has been the driver that has truly changed the essence of the media landscape and hides design tools from the masses.

Manovich writes that current evolution of media can be seen as similar to biological evolution: *"There are many different types of mixes instead of a few 'pure' ones, each characterized by a distinct 'language'".* These suggest that media is flexible and malleable and that it's capable of shaping upcoming designs, which can create a perspective of the dynamic, circular growth of media development in the digital age (Image 3).

The computer metamedium operates through a host of general techniques and a set of media type -specific techniques or procedures. General techniques, such as selection and copy, can be used with any given type of media. Media-specific techniques are provided for the media type and are aimed at concrete media. It can be customized which means that it allows the overall variety of media needs.

```
void setup()
{
  size(600,600);
  smooth();
  noLoop();
}

void draw()
{
  background(255);
  strokeWeight(10);
  translate(width/2,height-20);
  branch(0);
}

void branch(int depth){
  if (depth < 12) {
    line(0,0,0,-height/10);
    {
      translate(0,-height/10);
      rotate(random(-0.1,0.1));

      if (random(1.0) < 0.6){ // branching
        rotate(0.3);
        scale(0.7);
        pushMatrix();
        branch(depth + 1);
        popMatrix();
        rotate(-0.6);
        pushMatrix();
        branch(depth + 1);
        popMatrix();
      }
      else { // continue
        branch(depth);
      }
    }
  }
}
```
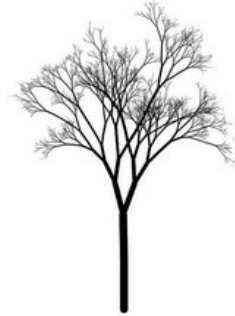
**Image 3.**  The complete code for tree_recursion (left), a Processing sketch (right), Mitchell Whitelaw, 2011.[3]

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[3] Source available at: http://www.openprocessing.org/sketch/8752  (pp.18-19)

Other prominent figures in the discussion on software culture include Ian Bogost, Jay Bolter, Florian Cramer, Wendy Chun, Matthew Fuller, Alexander Galloway, Katherine Hayles, Matthew Kirschenbaum, Geert Lovink, Peter Lunenfeld, and Adrian Mackenzie. Ian Bogost is known for his work in procedural rhetoric; he puts forward the idea that computers may be used to make arguments through procedural methods. Jay Bolter, in "Remediation: Understanding New Media," posits that new media remediate prior forms of media, reframing our perceptions and experience of such older media forms. Florian Cramer has written on post-digital aesthetics and the critical examination of the role that digital technologies play in contemporary society. Wendy Chun's work makes inquiries about the relationships among technology, culture, and identity and how these are related to issues of race and gender within a digital media context. Matthew Fuller's research has informed the fields of media theory and software studies with inquiries into how software and digital technologies inform and are implicated in cultural and political change. Alexander Galloway's work is based on research into interface theory, game studies, and network culture, and how these relate to the aesthetics and politics of software. Katherine Hayles has become well known for her work in posthumanism and the relations between literature and technology, especially in the ways that new digital technologies have changed forms of communication and formations of subjectivity. Matthew Kirschenbaum is one of the most prominent scholars in the field of digital humanities and material aspects of the digital, focusing on the tangible features inherent in digital media. Geert Lovink is one of the founders of the Institute of Network Cultures and spends much time researching critical internet culture, often with a focus on the social consequences of digital technologies. Digital media expert Peter Lunenfeld focuses his work on how art, design, and technology converge in contemporary culture. Adrian Mackenzie explores how software can come to embody cultural attitudes and how, in many ways, all software impacts societies and cultures.

The procedural rhetoric developed by Bogost, along with the remediation theory by Bolter, in conjunction with the intersectional analysis of race and gender by Chun and interface theory by Galloway, all combine to offer new insights into the cultural and

political implications of software and digital technologies. Lunenfeld, Fuller, Lovink, and Hayles expand this corpus by investigating not only the relations between art, design, and technology but also the broader social and post-human implications that digital media may have. Lastly, these theorists emphasize in different ways the substantial impact that software and digital technologies have on contemporary culture. Based on the above literature, several interpretations have been given to explain the role of software in the sense of contemporary media language. Lauber (2014) argues that Manovich gives critical views about the redefinition and recontextualization of technology and culture.

It allows an insight into the historical development of software tools through which Manovich gives insights into the significant impacts that software has on contemporary media. Elaborating further, Kitchin explains that Manovich talks about a shift towards a software-oriented culture where algorithms have been heavily involved in the creation of media content that ultimately changed the face of modern media. The dimension to which Kitchin responds is that which questions how this shift raises questions concerning creativity and authorship in a time of the digital. For Manovich, this is what he calls an "algorithmic turn" in culture, where software not only assists creativity but also shapes and limits its expression.

## 4. Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, more commonly known as linguistic relativity, asserts that the structure and words of a language influence the speakers' perceptions of the world, hence impacting the cognitive processes and cultural norms of the people. "Software Takes Command" shows how software has changed the basic ways in which we produce, publish, and interact with media.

From the Sapir-Whorf viewpoint, one would say that software becomes a new kind of "language" that shapes cultural production and perception in new ways. Different applications, such as Adobe Photoshop and Final Cut Pro, provide different affordances and ways of creating and manipulating media, influencing the look of new

cultural forms. In this sense, although software is not, strictly speaking, a language, it still shares the property of influencing creativity through its unique functions, capabilities, and inherent limitations. Manovich gives a very relevant example: the arrival of digital compositing and editing technologies has deeply affected film and video production. These software applications make possible complex, multi-aspect integrations and edits of visual and auditory elements—something that was impossible to achieve with traditional analog techniques. This has not only changed the aesthetic qualities of the media but has also pushed the limits of storytelling possibilities and creative expression for filmmakers and artists.

## 5. Media hybridity and deep remixability

This new metamedium computing device has enabled all these components of media to converge together, further deepened with remixability at a high level due to the efficient gains made with digital coding applications. It embraces the uses of an increasingly common and interchangeable set of tools in file formats and network protocols, that allow constant mixing and reassembling of the types of media. Craft (2014) commends the study for the deep and broad discussion of the effect software has had on media production. He says that Manovich's discussion of the "algorithmic turn" in culture is important, as it is easy to observe how software algorithms pertain to media production and the audience in terms of reception and interpretation (Image 4).

One example of this can be termed as Manovich describes creating media with software. One refers to a wide populace, including software programmers, information designers, web designers, interface designers, among others. He instructs and asks from these people not only to benefit or move, but also to transcend beyond the limits set by "media after software," build new methods, discover, see the world, the new ways of seeing our world, and find one's life. Academia has, in the main, heavily criticized and analyzed the contributions of Manovich. Bilansky, 2019, refers to Software Takes Command as a huge contribution in exploring software's influence on

culture within the digital humanities field. He singles out the fact that Manovich has related technical analysis to cultural critique—a big contribution needed by both scholars and practitioners.



**Image 4.** Opening titles animation for television series Mad Men. Imaginary Forces, 2007.[4]

## 6. Consequences on a larger scale

Examining Software Takes Command against Ted Kaczynski's manifesto *Industrial Society and Its Future* presents a sharp variation of opinions on how technology will impact society.

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[4]Source available at: https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/software-takes-command-9781623567453 (p.245)

The manifesto gives way for in-depth discussion of the benefits and possibilities of technology in the book; and, instead, provides a very contrasting approach that argues for technology accessibility. Manovich talked about the fact of understanding technology and what it means in media through cultural hints as Unabomber tested assumptions and went deeper into the more extensive societal implications of technology (Kaczynski, 1966).

Also, the thoughts of Neil Postman, to his book Amusing Ourselves to Death, are very relevant in understanding the interaction that exists between media, culture, and technology. Postman criticizes the effects of television on the public discourse-that the kind of messages that are portrayed, which are basically entertaining, have lowered the tendency to basically think about serious matters (Postman, 2005). Manovich's work, which basically facilitates an understanding of the cultural production and consumption of digital technologies, especially software computers. Whereas Postman has concurred this to the television, Manovich has basically broadened his theories to basically the general effect of software on media.

## 7. Broader implications

Manovich's study on software's impact on media and culture has broader implications for areas such as communication, design, and technology. His look at how software makes design accessible literally turns conventional ideas of authorship and skill inside out. While that is the case, accessibility also has other sides, like concerns in the standard and creativity of media through making software.

Manovich deems the central argument to be about how, at present, software plays a large role in the cultural process, and in many evolving forms of culture, it continues to form new relationships between people and representations. This, therefore, implies that the new software for new media will also embrace this move from which at least three other cultural consequences may be footed. However, unlike what was conventionally believed, which indicated creativity and authorship of individuals, it was software which made the teams more diverse.

However, this diversity in participation is causing new problems and with new implications. According to Lev Manovich, quoting the complexities of setting up a photo studio in the 1850s and comparing it with the simplicity of catching images with a digital camera or mobile phone, programming should ideally also turn out to be as intuitive as that (Manovich, 2013: 17). With that aspect, according to Manovich, to make it easy to access programming tools is sufficiently important, and what is placed in focus is to make parallels within the development of technology between the quest for democratization.

In recognising the successes and achievements of pioneers in technology — such as Margaret Hamilton, who once appeared, towering, next to the Apollo mission's code (Image 5) — through their staunch advocacy and example, we can try to narrow this gap and create a more user-friendly, easily approachable, and accessible programming environment for all, regardless of any background or degree of expertise.

Lin (2014) scrutinizes the widespread cultural impact of software, calling attention to its participation in reinforcing algorithmic culture". Lin points out that "Manovich in his research emphasizes the reader to think about the impact of the software on the social and political discussions, as well as of creative activities themselves". More specifically, Manovich, in his research, "explores the ways in which software is changing the creative process; it invites the readers to consider the future of design and creativity in 'software society' today and software continues to play a central role in shaping cultural configurations".

Manovich offers a valuable point of view to make sense of these future changes and how they may affect the approaches to media and design. Similar to him is Du Sautoy (2020), who addresses the idea by looking at the intersection of creativity and artificial intelligence: Du Sautoy asserts that AI's integration into creative projects denotes "a new field in design that adopts from existing software tools". So, Manovich's study is crucial to understanding these developments and the extent to which the impact on creativity and innovation can go further.

**Image 5.** MIT's Computer Scientist Margaret Hamilton next to Apollo Code she wrote - 1969.[5]

## 8. Conclusion

Lev Manovich's book "Software Takes Command" argues convincingly that computers function in the metamedium and cause a redefinition of both our perceptions and the creation of the medium. In researching its potentialities, As Manovich will emphasize the significant nature of change that digital technologies bring both in the process of producing media, consuming media, and any form of interaction that happens between production and consumption. The shift from the old characteristics of the mass media model to the new dynamic one emphasizes the change that the modern age of digital is going through.

It is a high-caliber work bound to enlighten the audience regarding the impact that software has on media, culture, and creativity. An exhaustive survey of the history of software tools, their democratizing effects within design, in many ways provides

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[5]Source available at: science.nasa.gov/people/margaret-hamilton

invaluable conclusions about the changing dynamic between design and culture. The book has received good critical response, hence its importance in the digital humanities field and relevance for academics, professionals, and enthusiasts interested in the future of media and design.

Presenting the audience with the integrated reviews from numerous authors provides a comprehensive understanding of Manovich's arguments and judgment on the presented readings. This research will also give the negative ability of the technology, especially, to create a broader perspective on new media and technology. No matter the fact that eleven years have passed since publishing, the book, which still contributes to our understanding of the impact of today's software and new media, will undoubtedly serve, even in the future, as a major reference point for further a deeper study of the intersections of software creativity and cultural production.

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# A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON "BECOMING A DIGITAL DESIGNER"

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## 1. Introduction

Becoming A Digital Designer is a book with 332 pages as its explanatory title indicates it's a guide to careers in web, video, broadcast, game, and animation design. The book was written by Steven Heller and David Womack and published in 2007 by John Wiley & Sons. The cover of the book which its design also reminds the notion of digital with the dotted letters (Image 1).



**Image 1.** Becoming A Digital Designer, book cover.

## 2. Why the book matters?

The book is an important publication in the field of visual communication design which specifically focuses on the digital environment. When it was published during the first decade of the 2000s, the digitalization of design was hitting its peak after the digital revolution started during the 1980s with Macintosh taking the first step to desktop publishing. The 2000s was the period that the field of design went through its major transformation with hardware and software great development. The digital production tools for design became the standard for the majority of designers during the 2000s and the possibilities of digital environment resulted in widening the spectrum of digital production for digital media. Therefore, the book provides valuable insights in terms of explaining the variety of digital media. Stephan Bundi's statement in Graphis Poster Annual, the prestigious award and publication since 1944 to honor creative excellence from around the globe in visual communication (Graphis), helps to comprehend the conditions of the time. In his statement, Bundi drew attention to how the developments in the field of information technologies affected the way designers work, and stated that in the conditions of that day, the designer could not work alone and had to surrender himself to the computer and hardware. He stated that the developments have increased productivity, but on the other hand, they have made the designer dependent on complex technologies, tool, and software manufacturers (Weill, 2007). As a consequence, the relationship between the technology and designers is inevitable today. Tarık Tolunay, a Turkish illustrator explains this situation as that the computer is the greatest friend of creatives -artists, designers- inevitably today and began to contribute to the production process of ideas. The power of the software or computer that is used by the creative decides the speed of creation, the way we create, and the type of work we produce. Therefore, it has become a symbiotic relationship. The artist designs, the computer makes it real and this mutual interaction causes the emergence of completely different works (Tolunay, 2022). Becoming A Digital Designer presents these completely different works with the possibilities of the digital realm through software and hardware that opens designers to be more creative with the way they work and with the products they create at the end.

## 3. Why was the book chosen to be reviewed?

As a visual communication designer, I studied design during the second decade of the 2000s. Those four years of my undergraduate study were very prominent for me in getting to know my field within the digital environment. Because working with digital tools, hardware and software, was already the standard of our education. During my undergraduate years, I experienced digital tools and digital media as a student and after my graduation I experienced digital environment as a professional because I worked as a web designer who also designed visuals for social media and web advertisements. Therefore, I have witnessed how the digital technologies affecting the field of visual communication design in terms of the way we work and what we design. I am continuing my graduate studies as a researcher who is influenced by the digital technologies. The book Becoming A Digital Designer, written by Steven Heller and David Womack, helped me a lot along the research journey of my master study. The book makes the reader think about the technology by emphasizing that digital tools and digital media create more options for designers that may help designers to boost their creativity by using their time and energy more efficiently which İS believeD cannot be something taking for granted for us as designers.

## 4. The authors' backgrounds

The book has two authors who are Steven Heller and David Womack. Both of their contribution as design professionals to the book is important. For this reason, within the context of reviewing the book, it would be helpful to get to know them better.

Steven Heller is a well-known name in the design field with his publications. He's an author, critic, commentator, speaker and educator, and the leading voice in design criticism and writing of our time (McCormick, 2015). He worked as an art director in New York Times for 33 years. He is the co-chair of MFA in Designer as Author Department. He was also special consultant to the President of Schools of Visual Arts in New York and a columnist for The New York Time Book Review. Heller is the author or the editor of over 100 books on design and popular culture. Design, design

history, and design education are the subjects of his publications. Some of his books with similar contexts to Becoming A Digital Designer are listed below (Image 2).

- The Digital Designer: The Graphic Artist's Guide to New Media (1997)
- Becoming A Graphic Designer: A Guide to Careers in Design (1999)
- Becoming A Graphic and Digital Designer: A Guide to Careers in Design (2015)
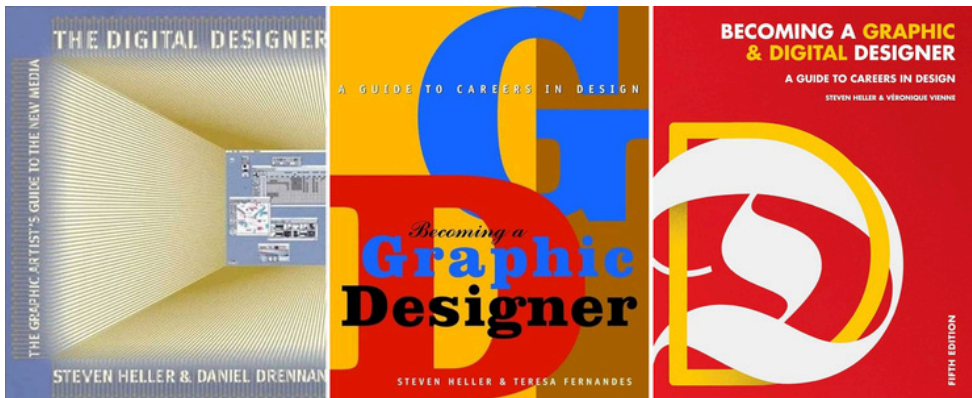


**Image 2.** Books co-authored by Steven Heller.

The Digital Designer is the first book by Heller which dives into the digital realm, addresses the concerns of both veterans and students of graphic design who are just beginning to enter the multimedia realm. As a similar approach that it's observed in Becoming Digital Designer, The Digital Designer features interviews with 17 professional multimedia designers, who give a clear picture of the field and offer solid, sensible advice to anyone interested in it (Heller & Drennan, 1997).

The second author of Becoming a Digital Designer is David Womack. He writes about trends in design and technology for numerous publications and consults on digital strategy for leading organizations. Between 2004-2010, at the time he wrote his book with Steven Heller, he was the lead as the editor of Adobe Think Tank which was an initiative focused on pushing the boundaries of experience design through research

and collaboration with leading practitioners in the field. He was also director of new media at AIGA, American Institute of Graphic Arts between 2000-2004 responsible for all web and digital media projects for the largest design advocacy organisation.

## 5. Content of the book

The name of the book carries the word "digital" as the major element in the title, Becoming A Digital Designer. Therefore, what the word digital means can be explained before introducing the content of the book. According to the dictionary of Oxford Languages, the word digital means signals or data expressed as series of the digits 0 and 1, typically represented by values of a physical quantity such as voltage or magnetic polarization. The visual representation of the word as 0 and 1 is given below (Image 3).



**Image 3.** 0 and 1 representing the digital.

The book starts with a flashback from the authors about the transition to digital tools. The following quote is the first sentence of the book, which I believe it's a catchy way to start telling the story of digital revolution in design world. "In the late 1980s I was given a Macintosh and told to throw out my glue pots, rulers, and Xactos, because digits were the future." (Heller & Womack, 2007). The first visual in the book supports this statement. It is an illustration that represent this transition, a hand throwing out the Xacto knife that from then on it's time to work with digital tools for design.

I believe the main questions which are tried to be answered in the book are who is the digital designer and what does a digital designer do. Within the context of the book, the definition of a digital designer was given through examples. Heller and Womack explain the role of digital designer by comparing the title to other titles of design jobs which helps readers to understand the definition of digital designer. As the authors state that a graphic designer can be a digital designer, but a digital designer can be more than a graphic designer. An art director or design director can be a digital designer, but not all digital designers are art directors or design directors (Heller & Womack, 2007). The book specifically focuses on the fields of digital design such as web design, animation, and broadcasting that computer and software are the main pillars of those fields. The book's overall content communicates the idea of computer and working on screens.

A sentence on page 199 of the book helps us grasp the topic when talking about digital design. This sentence reflects the book's main idea in the best way possible. As the authors state designers have options they have never dreamed of twenty years ago empowered by digital power. Meggs stated, electronic and computer technology developed at an incredible rate in the final quarter of the 20th century, revolutionizing many facets of human endeavor. The hardware and software of digital computers have permanently altered graphic design (Meggs, 1998). As digital technology has improved, the design process and design products within the visual communication fields have changed, become varied, and new possibilities emerged for both the techniques and media. New roles emerged in the field for designers who work digitally as well.

In terms of the structure, the book consists of three parts and fourteen chapters in total. The parts are titled as follows. Part I: Understanding The Digital, Part II: Media and Methods and Part III:  Digital Education. The first part of the book contains 5 chapters and it aims to help understand the digital principles that will shape the future. It focuses on the primary issues that feed the key disciplines of digital  design,

from understanding interaction, to visualizing information to designing for multiple devices.  The second part of the book contains 8 chapters and focuses on technologies behind the creative process and possibilities that come with the hardware and software. The third part of the book which is titled Digital Education has only one chapter but it's kind of the foreword about the subject within the context of the book. Therefore, the final chapter focuses on the importance of getting a formal education that skills and experience compensate. Moreover, studying in an environment that enables to both strengthen the creative side and exercise technical skills is emphasized in this last chapter.

In terms of the authors' approach, they aimed at those who want to assume creative roles in digital design, whatever the format, medium, or platform. Therefore, their methods for the book are very reasonable.  The book consists of 43 interviews with professionals from different fields of design working in the digital environment with digital tools in their design process. 15 case studies are also provided in the book which I believe provide insights about real-life scenarios that one may encounter during their career. Interviews and case studies given in the book strengthen the book's validity because they reveal the reality behind the job which I believe it İS quite important for young designers or students who are planning to take their career paths in that direction. One of the emphasis of the book that digital expands the options of graphic communications and interviews with professionals and case studies about their designs help make this emphasis stronger.

## 7. Overall review: Digital design literature

In the context of writing this book review, there was also the opportunity to dive into digital design literature. As a result of the literature review, the three books (See Image 4) listed below were encountered and explained.

- Digital Design Essentials: 100 ways to design better desktop, web, and mobile interfaces (Rajesh Lal, 2013)
- Web Design: The Evolution of the Digital World 1990-Today (Rob Ford, 2019)
- Digital Design: A History (Stephen Eskilson, 2023)

**Image 4.** Other books related to digital design.

In terms of their publication dates, they are more recent than Becoming A Digital Designer. Although all of the books listed above carry the word "digital" in their titles, their focus and approach are quite different from Becoming a Digital Designer's. The first book is titled Digital Design Essentials: 100 ways to design better desktop, web, and mobile interfaces and published in 2013. It takes a practical, highly accessible approach to creating graphical user interface designs for desktop, mobile, and touchscreen devices as it is claimed in the promotion of the book. It is written by Rajesh Lal, an expert in the realm of digital design. This comprehensive, step-by-step guide demonstrates how to apply design principles in a variety of desktops, web pages, mobile devices, and other touchscreens. The second book which is titled  Web

Design: The Evolution of the Digital World 1990-Today was written by Rob Ford and published in 2019. The book provides a visual journey through time, gathering the very earliest examples of what we today take for granted: the first website to use surround sound, the first drag-and-drop navigation, the first page-turn effect, the first website to use seamless video integration, the first viral site, the first parallax website, the first 'upload-your-face' website, the first site to incorporate a mobile phone, the first ever YouTube-like "website", and many more. The third book is titled Digital Design: A History, written by Stephen Eskilson and published in 2023. Eskilson provides an invaluable historical perspective to help readers better understand how digital design has become such a vibrant feature of the contemporary landscape. He covers topics ranging from graphic and product design to type, web design, architecture, data visualization, and virtual reality.

## 8. Overall review: Digital design today

It has been 17 years since the book was published. As Manuel Castells stated, new information technologies are not just tools to be applied, they are also processes to be developed (Castells, 2008, p. 41). Similarly, digital technologies are also processes to be developed and additionally, they tend to expand. During the time, when Becoming a Digital Designer was written and published cell phones were the main device for the majority of communication. However, today smartphones are very prominent in our daily lives and take a huge amount of time in our daily experiences that we have through screens. Therefore, the term UI/UX design now is significant when we think of the digital design. Under the title of UI/UX design, mobile applications, icon design and interaction design can be explained in such a publication if we had a chance to expand the books content today. And if we need to adapt the content of Becoming A Digital Designer to today's technologies, it can be suggested to involve immersive experiences through augmented reality and virtual reality within the context of mixed realities. The current era of virtual reality began in 2010 when American teenager Palmer Luckey made the first prototype of a virtual reality headset that would become the Oculus Rift (Dredge, 2016). Therefore, it would be good to add this subject to such a publication. Finally, as a very hot topic for

designers today, artificial intelligence would be mentioned in the digital design context. Image generation through artificial intelligence and artificial intelligence integration to design software such as Adobe Firefly can also be explained within the context of digital design.

## 9. Final thoughts on the book

The book is very beneficial for digital design research. It provides insights both historically and also practically. The details about the professional fields of digital design provided through the interviews with creatives and case studies help readers expand their knowledge about digital design processes, methods, and productions. For this reason, the book is recommended to design researchers, design students, and young designers who are planning to take their career path, especially in animation, web design, and multimedia under the digital design umbrella. Overall, I can say that the book helps a lot to learn more about the real life experiences within the realm of digital design through the interviews and case studies. It was very helpful for me to understand the dynamics of digital design both historically and practically.

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# REVISITING MANZINI'S VISION FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT
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## 1. Introduction

Ezio Manzini's "Design When Everybody Designs" introduces the concept of design in the realm of social innovation, emphasizing that everyone is potentially a designer in today's interconnected world. As part of the "Design Thinking Design Theory" series by MIT Press, the book details how design thinking and practice can contribute to societal change by fostering collaborative efforts among individuals, communities, and organizations. Manzini advocates for inclusive, participatory design processes that engage a wide array of stakeholders to address complex social challenges, highlighting the potential of design to transform the built environment and promote sustainable, impactful community solutions. The book explores the emergence of new networks and systems such as community-supported agriculture and collaborative housing, illustrating the role of expert designers in facilitating these complex co-design processes. Manzini's insights draw attention to the evolving role of design beyond traditional boundaries, suggesting that the future of design lies in its ability to contribute to social good and sustainability.

Appreciated for its comprehensive view on the dynamic field of design for social innovation, the book offers examples from global contexts that illustrate the potential of collaborative design efforts. Critics and scholars have acknowledged its relevance, citing its provoking exploration of design's role in fostering sustainable and resilient cultures. The inclusion of diverse case studies grounds Manzini's theoretical discussions, offering readers a glimpse into the practical application of design principles in addressing contemporary challenges. "Design When Everybody Designs" stands as a significant contribution to the discourse on design and sustainability, urging both expert designers and non-experts to rethink their approach towards

designing for social innovation. It challenges the conventional perception of design, advocating for a more inclusive and participatory model that leverages the collective creativity and expertise of all societal actors.

The book has four main parts. The Introduction outlines the need for design in a changing world, emphasizing the role of design experts in fostering social innovation and the value of widespread design capabilities. Manzini presents design as a vital tool for advancing sustainability and connecting local and global contexts to create a more inclusive design culture. Part 1, Social Innovation and Design, defines social innovation and explores how design can catalyze collaborative solutions to societal challenges through participatory frameworks. Part 2, Collaborative People, examines the roles of various actors in co-design and underscores the importance of diverse perspectives and shared ownership in achieving inclusive outcomes. In Part 3, Making Things Happen, which comprises nearly half the book, Manzini discusses expert and diffuse design as both problem-solving and sense-making tools, presenting diverse projects that deepen the discussion on design's role in social innovation. This section provides extensive examples with practical relevance to the built environment.

The final section, Design for a New Culture, calls for a paradigm shift in design towards sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience. There is an addition to heading in this part within parenthesis saying This is Not a Conclusion, it suggests that cultural shifts in design are continuous, inviting readers to actively engage in a transformative, sustainable design process.

Following parts of the paper respectively discusses why book is still important to for us designers to discuss, strengths of the book, and connecting design for social innovation thinking to larger scale frameworks, gaps that book have left to research, and finally discussion on who might benefit from the book.

## 2. Why the book still matters

Manzini's focus on how design can drive social change remains highly relevant in our interconnected world. As urban areas worldwide face climate change, resource depletion, and the need for sustainable development, the transition towards sustainability becomes crucial. Manzini's emphasis on local, everyday practices in fostering social innovation resonates with community-driven urban projects and grassroots initiatives. The book's impact on design culture promotes a more inclusive, participatory, and sustainable approach to design, advocating for a shift towards practices that are environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive. Along with the multiple challenges discussed throughout the book, this paper investigates the link between built environment and design for social innovation. Accordingly, challenges discussed in following belong to urban environments as sphere of built environment.

### 2.1. Current challenges in the built Environment

It will be helpful to define current challenges in the built environment briefly to align discussions with broader themes in urban studies and design. Focusing on how changes in the built environment impact quality of life and environmental sustainability. By doing so, it is likely of this study might become a part of a larger exploration of how urban planning and design can adapt to new challenges brought by technological advancements, climate change, and evolving social needs with the help of design for social innovation thinking. Challenges grouped into six themes as follows:

- Sustainability and Urbanization: The book stresses the need for sustainable, livable urban spaces by reducing energy use, managing waste, and integrating green spaces.
- Flexibility and Resilience: Urban design should be adaptable, with multi-purpose spaces that can respond to changing needs and crises.
- Community Engagement: Participatory design ensures that urban development meets local needs, fostering inclusivity and equitable outcomes.
- Economic Disparities: Design can help reduce social inequalities by promoting fair access to public spaces, transportation, and housing.

- Economic Disparities: Design can help reduce social inequalities by promoting fair access to public spaces, transportation, and housing.
- Technological Advancements: Technology should enhance urban life, supporting social interaction and sustainable practices.
- Cultural Heritage and Modernity: Design should balance cultural preservation with modern infrastructure, maintaining identity while advancing development.

By defining these challenges, we are not only contextualizing the book's contributions but also, we're trying to emphasize its practical importance in tackling real-world urban issues. While, the book offers significant contributions to the field of social innovation and design, particularly through its emphasis on collaboration, sustainability, and inclusivity within previously mentioned challenges of urban environment. Yet, from an urban design perspective, the book could be enhanced for becoming more valuable resource for urban designers, planners, and policymakers, offering practical guidance for creating resilient, inclusive, and sustainable urban environments.

## 3. Strengths of the book

Manzini's book's strengths are widely recognized in terms of introduction to social innovation, framework for design thinking, emphasis on collaboration, focus on sustainability and resilience, examples and case studies, and accessible writing style. Firstly, the book provides a comprehensive introduction to the concept of social innovation, demonstrating its significance in creating a more sustainable and equitable society. DiSalvo (2017) praises it as essential reading for those involved in social design and innovation, placing it alongside seminal works like Victor Papanek's "Design for the Real World". Manzini offers useful frameworks for design thinking in several diagrams, such as the Design Mode Map (Image 1), Interaction Quality Map (Image 2), and Participant Involvement map (Image 3). These diagrams help readers understand and implement collaborative and participatory design processes. This aligns with the book's emphasis on inclusive design processes that engage a wide array of stakeholders, ensuring that solutions are effective, accepted, and sustainable through community involvement.
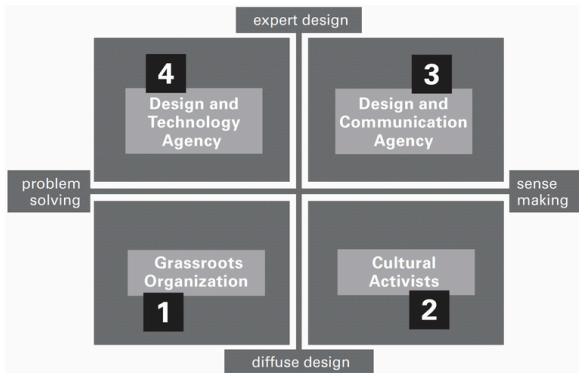
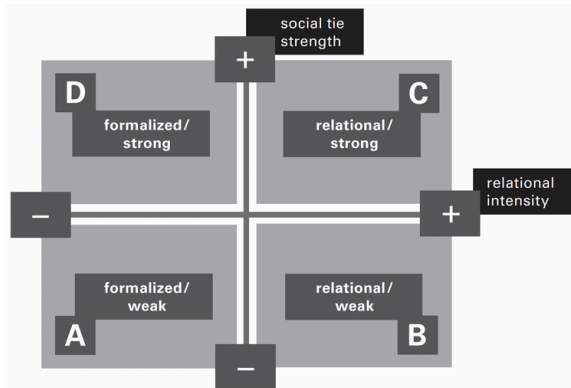**Image 1.** Design mode map (Source: Manzini, 2015 pg. 40).



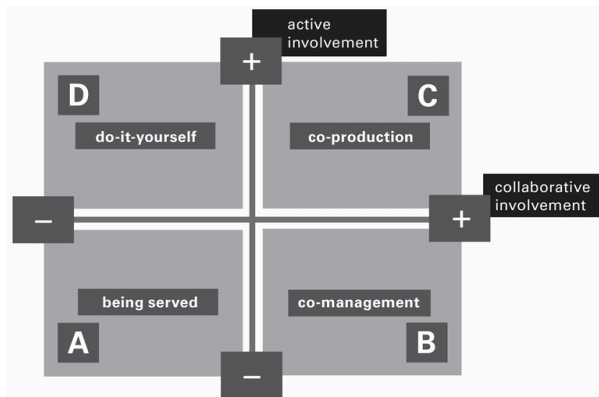**Image 2.** Interaction Quality (IQ) map (Source: Manzini, 2015 pg. 109).



**Image 3.** Participant Involvement (PI) map (Source: Manzini, 2015 pg. 107).

The Design Mode Map categorizes design approaches along two axes: expert versus diffuse design and problem-solving versus sense-making. In Quadrant 1, Grassroots Organizations embody community-led, problem-solving efforts by non-experts. Quadrant 2, Cultural Activists, represents diffuse design focused on fostering cultural awareness. Quadrant 3, Design and Communication Agencies, involves expert-driven sense-making to shape cultural understanding. Finally, Quadrant 4, Design and Technology Agencies, applies expert knowledge to develop technical solutions.

Manzini's framework illustrates design's diverse roles, showing it as a tool for both problem-solving and creating cultural meaning, bridging professional and community efforts to drive social innovation across contexts.

The IQ Map categorizes interactions by social tie strength (weak to strong) and relational intensity (low to high), helping to assess interaction quality in design projects. Quadrant A represents weak ties and low intensity, like casual acquaintances; Quadrant B involves weak ties with high intensity, such as online forum interactions. Quadrant C, with strong ties and high intensity, is typical of close communities, while Quadrant D shows strong but infrequent ties, as in professional networks. Manzini highlights that "the quality of interactions is crucial for the success of social innovation projects," emphasizing that strong, meaningful ties enhance collaboration in social design.

The PI Map categorizes involvement by two axes: active vs. passive participation and individual vs. collaborative efforts. Quadrant A shows low active, low collaborative involvement, where individuals passively receive services. Quadrant B has low active, high collaborative involvement, seen in committees managing projects. Quadrant C involves high active, high collaborative participation, as in community co-production projects like gardens. Quadrant D reflects high active, low collaborative involvement, where individuals engage independently. Manzini highlights that understanding these involvement types enhances participation, fostering impactful social innovation through active, collaborative design.

The book acknowledges that maps like the PI and IQ maps offer simplified frameworks useful for analyzing collaboration and organizational development. These diagrams enhance understanding of social innovation and collaborative design, as DiSalvo (2017) also notes, with Manzini's emphasis on sustainability through "cosmopolitan localism"—a balance of local engagement and global connectivity. The book's project examples link theory to practice, showing how design can make urban spaces more sustainable and community oriented.

Manzini's clear, engaging writing style makes complex ideas accessible to a wide audience, from professionals to community activists. The book's strengths include its comprehensive approach to social innovation, practical design frameworks, focus on collaboration and sustainability, real-world examples, and accessibility, establishing it as a valuable resource for social innovation in urban design.

## 3.1. Case studies and practical examples

As mentioned earlier the book is not only rich in theoretical insights but also provides numerous practical examples that illustrate the application of these ideas. These cases highlight the effectiveness of social innovation, offering inspiring success stories that illustrate design's transformative potential in addressing urban challenges. By including case studies, the book provides a balanced analysis, showing both strengths and potential limitations. These examples align with second-order design principles, fostering participation, collaboration, and sustainability. For instance, collaborative mapping and urban gardens showcase how community involvement can promote sustainable urban development and resilience. Two detailed examination cases below chosen for highlighting the transformative potential of design in addressing urban challenges and underscore the book's relevance to practitioners and scholars alike.

- *Sustainable Periurban Project in Nord-Pas-de-Calais:* This project aimed to promote sustainable living in suburban areas facing sprawl, dense roads, and decreasing green spaces. Using video sketches to illustrate sustainable practices,

it engaged urban planners, residents, and environmentalists in workshops that fostered collaborative solutions. These videos showcased energy-efficient homes, community gardens, and eco-friendly transport, serving as tools to visualize interventions and gather community feedback. The project effectively raised awareness of sustainable practices, leading many residents to adopt these changes in daily life, which improved resource management, reduced pollution, and enhanced green spaces. This participatory approach strengthened community ties, fostering collective action towards sustainability.

- *Ainonghui Farmers' Association:* The project integrates traditional farming with modern social innovation to support local farmers, improve market access, and build community engagement. Through collaborative workshops, farmers, designers, and stakeholders co-created solutions, including community-supported agriculture (CSA) models, fair pricing, and training on sustainable practices. Additional activities like food festivals and farm visits strengthened community bonds. The project led to higher yields, improved crop quality, and stable incomes for farmers. Sustainable practices enhanced soil health, reduced chemical use, and promoted efficient resource management, fostering stronger connections within the community and between farmers and consumers.

The Sustainable Periurban Project and Ainonghui farmers' association showcase effective community engagement and sustainable solutions in urban and agricultural contexts. Using participatory design, these projects meet local needs: the Periurban Project engages residents in urban sustainability, while Ainonghui promotes resilience in agriculture through training. Both projects illustrate second-order design principles by creating adaptable, inclusive environments that support community-driven, sustainable development.

## 4. Second-order design: The big picture?

While the book may appear to focus on smaller-scale innovations, it provides a critical foundation that ties into larger theoretical approaches like *second-order*

design, systems thinking, social sustainability, and transition design. The book's practical and accessible strategies offer a starting point for broader systemic change, demonstrating how localized efforts can contribute to global sustainability and social innovation goals. Therefore, the book does not need to be limited to its scale but can be viewed as a vital component of a larger, more comprehensive theoretical framework. Here applying the perspective of second-order design is preferred because it is particularly relevant to the built environment and urban context. In order to be able to apply this perspective, it's better to define what did Manzini meant by social innovation in design and design for social innovation.

Social innovation in design refers to the process of developing new ideas, products, services, and models that meet social needs while creating new social relationships or collaborations. Manzini describes social innovation as encompassing solutions that are both beneficial for society and enhance society's capacity to act. This form of innovation is characterized by the creative recombination of existing assets, such as social capital, historical heritage, traditional craftsmanship, and accessible advanced technology. These innovations aim to achieve socially recognized goals in novel ways, addressing a wide range of social changes and challenges.

Design for social innovation, on the other hand, specifically involves the role of expert design in facilitating, sustaining, and guiding processes of social change towards sustainability. Manzini emphasizes that this type of design deals with creating meaningful social innovations through new social forms and economic models. It addresses various kinds of social changes, including those that concern not only the poor but also the middle and upper classes, enabling them to reduce their environmental impact, regenerate common goods, and reinforce the social fabric. Manzini notes that design for social innovation activates and orients these processes, making it a crucial component in driving forward sustainable social change.

The book also has two schematic diagrams for highlighting the role of designers in facilitating, sustaining, and guiding processes of  social  change.  One  is  the  central

concept of emerging cultures (Image 4) suggests that interactions between these different design modes lead to the development of new cultural forms and practices. Manzini emphasizes that "emerging cultures are the result of dynamic interactions and collaborations across different design modes," highlighting the iterative and evolving nature of design practices. This iterative process indicates that "design practices are not static but continuously evolve through interactions between expert and diffuse design, and between problem-solving and sense-making".
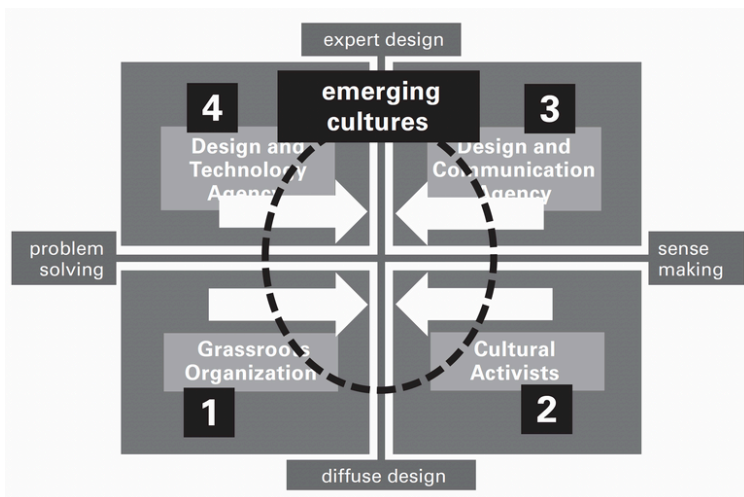


**Image 4.** Participant Involvement (PI) map (Source: Manzini, 2015 pg. 107).

Other one is the concept of design coalitions (Image 5) highlights the harmonious potential of combining these diverse approaches. Manzini emphasizes that "design coalitions bring together diverse stakeholders, including professional designers and community members, to leverage their unique perspectives and skills," creating holistic solutions that are both technically effective and culturally meaningful. The dynamic interaction between these design modes, indicated by the circular pattern and arrows, suggests an iterative process where continuous feedback leads to evolving and adaptive solutions.
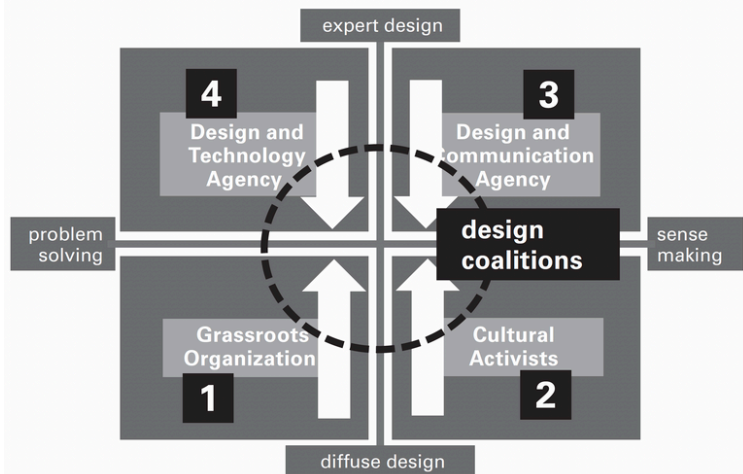
**Image 5.** Social innovation in design (Source: Manzini, 2015 pg. 50).

As a final point on distinction, while social innovation in design broadly encompasses any innovative solution that meets social needs and fosters new relationships, design for social innovation specifically focuses on the intentional efforts of designers to support and steer these innovations towards sustainability. Manzini vision on this integrated approach aims to harness the collective creativity of both professional designers and non-experts to address complex social and environmental challenges effectively.

In addition to potential of the book's being a starting point for broader systemic change, DiSalvo's (2017) critique of the book also aligns with the notion by stating that the book provides a basis for designers and scholars to "probe the limits and implications of social design and innovation" suggesting these practical examples can indeed serve as a foundation for second-order design.

Second-order design, discussed by George (2007), focuses on creating processes, frameworks, and decision environments that empower others to participate in the design process (Image 6). The second-order approach is found to be necessary to address the complexity and scale of urban design challenges, which often require input from various stakeholders and need to be adaptable to changing conditions.
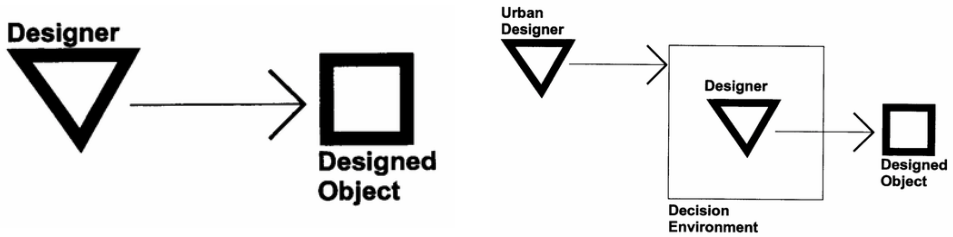
**Image 6.** The relationship between the typical designer and the designed object
(left) and between the urban designer and the designed object (right)
(Source: George, 2007)

In a second-order design approach, the urban designer's role is to shape the decision environment rather than directly creating the designed object. This decision environment includes various factors such as policies, frameworks, participatory processes, and collaborative efforts that enable multiple stakeholders (including other designers) to contribute to the final design. The urban designer creates conditions that facilitate the design process, promoting collaboration, adaptability, and broader engagement.

The decision environment diagram of urban design (Image 7) highlights the complexity of factors that also influence social innovation, including social, political, economic, and legal elements. This complexity aligns with Manzini's holistic view that sustainable social innovation must consider a wide range of external factors. The control over decision making diagram (Image 8) underscores the decentralized nature of urban design, again reflecting Manzini's emphasis on participatory and collaborative processes. By involving multiple stakeholders in decision-making. As depicted in this diagram, Manzini's projects shows ability to embody the principles of second-order design, where designers create enabling environments rather than directly controlling outcomes.

**Image 7.** Different decision environments (Source: George, 2007).



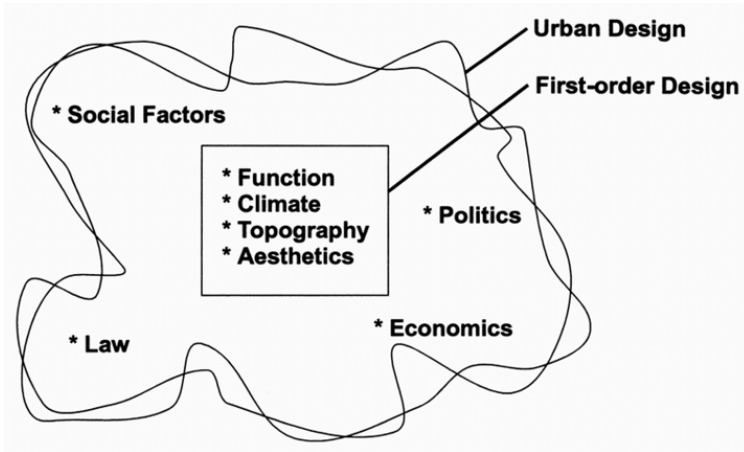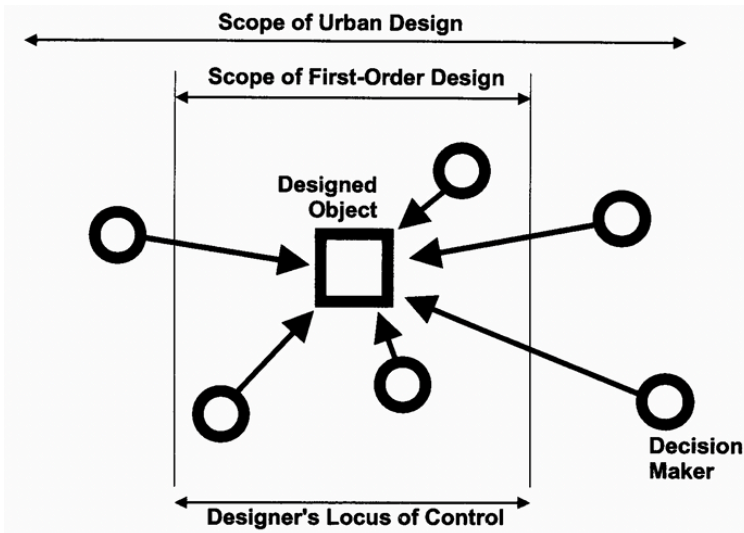**Image 8.** Different control over decision making (Source: George, 2007).

While these diagrams from George's (2017) study highlighting the shift from a traditional, linear design approach to a second-order design approach in urban design, they also provide a visual framework to understand how Manzini's strategies align with second-order design, emphasizing the importance of creating conditions that foster sustainable and inclusive innovation. Promoting participation, collaboration, and adaptability, making it highly relevant to social innovation and the built environment. By applying second-order design principles, urban design can foster community involvement, sustainability, and innovative solutions to urban challenges. Following section examines how this approach supports social innovation in built environment.

## 4.1. Supporting social innovation in the built environment via second-order design

In the contemporary discourse on urban design and social innovation, the concept of second-order design emerges as a crucial framework for fostering sustainable and resilient communities. As mentioned earlier, second-order design shifts the focus from creating specific built forms to designing decision environments that enable diverse stakeholders to collaboratively shape the urban landscape. This approach aligns with Manzini's vision of design for social innovation, which emphasizes the role of designers in facilitating and guiding processes of social change. By integrating second-order design principles, urban designers can create enabling conditions, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, develop adaptive frameworks, and ensure inclusivity and capacity building. This section explores how these aspects of second-order design can support social innovation in the built environment.

In terms of enabling conditions meaning creating conditions that support diverse stakeholder (public, academia, private, civic society etc.) participation in the design process, as George (2007) states rather than directly designing the built environment, urban designers set up a framework of choices that allows others to take part in its creation. While Manzini highlights the importance of creating enabling ecosystems that facilitate collaboration among diverse stakeholders by saying *"To create a more*

*supportive environment it is necessary to move in different directions and with different attitudes… they may also be framework projects: second-level projects that seek to align, coordinate, and systemize a multiplicity of enabling solutions".*

In terms of fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, meaning combining expertise of various fields to address complex urban challenges. George's (2007) emphasize about the need for procedural explanation that is both general and specific, applicable across different situations and not overly restrictive for *"inspiring research that can inform the future practice of urban design".* This requires a comprehensive approach that involves multiple expertise input in a second-order design framework which is reflected in Manzini's work in the form of focus on microenterprises and networks, which require interdisciplinary engagement to thrive in the words as *"An interesting line of evolution for the expert design mode is toward the diffusion of microenterprises based on the notions of open design and distributed production: a design mode where design experts are, at the same time, designers, makers, and entrepreneurs".*

In terms of developing adaptive frameworks, meaning designing adaptable systems or thinking frames that can respond to changing needs and crisis, George (2007) discusses the appropriateness of second-order design for turbulent decision environments characterized by rapidly changing economic, political, social, and legal factors. While Manzini illustrates the need for adaptive frameworks in social innovation highlighting it is not possible to design people's behaviors, but it is possible to create conditions that can likely influence how people will behave and says *"Design for social innovation replies to these questions by intervening on the enabling ecosystem in various ways, at various moments and different levels. The common aim of all these interventions is to create a new infrastructure…".*

In terms of inclusivity and capacity building, meaning ensuring that all stakeholders including marginalized communities, have a meaningful voice in the design process. George's (2007) discussion on this again from the point of dealing with multiple

users in urban design (such as citizens, individual property owners, developers, business interests, and politicians etc.). While Manzini advocates for inclusivity and capacity building in design for social innovation by drawing upon Amartya Sen's and Martha Nussbaum's theoretical framework saying "This way of seeing things, with its far-off roots in the wisdom of Lao Tzu, was taken up again with a vengeance 25 years ago by the economist Amartya Sen and the philosopher Martha Nussbaum. They propose moving from considering people as carriers of needs to be satisfied to considering them as active subjects able to operate for their own well-being". Since, Sen's and Nussbaum's theoretical framework have shifted the focus from traditional welfare economics, which often emphasizes income and resources, to a more holistic view of human well-being and development (Alexander, 2016), Manzini's approach in this sense is more comprehensive.

As further examination states, integrating second-order design principles into the built environment supports social innovation in terms of multiple aspects. Both George and Manzini emphasize the importance of a holistic approach that involves various stakeholders and adapts to changing conditions, ultimately contributing to sustainable and resilient urban development. Therefore, integrating social innovation within second-order design in urban environments offers several key advantages of integrating social innovation in urban design, sustainability and resilience within built environment, community engagement, and innovative solutions for urban challenges. Manzini's book offers numerous case studies and examples, which is mentioned as one of the strengths of the book, that illustrate how social innovation and second-order design principles can be applied in real-world scenarios. These examples offer practical insights and methodologies that can be fitted to different contexts, demonstrating how the integration of these principles can be achieved in practice. For example, in terms of integrating social innovation in urban design, the collaborative mapping cases of the book integrates community input directly into urban planning, ensuring that the urban design reflects the needs and aspirations of the residents. Or in terms of sustainability and resilience within built environment, the case of visualizing sustainable suburban living practices through video sketches exemplifies

using participatory design to develop sustainable living practices, contributing to the long-term resilience and ecological balance of suburban areas. An example of living labs can be given in terms of community engagement where residents are engaged in co-designing urban interventions, promoting social cohesion and active community involvement. One other example in terms of innovative solutions for urban challenges can be given from the case of the DESIS Network. The network and its labs foster innovation by bringing together design students, professionals, and communities to collaborate on social innovation projects, addressing urban challenges in unique ways.

To conclude for this section, such advantages highlight the importance of combining social innovation and second-order design principles to create resilient, sustainable, and inclusive urban environments. However, till here the numerous strengths and practical applications of Manzini's approach is discussed. It is also essential to acknowledge and address the gaps and limitations within his book in order to gain more balanced perspective. Next section of the study aims to fulfil that.

## 5. Gaps in the book and conclusion

While Manzini's book offers valuable insights, there are of course areas that have left gaps. It should be noted that the term gap was specifically chosen rather than limitation or any similar term because these gaps are believed as opportunities for future researchers to explore and address. There is a need for standardized methods to evaluate the long-term impact of social innovation projects. Manzini stresses systematic assessments, with longitudinal studies providing insights into project sustainability over time. DiSalvo (2017) and Angelucci (2017) also emphasize this need, especially as nearly a decade has passed since the book's publication. Additionally, cultural adaptation strategies are essential to apply social innovation globally. Further investigation is required to integrate emerging technologies effectively in community-driven projects without excluding disadvantaged groups. Policy support is critical to sustain social innovation and prevent  isolation  in  limited

settings; as again DiSalvo (2017) notes, without it, social innovation may not reach its full potential. Finally, scalability remains challenging, as expanding small-scale projects while preserving their values is essential for broader impact. These gaps are mentioned in the need for advancing the field of social innovation in the field urban design therefore within the built environment. Discussion of these gaps and the need for further research highlights the ongoing work required to fully realize the potential of social innovation in creating resilient, sustainable, and inclusive urban environments.

The intersection of design and social innovation is multidisciplinary, engaging professionals and academics committed to using design as a tool for social change. "Design When Everybody Designs" offers valuable insights into the enduring relevance of Manzini's work and its application within the built environment. It serves as a conceptual resource for those interested in addressing societal challenges through creative, collaborative, and human-centered approaches. By fostering a culture of inclusivity, sustainability, and resilience, Manzini's work continues to inspire and guide efforts towards creating better urban environments and improving the quality of life.

By completing the book's review from built environment perspective, it has been discovered that Manzini's work aligns well with second-order design principles. By emphasizing the creation of environments that enable collaborative and participatory design processes. This alignment underscores the potential of second-order design to create conditions that support diverse stakeholder participation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and adaptability in addressing complex urban challenges. Moreover, Manzini's approach inspires research that can inform the future practice of urban design, encouraging ongoing exploration and refinement of these principles to better meet the evolving needs of urban environment and urban quality of life. Another related discovery is the recognition of the importance of creating enabling conditions, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, developing adaptive frameworks, and

ensuring inclusivity and capacity building. These aspects are crucial for addressing the complex challenges of urban environments and promoting sustainable and resilient communities. The review also identified several gaps within the book, which are essential for advancing the field and ensuring the long-term effectiveness and impact of social innovation initiatives within the built environment.

To conclude, "Design When Everybody Designs" stands as a significant contribution to the discourse on design and sustainability. It urges both expert designers and non-experts to rethink their approach towards designing for social innovation, advocating for a more inclusive and participatory model that leverages the collective creativity and expertise of all societal actors. The book not only provides a foundational guide but also serves as a call to action for future research and practical application in the field. The review highlights the transformative potential of combining social innovation and second-order design principles.

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PART III
**DIGITAL**
*DIALOGUES*

# D-*AI*-LOGUE:
# SUPERFICIAL TOOLS FOR THE ACT OF DESIGN OR
# PHILOSOPHICAL SHIFT IN DESIGN DISCOURSE

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## 1. Introduction

> *"... the essence of technology is by no means anything technological."*
> *(Heidegger, 1977, p.4)*

Advancements in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and processes have led to a multifaceted revolution, bridging technological progress and philosophical introspection. This chapter discusses the dual nature of AI's rise—on one hand, a rapid but superficial evolution in tools and applications level, and on the other, a profound redefinition of [collective] knowledge, existence, creativity, as well as ethics. As visible with the play on words (dialogue as D-*AI*-LOGUE), the title suggests a comparative exploration of two paradigms: the technical advancements AI brings and the deeper philosophical implications of those advancements and beyond. While AI's technical achievements often focus on efficiency and convenience, its deeper implications challenge our understanding of humanity, creativity, and morality. By exploring this tension, the chapter invites a critical dialogue, urging us to look beyond functionality and consider how AI reshapes the very foundations of human thought and societal values.

As society embraced the immediacy of digital technologies, the reflective nature began to shift to another level. Social media, in particular, transformed dialogue into a dynamic that prioritized speed over depth, efficiency over nuance, and visibility over authenticity; digital dialogues have emerged. What is digital does not necessarily mean fake or not real; rather virtually existent. Communication could now traverse continents in seconds, but it often alters the deliberation and intentionality that once defined it. This acceleration has introduced profound changes to the fabric of dialogue. Social media platforms did democratized conversation, granting voices to the previously unheard and connecting individuals across vast distances. On the

surface, this seemed to fulfill an ancient human desire for connection and shared understanding, yet, the same platforms that expanded dialogue also fragmented it. Dialogues have become polarized, stripped of subtlety and confined to soundbites, emojis, and fleeting digital gestures. The act of dialogue shifted from an exchange of ideas to an arena of performance, where visibility and engagement metrics often eclipsed authenticity and understanding. So, where is the dialogue itself in the digital space now? Are we still having dialogues? Perhaps, an "augmented dialogue"?

Moreover, the role of algorithms in shaping these exchanges deepened the divide between the ideals of connection and the reality of digital discourse. What we see, hear, and ultimately believe became curated not by human intention but by computational logic—patterns derived from vast datasets that often prioritize engagement over enlightenment. Echo chambers emerged, reinforcing existing biases and narrowing the scope of dialogue to what was algorithmically deemed relevant or profitable.

In this new landscape, dialogue is no longer merely an act between individuals; rather a product shaped by invisible forces, a process mediated by technologies that simultaneously amplify and distort. What began as a tool for connection has become a double-edged sword, questioning the very nature of dialogue itself. Is a fragmented, algorithmically-curated exchange still dialogue, or has it transformed into something else entirely? Has the immediacy of digital platforms enriched human interaction, or has it hollowed out its core, leaving behind a shell of performative engagement? These questions become even more pressing as artificial intelligence enters the equation, challenging the boundaries of dialogue in ways that demand reflection.

This chapter explores these shifting dynamics, tracing the evolution of dialogue from its slow, reflective origins to its rapid, hybridized forms in the ever digital age, within the context of design. In doing so, it invites readers to consider not only how we communicate but also how the changing nature of design dialogue reshapes our understanding of connection, creativity, and humanity itself.

## 2. The hybridization of design dialogue: Human and machine

The introduction of artificial intelligence into the realm of design catalyzes a transformative shift in the way we approach creativity, collaboration, and dialogue within the discipline. Conversations in design are no longer solely human endeavors; they have evolved into hybrid exchanges where algorithms co-create, suggest, and even originate ideas. This dynamic integration raises profound questions about authorship, agency, and the nature of creativity in a field historically driven by human intuition and craftsmanship.

In the context of design, "augmented dialogue" emerges as a collaborative space where human imagination intertwines with machine logic. Designers increasingly engage with AI-powered tools, from generative design algorithms to image synthesis models, stepping into a new dimension of idea generation and problem-solving. These exchanges produce outputs that blur the line between human intention and machine computation, transforming the design process itself. To some, this represents a revolutionary enhancement of human capability, offering unprecedented access to efficiency, creativity, and experimentation. AI, in this framework, becomes not merely a tool but a co-designer, capable of challenging assumptions, expanding creative boundaries, and enabling novel approaches to design challenges.

However, the hybridization of design dialogues with AI is not without its complexities. Critics caution that the reliance on algorithmic mediation may dilute the authenticity of the design process, reducing the richness of human-led exploration. AI systems, optimized for speed, patterns, or trends, might subtly constrain creative outcomes by reflecting biases or favoring familiar aesthetics. This raises a crucial question: when a machine intervenes in the design process, is the result truly collaborative, or is it subtly prescriptive?

Such concerns challenge designers to critically examine the role of AI in shaping creative agency. Traditionally, the design process has been deeply personal, reflecting

the unique perspectives and intentions of the designer. In augmented dialogues, however, AI serves as both a mirror that reflects human input and a prism that refracts it, introducing unanticipated interpretations. When AI generates a compelling design or innovative concept, whose authorship does it represent? Whose voice does it amplify, and whose does it silence?

The implications of these hybrid dialogues are especially profound in domains where subjectivity and cultural context are paramount, such as architecture, product design, and visual arts. The blending of human and machine inputs not only challenges conventional notions of creativity but also prompts us to reevaluate the values we embed in our design processes. AI systems, trained on existing data, inevitably inherit the biases and limitations of their sources. As a result, the hybridization of design dialogues becomes more than a technical evolution; it is a philosophical shift, demanding reflection on how we define creativity, originality, and inclusivity.

At the same time, this hybridization opens up opportunities for innovation. Design has always been a field of expanding boundaries—pushing material, technological, and conceptual limits. Viewed through this lens, AI is not an anomaly but a natural progression in the evolution of design. By integrating machine intelligence, designers can access new realms of possibility, collaborating with tools that enhance intuition and extend the reach of their creativity. This transformation invites us to rethink fundamental questions: Can AI foster a deeper, more expansive dialogue in design? How do we ensure that its contributions enhance, rather than constrain, human creativity?

Ultimately, the hybridization of dialogue in design is both a challenge and a catalyst for growth. It compels us to revisit the principles that underpin our discipline, from authorship and agency to the ethics of creation. Far from merely disrupting the design process, AI offers a reflective lens through which we can explore the evolving nature of creativity and the intersection of human and machine. As we embrace this

augmented space, the question is not whether AI will replace human designers, but how it will redefine the practice of design in an era where collaboration transcends traditional boundaries.

## 3. Dialogue as a speculative space

Dialogue, at its core, is more than an exchange of words; it is a speculative space—a framework where ideas are tested, assumptions are questioned, and possibilities emerge. This dynamic process becomes even more intricate with the introduction of artificial intelligence, inviting critical reflection on the nature, purpose, and outcomes of communication itself.

As AI enters the dialogue, it challenges fundamental questions: What does participation mean when one "voice" is an algorithm? Can AI, rooted in patterns and data, truly engage, or does it simulate understanding? These questions force us to reconsider not just the mechanics of dialogue but its deeper implications for creativity, originality, and human agency. AI-generated outputs, while novel, often reflect pre-existing patterns, raising debates about whether such contributions are genuinely creative or merely derivative.

The philosophical concept of "enframing" (*das Ge-Stell*), introduced by Heidegger, offers a useful lens to examine this shift. Heidegger argued that technology is not a neutral tool but actively shapes how we perceive and engage with the world. In AI-mediated dialogue, this enframing manifests as algorithms guiding conversations, shaping speculative boundaries, and subtly influencing what is deemed possible or desirable.

For instance, predictive algorithms often prioritize content based on engagement metrics or personalization, which can narrow the scope of dialogue. This selective framing creates echo chambers, where diverse ideas are sidelined in favor of efficiency or relevance. The speculative potential of dialogue, in such spaces, becomes both expanded and constrained—introducing new possibilities while

limiting others. Yet, AI is not merely a constraining force; it also brings new speculative dimensions. When AI proposes solutions or ideas outside human intuition, it redefines notions of authorship and originality. These algorithmic interventions challenge us to see dialogue not solely as human-centered but as a collaborative process where human intuition intersects with machine logic. Nevertheless, ethical and philosophical tensions remain. Can AI ever genuinely engage in dialogue, or is its role confined to imitation? And as we attribute value to AI-generated contributions, are we redefining what it means to understand, create, or even participate?

The hybridization of dialogue prompts us to reflect on its evolving purpose. No longer a purely human act, dialogue becomes a collaborative, speculative space where possibilities are negotiated between human agency and algorithmic influence. This shift compels us to ask foundational questions: What role does dialogue play in shaping how we understand and interact with the world? How do we navigate the influence of algorithms without compromising the depth and authenticity of communication?

In this emerging landscape, dialogue evolves into a dynamic frontier where human thought and AI's computational power converge. Rather than static, it reveals itself as an ever-changing process—testing, reshaping, and expanding the speculative boundaries of what it means to communicate, imagine, and understand.

## 4. The creative dialogue: Between machine and imagination

Nowhere is the speculative nature of digital dialogue more evident than in the creative fields. Designers, artists, and architects increasingly collaborate with AI tools—generating ideas, expanding visual possibilities, and testing solutions in ways that were previously unattainable. These tools allow for new forms of exploration, revealing patterns, iterations, and connections that might otherwise remain hidden to the human eye. AI acts as a catalyst, amplifying the capacity for imagination and offering fertile ground for experimentation.

Yet, this partnership raises compelling questions: Does AI enhance creativity, or does it constrain it within algorithmically defined boundaries? Does it merely echo human inputs, or does it possess an emergent capacity for invention? When designers work with AI, are they engaging in a true dialogue—a reciprocal exchange of ideas—or simply reacting to machine-generated outputs? And what happens to the authenticity of the creative process when the origin of an idea becomes indistinguishable, a synthesis of human intention and machine calculation? In this liminal space, where the line between creator and tool blurs, traditional notions of creativity and agency are challenged.

Consider the insights of Marcus du Sautoy in the "The Creativity Code" (2020), who speculates that creativity, once thought to be the exclusive domain of humans - formerly advocated by Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) as well, might be replicable through the chemical and mechanical processes of neural networks. If AI can mimic or even surpass human creativity, does this imply that creativity is no longer uniquely human? Or does it suggest that the very nature of creativity is evolving, becoming a hybrid process where human intuition meets machine logic? This raises an even deeper question: is creativity a fixed attribute, or is it something inherently fluid and adaptive, shaped by the tools and environments through which it is expressed?

This interplay is both liberating and unsettling. On one hand, it democratizes creativity, granting individuals unprecedented access to tools that enable them to generate ideas, visuals, and solutions that might have been impossible without AI. A novice designer can now create intricate, parametric forms with the assistance of an AI tool that once required years of expertise to master. On the other hand, this democratization comes at a cost: it challenges conventional ideas of authorship and originality. When creativity becomes a co-authored process between human and machine, who claims ownership? What does it mean to be "the artist" in this context? These questions strike at the heart of creative identity and the value society assigns to human ingenuity.

Moreover, this hybridity invites a look into the limitations of machine-generated creativity. While AI excels at pattern recognition, iteration, and data-driven synthesis, it lacks the subjective experiences and emotional resonance that often underpin human creativity. Authenticity, as a result, may be redefined—not as a measure of individual genius, but as a product of collaboration between disparate entities. This collaborative model introduces a new dimension to creativity, one that shifts the focus from individual brilliance to the synergy between human insight and computational capacity.

In the evolving dialogue between machine and imagination, creative fields are entering uncharted territory. This partnership is reshaping not only the processes and outputs of creativity but also the ways in which we perceive ourselves as creators. As AI becomes an active participant in creative endeavors, we are forced to confront profound questions about the nature of creativity itself. Is it merely a skill set, replicable and programmable? Or is it an emergent property of human experience, shaped by emotions, memories, and cultural contexts? Perhaps creativity, like the tools we use to express it, is not static but ever-evolving—a dynamic interplay between human agency and technological innovation.

In this speculative moment, the creative dialogue between machine and imagination seems to be less about replacing human creativity and more about expanding its possibilities. Together, humans and machines are charting a path into an era where the boundaries of what is possible are continually redefined, challenging us to rethink not only how we create but also why we create.

## 5. The ethics of digital dialogue

At the core of AI's role in conversation lies the question of control. Who holds the reins when algorithms start to dictate the flow and structure of dialogue? Historically, human interaction has been based on a dynamic exchange of thoughts, emotions, and personal experiences. Each individual brings their own unique perspective to a conversation, resulting in an organic and often unpredictable exchange.

However, with AI increasingly mediating conversations—whether through chatbots, virtual assistants, or social media algorithms—the question arises: is the person we are engaging with truly shaping the conversation, or is an invisible entity (a tech company, for example) steering it through pre-programmed responses and biases?

When AI systems are designed to anticipate our questions, preferences, or even emotions, they often do so based on vast amounts of data that reflect generalized patterns rather than individual complexities. This raises concerns about how dialogue is being shaped: Are we being directed toward specific outcomes, behaviors, or decisions based on algorithmic design? Are our preferences being subtly influenced by the narrative controlled by the algorithms behind the interactions?

Moreover, AI systems often rely on past data to predict future responses, but this data can carry hidden biases—prejudices or stereotypes embedded in the algorithms themselves. This means that the narratives we engage with could be limited or skewed by the system's inherent biases, reinforcing specific ideologies or viewpoints.

## 5.1. Authenticity vs. simulation: What is genuine interaction?

One of the most profound questions that AI-mediated dialogue raises is about authenticity. In human interactions, authenticity is rooted in emotional intelligence, lived experience, and spontaneity. Our ability to read non-verbal cues, interpret tone, and empathize with others makes our conversations deeply human.

When AI systems simulate traits like empathy, humor, or understanding, they do so based on patterns and algorithms rather than emotional insight. This ability to mimic human responses can be convincing, especially as AI becomes more advanced. However, the problem lies in distinguishing real empathy from a calculated, programmed response.

This issue also extends to the idea of intent in communication. A human speaker has genuine intentions—whether it's to comfort, inform, or entertain—driven by complex emotional and cognitive processes. An AI, on the other hand, lacks these motivations. It can predict the best response to a situation based on statistical probabilities and past data, but it cannot truly "care" about the person it is interacting with.

So, what happens when we start forming emotional bonds with AI systems that simulate human connection? Can we trust that these simulated interactions are genuine, or are we unknowingly falling for a carefully constructed illusion? And if AI can simulate empathy, does it cheapen the value of human emotions in our interactions?

## 5.2. Commodification of dialogue as data: Who owns the dialogue?

The idea that dialogue has been commodified is perhaps the most unsettling of all. Every time we engage with an AI system, we are, in effect, exchanging our thoughts, emotions, preferences, and behavior patterns for data. This data can be harvested and analyzed to generate profit, often in ways we do not fully understand or consent to. Take social media platforms, for instance. Every conversation, post, like, or share feeds into an algorithm that learns more about us and tailors future content to keep us engaged. What was once an intimate conversation with friends or family becomes a data point that can be sold to advertisers, used for predictive analytics, or even exploited to manipulate political views or consumer behavior.

This commodification has serious ethical implications. It reduces dialogue—something deeply human and personal—to a product. Our conversations are no longer purely for connection or expression, but have been transformed into a resource to be mined for profit. In this scenario, individuals lose ownership of their own voices, as their words are repurposed without their full understanding or consent.

Even more concerning, the constant tracking of our interactions can lead to the creation of digital identities—profiles of who we are, what we think, what we buy, and even what we feel—an identity that may be sold or used in ways we never intended.

The question of ownership is central to the ethical considerations of AI dialogue. When conversations are mediated by AI systems, who owns the conversation? Is it the tech companies that design the algorithms? The users who engage with the system? Or perhaps the companies that buy and utilize the data produced during these interactions? Ownership of dialogue extends beyond the conversations themselves and into the realm of influence. Tech companies have access to vast amounts of personal data that not only shapes their understanding of individuals but also drives entire markets. They can use this data to manipulate consumer behavior, create hyper-targeted advertising, or even influence political opinions. In essence, they control not just the data, but the broader narrative surrounding our lives, our preferences, and even our identities.

In the context of AI, this becomes even more complicated. AI systems are not passive tools but active agents that interact with users, shape their experiences, and learn from their behaviors. This raises a new set of questions: If our conversations with AI are shaped by algorithms designed to maximize profit, can we truly say we are in control of our own narrative? And when AI systems predict our desires or needs, is that prediction based on our authentic selves or a version of us that has been shaped by algorithms?

## 5.3. Ethical responsibility and moving forward

As AI continues to evolve, the ethical questions surrounding AI-mediated dialogue will only grow more complex. We must consider how these systems impact our autonomy, shape our relationships, and alter the very nature of communication itself. While AI has the potential to enhance and enrich human interactions, it also  presents

significant risks—particularly when it comes to control, authenticity, commodification, and ownership.

To navigate this landscape responsibly, we must develop frameworks that protect user privacy, ensure transparency, and hold companies accountable for how they use and manipulate conversational data. Additionally, we must engage in ongoing conversations about the role of AI in society—conversations that are not just about the technology itself, but about the human values that should guide its development and implementation.

By recognizing the ethical complexities of AI dialogue, we can begin to shape a future where these technologies enhance rather than diminish the richness of human connection.

## 6. Concluding toward a new philosophy of dialogue

The emergence of AI tools in design introduces a transformative shift in how dialogue is conceptualized, moving beyond human-centered exchanges to a hybrid interplay of human and machine intelligences. This transition demands a re-evaluation of foundational philosophical ideas and computational theories to understand the dynamics of agency, intentionality, and creativity within AI-mediated processes. Heidegger's "Being-in-the-world" (1927) offers a crucial framework for analyzing this shift, urging us to prioritize authentic engagement over abstract, decontextualized computation. Beth Preston's discussion of "Connections vs. Interactions" (1993) provides further nuance, distinguishing between the algorithmic manipulation of symbols and the embodied, context-sensitive understanding inherent in human cognition. Dreyfus' critique (1991; 1992) of symbolic AI as incapable of grasping the fluid, situated nature of human experience underscores the limits of computational complexity and reminds us of the risks of over-reliance on formalized representations of dialogue. In this light, dialogue mediated by AI becomes not merely a technical exchange but an ontological reconfiguration of our relationship to technology, knowledge, and one another.

Drawing from David Marr and Shimon Ullman, this reconfiguration must also account for the computational mechanisms underlying perception and cognition, emphasizing the layered complexity of how meaning emerges through structured interactions. Marr's (1982) levels of analysis—computational, algorithmic, and implementational—highlight the importance of understanding not only what an AI does but why and how it aligns with human cognitive processes. Shimon Ullman's work (1979) on visual perception and the role of intermediate representations invites us to explore the spaces where human and machine intelligences intersect, suggesting that dialogue can act as an intermediary layer bridging human subjectivity and algorithmic objectivity. Cummins' insights (1989) on the functional roles of AI systems further compel us to evaluate how these tools shape design processes and outcomes, transforming dialogue from a mode of interaction into a vehicle for collaborative meaning-making.

The new philosophy of dialogue must also grapple with Beth Preston's "Heideggerian AI" (1993, p.59) which suggests that AI can simulate aspects of "ready-to-hand" engagement but struggles to achieve the lived, embodied understanding of human designers. As Churchland's neurocomputational perspective (1996) reminds us, cognition is deeply embodied and context-dependent, meaning that AI's contributions to dialogue must not overwrite this relational, situated nature. Escobar's (2018) call for decolonizing technology aligns with these concerns, urging us to ensure that AI systems prioritize inclusivity, cultural diversity, and relational ways of knowing. In design, this means fostering systems that do not impose reductive, universalist frameworks but instead amplify local, contextualized perspectives.

Ultimately, this theoretical synthesis calls for a hybrid relational model of dialogue in design, where AI is not merely a tool but a co-actor that participates in iterative, situated processes of meaning-making. By integrating the embodied, context-sensitive approaches of Heidegger and Dreyfus with computational insights from Marr, Ullman, and Churchland, and ethical considerations from Escobar, designers can cultivate a richer, more equitable design philosophy. This approach reimagines dialogue as an emergent, interconnected practice that transcends the human-machine divide, fostering creativity, authenticity, and inclusivity in the age of AI.

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# VIDEO ESSAY WORKSHOP AS AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF URBAN DIALOGUE

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## 1. Introduction

The study examines the practice of producing video essays in the field as an alternative method for students from various disciplines to engage with urban spaces. It questions the potential of a collective video production workshop in supporting the efforts of urban individuals to develop a critical discourse about urban space. The workshop titled "From Urban Images to Video Representations," which examines Kültürpark within the context of urban rights and crime against the city, analyzes the video essays produced by interdisciplinary students who are actors in the city. The aim is for students to engage in a dialogue with the city through their field experiences and visual documentation using the method of video essay. It has been observed that the process of collecting visual documentation in the field creates a mutually enriching dialogue between the urban fabric and its actors as students. Kültürpark is the largest public space in İzmir and a place where many examples of crime against the city can be examined. In the study, urban dialogue, defined as the documentation and interrogation of crimes committed against the city that affect the lives of its residents, will be the focus of the workshop conducted in this area. The aim of this study is to discuss the use of alternative media tools as a way of looking at the concept of crime against the city and its visibility, as well as the chance of dialog with the city that the workshop experience will provide to the students.

Harvey (2008), who defines the right to the city as the demand and outcry of the city, addresses this concept with urban movements and resistance. Similarly, in this study, while looking at the debate on the right to the city and the crisis in urban space, protests are also examined as the response - the cry - of the citizens in the city. One of the aims of this study is to document the city's outcry through videos and to capture the city's efforts to establish a dialog (Image 1).

**Image 1.** The outcry and demand of the city (Bayrak, A.R., 2024).

Based on the concept of the right to the city, this study examines the crisis in urban space and questions the urban response to this crisis. The study examines the limitations of the concept based on crime against the city. In this context, the study proposes a method for questioning the components of architecture-city-representation in an alternative interdisciplinary educational environment through the transformation of urban images into video representations, and questions the potential of this method for making crimes against the city visible in İzmir, Kültürpark site. Based on Ulus Baker's view of the democratizing potential of video, this study aims to explain the city in a critical perspective to the dwellers (Baker, 2014). The study also aims to contribute to the literature on crime against the city from the perspective of alternative media tools. To summarize this introduction, through the critical potential of alternative media and the power of images, an experimental study was conducted on the definitions of right to the city and crime against  the  city (Image 2).
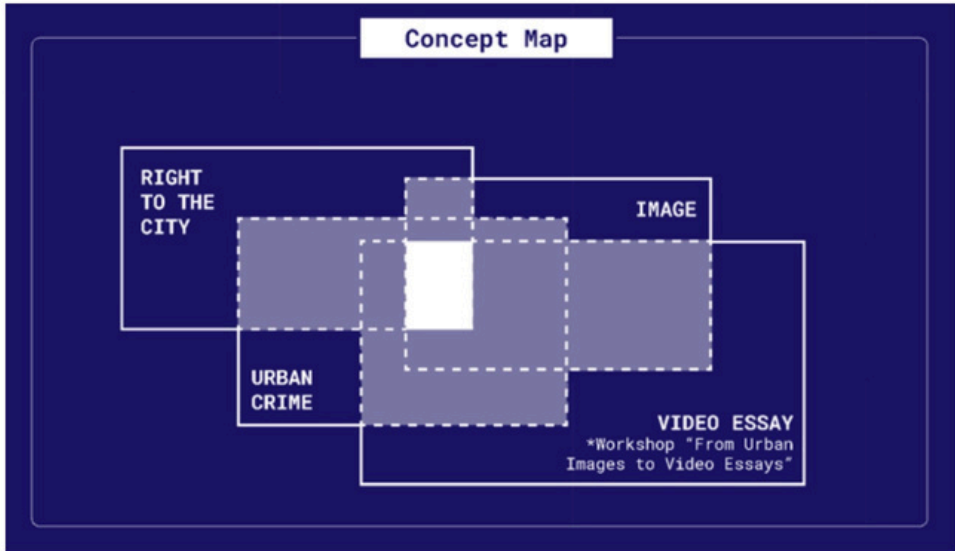
**Image 2.** Concept map of the study (Bayrak, A.R., 2024).

## 2. Methodology: Video essay as an urban dialogue tool

The study attempts to document crime against the city with the video essay method, one of the alternative media. The method of the study is a collective video production workshop with field data from an interdisciplinary perspective and an informal educational practice.  Since the concept of the right to the city is concerned with the actors of the city interacting with urban space, the subjects of a media fiction in this sense will be none other than these actors. Another important reason for choosing the workshop method in the study is to encourage actors - subjects - to establish an urban dialogue with the city from a critical perspective.

In today's world images; from photography to cinema, from cinema to experimental videos, act as documenters and narrators. In the study, the potential of an alternative view of urban space through image theory is questioned. The hypothesis of the study is to explore the possibility of video images in framing the  concept  of  crime  against

the city and to investigate it within an alternative interdisciplinary educational practice. What is intended to be done with images is not only to provide evidence of crime, but also to examine the relationship of the visual with the life there due to its multidimensional structure. These video essays, which also document the traces of daily life, make visible the situations in which the rights of the city are violated.

## 3. Urban space, crime against the city and alternative media

Urban space is the "space of exchange" where commodities are exchanged (Lefebvre, 2011, p.15). The urban structure provides space for the patterns of production, consumption and circulation of the commodity. According to Lefebvre, Harvey and Castells, the city is not only the site of the commodification of the product, but also the subject of commodification (Brenner et al., 2009). In his book Social Justice and the City, Harvey argues that land and the structures on it are different from ordinary goods. Therefore, use and exchange value take on special significance. The fact that the structure is tied to the land, that is, it cannot be moved, monopolizes the landowner's voice over the land structure. Land and structures are necessary for life, and this necessity can lead to restrictions on consumption. Land and structures are permanent and, because of their longevity, are a means of accumulating capital. The capitalist property owner has two gains, the present exchange value and the potential future exchange value. Given the diversity of functions of buildings, the use value can also vary. In addition to the diversity of functions, there is also a diversity of users. According to the different perspectives of users, the use value and exchange value vary. This difference is between the perspective of those who live in the dwelling for shelter and that of the real estate agent who is interested in the exchange value of the dwelling. While real estate agents and contractors seek to make a profit through exchange value, users think in terms of use value (Harvey, 2003, pp.147-153).

Harvey (2008) argues that the right to the city is not just the right to equal access to urban resources. Rather than an individual right, the right to the city is the freedom to change the city as we imagine it through collective action. The urban individual must embrace the situation as a participant and actor when it comes to the right to the city. Castells (2012), in his book Networks of Outrage and Hope, states that the Occupy

movement was born entirely digitally. He adds that the initial sparks came from hashtag posts on Twitter and that Facebook groups were the main source of communication during the protest. Castells describes the activists' personal narratives on Tumblr and Youtube as a kind of "self-service history," that is, a history they wrote themselves (Castells, 2012, p.172).

These productions, which oppose the mainstream media and autonomously present their own stories, constitute an alternative source of memory by displaying images of protests and urban space in public space. It can be said that the image productions of these protests, which Hardt and Negri (2019) describe as poisons that advocate an autonomous publicity against the neoliberal privatization of urban space, are also autonomous storytelling with different perspectives. The discourse of these protests goes beyond pointing out income inequality to express their demands for their rights to urban space and to shed light on the exploitation of all life (Hardt and Negri, 2019, p.70).

An example of the interdisciplinary intersection of sociological methods with architectural disciplines, the Forensic Architecture group operates within the Centre for Research Architecture (CRA) at Goldsmiths, University of London. Using various forms of representation with the visual narrative possibilities of planning and architectural knowledge, the Forensic Architecture team investigates state violence and human rights violations through spatial analysis (Forensic Architecture, 2024). Forensic Architecture, which also uses video experimentation in its work, incorporates representational forms such as mapping, three-dimensional modeling, image-space matching, and event reenactment in its productions. Another recent Forensic Architecture's work is Destruction of Medical Infrastructure in Gaza, an interactive media production about hospitals bombed by Israeli forces in Gaza (Forensic Architecture, 2024a). Through the web interface, the fiction first describes the bombed sites through mapping and then overlays civilian videos that match the three-dimensional modeling in terms of space and perspective. This study is of great importance against the neglect of Israel's war crimes in today's mainstream media.

Like the FA productions that attempt to reveal the perpetrator and the reality of the situation by reframing the crime, the aim of this study in the workshop part is to reveal the perpetrator schema by addressing crime against the city with data from the field. The framework of the study was designed with a perspective that takes Ulus Baker's social healing power of images as a motto (Baker, 2014). It aims to collect evidence of crime against the city through video, to create a collective archive of urban memory, and to fragment and make visible crime through this evidence.  In the workshop "From Urban Images to Video Representations", the records of rights violations encountered in everyday life will function as a document that produces an alternative reading and a collective gain.

According to Yılmaz et al. (2023), cited in Smyrnelis (2009), the present-day area of Kültürpark was created immediately after the "liberation" of September 9, 1922. The fire wiped out the non-Muslim part of the city; Armenian, Greek and Frankish settlements. The fire areas extend to the Alsancak neighborhood in the north of Kemeraltı and in the east near Basmane Train Station. The first zoning works carried out in the fire zone according to the hazard plan were the opening of Gazi Boulevard and Fevzipaşa Boulevard (Göksu, 2003).  The basic approach of the Danger Plan, which was implemented in 1925, reflects the school of Baron Haussmann, the governor of Paris, who was the pioneer of the "militarist urbanism" movement in Europe in the mid-19th century (Göksu, 2003, p.173).  In his short film PARK, Emre Yeksan intersects the news of the time, which he found while researching the 1922 fire in İzmir, with the found footage of Kültürpark from the time of the fair. In a way, this film intersects the oral history narrative with images, allowing the audience to look at the official history narrative from a critical perspective and offering a counter-memory (Yeksan, 2022).

Participants working in the area were told about the fire in the city and the memory of this Basmane Pit, current debates and land speculation scenarios in the area. They were encouraged to imagine the potential and future of the area, in addition to the discussions that might fall under the  definition of  crime.  The reason for choosing

Kültürpark as the location for the workshop was to lead the participants into different discussions in teams.

## 4. Case study: "From urban images to video representations" workshop

Since crime against the city takes place in a part of the city, the subject of this situation should be the urban dwellers, i.e. the owners of the city (Keleş, 2007). Since the concept of the right to the city is concerned with the actors of the city interacting with the urban space, the subjects of a media fiction in this sense are none other than these actors (Image 3).



**Image 3.** Students as actors of the city (Bayrak, A.R., 2024).

In order to have an interdisciplinary process that works bilaterally as a feeder in the workshop, a distribution was made in which students from different departments will participate together in the teams. What is meant by bilateral interdisciplinary work is the exploration and production of the  visual  communication  design  student's ideas

about the critical use of media tools.  Another point that the workshop method considers important, in addition to the final results, is the creation of a production environment where students can be supported by their teammates on issues that they have not had the opportunity to work on before or have not been encouraged enough (Image 4).
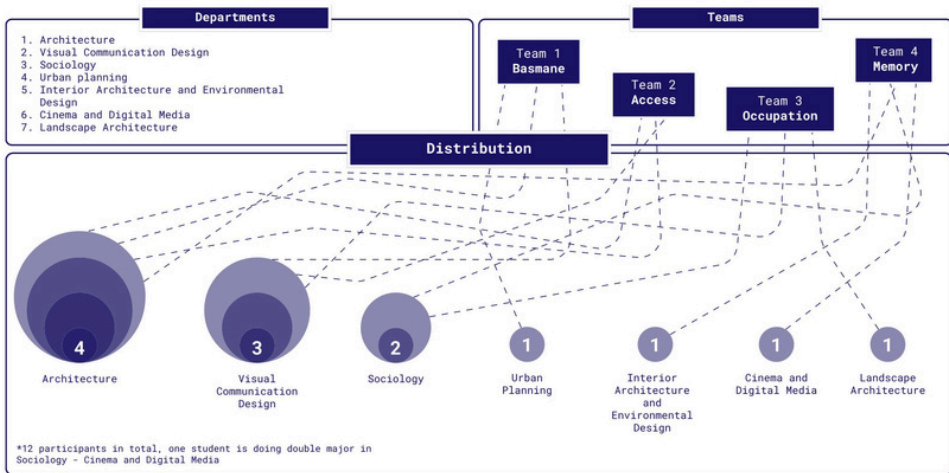


**Image 4.** Distribution of students according to their departments (Bayrak, A.R., 2024).

The workshop "From Urban Images to Video Representations" aims to discuss the complex concept of crime against the city through collective production and interdisciplinary approaches. Supported by the İzmir Chamber of Architects and İzmir University of Economics, Faculty of Fine Arts and Design, the workshop was designed as a multidisciplinary and multi-level workshop that could include students from different levels - undergraduate, master's and doctoral - in the curricula of architecture, interior design, visual communication design, sociology and urban planning. It also aimed to lead participants in a direction of rethinking crime against the city beyond its physical manifestations. Topics ranged from the neglect of historical memory to the privatization of public space and inequalities in urban access.

During the fieldwork, all members were assigned different tasks: one recorded observations in a journal, another did video and photo documentation, while a third annotated a map (Image 5).



**Image 5.** Actors in the fieldwork (Bayrak, A.R., 2024).

The journal notebook was designed to be an ongoing record of observations, drawings, and thoughts that could be used in later stages of the project. These were later transcribed into montage notebooks to form the basis of the video essays. After the fieldwork, the participants returned to the İzmir Chamber of Architects to discuss their findings. They discussed their field experiences, supported by journal entries and annotated notes. At this stage, the participants were able to collectively reflect on the things they had observed, point out commonalities, and translate their insights into visual concepts for their video essays. Next, the montage notebook was introduced as a means for participants to physically outline their narratives prior to digital editing. Analog techniques were emphasized for a free-form exploration of structure and sequence, uninhibited by the rigid timeline and layering constraints of digital platforms. In the montage notebook, participants glued strips of paper representing individual visual elements onto a horizontal timeline. This introduced them to ideas of juxtaposition, overlap, and flow that would simulate the kind of compositional layering they would do in digital editing. In this context, the memory team integrated archival photos of the Kültürpark; they superimposed historical images with sketches to begin building a narrative that contrasted the park's past with

its present state. In the physical montage, the participants themselves did not passively learn, but actively discovered how these other visual elements could be put together to create subtle messages related to their assigned themes (Image 6).



**Image 6.** Journal and montage notebooks (Bayrak, A.R., 2024).

The second day of the workshop focused on digital editing, starting with an introduction to Adobe Premiere Pro. Key editing features the students learned included layering video, designing sound, and incorporating animation. Next, they were asked to recreate their analog montage sketches in the digital space. Additional tutorials in Adobe After Effects were available upon request for those participants focused on visual communication and film studies to demonstrate basic animation skills. This workshop expanded the repertoire of visual methods that participants could engage with, allowing them to incorporate 3D maps, archival documents, and drawings into their video essays.

In the final phase of the workshop, the participants completed their video essays, transforming them into pieces that not only critiqued various aspects of crime against the city, but also raised questions about İzmir's cultural heritage and social landscape. The impact on the audience emerged as a major topic of discussion. Questions were raised as to whether the audience would empathize with such a critique of urban spaces, recognize the documented phenomena as forms of crimes against the city or feel related to the visual narratives presented. Accordingly, the outcomes of the workshop went far beyond the video essays themselves, but opened a space for critical discourse on how visual representation can catalyze a collective consciousness of urban rights and memory. This reflective engagement with video as a medium thus underscored its potential to amplify urban rights struggles, while emphasizing the importance of historical memory in relation to issues of spatial justice. Thus, these video essays served as both critical artifacts and facilitators for future discussions of urban issues, demonstrating that visual representation shifts power, engages audiences, and promotes different views of public space and collective memory.

## 5. Outputs: Video essays as urban critique

The section will present the results of the workshop "From Urban Images to Video Representations", touching on issues of crime against the city and land speculation as reflected in the practices of the Basmane team. Participants were encouraged to observe the status quo of urban space using video recording and editing as a means to critically examine these spaces. Basmane Pit in the İzmir district has become a focal point for discussions related to crime against the city and speculation. In fact, it is a part of crime against the city since it was proposed for privatization and development by the local authorities for the sake of capital accumulation; thus, it reflects the conflict between the public character of urban space and the interests of capital. Observing the pit and its surroundings, the study team felt a sense of abandonment and unease. The abandoned buildings and parking lots around the pit reinforce this sense of being cut off from the city, including the public, and  the  team

saw this as a metaphor for how speculative projects cut off urban spaces from their inhabitants.

The history of the area, the İzmir fire, its past use and present potential were underlined in the team's montage notebook. In the montage design, titles are assigned to reflect both the phases of speculative development of the area and its influence on the surrounding environment. Central to their visual narrative is the figure of Aphrodite, used as a metaphor for Izmir's lost innocence in the face of rapid urban development. By linking this mythological figure to urban memory, the team expresses the threat that capital-driven projects pose to Izmir's heritage. The video essay "Smyrna" begins with a symbolic scene: a feather falling from Aphrodite, a metaphor symbolizing the loss of innocence. This is followed by archival footage of the İzmir fire, which creates a link to the past in the present context. With dramatic background music, it evokes emotions that suggest the transformation of the area into history and its continuation.

The promises of political figures and their failures in urban planning, juxtaposed with the visuals of the empty pit, criticize the gap between public commitments and inaction. Aphrodite, who personifies İzmir in this tableau, shows the inability to act against speculative projects. This work, by the Basmane team, lies in demonstrating the transformative power of multimedia to explore themes of crime against the city and memory. Through the effective use of 3D modeling, archival imagery and news visuals, creative techniques are used to bring out the complex dynamics of land speculation. The layering of different visual forms - for example, historical maps and sketches in the presentation - also serves to reinforce the critique of policies that promote detachment from urban space (Image 7).

Team 1 | Basmane
Land Value Speculation



**Image 7.** Fragments from "Smyrna" video essay.[1]

The third group based their research on the occupation of public space in Kültürpark. They examined semi-permanent structures such as hangars that were set up for temporary use for the İzmir Fair but left standing, occupying the southern area of the park. Another case of spatial occupation was in the park's western part, where expanding structures and parked vehicles began to occupy the public space. The occupation took several forms, including excessive paving, restricted access, and vehicular paths in their field notebook. These observations focused on the western part of Kültürpark. During the documentation, the team witnessed a frog being run over by a motorbike, which was seen as a violation of life itself; this theme was reflected in the video essay. This symbolic image in the creative storyboard, like that of the frog, meant that the occupation extends to living beings in public space.

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[1] Smyrna Video Essay, From Urban Images to Video Representations Workshop, 2024.
Available at: https://youtu.be/lnObJ8uGg5U (Access Date: 28.04.2024)

The image of the frog became central to their montage plan, serving as a metaphor for the occupation of life. The sound was to begin with classical music and transition into upbeat tunes to emphasize the contrast between the archival footage of a vibrant park and the contemporary footage of occupations. As the video progresses, words such as "life," "construction," "vehicle," and "constraint" are flashed next to field photographs to emphasize the theme of occupation at all levels of park life. Titled "We Apologize for the Disturbance" (Verdiğimiz Rahatsızlıktan Dolayı Özür Dileriz) the video juxtaposes present footage with city government signs apologizing for the disturbance caused by the construction. During the occupation scenes, the sound of a frog playing is heard in the background, subtly linking human encroachment to the life of a frog lost in the park. Later, a dead frog appears on the screen with the inscription "Parks Belong to All Living Beings," reinforcing the expression that parks belong to all forms of life, not just humans. The title "We Apologize for the Disturbance" is thus a double apology: first, from the city for its construction disturbances, and second, from the team for graphically presenting the results of those disturbances (Image 8).



**Image 8.** Fragments from "We Apologize for the Disturbance" (Verdiğimiz Rahatsızlıktan Dolayı Özür Dileriz) video essay. [2]

## 6. Observations and audience feedback

Each video essay derived from teams has been valued as a tangible output of this research, as there are different framing approaches in different areas of focus. These frames went beyond the boundaries of the Kültürpark, including the surroundings, the historical context, and the user's point of view. For most of the 20-27 year old participants, post-workshop feedback indicated that the workshop had enabled them to develop a critical perspective on urban space and had encouraged them to take initiative. Having grown up with the exponential growth of digital imagery, this age group demonstrated an ease in thinking through visual media-a fact that confirmed Baker's (2014) observations about the role of the image in contemporary communication. The workshop also showed Harvey's claim that rights to the city are collective rather than individual, through the influence that the presence of collective practice had on participants' engagement with urban issues (Harvey, 2015). Video recording of the incidents of crime against the city provided visual documentation not only with definitions but also with concrete evidence, which in turn reinforced the concept of "document-itself" described by Baker (2014, p.99). Thus, the workshop produced materials that define and substantiate crime against the city, demonstrating the potential of collective video practice in addressing and documenting critical urban issues.

## 7. In lieu of a conclusion

The "From Urban Images to Video Representations" workshop underlined an interdisciplinary approach to urban studies in which students from architecture, urban planning, sociology, and visual communication design participated. In this respect, such diversity provided them with opportunities for collective discourse on urban problems, enriching the chances for rich and multilayered dialogues. Participants have collected data in the field by analog methods, digitizing their findings later. The teams worked on different fragments of crimes against the city about land value speculation, access inequality, building density and restriction, the occupation of the public area, and loss of memory sites within Kültürpark. Each of the video essay

produced aimed to illuminate, through unique perspectives and technical approaches, often-invisible crimes within urban contexts. One of the critical successes of the workshop was to assemble participants on issues of urban rights and struggles, which has been indicative of the fact that such a collective involvement might create civic activism beyond the timeframe of the initial format of the workshop.

With the workshop experience it can be said that participants can be turned into active urban actors through dialogue-so-called "urban dialog". There is an immediate effect on the discourse produced around right to the city. Invoking the geography of images is a factor in contemporary urban discussions. Hence, this workshop has been able to show how video essay can be a major tool in creating narrative about the city, which then becomes a medium in articulating urban rights and calling for critical discourses on complexities arising in the city.

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# WALKING THROUGH MEMORY LANES: A JOURNEY ON COLLECTIVE NARRATIVES IN IZMIR'S URBAN LANDSCAPES

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## 1. Introduction

This study explores the use of walking as a medium to engage with collective stories embedded within urban landscapes, focusing on the city of Izmir. Positioned within the contextual framework of collective memory, this research draws on theories from urban sociology, cultural studies, urban planning and architecture to meticulously investigate the relationship between memory and place through the act of walking. Employing the urban walk as a methodological instrument, this exploration interrogates how individuals perceive and interact with the multidimensional nature of urban space and subsequently, how this contributes to the formation and evolution of collective memory. Central to this methodological framework is the organization and documentation of urban walks, designed to elicit participants' engagements with the built environment, uncover invisible narratives embedded within the urban fabric, and interweave personal experiences into the essence of the city's narrative. These urban walks within Izmir's urban landscape, specifically taking place in two distinct districts of Konak and Karşıyaka, offer a participatory and semi-guided exploration of the built environment, serving as focal points within the study. The transcription and mapping of qualitative data gathered during these walks, incorporating individuals' personal archives, oral histories and experiential maps, provide valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying collective memory formation. The empirical findings of this investigation underscore the transformative potential of immersive experience, enabling individuals to reimagine and reinterpret the urban space through their own narratives, thereby illuminating the importance of how spatial presence contributes to evoking and recollecting memories. Ultimately, this study enriches our comprehension of the dynamics governing the relationship between individuals, communities, and the built environment. By accentuating walking as catalytic agent

for engaging and reimagining urban spaces, thus fostering the creation of novel collective memories.

Strolling through a city reveals layers of untold stories, forgotten memories, and glimpses into its historical and cultural identities. Urban spaces are dynamic places, molded by the memories and narratives of those who inhabit and traverse them. Walking, whether intentional or subconscious, serves as a tool to engage with these stories, offering insights into the layers embedded within the urban fabric. This study aims to analyze the relationship between walking, memory and place, with a particular focus on Izmir, a city noted for its multicultural legacy. Izmir offers a perfect backdrop for examining how collective narratives develop in urban settings because it is a historical intersection of many populations. Through walking, participants interact with the city's layers, uncovering its multifaceted identity in motion.

The research is guided by the central question: *How does walking serve as a medium to engage with collective stories within urban landscapes, specifically in Izmir?* This leads the investigation towards the intersection of individual memories and collective narratives, showcasing how walking catalyzes memory activation and contributes to urban storytelling. Through semi-guided urban walks organized in the Konak and Karşıyaka districts, where walking is not merely a method of movement but a tool for reimagining the urban space, participants actively engage with their surroundings. From personal archives to oral histories, these walks transform static urban environments into dynamic sites of memory and connection.

In the modern world where urbanization often disrupts historical narratives, understanding how memory interacts with space fosters a deeper sense of belonging. By engaging communities through participatory methods like urban walks, this study provides a framework for reconnecting individuals with their urban heritage, ultimately enriching their connections with the spaces they inhabit.

## 2. Memory, place, and collective identity in urban contexts

Memory and place are inherently intertwined, with physical environments serving as anchors for shared histories and collective identities. Maurice Halbwachs emphasized that memory is a social construct, shaped by the interactions and experiences of groups within spatial contexts. He argued that spaces act as vessels for collective memory, connecting individual recollections to communal narratives (Halbwachs, 1992). Similarly, Pierre Nora introduced the concept of lieux de mémoire (places of memory), highlighting how landmarks, monuments, and sites function as touchstones for collective identity, bridging the past and present (Nora, 1989).

Henri Bergson's ideas further extend this understanding, proposing that memory is not merely a mental construct but one deeply connected to the body and its physical movement. Walking, as an embodied act, can evoke memories stored not only in the mind but also in the body's interactions with its surroundings (Bergson, 1911). Aldo Rossi similarly conceptualized cities as *"the locus of collective memory"*, where urban spaces become repositories for shared experiences and historical continuity (Rossi, 1992). In multicultural contexts like Izmir, these theories converge to reveal how layered histories and diverse narratives shape the city's identity, embedding its urban fabric with overlapping cultural memories.

Kevin Lynch (1960) connects urban memory to environmental images, he defines as generalized mental picture of the exterior physical world that is held by an individual, which are shaped by both sensory experiences and past recollections. People often attach meaning to the city through their interactions with its spaces. The interplay between the urban environment and its inhabitants is central to the formation of urban collective memory.

## 3. Methodology: Footsteps through the city

### 3.1. Organizing the urban walks

This section outlines the practical aspects of the urban walks, including route selection and participant inclusion. It describes how routes are designed to feature historically and culturally significant sites, allowing participants to engage with meaningful spaces. Ethical considerations and inclusivity measures are also addressed to ensure respectful memory sharing.

### 3.1.1. Selecting the districts: Konak and Karşıyaka

The districts of Konak and Karşıyaka were chosen intentionally. The walk begins in Konak, the city center, and moves toward Karşıyaka, offering a contrast between public spaces, residential areas, and modern developments. The route highlights 18 stops, some with preserved historical traces and others that have disappeared or transformed, enriching the collective memory of the participants.

### 3.1.2. Designing the semi-guided walks

The urban walks were semi-guided, combining a structured route with opportunities for participants to share personal memories. The walks, typically with 15 participants, were held twice a month from March to May. The group was guided through each stop's historical context while encouraging participants to share stories and reflections, fostering a collective narrative of place.

### 3.1.3 Incorporating booklets to guide reflection

Booklets were provided to participants, featuring a map and old photographs of some of the stops on the route (Image 1 and Image 2). Participants were also encouraged through social media to bring personal items, such as photos or letters, to enrich the storytelling process and connect individual experiences to the city's collective history.

**Image 1.** Participants engaging with the "Urban Walk Booklet" (Author, 2024).

### 3.1.4 Participant recruitment and walk organization

Participants were recruited primarily via social media, aiming for a diverse range of individuals. Each walk, lasting about six hours, included 15 participants. 6 walks were conducted over the course of 3 months, refining the route and methodology based on feedback. The walks (Image 2) were designed to be inclusive, fostering emotional and intellectual connections to the spaces and the collective memories they evoked.



**Image 2.** Participants in motion (Author, 2024).

## 3.2. Data collection

Data collection involved a combination of qualitative methods, including oral histories, visual documentation and the contribution of personal archives. Participants shared personal memories and stories associated with specific locations, enriching the study with diverse perspectives. They were encouraged to capture photographs during the walks, creating a visual archive of their experiences. Some participants brought family photographs and documents, contributing additional layers of historical context to the study.

## 3.3. Emerging patterns and shared memory location

Analyzing these data provided a deeper understanding of the relationship between walking, memory, and place. Key questions addressed in the analysis included: *How do participants' personal memories intersect with the city's collective narratives? What role do specific places play in activating memory? And how does walking influence participants' perceptions of urban spaces and their connection to them?*

In this section, two locations within the urban landscape are explored as examples of how specific spaces activate collective and personal memories in distinct ways. Through participant anecdotes, these spaces reveal the complex relationship between place and memory. These locations were chosen to illustrate the diversity of memory activation across the city, though it is important to note that they are only a few examples of the broader patterns observed in this study. Other locations, such as *Konak Pier, Silahçıoğlu Han, Çağlayan Apartmanı* and *Van Der Zee Köşkü* also played seminal roles in participants' recollections and contribute to the overall findings.

The first location, Büyük Kardiçalı Han (Image 3) is one of the largest hans in Izmir, holding a monumental place in the city's urban fabric. Located at the intersection of 2nd Kordon and Mimar Kemalettin Caddesi in Konak, this han is not only important due to its physical structure but also as a memory node deeply embedded in the collective memory of Izmir residents. Today,  the  building's  neglected  state,  visible

from the outside, and its structural damage are evident. The history of Büyük Kardiçalı Han dates back to a family that, due to the Ottoman migration movements, moved from Konya to Karditsa centuries ago. The earliest known name in the family tree belongs to Halil Onbaşı, who lived in Karditsa, Greece in the 1700s. In 1910, the family emigrated to Izmir, where Ibrahim Kardiçalı Bey initially bought a building in the Pasaport harbor area. However, this building soon proved inadequate, leading him to construct the Büyük Kardiçalı Han at its current location. The han was completed in 1928, becoming an important center for commerce and social life in Izmir. Following Ibrahim Kardıçali's death in 1952, the building became neglected over time and has faced significant deterioration. In 2003, some renovations were made, but the structure urgently needs a restoration to preserve its original integrity. This space sparked memories from participants, who recalled its vibrant past with art exhibitions, cafés, and social events. Photos of this space from various periods provide a visual representation of its transformation over time, enriching our understanding of its role in memory.



**Image 3.** The deteriorating facades of the Büyük Kardiçalı Han (Author, 2024).

Participant Anecdote 1:
"I remember Büyük Kardiçalı Han well; especially when I was younger, we would take art classes here. It was like an art center back then. There were exhibitions and cafes where we'd hang out. Now it's in ruins, but I can't forget those days."
*(Participant1, 45, Izmir Resident)*

Participant Anecdote 2:
"For me, Kardiçalı Han was a part of Izmir's cultural heritage. Many of my friends would spend time at the meyhane (tavern) here. It was both an art space and a social hub. Now it's falling apart, and it's sad to see these kinds of places disappearing."
*(Participant2, 38, Izmir Resident)*

Participant Anecdote 3:
'I don't really know much about Izmir, but walking around the Han, I could feel there was a lot of history there. It was interesting to hear how people used to come for art exhibitions and just spend time there. I could imagine it being a lively place, full of life, but now it feels quiet and a bit forgotten. It's a shame because it seems like it had so much to offer."
*(Participant3, 24, Ankara)*

Despite the physical degradation, the memories persist, showcasing the powerful connection between place and memory. The han's transition from a cultural center to a neglected structure reflects how memories outlast physical spaces, emphasizing the importance of preserving such landmarks for future generations.

The second location, Pıtrak Apartmanı, also triggered memories but in a different manner. A modernist apartment building constructed in 1974, represents a significant piece of Karşıyaka's modern architectural history. Designed by the renowned architect Cahit Akan, who was active in architectural production between 1960 and 1980, the building reflects the urban development trends of the period. Once home to a communal pool, it was a central gathering spot for local families. The pool was later replaced by a parking lot, though the ceramic fish motifs from the original pool area remain, keeping the memories alive (Image 4).

**Image 4.** Ceramic Tiles Featuring 'Cup' and The Parking Lot Where the Pool Once Was (Author, 2024).

## Participant Anecdote 4:

"I learned how to swim at that pool. It wasn't just a pool—it was a gathering spot for so many families. People would sit by the edge and chat while the kids swam. I still remember the smell of chlorine and the sound of laughter. It's strange how the pool is now replaced with a parking lot, but those fish motifs keep it alive in my memory."
*(Participant4, 42, Izmir Resident)*

## Participant Anecdote 5:

"We used to gather there with friends after swimming. The café 'Cup' still reminds me of those days. Even though there's no pool anymore, the atmosphere in that area hasn't changed much for me."
*(Participant5, 38, Izmir Resident)*

## Participant Anecdote 6:

"I wasn't familiar with this apartment building, but it was nice to hear about how it used to have a pool and a café that brought people together. I don't know the city well, but you could really feel how much those spaces were a part of the community. It's strange to see how much has changed, especially with the pool turned into a parking lot."
*(Participant6, 35, Istanbul)*

Pıtrak Apartmanı highlights how the transformation of spaces, like the loss of the pool, does not erase the emotional significance of the place. The remnants of the past, such as the fish motifs and the café, continue to serve as memory triggers for residents, demonstrating the resilience of collective memory despite physical changes in the built environment, visible in the Image 5.

These examples underscore the varied ways in which memory is tied to specific urban sites. The analysis also points to a broader range of locations explored in this study, each contributing unique insights into the relationship between memory and place.



**Image 5.** The Café 'Cup' Lives On and Fish Motif Ceramics: Remnants of the original pool (Author, 2024).

## 3.4 Challenges and Limitations
While the methodology provided rich insights, it was not without challenges. The subjective nature of memory and narrative posed difficulties in ensuring consistency and comparability across participants. Additionally, the urban walks were limited to specific districts, leaving other areas of Izmir's diverse urban landscape unexplored. Future research could address these limitations by expanding the scope of study and employing complementary quantitative methods.

## 4. Findings and analysis: Mapping collective memories on-site

This research reveals the profound interplay between memory, space, and the act of walking, positioning urban environments as dynamic archives of collective experiences. Through semi-guided urban walks in Izmir, participants engaged with the city's layered history, uncovering narratives embedded within its urban fabric. These findings highlight how urban spaces serve as conduits for memory, simultaneously preserving and reshaping individual and collective identities. Participants' interactions with specific locations illuminated the ways in which memory is triggered, often through sensory cues or personal connections. Spaces such as Büyük Kardiçalı Han and the streets of Karşıyaka emerged not merely as physical entities but as shared memory locations—carrying the imprints of lived experiences, cultural shifts, and urban transformations. These spaces evoked a spectrum of emotions, ranging from nostalgia to curiosity, underscoring their role in fostering a sense of belonging or alienation.

The findings also underscore the temporal fluidity of memory. Urban spaces, as observed, are not static repositories but evolving constructs influenced by socio-political changes, architectural modifications, and personal engagements. Memories associated with these spaces were often fragmented yet interconnected, forming a mosaic of individual stories that collectively shape the identity of the city. This dynamic nature challenges the dichotomy between permanence and ephemerality in understanding urban heritage. Notably, the act of walking emerged as a critical medium for re-engaging with the urban landscape. The physicality of movement allowed participants to experience the city beyond visual observation, engaging their tactile, auditory, and olfactory senses. Walking facilitated an embodied interaction with space, enabling participants to uncover forgotten or overlooked narratives. This active engagement fostered a deeper connection to the city, transforming abstract urban concepts into tangible experiences.

The methodology also highlighted the role of storytelling in memory preservation. Participant anecdotes, often shared spontaneously, became a rich source of

qualitative data. These narratives revealed how personal and collective memories intersect, creating a shared cultural consciousness. Furthermore, the dialogic nature of urban walks—where participants exchanged stories and reflections—emphasized the communal aspect of memory-making, illustrating how urban experiences are collectively constructed and reconstructed. Ultimately, the findings suggest that urban spaces function as palimpsests, where layers of memory, history, and identity coexist. This multilayered understanding challenges linear interpretations of urban heritage, advocating for a more nuanced approach that embraces complexity and diversity. By examining how memory is intertwined with urban space, this research offers insights into the processes that shape our understanding of cities and their histories.

## 5. Conclusion

The study underscores the transformative potential of walking as a method to engage with urban memory, offering an alternative lens through which to understand the relationship between people and cities. By bridging the tangible and intangible, walking facilitates a dialogic interaction with the urban environment, allowing individuals to explore the multidimensional nature of space and memory. The findings illuminate how urban spaces act as living archives, continuously shaped by human experiences and interventions. This understanding challenges traditional views of heritage as fixed or immutable, emphasizing instead its dynamic and participatory nature. Spaces like Büyük Kardiçalı Han exemplify this complexity, reflecting both the city's historical narratives and its ongoing transformations.

Walking, as demonstrated, is not merely a mode of transportation but a means of discovery and reflection. It creates opportunities for participants to reimagine their relationship with the city, fostering a sense of belonging and collective identity. This embodied engagement also highlights the sensory dimensions of urban memory, where sounds, smells, and textures play a crucial role in evoking recollections. At its core, this research advocates for a more inclusive approach to urban heritage, one that values personal and collective narratives alongside architectural and historical documentation. The shared stories and interactions during the walks reveal the

communal nature of memory, suggesting that cities are as much about their people as their physical structures. This perspective enriches our understanding of urban environments, emphasizing their role as spaces of connection and dialogue.

The study's abstract approach allows for broader interpretations, inviting readers to consider how memory and space interact in their own urban contexts. It also challenges researchers, planners, and preservationists to rethink their methodologies, integrating participatory and experiential elements into their work. By foregrounding the lived experiences of individuals, this research offers a pathway toward more empathetic and sustainable urban practices. In conclusion, the exploration of Izmir's urban spaces through walking reveals the intricate interplay between memory, space, and identity. The findings encourage a reimagining of cities not as static entities but as evolving landscapes shaped by collective experiences. This approach not only deepens our understanding of urban heritage but also underscores its relevance in contemporary urban life. By embracing the complexity and fluidity of memory, we can foster a more inclusive and dynamic relationship with the cities we inhabit.

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# TRAINING GANS WITH SYNTHETIC DATA: A DUAL-LAYERED APPROACH TO AI-DRIVEN ARCHITECTURAL LAYOUT GENERATION

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## 1. Introduction

In the field of design studies, we research architectural design with a focus on the growing effect of artificial intelligence which suggests novel approaches for innovation and exploration. In the field of floor plan generation, the impact of quickly evolving AI models like Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), and Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) and their possible combinations is explored. However, using AI models to generate architectural layouts poses several challenges. The most mentioned ones in literature are the lack of curated high-quality datasets and also creation of new ones. Gathering standardized drawings consists of a monotonous and heavy process that involves manual tasks such as screening, cleaning, masking, and labeling. As these tasks tend to have errors and biases, they are also time-consuming. With these problems in training AI models, the usage of synthetic data emerges as a potential alternative to create unbiased and impeccable datasets with automated gathering processes. This ongoing research focuses on a specific context, generating architectural layouts for one-bedroom flats (1+1) to utilize them as a training dataset. Our proposed approach introduces a dual-layered methodology for layout generation. Initially, a generative algorithm powered by p5js autonomously and randomly crafts architectural layouts within the local regulatory bounds. Subsequently, unlike traditional works on AI-driven systems, a GAN is trained with the generated synthetic dataset. By utilizing synthetic data as a training dataset, we not only aim to optimize the training process but also to create spatial layouts raw in their essence and devoid of subjective nuances. This ongoing research challenges state-of-the-art design methodologies and offers a glimpse into the potential of synthetic data for architectural layout generation.

Architectural drawings have been a significant part of the design dialogue between the architect and the user, serving as a medium for the designer's intent and the client's needs. Schematic representations such as bubble diagrams and basic floor layouts play a pivotal role in the pre-design phase, allowing architects to present the organization of spaces and the relationships in between visually. However, these conventional methods have their limitations; they require extensive time to create and iterate and also they are often hard to adapt quickly as client needs or constraints evolve (Alberti, 1991). The introduction of CAD software created a major shift as it enabled architects to produce more precise, detailed, and adaptable drawings. In addition to that, advancements in parametric design tools have accelerated this process further. This improvement in digital design tools has streamlined the design dialogue, yet the need for faster, better, and cheaper methods continues to grow concurrently.

With the advent of machine learning and deep learning models, artificial intelligence tools have emerged as a third participant in the design dialogue, bridging interactions between architects and clients. This new participant brings a new potential to the design process, including the pre-design phase. Building on pioneering works in AI such as Goodfellow et al. for GANs and Isola et al. for image-to-image translation, since around 2019, a wide range of models including Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) (Chaillou, 2019; Nauata et al., 2020; Nauata et al., 2021), Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) (Wu et al., 2019), Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) (Hu et al., 2020), and their combinations (Liu et al., 2022; Upadhyay et al., 2023) have been explored to generate schematic representations such as bubble diagrams and basic floor layouts. Despite notable achievements in the field, utilizing AI models to create architectural floor layouts still comes with challenges. As these models highly rely on the quantity and quality of datasets, the lack of curated, standardized high-quality architectural datasets is one of the most recognized obstacles in the field.

The pioneering researchers had to create their datasets (Chaillou, 2019; Wu et al., 2019; Kalervo et al., 2019; Nauata et al., 2020), a time-intensive task involving manual processes such as cleaning, screening, and labeling. Furthermore, some subsequent works have had to modify or improve those existing datasets to better align with their workflow or specific requirements of their models (Hu et al., 2020; Nauata et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2022; Sun et al., 2022). The difficulties of preparing or modifying a dataset are frequently mentioned in the research domain. These challenges can be summarized in two main points: 1) the inadequacy of curated architectural high-quality datasets, and 2) the challenging and time-consuming process of creating new ones. These challenges continue to form the new developing design dialogue, pushing researchers to innovate to streamline the process.

As a part of ongoing research, this paper aims to provide an overview of existing curated architectural floor layout datasets by offering insights into their characteristics and limitations. To address the challenges and biases of traditional datasets, a dual-layered methodology is utilized. First, the paper introduces a synthetic dataset created through an autonomous, generative algorithm as an alternative to existing curated datasets. Then, a GAN model is trained using this synthetic data to test this methodology in a case study for one-bedroom flats (1+1), allowing to demonstrate the feasibility and advantages of synthetic data. By utilizing synthetic data to train AI models, this paper aims to streamline the dataset creation process by minimizing biases and time-intensive tasks, and improving both the accuracy and efficiency of AI-driven layout generation while offering a glimpse into the hyperreal nature of AI dynamics in the design dialogue.

## 2. AI-driven spatial layout generation

While AI-driven methods gained importance in architectural floor layout generation in recent years, there were early approaches that utilized rule-based, heuristic, and parametric methods. This review will only focus on works that utilize data-driven models, mostly those using an AI model such as GANs, CNNs, and GNNs to generate architectural floor layouts.

Among the earliest data driven studies, one (Merrell et al., 2010) employed a Bayesian network. The model was trained with a dataset of 120 architectural programs with various features including single-story, two-story, and three-story residences to generate architectural layouts. The dataset contains various types of features such as total square footage, per-room features such as areas, and aspect ratios, and inter-room features such as adjacencies and adjacency types. In 2018, Huang and Zheng conducted another study that utilized a deep learning model, a GAN, specifically Pix2PixHD. The study focuses on recognizing and generating apartment floor plans. Three volunteer architectural students manually marked 115 image pairs which included color-labeled rooms based on their functions and openings such as doors and windows with specific colors. The dataset was divided into two subsets of 100 images for training and 15 images for testing. The trained model was utilized in two ways: 1) the floor plans were used as input to generate color-labeled maps, and 2) color-labeled maps were used as input to create plan drawings.

 As field studies progressed, the lack of curated, high-quality architectural datasets increasingly posed a limitation. The first study that drew attention to the issue was conducted in 2019 by Kalervo et al. They utilized a CNN model with an encoder-decoder structure. Although the aim wasn't to generate architectural floor layouts, to appropriately train the model, they introduced their dataset CubiCasa5K. The dataset includes 5,000 floor plan images with versatile annotations including 80 different categories such as walls, doors, windows, rooms, and fixed furniture. Each floor plan in the dataset was manually annotated by trained annotators using a CAD tool. Additionally, a quality assurance procedure was also implemented to ensure accuracy. The final dataset was divided into three subsets of 4,200 images for training, 400 for validation, and 400 for testing. Thus, one of the first arguably large architectural datasets in the literature was created.

Wu et al. conducted another study that also utilized a CNN model similar to Kalervo et al. Differently, the primary aim of the study was to develop a novel data-driven approach to generate floor plans for residential  architecture  corresponding  to  given

boundaries. To achieve this, Wu et al. planned a two-fold approach: in the first stage, room types and locations are predicted starting from the living room using an iterative method, and then walls are located by an encoder-decoder network, transforming the pixelated representation into vectorized layouts. Due to the complexity of the approach and nature of the deep learning model, they required a much larger dataset than earlier data-driven studies (Merrell et al., 2010; Huang & Zheng, 2018). To address this need, they created a dataset called RPLAN, consisting of over 80,000 real residential floor plans collected primarily from the Asian real estate market. Similar to the previous studies, floor plans were manually collected. Then the collection was filtered to focus on plans ranging from 60 to 120 square meters and including 3-9 rooms. The plans were converted into 256x256 pixelated images with detailed geometric and semantic information embedded in a four-channel image format. These features made RPLAN a more comprehensive and versatile dataset compared to CubiCasa5K.

Chaillou published a study employing a GAN model similar to that used by Huang and Zheng, specifically Pix2Pix, within the architectural design process. Notably, for the first time, a framework was proposed not only for room layouts but also for various tasks such as generating building footprints and furniture arrangements. The first model generates building footprints based on the shape of the parcel. The second model takes the footprint as input and handles the room layout. The last model takes the output from the second model and maps appropriate furniture layouts. Additionally, the models enable users to fine-tune or modify the outputs to achieve desired results. All of these were achieved with a model that was trained with 700 apartment plans. The plans were manually collected using GIS (Geographic Information Systems) data from the city of Boston, and annotated for training the model. To ensure the diversity and representativeness of the dataset, the plans cover a variety of apartment types and configurations. A year later, Chaillou named the model as ArchiGAN in his following study (Chaillou, 2020).

In addition to CNN and GAN models, Hu et al. introduced Graph2Plan, which utilizes a GNN and a CNN to process layout graphs and build boundaries to create floor plans. The workflow allows users to specify constraints such as room counts, adjacencies, and locations. The model was also trained with the RPLAN dataset introduced by Wu et al. but progressively in three steps: focusing on room box prediction, raster image generation, and box refinement.

In the same year, another study that utilized a GAN model, House-GAN was introduced by Nauata et al. Distinctively, the model takes a bubble diagram specifying the number and types of rooms with adjacencies as an input. The model was trained with 117,587 real floor plan images gathered from the LIFULL HOME database. All the floor plans were uniformly scaled down to 256x256 pixel images. The floor plans were first converted into vector graphics and then into bubble diagrams. Lu et al. noted this as a shortcoming since these graphs were generated manually by human annotators. Despite this labor-intensive pre-process, it made the dataset of House-GAN the first dataset consisting of vectorial bubble diagrams. A year later, Nauata et al. extended the work with House-GAN++. For this study, a relational GAN was combined with a conditional GAN model to handle both the generation and iterative refinement of floor layouts. Most significantly, this study utilized the RPLAN dataset introduced by Wu et al. instead of the dataset gathered from LIFULL HOME's database as used in the former study. The Initial 80,000 floor plan images were reduced to 60,000 to focus on the high quality and diversity of the distribution.

In 2022, Liu et al. introduced a novel method, using vectorized representations rather than rasterized images. The framework includes two phases called drafting and panoptic refinement that allow user interactions. The two phases leverage two separate models, a graph convolutional network (GCN) to encode room connectivity from input bubble diagrams and to generate the initial floor plan, and a panoptic refinement network (PRN) to refine that floor plan. The proposed framework was trained with the RPLAN dataset (Wu et al., 2019). They implemented a pre-processing step inspired by Nauata et al.'s work in House-GAN++, to filter out noisy cases where frontal or interior doors were incorrectly kept inside a room.

Sun et al. presented a wall-oriented approach called WallPlan, focusing on the walls rather than the rooms. The study handles the floor layouts as a graph, utilizing wall intersections as nodes and wall segments as edges. The workflow consists of three different networks called GraphNet, LabelNet, and WinNet. They utilized the RPLAN dataset (Wu et al., 2019) for the training of the three-fold model. Due to the nature of their wall-oriented method, they needed to extract wall junctions from the dataset. Additionally, as the original RPLAN dataset does not include windows, they implemented some empirical rules inspired by Wu et al. and Hu et al. to add windows to floor plan images synthetically to train WinNet.

More recently, Upadhyay et al. introduced FloorGAN. The proposed approach is another alternative to synthesize floor layouts by utilizing a GAN model similar to (Huang & Zheng, 2018; Chaillou, 2019; Chaillou, 2020; Nauata et al., 2020; Nauata et al., 2021). The model allows users to control room types and spatial relationships. Distinctively, the model is able to learn the window and door locations from the dataset. The RPLAN dataset was used in the original form to train the model. Authors also suggest that the workflow does not require any post-processing unlike the previous works.

## 3. Architectural plan layout datasets

High-quality datasets are essential to train effective models, and the field of AI-driven architectural layout generation is no exception. The dataset provides the contextual and spatial data for effective training of the model, ensuring that generated layouts reflect necessary architectural principles. However, the lack of curated, standardized high-quality datasets has posed challenges, forcing researchers to develop new datasets customized to specific situations, models, and applications. This section provides an overview of the existing datasets in the architectural layout generation field, mentioning the evolution of them, highlighting their strengths and limitations.

Early datasets, including Merrell et al. and Huang & Zheng, were small and manually annotated to facilitate foundational experiments. The datasets captured basic spatial

features such as room areas, aspect ratios, and adjacencies with color-coded rooms and openings. These pioneer works paved an essential foundation for architectural layout generation, although they were constrained by their limited size. While innovative at the time, the labor-intensive pre-process limited the versatility and generalization potential of the datasets.

Researchers began developing more inclusive and extensive datasets, as the need for large and scalable ones became clear. Kalervo et al. introduced CubiCasa5K as the first attempt at a larger dataset in the literature. The study marked a significant leap forward, including 5,000 floor layout images, annotated with 80 categories such as walls, doors, windows, and fixed furniture. However, similar to the earlier datasets (Merrell et al., 2010; Huang & Zheng, 2018), the pre-process required a significant amount of time-consuming and labor-intensive work, underscoring again the difficulty of creating high-quality datasets in this field.

Around the same time, the RPLAN dataset was introduced (Wu et al., 2019), becoming a foundational resource for AI-driven architectural layout generation later. Distinctively, the dataset gathered from 80,000 layouts ranging from 60-120 square meters, including diverse layouts. Thus, it enabled the training of more complex models with its extensive size and diversity. The dataset also presented the geometric and semantic information in four-channel images, allowing models to learn comprehensively. Although the remarkable contribution to the field, focusing primarily on layouts from the Asian real estate market resulted in regional biases, restricting its adaptability for international applications.

The most extensive collection, including over 117,000 floor layouts, is the LIFULL HOME database, introduced by Nauata et al. This dataset covers diverse floor layout configurations, converted into vector graphics, and transformed into bubble diagrams. Despite the considerably labor-intensive process, including both annotating and converting, the LIFULL HOME database has been fundamental for training models like House-GAN. Although it contributed to the AI-driven floor layout generation field,

similar to the RPLAN dataset, focusing on layouts from the Asian real estate market resulted in limitations.

While the mentioned datasets, CubiCasa5k, RPLAN, and LIFULL HOME database represent major steps forward in the field, several limitations remain. Existing datasets in the literature rely on manual processes—such as gathering, screening, annotating, and labeling—making it challenging to scale them without substantial labor. Additionally, they all cover a single category, residential projects, restricting adaptability to different categories. The regional specificity of the RPLAN and LIFULL HOME database limits its capability to generalize architecture conforming to several different cultural norms.

As noted above, existing datasets are often limited in scope, constrained by regional biases, and impractical to scale for diverse applications. Developing a dataset that encompasses the full spectrum of architectural, cultural, and ethnic diversity across all structure types and categories for training models to generate architectural floor layouts presents a big challenge.  A shift in dataset creation is essential, prioritizing adaptability, speed, and automation. This approach enables the generation of datasets tailored to specific needs, scenarios, or model requirements, while also adhering to architectural, cultural, and regulatory standards.

By utilizing generative frameworks, it is possible to simulate architectural layouts and create synthetic datasets, allowing rapid, automated, adaptable, and scalable workflows for the data creation process. Computational methods, especially scripts can be utilized to transform what was once a static process into one that responds dynamically to the needs. This adaptability not only aligns with the evolving needs of the field but also provides a flexible groundwork for AI-driven design exploration.

## 4. A dual-layered approach to synthetic data for ai-driven layout generation

In architectural design, especially when bound by specific codes and regulations, layouts often can be described with logical and mathematical rules. By leveraging these constraints as the necessary framework, it is possible to automate dataset creation to create structured architectural layouts efficiently. It has been done before numerous times, with the help of various methodologies such as modular systems, heuristic approaches, agent-based systems, generative algorithms, and parametric design. Building on this groundwork, this ongoing research offers a streamlined approach for generating synthetic data for a custom case.

This study focuses on one-bedroom flats, known as "bir artı bir daire" (1+1) locally in İzmir, to showcase the method. The process began with a detailed analysis of approximately one hundred real examples from the region to understand common design patterns, including their areas, proportions, adjacencies, and adjacency types (Image 1). Although this part of the process required manual input, it provided essential insights about geometric and semantic norms of these units.



**Image 1.** A sample from the analysis of real examples from the region.

With this insight, we chose to utilize the p5.js javascript library for its simplicity, accessibility, and flexibility and created a script to generate architectural layouts. The script begins by placing an entrance, serving as a pivot for other rooms. The process is followed by an open kitchen adjoining a living room, as is common in focused cases in the region. It continues by adding remaining spaces including a bedroom and bathroom. Following a common layout pattern in the region, a balcony is added to either the living room or bedroom, if it is applicable (Image 2). While the layout is shaped, the script also retains all the essential numeric data such as room dimensions, areas, and ratios behind the scenes, enabling extensive control for the user later. The approach allows the generation of diverse layouts, respecting specific regional design norms while still being adaptable, flexible, and scalable.
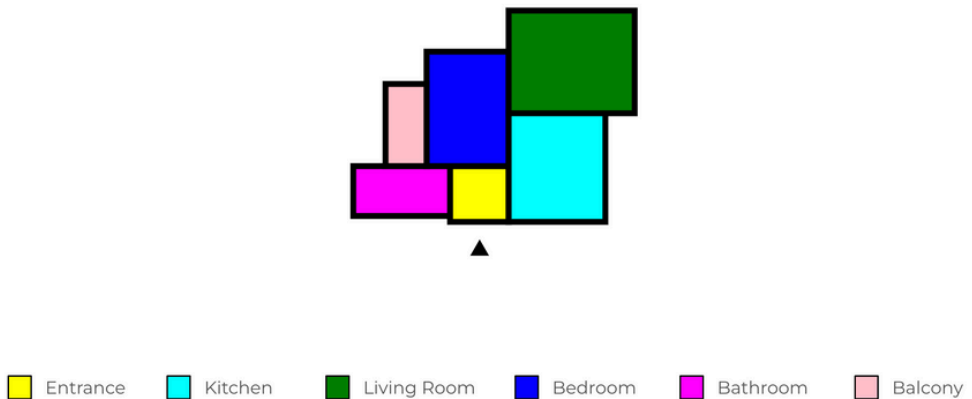


**Image 2.** A layout sample from the synthetic dataset.

The most significant requirement for creating a synthetic dataset is generating layouts in bulk. The same script allows generating variations by pseudo-random numbers to ensure diversity within the regulatory bounds. This streamlined process enables having thousands of generated layouts, tailored for a specific model, scenario, structure, regulation, scale, region or data format that can be utilized later to train AI-driven layout generating models. Thus, the method addresses most of the challenges associated with existing architectural datasets, delivering a new customizable, and scalable solution for architectural data generation.

While in theory, the synthetic dataset demonstrates promise, its effectiveness for practical use should be evaluated. As a case study, we chose to test our dataset on Pix2Pix, a simple but effective GAN model. The aim was to generate new architectural layouts based on a given building plot, by training the model solely with synthetic dataset. To achieve this, the images in the dataset needed to be paired with their corresponding building plot image. This was done with an easy modification in our script, proving its adaptability to different models and scenarios as mentioned earlier. For this case study, 1,400 paired images were created and divided into three subsets, 1,000 for training, 200 for validation, and 200 for testing.

During training, the Pix2Pix model utilizes these image pairs to learn spatial relations and color distinctions in the images, corresponding to architectural elements like walls and various rooms. As the model progresses towards the training, around epoch twenty, patterns resembling an architectural layout begin to emerge (Image 3). However, it is still far from proper layout, because it often places rooms incorrectly. The model improves incrementally around epoch fifty, refining the walls and room placement (Image 4). The training resumed until epoch two hundred. Ultimately, the model is able to produce layouts that are notably similar to the training dataset (Image 5) To further assess the training, especially its generalization capability, we tested the model with a separate validation set. This is crucial, as models tend to memorize the training pairs, falling into overfitting. Encouragingly, the trained model was able to generate outputs close to the ground truths, suggesting learning from the synthetic dataset was effective.

Input          Output          Ground-truth

**Image 3.** Epoch 22 result.



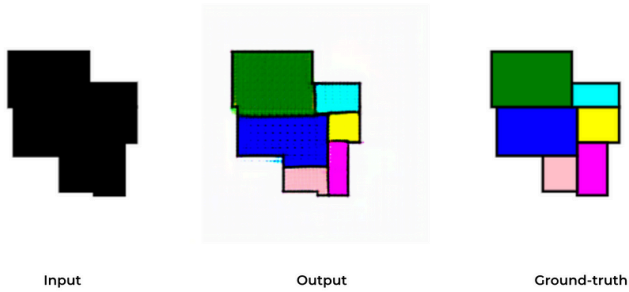Input          Output          Ground-truth
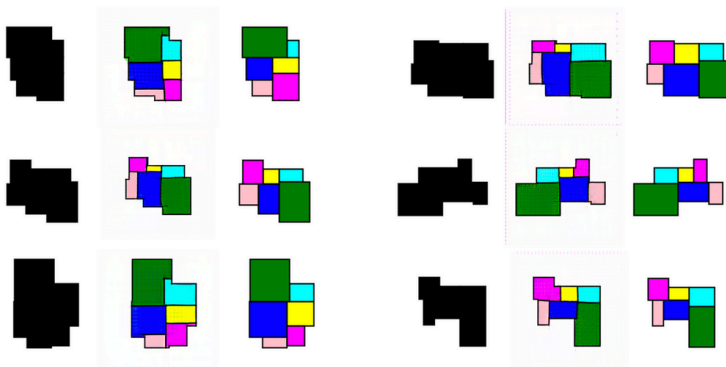
**Image 4.** Epoch 47 result.



**Image 5.** Results from trained model.

However, not all outputs met expectations. The model generated several layouts having significant flaws. Some of the outputs were missing rooms, or having double rooms for a specific function which was not expected in one-bedroom flats (Image 6). These results highlight the need for refinement, which could be achieved through various modifications such as changing model parameters or enlarging the dataset size. Nonetheless, this case study demonstrates the potential of synthetic data for training AI-driven layout generation. Utilizing the Pix2Pix model here serves as a baseline, underscoring the value of synthetic data. If this model performs reasonably with the synthetic dataset, more advanced models could likely perform even better. By training a model with synthetic data, we offer new possibilities for architectural design exploration, providing a customizable and scalable foundation for future studies.



**Image 6.** An example output having double entrance.

## 5. Conclusion

This study, as part of an ongoing research, introduces a dual-layered methodology for generating synthetic architectural layouts. By addressing the major challenges of dataset creation in AI-driven architectural design, we created an automated, generative framework. This research contributes to the field by: 1) streamlining dataset production through adaptable, scalable, and flexible synthetic data; 2) reducing biases existing in manually curated datasets; and 3) encouraging an innovative design dialogue, where synthetic data introduces a form of hyperreality in generating architectural solutions. These findings represent that synthetic data offers a customizable foundation for future advancements in architectural layout generation, serving as a viable alternative to traditional datasets.

## 5. Discussion

Using a synthetic dataset presents several advantages, yet few challenges still occur. It offers adaptable, scalable, and fast pre-processing rather than labor-intensive curation. Being a flexible method allows the dataset to be tailored for specific scenarios, contexts, architectural regulations, or model requirements. However, the synthetic nature of the data requires rigorous testing to ensure the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the dataset. These advantages and limitations reveal that, although synthetic datasets offer the potential to transform architectural data creation, they require thoughtful implementation to employ their full capabilities.

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# PART IV
# COLLECTIVE
# *DIALOGUES*

# IN SEARCH OF DIALOGUES

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In today's fragmented urban landscapes, modern identities confront the pervasive sense of placelessness within cities. Designers employ varied approaches: some favor highly irregular shapes and forms, others adopt a historicist eclecticism, while still others pursue a clear and restrained architectural language to structure the building's program. This session facilitates a contextual understanding of art and design history, where history, viewed within its context, fosters comparative thinking and offers fresh perspectives for both designed and undesigned world. Designed artifacts reflect social developments that shape spatial entities. Inevitably, all institutions are embedded within daily practices rooted in social foundations. The articles chosen for this session, spanning from the industrial era to today's digital age, would evoke a sense of continuity that deepens graduate students' understanding of world history. By focusing on distinct periods, the aim was to highlight various collective aspirations for communal life and evolving definitions of individuality within society. Key turning points for the articles are chosen include industrialization, World War II, and the digital age. These milestones provide a systematic approach to conveying the complexities of history, enabling discussions on the prevailing "spirit of the times." Another approach that arises within these articles involves blending the narrative history of human artifacts with theoretical frameworks. The idea is to explore potentials of different artefacts, collectivity and individualism, to discuss, to interpret and to create different compositions with minimum/maximum joints. To my personal idea, collective dialogues, as an overarching theme of the presentation, provides one to theorize the notions of the individual and the collective through different programs, such as artist and artisan communities, spatial entities and urban habitats.

On 31st of May, 2024, during the Design Studies Symposium, a total of four presentations took place under the overarching theme of "Collective Dialogues." These studies were; *Exploring the Influence of Design Tools Across Different Mediums* by Sebahat Irem Çimen, *The Boulle Technique in 19th Century Dolmabahçe*

*Architecture: the Case of Grand Efes Hotel in Izmir District* by Sude Pamuk, and *A Dialogue Between Art and Neuroscience: Exploring Interdisciplinary Synergies* by Berçin Göksen. All these studies were the outcome of the course labelled Current Topics in Art and Design, conducted by me, in Design Studies Graduate Program. The course examines the design discourses of the 20th-century modern world to explore the foundations of contemporary approaches. Almost every topic is analyzed through the lens of Romanticism that emerged in the late eighteenth century but continued throughout twentieth century as a counterargument of mainstream projects. The course highlights both continuities and discontinuities in design approaches and historical periods. Only two studies from a broad spectrum of projects spanning from the Ottoman period to the present and digital ages are covered in this book. In this regard, the methodology and the originality of the subject matter of these two studies stand out.

In her study entitled *Ceramic Art Meets Architecture: the Case of Grand Efes Hotel in Izmir District*, Sude Pamuk explores the role of ceramic art in Europe, its integration into architecture, the evolution of ceramic art in Turkey, and specifically analyzes the ceramic pieces in the Grand Efes Hotel. In her study, Pamuk explains how the Arts and Crafts movement continued to influence architecture in the 20th century from an underground position, becoming de-identified, and how ceramic art found its form as a means of creating social belonging within this context. She illustrates this through examples from the Grand Efes Hotel. The concept of construction culture of Modernists germinated different parts of the world at the same time at the early 20th century. The architects' endeavors to reach those life manners were concentrated on a goal of creating a *building* stock that *conceives mass production houses* for collective life manners. It was the period in which the architects had redefined beauty and scale through only new construction materials, which created their own standard building vocabulary under the impact of universalization. The *for the sake of* part of Modernism, beginning from the 1940's, was not only the epoch for the explosion of the self-generated urban patterns throughout the world, but also the erosion of the epoch of manifestos and utopias. Architecture is a discipline that consists of both

material constraints and functional values, which are governed by complex political, social and historical dynamics (Allen, 2000). Linking the gaps between the forms and the ideas, architecture history and theory engages the human artifacts with philosophy, sociology and critical theory (Ellen, 1990). Allen asserted that a new image culture that emerged with modernity stimulates new ways of thinking and interpretation so that architectural culture has altered social and semantic representations and vice versa. In addition, with modernity, one could argue, an idiosyncratic vocabulary of graphic design in architectural presentations has changed the ways of conceptualizing an architectural problem, the design process and semantic representations of architecture (2000). Therefore, beyond architectural plans and sections, which are more traditional representation techniques in comparison to graphic representation techniques, Pamuk proposes to present the use of ceramic works related to Grand Efes Hotel in accordance with representation techniques in race of identity formation of Modernist age. In this period, where the local and the modern blended, artists looked to the traditional archetypes, developing their art on ceramics through Modernist styles. The amalgamation of the modern and the local is evident as a brief transitional period between 1950 and 1970. Indeed, the regionalists of the 1960s were conciliatory with the present, despite having existed as critics of Modernity. Ricœur articulated a global culture that was hybridized with tradition and universal civilization (Ricœur, 1961). In Pamuk's study, these local traces on a large Modernist edifice, the Grand Efes Hotel, are discussed through abstract works influenced by Anatolian mythology.

In her research paper entitled *A Dialogue Between Art and Neuroscience: Exploring Interdisciplinary Synergies*, Berçin Göksen investigates the transformative possibilities of interdisciplinary collaboration between neuroscience and art, analyzing how their convergence enriches the comprehension of human cognition, creativity, and shared experiences. By revisiting historical milestones—such as the anatomical explorations of the Renaissance and the literary contributions of modernist figures like Virginia Woolf—the paper illustrates how art has historically prefigured and complemented

scientific advancements. Adopting a multidimensional framework, the paper examines how neuroscience shapes artistic practices while art, in turn, offers a humanistic perspective on scientific phenomena. Reshaping social hierarchies, the neuroscientific artistic practices underscore the hyperreality of culture; complete disappearance of conventional materials in art signifies transformations beyond aesthetic sensibility. The audience transforms inside. This situation reflects a different reality in which museums, as summarized by Jean Baudrillard's concept of the "Beaubourg Effect," resemble hypermarkets that fuel the culture industry (1982). His statement, "at the level of culture what the supermarket is at the level of commodity," highlights this parallel. In this context, viewers actively participate in this new reality, engaging with human cognition, creativity, and culture from a multidimensional perspective. Shared experience, mutual understanding, and collective cognition are the key concepts in her study on the simulation of culture, which reflects present-day reality. Individuals explore art about physical spaces through connecting with others. The artistic practices, collectively referred to as mobile social software, belong to the broader category of location-based services. Members of society could directly participate in the process of producing art and, consequently, knowledge, through their spatial experiences. The transformation of neuroscientific art shapes the concept of movement itself, as well as spatial experiences.

Design history provides a vantage point to making inference about human action throughout history and gives an insight to gain a critical point of view to the power relationships. In this section, researchers explore small, scaled projects reconsidering hybrid relationships between indigenous materials and modern design approaches in pursuit of social accountability. It underpins the creation of new generative themes while designing implicating the power of changing the world. Theory and history play a crucial role in synthesizing concepts and fostering the development of graduate students' own ideas. Here, looking at designed artifacts serves as a means of commenting on contemporary conditions, inherently involving an element of critique. When the voices of critique and commentary intensify, a collective dialogue emerges.

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# CERAMIC ART MEETS ARCHITECTURE: THE CASE OF GRAND EFES HOTEL IN IZMIR DISTRICT

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## 1. Introduction

The increasing understanding of nationalism after the Second World War was effective in architectural environment as well as in most social areas. With industrialization, mass production structures that are very similar to each other have increased. Architects, who wanted to add a spirit into the buildings under the influence of nationalism, worked with the artists of the period and added unique pieces to their designs. In Turkey, especially in the 1960s, architects were in search of "representation and identity" and worked with artists to add unique identities to their designs, sometimes traditional and nationalist, sometimes without these concerns, merely abstract modernist. The aim was to construct an identity through an ornamental system to be adapted to public and private buildings, which were otherwise dominated by the unadorned, relatively cold, and monotonous patterns imposed globally at the height of Modernism. When Contemporary Turkish Ceramic Art is examined, there are pioneering artists such as Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, Füreya Koral, Ayfer Karamani, Sadi Diren, Atilla Galatalı, Tüzüm Kızılcan and Jale Yılmabaşar, and some of them worked with architects in this context. Ceramic art began to be seen in public buildings, hotels and factories. Architects and especially ceramic artists worked together from the beginning of the construction projects.

One of the examples in İzmir regarding the combination of ceramic panels with architecture is the works of different ceramic artists in a hotel, formerly known as Büyük Efes Hotel (Grand Efes Hotel), recently known as Swissotel. The hotel, which started to be renovated in 2003 and opened its doors again in 2005, contains works of artists such as Atilla Galatalı, Nasip İyem, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, Jale Yılmabaşar, Beril Anılanmert and Erdoğan Ersen. This study aims to examine the relationship between the search for architectural identity and ceramic art and to archive the current status of the works in the Büyük Efes Hotel.

Due to the design monotony experienced in the field of architecture with the Industrial Revolution and mass production, and the increasing understanding of nationalism after the Second World War, architects in various parts of the world sought solutions to save their designs from monotony and give them an identity. As a result of this search, architect-artist collaboration emerged. Ceramic art, which started to attract renewed interest, began to show itself in large-scale structures by combining with architecture. In Turkey, architects who sought representation and identity in the years after the declaration of the republic resorted to the same collaboration. The leading architects and ceramic artists of the period came together in buildings such as factories, hotels and banks. The Grand Efes Hotel is an example of this collaboration. Artists were invited during the construction process of the hotel and asked to create ceramic works for the hotel. During this period, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, Atilla Galatalı, Nasip İyem, Beril Anılanmert, Jale Yılmabaşar and Erdoğan Ersen created works for the Büyük Efes Hotel.

In this study, the position of ceramic art in Europe, its place in architecture, the development of ceramic art in Turkey and, as a specific case, the ceramic works in the Grand Efes Hotel were examined.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Arts and crafts movement and ceramic art in Europe

With industrialization, the number of objects that are imitations of each other, stereotyped and far from human sensitivity has gradually increased. Traditional arts and handicrafts are on the verge of extinction in the face of industrialization and mass production. In 19th century England, the Arts and Crafts Movement, whose main aim was to keep traditional products and handicrafts alive, began under the leadership of William Morris and John Ruskin, who saw the Industrial Revolution as the greatest disaster that humanity had brought upon itself. This movement aimed to re-understand the importance of workshop products and to save industrial products from monotony by adding artistic content. Ceramic art, which started to disappear in the

wheel of consumption accelerated by industrialization, also gained importance again, and 20th century artists Picasso, Miro, Mattisse, Braque and Chagall carried their paintings on ceramic bodies and made original experiments (Image 1) (Çevik, 2016). The fact that contemporary artists have achieved successful results beyond the functionality mission of the material by conducting interdisciplinary studies has made unique contributions to the dissemination of the artistic identity of ceramics (İn & Canduran, 2023). With the increase in interest in ceramic art after the Second World War, the development of technology and the beginning of ceramics to be seen in international fairs, many artists of the 20th century turned to ceramic art (Gül, Özkeçeci, & Alacalı, 2014).



**Image 1.** Joan Miro - Miro Wall, 1979. 7200 Ceramic Tiles, 10x55m, Wilhelm-Hack Museum, Ludwigshafen, Germany.[1]

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[1] Available at: publicdelivery.org

## 2.2. Mid-century Turkish ceramic art

Traditional Turkish Ceramic Art covers the period that started with the Anatolian Seljuks in the 13th century and continued until the Republic period. In Traditional Turkish Ceramic Art, the concept of wall decoration is based on tile embroidery (çini). Mid-century Turkish Ceramic Art covers the process that started with the declaration of the Republic in 1923 and continues until today. Many social changes that occurred with the Republic also manifested themselves in art. The modernization process in ceramic art, which had its early period with the Republic in Turkey until the 1950s, accelerated after the 1950s thanks to industrialization, international interactions and educational fields. However, this development process was more painful than European examples and went through difficult periods due to impossibilities. With the development of the industry, ceramic workshops and factories began to be established. Due to the lack of institutions and instructors that could provide education in the Western sense, talented students were sent abroad to receive education. When these artists returned to the country, they both gave education as instructors and created works as artists. During this period, the foundations of the Faculty of Fine Arts were laid. The establishment of individual ceramic workshops also parallels this period (Image 2) (Erman, 2010). With the Anatolian trips organized by the government, artists examined the patterns and elements of Turkish culture and used them in their works (Yavuz, 2008). Artists such as Füreya Koral, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, Bingül Başkar, Alev Ebuzziya, Jale Yılmabaşar, Güngör Güner and Zehra Çobanlı have produced works in different forms by taking advantage of the expressive richness of the material (İn & Canduran, 2023).

**Image 2.** Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu's Workshop House in Kalamış. Photographed by Ziya Tacir, 2019. Source: İstanbul Modern

## 2.3. Ceramic wall panels and architecture

In the 1950s, one of the visible areas of the modernization movement in Turkey, whose face changed with the Republic, was architecture. Particularly international fairs and events organized in the country were used to promote the new Turkey (Bozdoğan, 2016). The Turkish Pavilion designed by architects Utarit İzgi, Muhlis Türkmen, Hamdi Şensoy and İlhan Türegün for the 1958 Brussels Exhibition is an example of this. Also, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu's ceramic panel is an important part of this design (Image 3). Architects who wanted to get rid of the Ottoman influence and create the new identity of the modern Republic of Turkey made designs that were in line with the international modern style that was influential in the West. When the increasing number of similar building blocks began to be criticized  for  impersonality

and monotony, architects began to confront issues of representation and identity (Yavuz, 2008). Architects who want to save their designs from monotony and add personality to them begin to collaborate with the artists of the period.

Since the end of the 1950s, it has been seen that works of art have been frequently included in many architectural buildings, especially those built in the international style. Generally, in projects where architectural design and artistic production processes proceed together, where the architect and the artist collaborate and the artistic element is included in the design process from the very beginning, it is seen that the work of art establishes spatial relations as the essential element of the structure and creates a dialogue with the audience through these relations. This approach, based on the Bauhaus model, requires a holistic approach to design. In this way, the resulting works are aimed to be an integral part of the architecture rather than an ornament added later. In Turkey, especially in the process that started with the 1958 Brussels Exhibition Turkey Pavilion, important architects of the period - such as Utarit İzgi, Haluk Baysal, Melih Birsel, Doğan Tekeli, Sami Sisa - and leading artists of the period - Füreya Koral, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, Kuzgun Acar, Sadi Çalık, İlhan Koman, Jale Yılmabaşar, Sadi Diren and Tüzüm Kızılcan – has cooparated. In accordance with the holistic design approach of the period, architects and ceramic artists mostly produced together for large-scale public buildings such as hotels, factories and banks (Kırca & Üstündağ, 2020).

**Image 3.** Brussels Fair Turkish Pavillion, Detail of the Mosaic Panel by B. R. Eyüboğlu, 1958. Source: Salt Archive - Courtesy of Gönül İzgi.[2]

## 2.3.1. The case of grand Efes Hotel

Architects and especially ceramic artists worked together from the beginning of the construction projects, one reason for their ability to collaborate was the long-standing friendship between the architects and the ceramic artists (Yavuz, 2008). One of the examples in İzmir regarding the combination of ceramic panels with architecture is the works of different ceramic artists in a hotel, formerly known as Büyük Efes Hotel (Grand Efes Hotel), recently known as Swissotel (Image 4). The project of the

[2] Available at: https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/77212

hotel was prepared by German architect Paul Bonatz in the 1950s and was managed by Turkish architect Fatih Uran.

The hotel, which started to be renovated in 2003 in partnership with Has Mimarlık and NBBJ and opened its doors again in 2005, contains works of artists such as Atilla Galatalı, Nasip İyem, Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu, Jale Yılmabaşar, Beril Anılanmert and Erdoğan Ersen (Kırca & Üstündağ, 2020). The hotel is a good example of architect - artist collaboration. During the architectural design process of the building, various artists were invited to the area and asked to identify various parts of the hotel and produce works suitable for them (Arkitekt Magazine, 1965). Thus, the involvement of artworks in the design was at the very beginning of the process. Built in 1965, the hotel was restored and reopened in 2005. During this process, the locations of the ceramic panels within the hotel changed.
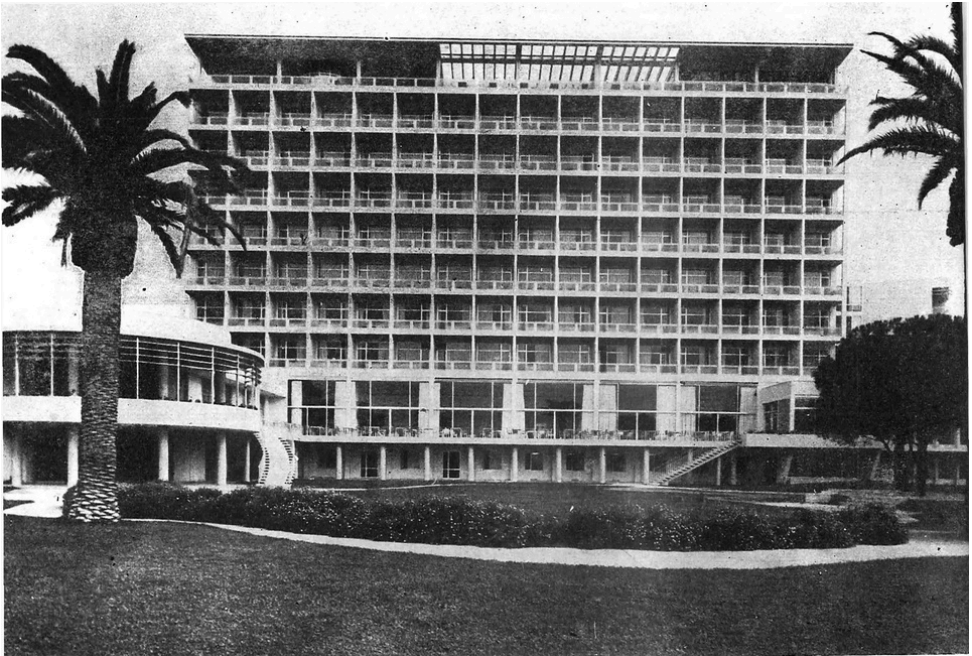


**Image 4.** Grand Efes Hotel. Source: Arkitekt Magazine 1965 - 01 (318).

## 3. Methodology

Within the scope of this study, the historical part of ceramic art, which started in Europe with the Arts and Crafts movement in the 19th century, was researched, the social developments and movements that had an impact on architecture after the declaration of the republic in Turkey were touched upon, and the reasons why the architects and ceramic artists of the period started to work together and the works they produced were focused on. In this part of the study, a literature review was conducted by reading articles on the subject.

Grand Efes Hotel, which is a good example of architect-artist collaboration and especially the use of ceramic art in architecture, and the ceramic works it contains were examined. During this review, similar works were grouped and interpreted.

## 4. Results and discussion

When looking at the six different artists of the ceramic works in the hotel, it could be seen that there are two separate groups that are similar or different in style. Although the works are basically rooted in Turkish culture, one group made this presentation in a more abstract way, while the other group's source of inspiration is clearly visible.

Although the works of Atilla Galatalı, Beril Anılanmert and Nasip İyem were inspired by Anatolia, it can be said that they were created using abstraction. Galatalı used the sun motif, which is reminiscent of pavement finds in an ancient settlement in Anatolia and is frequently seen there and which he frequently used, in both of his works (Image 5). Anılanmert was inspired by Iznik Tiles and combined both traditional and contemporary points in her work (Image 6). Although İyem frequently included Anatolian mythology and goddess figures in her other works, she produced an abstract work in her work in Efes Hotel (Image 7).

**Image 5.** Atilla Galatalı's Ceramic Wall Panel, 1964.[3]
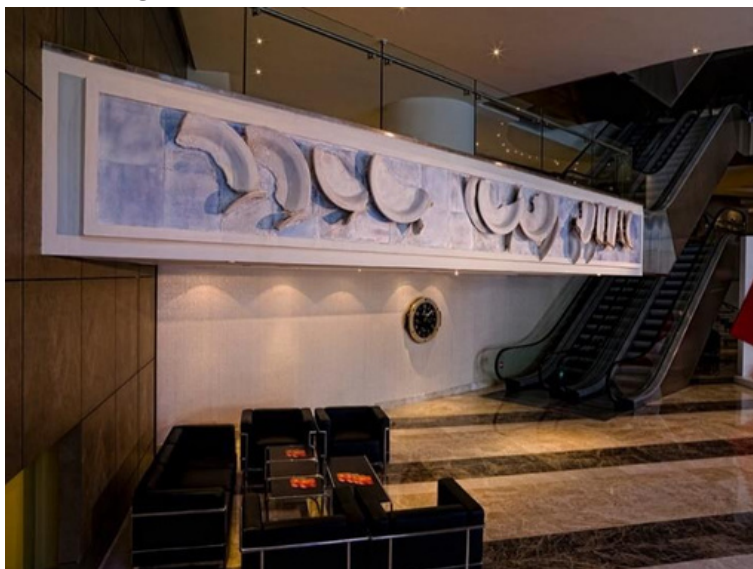


**Image 6.** Beril Anılanmert's Ceramic Wall Panel, 1964.[4]

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[3,4] Available at: www.swissotelbuyukefesizmir.com

**Image 7.** Nasip İyem's Ceramic Wall Panel, 1964.
Photographed by Nurtaç Buluç, 2021.[5]

One could argue the works of Jale Yılmabaşar, Erdoğan Ersen and Rahmi Eyüboğlu are clearly of Anatolian origin. Yılmabaşar used motifs from Anatolian civilizations such as the Hittites, Phrygians and Ions (Image 8). Similarly, Ersen included Anatolian civilizations and animal motifs in his work (Image 9). Eyüboğlu used the Tree of Life symbol, which he frequently uses in his paintings and is an important symbol in Anatolia, in this ceramic work (Image 10).

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[5] Available at: www.sehrinpanolari.com

**Image 8.** Jale Yılmabaşar's Ceramic Wall Panel, 1964.[6]

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[6] Available at: www.swissotelbuyukefesizmir.com

**Image 9.** Erdoğan Ersen's Ceramic Wall Panel, 1964.[7]
Photographed by Nurtaç Buluç, 2021.



**Image 10.** Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu's Ceramic Wall Panel, 1964.[8]

[7] Available at: www.sehrinpanolari.com
[8] Available at: www.swissotelbuyukefesizmir.com

## 5. Conclusion

Ceramic art gained importance among the artists of the period after the Arts and Crafts movement that started in the 19th century under the leadership of William Morris and John Ruskin. Picasso, Miro and Matisse, some of the important artists of the 20th century, produced works in the field of ceramics. Thanks to developing technology and increasing interest, ceramic works began to be seen in international fairs after the Second World War. As modern concrete construction techniques powered by bulldozers around the world were criticized for generally producing monotonous structures, and on the contrary, it became important to create regional identities with the increasing understanding of nationalism, ceramic works were included in architecture to create representation and identity by architects who wanted to save their buildings from monotony. Turkey, which wanted to create a new identity for itself with the declaration of the republic in 1923, gained a new face with the influence of modernism. One of the areas where change and modernization was clearly seen in this period was architecture. As in many Western countries, the number of buildings designed with the International Modern Style has increased in Turkey. However, this situation has caused the new buildings to become monotonous, far from essence and culture. Architects who sought identity and representation wanted to add unique works to their designs by collaborating with the artists of the period. With this approach, ceramic art has found a place especially in large-scale public buildings such as banks, hotels and factories. The ceramic panel completed by Jale Yılmabaşar in 1969 for the entrance of the Vakko Textile Factory building, designed by architects Haluk Baysal and Melih Birsel, and currently located in Vakko Fashion Center; and Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu's ceramic panel titled "Istanbul Composition" located in the İMÇ building designed by architects Doğan Tekeli, Sami Sisa and Metin Hepgüler are just two examples of this collaboration. Another example of architect-artist collaboration in the 1960s is the Büyük Efes Hotel in Izmir. Artists were involved in the design process from the early stages of the hotel's construction, so that art became an element of the entire architectural design, creating a dialogue with the user, rather than being an added element. Inside the hotel, there are  ceramic

works of Atilla Galatalı, Beril Anılanmert, Nasip İyem, Jale Yılmabaşar, Erdoğan Ersen and Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu. Although all of them are inspired by Turkish culture, the works of Galatalı, Anılanmert and İyem are more abstract and do not clearly present their source of inspiration. On the other hand, it can be said that the works of Yılmabaşar, Ersen and Eyüboğlu are far from the abstraction technique and directly reflect Turkish culture. Anatolian motifs emerged as a means of cultural redemption, aiming to create a unique sense of place inspired by local contexts. These motifs sought to counter the homogenization of modern architecture by reintroducing a distinct cultural identity rooted in the Anatolian heritage.

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# A DIALOGUE BETWEEN ART AND NEUROSCIENCE: EXPLORING INTERDISCIPLINARY SYNERGIES
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## 1. Introduction

Traditionally, science, art, and technology have been seen as separate fields. However, their intersections reveal complex interdependencies, suggesting that these domains are not as distinct as they seem. The human brain—long regarded as the most complex structure known to humanity—remains a focal point of scientific fascination, continually revealing new layers of mystery and insight. Today, advances in neuroscience uncover further intricacies of the nervous system, and intriguingly, the brain itself is increasingly viewed not only as an object of scientific study but as a work of art in its own right.

This study aims to delve into the symbiotic relationship between neuroscientific principles and artistic practices, examining how artistic intuition and creative expression can enrich neuroscience. Moving beyond a segmented view that isolates science, art, and technology, the study advocates for an integrated approach, one that acknowledges the potential of these disciplines to mutually enhance and inspire one another.

In our contemporary context, where neuroscience and technological advancements significantly shape social dynamics, it becomes crucial for writers, artists, designers, and cultural producers to engage with neuroscience meaningfully. Art's inherent capacity to confront existential questions complements the empirical inquiries of science and the innovations of technology, thus fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and dialogue.

By facilitating conversations between neuroscientists and artists, this work aspires to highlight the potential for new, transformative connections across these domains, envisioning a collaborative framework capable of catalyzing both scientific insights and creative endeavors.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Historical foundations of neuroscience and art

The quest to understand the nervous system and the mysteries of the brain stretches back to ancient Egypt, where some of the earliest observations and theories about the brain were documented. Knowledge preserved in the Edwin Smith Papyrus (circa 1600 BCE) reveals that Egyptian physicians described the brain and noted its physical characteristics, especially in the context of head injuries. Although neurology, as a systematic study of nervous system diseases, did not yet exist, and there is no evidence that Egyptians viewed the nervous system as a distinct organ, this ancient text offers early references to brain anatomy (York & Steinberg, 2010). These records represent an essential foundational step in humanity's journey to comprehend this complex organ.

In Greek antiquity, Hippocrates expanded this inquiry by proposing that consciousness and emotions arise from the brain, setting the stage for future exploration of its functions. As he famously stated, "Men ought to know that from the brain, and from the brain only, arise our pleasures, joys, laughter, and jests, as well as our sorrows, pains, griefs, and tears" (Hippocrates of Cos, 1923). This insight marked a transformative leap, emphasizing the brain's central role in human experience.

### 2.2. Classical contributions: Art's interplay with science

During the Renaissance, art and science intersected in profound ways, reflecting a shared commitment to understanding the mysteries of the human form and the natural world. This period marked a significant departure from earlier, more segmented approaches to knowledge, as artists and scientists alike sought to combine empirical observation with creative expression. Figures like Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo exemplified this interdisciplinary spirit, merging scientific inquiry with artistic skill to advance both fields.

Leonardo da Vinci, renowned for his masterpieces like The Last Supper and Mona Lisa, was equally captivated by anatomy and physiology. His notebooks are filled with detailed sketches of human organs, muscles, and skeletal structures, revealing his belief that understanding the body's mechanics was essential to creating lifelike art. Leonardo conducted dissections to explore human anatomy firsthand, producing some of the most accurate anatomical drawings of his time. His belief that "practice must always be founded on sound theory" highlights his conviction that art and science were complementary disciplines. Leonardo's anatomical studies laid the groundwork for both medical knowledge and realistic representations of the human body in art.

Michelangelo, another master of the Renaissance, carried this interplay between art and science into his iconic fresco The Creation of Adam on the Sistine Chapel ceiling. In 1990, Dr. Frank Lynn Meshberger proposed a revolutionary interpretation of this fresco, suggesting that Michelangelo had embedded a detailed representation of the human brain within the image of God and the surrounding angels. According to Meshberger, the contours of the image around God correspond to various structures of the brain, including the brainstem, basilar artery, pituitary gland, and optic chiasm This resemblance implies that Michelangelo, who had studied anatomy extensively, used this scene not merely to depict the biblical moment of creation but to symbolize the divine gift of intellect. The almost-touching fingers of God and Adam evoke the synaptic gap through which a spark of life—and consciousness—might be transmitted, suggesting that Michelangelo viewed intellect and creativity as humanity's highest gifts(Meshberger, 1990).

These classical contributions reflect a period when art was not merely a representation of the visible world but also a means of exploring hidden truths. By blending artistic mastery with scientific insight, Renaissance artists like Leonardo and Michelangelo not only advanced the techniques of their craft but also contributed to the foundations of modern anatomy and neuroscience. Their work underscores the transformative power of interdisciplinary inquiry, illustrating that art can serve as a mirror to scientific discovery.

## 2.3. Modern perspectives: Literature as a mirror to neuroscience

In the early 20th century, literature began to explore the intricacies of consciousness and selfhood, often anticipating themes that neuroscience would later investigate. One of the most influential figures in this literary journey was Virginia Woolf, whose "stream of consciousness" technique offered deep insights into the human mind. In novels like To the Lighthouse and The Waves, Woolf depicted the self not as a fixed entity but as a fluid construct, continuously shaped by our sensory experiences and perceptions. Her works, especially To the Lighthouse and Mrs. Dalloway, delve into the fluidity and complexity of consciousness, portraying the self as both delicate and resilient.

In Proust Was a Neuroscientist, Jonah Lehrer highlights how Woolf and other modern artists intuitively understood complex neurological principles long before they were scientifically validated. Lehrer argues that Woolf was not merely reflecting human experience but was, in a sense, predicting scientific insights about consciousness and cognition. He suggests that art and literature often act as visionary guides, revealing truths about the human mind that science would only later confirm. This perspective underscores literature's role not just as a mirror to human experience, but as a forward-looking exploration of uncharted territories of the mind.

Woolf's depiction of the self exemplifies this predictive power. She describes the self as something *"that would break at the touch of a breath and a thing that could not be moved even if horses were harnessed,"* capturing its dual nature (Lehrer, 2007). This portrayal aligns with neuroscience's understanding of the self as both dynamic—constantly shaped by perception, memory, and experience—and stable, maintaining continuity over time. Woolf saw the self as both fragile and enduring, susceptible to the smallest shifts in emotion and perception yet grounded by an unyielding core.

Lehrer draws parallels between Woolf's narrative techniques and the brain's process of constructing reality. Woolf's "stream of consciousness" style, which immerses readers in the non-linear flow of her characters' thoughts, mirrors how the mind

processes sensory input—a continuous, often chaotic flow of introspection. Her work encourages readers to question the nature of consciousness and selfhood, resonating with neuroscientific themes like brain plasticity, emotional processing, and the interplay of memory and identity. By immersing readers in her characters' fragmented yet cohesive thoughts, Woolf intuitively reveals the brain's structure and function.

Through Woolf's insights, Proust Was a Neuroscientist illustrates that literature can serve as a precursor to scientific understanding, offering a pathway to explore the mind before empirical tools could validate these ideas. Woolf's work continues to inspire readers and scholars, encouraging a reevaluation of self, identity, and consciousness. Her contributions suggest that art and neuroscience are interconnected fields, both seeking to comprehend the complexities of the human mind. This intersection invites us to view literature and science as collaborative in their exploration of consciousness, each enriching the other in their quest to understand what it means to be human.

## 2.4. Bridging disciplines: The "Two Cultures" and the emergence of a third
In 1959, C.P. Snow delivered a lecture titled "The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution," which later became a seminal text advocating for bridging the divide between the natural sciences and the humanities (Snow, 1959). Snow argued that the separation between these two cultures was a significant hindrance to solving the world's problems, as it limited the potential for interdisciplinary collaboration and understanding.

Snow identified the two cultures as those of the literary intellectuals and the natural scientists. He pointed out that literary intellectuals often lacked a basic understanding of scientific principles, while scientists were frequently uninformed about the humanities. This cultural divide, he argued, was perpetuated by the educational system, which failed to integrate scientific and humanistic disciplines.

In his article, Snow lamented the lack of communication between these groups and suggested that a new "Third Culture" could emerge, bridging the gap between the scientific and literary communities. This new culture would foster mutual respect and dialogue, allowing for a more holistic understanding of the world. Snow's vision was one of integration and collaboration, where the insights of science and the perspectives of the humanities could come together to address complex societal issues.

Victoria Vesna expands on Snow's idea in her article "Toward a Third Culture: Being In Between," emphasizing the role of artists working with technology in bridging the gap between the two cultures  She writes, "Artists working with technology are frequently informed and inspired by exciting scientific innovations, and often turn to contemporary philosophical interpretations of these events, which positions them in between the 'two cultures,' a position that creates the potential for a 'Third Culture,' as predicted by C.P. Snow himself" (Vesna, 2001). This emerging culture, Vesna argues, is not composed solely of the scientific elite but is a triangulation of the arts, sciences, and humanities.

## 2.5. Contemporary intersections: Neuroscience and art in dialogue
Interdisciplinary efforts in contemporary times continue to evolve, with influential contributions from figures like Associate Professor Ebru Yetişkin, a sociologist, media theorist, and independent curator working at the intersection of science, art, and technology. Yetişkin's curated exhibitions, publications, and seminars offer valuable insights into how advancements in technology and scientific knowledge enrich creative processes, providing artists with new tools and methods. She argues that science and digital technologies democratize art by making it more accessible to diverse audiences and by expanding creative possibilities across cultural and social contexts. This democratizing effect, she believes, has the potential to foster a more inclusive and varied art World (Yetişkin, 2020).

Yetişkin also raises critical questions about the ethical and social implications of using artificial intelligence and other digital technologies in artistic practices. She examines how these technologies influence creative expression and affect social and cultural dynamics. In a seminar titled " Another Brain - Neuroscience and Art," co-conducted with artist Nihat Karataşlı, Yetişkin emphasized the potential for new perspectives and innovative creations at the intersection of contemporary art and neuroscience. They discussed various approaches in which contemporary art directly engages with neuroscience, exploring how neuroimaging devices like fNIRS, EEG, and fMRI, along with data analysis methods, can transform artistic practices.These explorations include experimental projects that use neuroscience tools in traditional art forms such as painting, sculpture, video art, and installation. By integrating neuroscientific methods with artistic interventions, these studies aim to produce new creative insights and experimental outcomes (Yetişkin & Karataşlı, 2021). Yetişkin and Karataşlı also addressed themes such as neuroculture and neuropolitics, examining how crowd management and collaborative inquiries between scientists and artists can deepen our understanding of the mind while influencing politics and culture.

Another approach involves collaborative projects where neuroscientific research intersects with artistic interventions, bringing shared questions into new mediums. These interdisciplinary works also tackle political themes, such as crowd dynamics and neuro-politics, offering potential solutions that challenge and re-examine our modern world. Through such interdisciplinary dialogue, these explorations reveal the immense potential of neuroscience and art to reshape the boundaries of each field, offering fresh perspectives on human cognition, creative processes, culture, and politics.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Measuring the magic of mutual gaze
"Measuring the Magic of Mutual Gaze" by Marina Abramovic, Suzanne Dikker, and Matthias Oostrik is a continuation of Abramovic's renowned "The Artist Is Present." This project investigates the neuroscience of mutual gaze, exemplifying the potential for meaningful dialogues between scientists and artists. By exploring how our brains engage during direct interpersonal connections, it highlights the deep-rooted connection between cognitive processes and artistic experiences.

The project utilizes brainwave sensors to measure and visualize the neural activity that occurs when two individuals engage in mutual gaze. This interaction is projected in real-time, creating a visual representation of the shared cognitive and emotional experience. This work exemplifies the synergy between art and neuroscience, demonstrating how artistic practices can provide unique insights into the workings of the human brain (Dikker & Oostrik, 2014).

### 3.2. Mutual wave machine
Another intriguing work in this interdisciplinary field is the "Mutual Wave Machine" by Suzanne Dikker, Matthias Oostrik, and their collaborators. This immersive neurofeedback installation visualizes the brainwave synchronization between two participants. By measuring and displaying the real-time brain activity of both individuals, the installation creates an environment where participants can see and experience their neural connectivity (Dikker et al., 2018).

The "Mutual Wave Machine" aims to explore the concept of brainwave entrainment, where the brainwaves of two people become synchronized during social interactions. Participants sit facing each other inside a dome-like structure, and as their brainwaves begin to sync, the environment responds with visual and auditory changes, creating a shared sensory experience. This installation not only highlights the potential for art to visualize complex neuroscientific concepts but also emphasizes the profound connection between human interaction and neural processes.

### 3.3. Cerebral hut

Güvenç Özel's Cerebral Hut is a large-scale interactive installation that investigates the connection between architecture, interactivity, movement, and human thought. First presented at the Istanbul Design Biennial in 2012, it was later showcased at the Saatchi Gallery in London and the SXSW Interactive Festival. Cerebral Hut challenges traditional architectural assumptions by reversing the influence between built environments and the human mind. Using an EEG helmet, which reads the user's concentration levels, this installation allows participants to alter the physical boundaries of the space through focused thought. As concentration increases, the environment actively reshapes, demonstrating a direct link between mind and architecture.

The installation is a pioneering example of kinetic architecture, where a dynamic structure responds in real-time to human thought. By hacking a commercially available device to measure brain activity, the team created a space that morphs based on the user's mental engagement. This "game space" reflects contemporary research into kinetic environments and the interplay of technology, movement, and space. Rather than having a fixed form, Cerebral Hut continuously transforms, questioning static notions of design and space (Özel, 2023). This innovative installation redefines architectural possibilities, showing how environments can be fluid, reactive, and intimately connected to human thought.

### 3.4. You are the ocean

Özge Samancı's *You Are the Ocean* is an interactive installation that allows participants to control a digitally simulated ocean using only their brainwaves. Wearing an EEG headset, participants can influence the intensity of the waves and the state of the sky (Samancı & Canığlia, 2019). Increased concentration leads to higher waves and darker clouds, while a calm mind results in a peaceful ocean. This installation explores the theme of origins and draws from Indigenous cosmologies, where the land and all elements within it are seen as interconnected and alive.

Through this work, *You Are the Ocean* reflects on humanity's relationship with the natural world and the impact of thought and presence on the environment. In this way, the installation serves as a reminder that we are not separate from nature; instead, we are deeply connected to it, with each thought and action having a ripple effect on the world around us.

## 4. Proposed project: Portrait of self

Inspired by interdisciplinary research and artistic exploration, Portrait of Self combines insights from Virginia Woolf's literary work and neuroscientific studies on selfhood. This interactive installation employs an fNIRS device to create a self-portrait that fluctuates in clarity based on the participant's attention levels. This dynamic representation illustrates how our sense of self is continuously evolving and being reconstructed through the act of attention.

### 4.1. Motivation and background

In neuroscience, a fundamental question is how the brain constructs the concept of "self." While the brain is a complex network of neurons and electrical signals, the self emerges from this complexity, uniting our experiences. Virginia Woolf, through her art, intuitively explored this mystery. She saw the self as a fragile yet essential source of identity—a narrative that continuously constructs our consciousness (Lehrer, 2007). Woolf proposed that the self emerges through acts of attention, weaving together fleeting thoughts and sensations into a cohesive experience (Lehrer, 2007).

Modern neuroscience supports Woolf's insights, showing that attention binds sensory fragments to form a unified consciousness. Studies suggest that any experience resides in short-term memory for about ten seconds, after which the brain must re-establish a sense of the present (Donald, 2001, pp. 13-25). Just as Woolf imagined, the self is not a fixed entity but an ever-evolving stream of moments, pieced together by focused attention. Without this "fictional self," Woolf suggested, all would be darkness; we would feel blind, lacking the cohesion that gives meaning to our experiences (Lehrer, 2007).

## 4.2. Specific aim and objective

The goal of *Portrait of Self* (Image 1) is to create an interactive art installation where participants' brainwaves control a projected self-portrait simulation in a dark room. Using an fNIRS headset and real-time neurofeedback, the participant's attention levels are continuously measured, with the self-portrait becoming clearer as their focus increases. This representation embodies the idea that the self emerges from attention, binding sensory experiences into a cohesive whole. Through this portrayal, the installation illustrates how the self is constantly reshaped by our attention, showing that without this focused engagement, our sense of self remains obscured and fragmented, like being in darkness.

This dynamic display reveals how our sense of self is continuously evolving, shaped by the act of attention, and reconstructed moment by moment.



**Image 1.** Hypothetical visualization of the *Portrait of Self* Installation.[1]

## 5. Conclusion

In our contemporary era, advancements in science and technology significantly influence societal dynamics. It is crucial for writers, artists, designers, and cultural producers to develop a nuanced understanding of neuroscience. Art, with its inherent capacity to pose existential inquiries, complements the probing questions of

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[1] This image represents a hypothetical visualization of the Portrait of Self installation, designed for participants to explore their perception of self. In the installation, an fNIRS device measures participants' real-time attention levels, causing their self-portrait to fluctuate in clarity. This dynamic representation reflects the concept of a continuously evolving self, reshaped by acts of attention; without focus, the sense of self becomes fragmented and obscured. As Virginia Woolf expressed, "How to describe the world seen without a self?", "There are no words" she said. Without the fictional self, all is darkness, and we think we are blind (Lehrer, 2007).

technology and science, facilitating interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration. As Werner Heisenberg noted, "It's always been the artist who perceives that alterations in man are caused by a new medium, who recognizes that the future is the present and uses his work to prepare ground for it." This underscores the vital role of artists in anticipating and shaping the future through their creative and perceptive work.

By fostering a dialogue between neuroscientists and artists, we can uncover transformative insights and creative endeavors that bridge the gap between disciplines, ultimately enriching our understanding of the human mind, and our modern world.

## *Acknowledgments*

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PART V
**LITERARY**
*DIALOGUES*

# DESIGN AND LITERATURE: A DIALOGUE ACROSS DISCIPLINES

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## 1. Introduction

In today's interconnected world, a dialogue across different fields is inevitable, and the dialogue between design studies and literature is no exception. The commonplace dialogue among these two fields concerns the representation of space in literary descriptions, a subject that has been intensively studied especially in the field of architectural and urban design (Charley, 2019; Spurr, 2005). Nevertheless, the preceding decade has also witnessed the emergence of new approaches that redefine this dialogue, investigating the potential for integrating literary tools into design (e Moura et al., 2023; Havik, 2020; Havik, 2014; Sioli & Jung, 2018; Edwards, Charley, 2011), and applying design tools into literature (Psarra, 2009, pp. 65-89). Considering these developments and the insights drawn from the Literary Spaces course taught in the Spring 2023 and 2024 semesters of the Design Studies Master's Programme at Izmir University of Economics, this essay reflects on the ways in which the methods and tools of design and literature are brought into dialogue, and from the perspective of design, how this dialogue informs novel approaches into unraveling design narratives.

## 2. Textual and visual narrative construction

Given that design represents the production of "concrete physical realities" and literature constitutes a form of "cultural production that is essentially reflective" of these realities (Grafe et al., 2006, p. 4), what primarily characterizes this dialogue is the fiction being inherent in both fields. Playing a central role in the production of space and the creation of literary text, fiction guides the context of the narrative in a book, while in the spatial design process, this context is expected to be embodied in space. Unlike literature, fiction in design means imagining how a space could be inhabited (Scheeren, 2015), whereas in reality, it can be experienced otherwise.

In other words, reality might not correlate with what is imagined, thereby transforming originally intended spatial envisioning into "imposed fictions". This is evident in the unexpected encounters in everyday urban life with the temporary appropriations and occupations (Chase et. al, 1999), where fiction is no longer regarded as a means of imagination but can instead be employed as an analytical tool[1] for deciphering the lived space.[2] This, in turn, highlights the critical role that the literary approaches play in deciphering and interpreting urban life.

Whether imposed or realized, fictions are inevitably intertwined (Psarra, 2003, p. 370), and narratives play a central role in their interconnection. In the construction of narrative, the writer-as-author is afforded the privilege of determining the characters and events that will unfold within the confines of the book. In the context of public space, however, the characters become users of space that the designer-as-author does not encounter. Moreover, the sequence of events is pre-determined within the architectural brief that has been provided in a typical practice. In a book, textual narratives can create an idealized representation through a hypothetical realm, which may hardly come to life. Likewise, in architectural design, renderings can offer surreal visual representations that are detached from the existing context.[3] Yet, both domains are communicated through narratives - textual in the form of a book or visual in the context of architectural representations - and both fields, by definition, are ideal unless the narrative is based on a real-life story or the architectural design is fully realized as in visual narratives. With this brief background in mind, despite the differing terminology employed by these two fields, their practical approaches are, in essence, similar. It is these overlaps that provide the basis upon which a dialogue among these two fields can be established.

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[1] In her seminal article "The use of fiction to interpret architecture and urban space", Katherine Schonfield (2000) discusses the conception of fiction in architecture through (1) allegory, (2) narrative, (3) structural pattern, (4) modified structuralism, (5) form, theoretical and physical structures.

[2] In his seminal work The Production of Space, Henri Lefebvre (1991) outlines a trialectics of space that has three interrelated constituents: conceived space, perceived space, and lived space. Lived space stands for the spaces of representation and refers to practices that take place in space.

[3] For further discussion, see "From Romantic Ruins to the Ultra-Real: A History of the Architectural Render". Accessed November 26, 2024. <https://www.archdaily.com/894662/from-romantic-ruins-to-the-ultra-real-a-history-of-the-architectural-render?ad_campaign=normal-tag>

Just as the vocabulary they adopt, the techniques such as perspective, section, and dimensionality shared by both fields are similarly invoked, yet contextualized and applied differently. In design, perspective allows designers to define space and what it contains from a fixed point by placing the user at the vanishing point; in literature, it represents the point of view of a narrator observing the events and characters unfolding in this space.[4] Section, on the other hand, an imperative tool for understanding and building the spatial relations in architectural design, becomes a means of constructing and telling stories in literature (Image 1). In his book Life: A User's Manual, Georges Perec (1998, pp. 40:44) describes how a section-thinking allows the construction and unfolding of the story:

> *"I imagine a Parisian apartment building whose façade has been removed ... so that all the rooms in the front, from the ground floor up to the attics, are instantly and simultaneously visible. The novel – whose title is Life A User's Manual – restricts itself ... to describing the rooms thus unveiled and the activities unfolding in them, the whole in accordance with formal procedures ... try to imagine on what a collective existence might be based, within the confines of this same [the reader's] building."*

As another formal procedure, dimensionality is inherent in the design process to produce space and objects, and moving simultaneously between two and three dimensions is integral to the language of design. Although the book is by its nature three-dimensional, narratives in a literary text unfold on the page as two-dimensional surfaces. Through time, memory and imagination, this two-dimensional nature of the pages becomes a means of accessing the multi-dimensional nature of narratives. In the Life: A User's Manual (1987), the invisible guidelines that make up the grid structure superimposed on a flat surface present a complex narrative (Image 2). Hence in literary texts, the grid becomes "the story" by telling a *"space within which the mathematical and the imaginary coexist in tension with one another"* (Sobelle, 2012, p. 182).

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[4] In her essay, "There are Different Ways of Making the Streets Tell", Inga Bryden, a writer and cultural studies scholar, questions the connections between literary form and architectural form. Emerging as a connection, Bryden exemplifies how perspective has been adopted as the construction of narrative in the books Lights Out for the Territory: Nine Excursions in the Secret History of London (Sinclair, 1997) and If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things (McGregor, 2002).

**Image 1.** The cover of the book "Life: A User's Manual" with a cross-section of a block of flats.[5]



**Image 2.** The grid structure of the narrative in "Life: A User's Manual". [6]

Not only do the terminologies and the techniques used in two fields overlap, but they are also exchanged. In his design practice, architect Ole Scheeren considers buildings as spaces of stories. Scheeren follows an understanding of "hybrid narratives" in which architectural "form follows fiction", so that buildings as organizational structures allow multiple narratives to be written by visitors (Scheeren, 2015). The practice of Lilith Ronner van Hooijdonk applies the idea of "narrative architecture" as a way of communicating their architectural projects and connecting users with each other (Lilith Ronner van Hooijdonk, 2018). Another instance is the practice of "The Laboratory of Literary Architecture",[7] where literary texts are spatialized and transformed into physical models using design tools (Pericoli, 2019). In a similar vein, Sophia Psarra applies architectural tools to understand the geometric construction of narratives in the labyrinths of Jorge Louis Borges (Psarra, 2009, pp. 65-107). In other works, a critical reading of design processes is possible by interrogating agency in collective design practices by bringing literary imagination into play (Dionne, 2018), or by combining literary texts with design tools to experience a critical on-site reading of the city through mobile applications (Sönmez & Doğu, 2021). These attempts can be multiplied and confirm that reading space with literary tools is possible, whether in a literary or architectural form.

## 3. Literary urbanism

It is against this background that the Literary Spaces course discusses literary approaches as a means for spatial thinking. Making connections between literature and design, the student research projects aim to shed light on urban experiences, offering insights into how literary conceptions and instruments can reshape our perception of space. As discussed previously, literary conceptions are diverse, and the tools in the literary repository are manifold. These efforts have become  visible  in

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[7] Founded in 2010 by architect/illustrator/author Metteo Pericoli, "The Laboratory of Literary Architecture" is a cross-disciplinary exploration of literature as architecture that conducts workshops at established educational institutions around the world. The Laboratory seeks answers to questions such as "what makes a story stand, how do we perceive literary structures, can a literary structure be designed?". Accessed November 23, 2024. <https://lablitarch.com/>

scholarly publications devoted to these interests, especially in recent years.[8] Drawing on the research projects developed over the last two years in the Literary Spaces course, the works collectively covered a wide range of spatial dialogues on various themes. These themes included but not limited to the analysis of everyday life through a literary perspective, the exploration of spatial typologies within literary narratives, questioning the representation of space in the structures of pop-up books, and the literary exploration of feminism in relation to power dynamics in spatial environments.

Given that both the instruments and the vocabulary of literature become helpful in unveiling the blindspots in the urban, these works encompass a range of methods and conceptions, including the analysis of urban spaces at varying scales, looking into diverse situations, and across different time periods, with the city of Izmir in Turkey serving as the unifying background [9] (Image 3). Several projects focused on the evocative descriptions of urban space, using atmospheric analysis in narrative construction. The practice of atmospheric writing in these works ranges from dealing with how the changes in the day and night affect our perception of an urban coastline, or how the sea turns the coastline into an emotional landscape, and the poetic journey of winemaking, to reading the sensory experiences and architectural features of leisure spaces and questioning whether the modernization practices have led to monotonous spaces.

In addition to exploring literary descriptions of space, other projects took a critical approach and transcribe the street life from the eye of an inanimate object freed from cultural codes, from the perspectives of different individuals coming from different

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[8] These publications may include, but are not limited to, "Vademecum: 77 Minor Terms for Writing Urban Places" (Havik, et al., 2020) and "Repository: 49 Methods and Assignments for Writing Urban Places" (e Moura et al., 2023).

[9] As the focus of the term research, students enrolled on the course in the Spring of 2024 are expected to concentrate on exploring the dynamics of urban life in Izmir, Turkey.

age groups and cultural backgrounds, or through the fact that objects carry memory, turning the space they are into an extension of memory. Taken together, the works demonstrate that literature can provide insights into urban situations, things, people and events that shape urban environments, and that these valuable dynamics can guide other ways of reading the urban.



**Image 3.** Examples of student work from the Literary Spaces course. Source: "Perspectives" by Meryem Nur Denktaşlı (Left) and "Exploring the Emotional Landscape: The Sea as a Character in Urban Atmosphere Along the Bostanlı Coastline" by Sera Güner (Right).

In the urban context, spaces cannot be fully understood by simply observing them. It is essential to experience them, to observe the causes and consequences of their transformation, to read them by making their traces visible. Spaces exist through the stories they embody, and the narratives constructed by the students in turn revealed spatial experiences. This is the core aim of the course *Literary Spaces*: to extract

and articulate narratives that emerge at the cross cuttings of time and space. Through these narratives, while some stories share similar threads, each space explored writes its own unique (hi)story. By uncovering compressions, disappearances, mutations and dualities, these analyzed spaces ultimately become valuable urban patchworks, where the reflections and actions converge.

Compressed between time and space, stories tell what one does and can do in it and make out of it. Stories are "the treatments of space" in Michel de Certeau's words, playing decisive roles, becoming more than mere fixations but creative acts (1984, p. 123). In the distinct spatial experiences revealed in the student projects so far, creativity not only flourishes through the narrative tools implemented but also through the forced acts due to altering socio-economic structures, politics and their implications on the changing production and consumption patterns. Therefore, regarding the themes explored, each urban story developed by the students is unique. In these stories, the time refers to all times - past and present – that coexist simultaneously. The following essays, developed in the context of Literary Spaces, will demonstrate how the literary repository can be conceptualized in the context of urban literacy, how literary tools enable a reading of the city, and what kind of "new" dialogues these tools provide when applied in the urban.

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# A PLACE THAT IS AN EXTENSION OF MEMORY: MUSEUMS AND ANTIQUE SHOPS

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## 1. Introduction

Memory is the essence of the self. It stores things that characterize the expression of emotions. It sometimes can be a place, yet sometimes an object. It can be a spiritual healer or a proof of experience. Without objects, narratives would lack vitality, and without narratives, places would be irrelevant. Placing objects in a space of narrative memory and opening this space to outsiders creates a space that is an extension of memory. The stories evoked by the objects in these spaces take the self on a journey in which the ordinary becomes remarkable and personalized. It is important to note that these spaces play an important role in revealing the relationship between narrative, self and space and how they feed each other. By bringing memory and narrative together, these spaces allow us to engage not only with the tangible remains of history, but also with the emotional, psychological and cultural contexts that accompany them. Museums are one of the main places where such objects can be seen together. Our body moving through an ever-changing narrative space allows us to think about the contextual significance of objects as well as their experience. In museums we visit as passive observers of history, just like in antique shops, we desire to stay in the moment of that period, to experience that atmosphere through objects. From this perspective, are antique shops also museums? What makes an object worth exhibiting in a museum? How is memory not enough to exhibit an object whose narrative is blurred?

The main focus of this study is the comparison of museums and antique shops that bring together memory and narrative. The narrative similarities and differences of these spaces, which gain meaning through the objects in them, will be revealed. The study will be supported by existing literature and a case study will be conducted by experiencing Ziraat Bank Izmir Art Museum & Antiques Shop in Izmir.

*"Just when we think that things are safely dead, fossilized, petrified, and consigned to the past, they rise from their graves of natural extinction and cultural obsolescence."*
*(Mitchell, 2001)*

The narrative journey began with the experience of space, an essential aspect of the human condition defined by its spatial and temporal dimensions (Schorch, 2013). Museums and antique shops are emerging as literary spaces that evoke a deep sense of history, nostalgia and discovery. Both serve as repositories of the past, inviting discovery and contemplation through their unique collections and objects. Since historical events are chronicled in the spatial language of objects, the museum setting naturally supports a fragmentary and a-historical presentation (Katriel, 1994). With their carefully curated exhibitions and educational tone, museums offer structured narratives that guide visitors through the archive of time, presenting history in a way that is both informative and remarkable (Falk & Dierking, 2000). Home to relics ranging from ancient to modern, each piece is carefully displayed to convey a particular narrative or evoke a particular emotion. The general architectural character of museums - wide halls, quiet corridors and white glossy surfaces - creates an atmosphere in which time stands still, reinforcing a sense of architectural greatness and admiration. In Brian O'Doherty's (1986) "white cube" approach, he argues that in order for an artwork to be fully perceived, it must be removed from all existing context. The traditional museum space as a controlling and enclosing space where the object is decontextualized from the space contrasts with the eclectic and experiential design of antique shops. In antique shops, the past is accumulated as a treasure of memories, rather than curated, waiting to be uncovered by an insightful eye. These shops often appear as mysterious and enchanting places, filled with relics and curiosities that seem to have lives of their own (García, 2021). Each object in an antique shop tells its own story, filled with whispers of its former owners and the eras in which it survived. The allure of antique shops lies in their unorganized chaos, where objects of different times and origins coexist carelessly. This randomness invites a different kind of interaction, driven by personal curiosity and the enthusiasm for discovery. The tangible nature of antique shops, where visitors can touch, hold and even smell the objects, adds a sensory depth that enhances the overall experience.

By examining the different yet intertwined atmospheres of museums and antique shops, this study is about how each space brings together memory and literature. Through an exploration of the role of spaces as literary contexts, the essay discusses how these diverse spatial settings shape narratives and gain meaning through the objects they contain. Based on these concerns, the study questions whether  antique shops are also museums, and seeks to answer this by means of a narrative. The experience realized to support the narrative, the literary narrative of a museum and an antique shop selected in Izmir, is narrated after experiencing these places. Since this experience is a personal encounter, it is expressed in the *first-person narrative.*

## 2. Comparative spatial dynamics

Museums and antique shops are temporal thresholds that invite visitors to dialogue with history. They become curators of history by housing objects that whisper the stories of the human journey through the ages. Both spaces invite an interaction between memory and the self. Although their methods and atmospheres differ significantly, these spaces are extensions of memory. Museums can provide social contexts that illuminate the importance and structure of memory, as well as enabling the practices of history and the retrieval of memory as a part of it all (Katriel, 1994). In the museum, this interaction is often educational and didactic. There is a historical authority, an academic precision. The formal curatorial structure of museums creates a linear path through the labyrinth of time, adding a sense of continuity and coherence to the narrative. This structured, pre-routed journey suggests the spatial definition of the museum. In Marc Augé's (1995) "Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity", the definition of non-place represents anonymous places where no human traces are allowed to accumulate and where people simply pass by without making meaningful connections or experiences. While museums may have valuable objects and exhibitions, visitors often pass through museums relatively quickly. The temporariness of visitors' experiences can sometimes lead to a superficial interaction with the exhibits, similar to temporary interactions in other non-places. In Augé's (1995) definition of non-place, airports are considered as places where people  follow

predefined routes, anonymous and without meaningful connection. Both spaces are characterized by movement and temporality; visitors are in airports to get from one place to another, and in museums to quickly consume a specific information or cultural heritage. This brings both airports and museums closer to the non-place concept, which leads to superficial and temporary experiences. In a museum, visitors may not interact with each other or make permanent connections within the space and remain anonymous. Because the museum is not concerned with representing time, it may experiment with different methods to combine spaces and objects to create meaning (Tzortzi, 2015). Many modern museums, those designed with efficiency and accessibility in consideration, characterize monotony. Monotony in museums comes from their emphasis on efficiency and accessibility, which often results in standardized and impersonal spaces. Clean, bright designs and systematic exhibition layouts create a predictable and uniform visitor experience, limiting opportunities for discovery or personal connection. In addition, the focus on maintaining order and silence inhibits social interaction and makes the experience more solitary than dynamic. This refers to the sense of non-space described by Augé, where the physical environment lacks distinctiveness or local character. Augé (1995) also relates non-place to consumer culture, where individuals are primarily engaged in acts of consumption rather than meaningful social interactions. In some museums, the souvenir shops we encounter at the end of the labyrinthine journey reveal the commercialized aspects of museums. Although museums contain non-place characteristics, such as the inclusion of a souvenir shop, and the consumption-oriented nature of non-places, where the users' experience does not have a lasting impact on the space, they have significant potential to create meaningful connections, improve cultural insight and preserve collective memory.

In contrast, antique shops are silent narrators of the past, enriching the character and atmosphere of their surroundings through the presence of objects in the space. Antique stores seem inherently confusing, with items that may be irregularly labeled, have limited provenance, and have unknown functions (Douma, 2015). They are more intimate and eclectic spaces. They are usually more relaxed, filled  with  objects  from

different times and places of discovery. Each antique object holds its own story; at the point where the tangible structure of the space and the abstract perception of time meet, these stories come alive again. A story encourages to actively "self-inscribe" as opposed to passively "*looking at them and reading the inscription*" as opposed to a de-contextualized object (Schorch, 2013). It invites individuals who experience the space, as opposed to the non-place, to establish a personal connection. The physical boundaries of the space expand and deepen with the historical layers of the objects. Unlike the structured organization of museums, antique shops are a fragmented, random representation of the past. In antique shops, objects are not just relics to be observed, but treasures to be discovered, each with a potential story for the visitor to discover. The space is full of curiosity and nostalgia, and the sensory experience of touching an old object triggers memory and the self. This interaction blurs the line between the observed and the observer, making history more personal and accessible. The individual stories embedded in each object are revealed through the observer's appreciation, developing a sense of historical empathy. In these spaces, time no longer flows linearly, past and present are intertwined. Each part of the spatial structure is a narrative element that contains the traces of time. The relationship between narrative, self and space in this space, which is an extension of memory, plays an important role in revealing how they feed each other. It raises questions about the experience of the body moving through an ever-changing narrative space, as well as the contextual significance of objects. As passive spectators of history, in the antique shops we visit, we desire to stay in the moment of that period, to experience that atmosphere, just like in museums.

## 3. Narrative journey in curating memory

Many museums are actively working against the temporality, anonymity and consumption associated with non-place by providing opportunities for reflection, dialogue and interaction on history and culture. In contrast to Augé's (1995) notion of non-place, museums continue to be primary spaces for education, reflection and community. However, the perception of space and place is variable and fluid; what

one person sees as non-place may have a different meaning for another. In The Practice of Everyday Life, Michel de Certeau (1984) defines space as the practice of living and walking. De Certeau (1984) sees the act of walking and movement as creating "spatial stories". Even if the act of walking in the museum is provided by didactic directional signs, visitors participate in more than just following a predetermined path. Visitors move from the artwork to the text panel, thinking, imagining and re-writing their own narratives. They see information, reflect on what they see and personally imagine connections. In doing so, they overlay the story they curate with their own individual interpretations, memories and emotions. According to Bal "walking through a museum is like reading a book" (1996, p.4), with two overlapping narratives: the textual narrative relating the objects to their functional and historical origins and the spatial narrative resulting from "the sequential nature of the visit". This personalized interaction transforms the museum from a prescriptive and structured space into a dynamic and evolving environment. Each visitor's unique narrative expands the practice of the space, challenging its intended norms and adding new layers of meaning. Initially defined as an educational and authorized space, the museum becomes a subjective space of experience where the interaction between the observer and the observed constantly reshapes its purpose and impact. Defined as educational and prescriptive, the museum space changes its meaning as it is experienced.

Similarly, antique shops offer a complementary narrative, transforming the interaction between space, objects and individuals into a deeply personal and experiential journey. The absence of a mandatory route in this space, where many objects from the past coexist, makes this space more flexible and subjective. This interaction brings the museum and antique shops closer together, and in these spaces each object communicates with the memory and present of the observer. Because every moment is shaped by the past, memory creates the continuity of life and lends meaning to the present (Sturken, 1997). In these spaces, each item serves as a piece waiting to be discovered and connected to the observer's own memories and emotions. The lack of formal organization allows antique shops to embrace

randomness and chaos as narrative tools. This disorder gives a sense of wonder and curiosity that makes each visit a unique experience. The sensory interactions inherent in antique shops - touching a worn surface, feeling the weight of an old object, or smelling the slight odor of moisture - trigger deep emotional responses. These interactions blur the boundary between object and observer, creating a participatory dialogue where history feels alive and accessible. Antique shops encourage individuals to become storytellers, revealing connections that may have been lost or forgotten. In the context of de Certeau's "spatial stories" (1984), the act of walking through an antique shop is like creating a personal narrative. Visitors create meaning not only from the objects they encounter, but also from their movement through the space. The sensory, visual and emotional interaction creates a multi-layered experience, transforming the antique shop into a dynamic space of memory and self-reflection. Therefore, both spaces - museums with their structured narratives and antique shops with their sensory-driven experiences - reveal the complex relationship between space, memory and narrative. In the context of the research, both the museum and the antique shop are important places that carry the traces of the past and offer visitors the opportunity to experience the relationship between time and space. In the selection process of the case study spaces, the didactic and organized structure of the museum and the chaotic and intimate atmosphere of the antique shop based on individual discovery were considered. The Ziraat Bank Museum, located in Konak, the historic Izmir district in Türkiye, was selected for its location in a historic building, and the Antiques shop located in Karşıyaka district, which has been passed down from generation to generation, was chosen as another narrator of time. In the research, the relationship these spaces establish with the past, the meanings they create through objects and their effects on visitors were analyzed. The comparison process will be made through the spatial organization, the visitor interaction and the role of objects, all of which will be explored through a narrative lens. The literary interpretation of the spaces aims to understand how these spaces contribute to personal experiences and spatial memory. The first-person narrative is chosen to convey how these spaces evoke different emotional and ideational responses in individual experience.

## 4. Research context: Ziraat Bank Izmir Art Museum & antiques shop

Built in 1930 and bearing the traces of the I. National Architecture Movement, the building was transformed into an art museum after restoration works (Ziraat Bankası İzmir Sanat Müzesi, n.d.).

*I step inside with the curiosity of experiencing an old building (Image 1). At the entrance, I am greeted by an area surrounded by large columns with stained glass ceilings. In the middle of the stained-glass ceiling, seating units stand as if inviting me to stand in the center (Image 2). The whole floor shimmers in this area equipped with artificial lighting. The feeling of an old building outside contrasts with the smooth floor inside. Directional signs on the walls invite me to go up (Image 3). These are not the steps of an old building, at least not anymore.*



**Image 1.** Ziraat Bank Izmir Art Museum. Source: Author.

*I pass through labyrinthine corridors with wooden frames. Photographs of various painters on the walls invite me to read and get to know them (Image 4). The flat floor slides me between the exhibition spaces, I don't even realize that I have made a full circuit and am back where I started. I need to go up one floor, the directional signs tell me that (Image 5). Smaller spaces this time. The sculptures that are "essential to be exhibited" are in glass showcases in the center of the spaces (Image 6). There are not even fingerprints on the glass. I look out of the corner of my eye at the sea and the question of who used to live here takes over my whole being. Again, a seating unit in the center of the space, as if to say "sit and look". How to describe a space that is so empty and yet so full? My voice grows inside me, as if to break the silence of the space. The paintings on the wall catch my eye. They are all arranged according to a rule, as if the whole atmosphere would be ruined if we moved one of them. After a small daze, I continue walking. I am greeted by a new museum experience, a digital art collection (Image 7). There are paintings that you can project on the opposite wall by dragging them on a digital screen, as if you can touch those works. Is it necessary to "pretend" in museums? As if you are interested, as if you know, as if you understand. I went back down to the entrance section with the stained-glass ceiling. The directional arrows are over, the exhibition is over. I sit on those seats, I look around, people are coming and going. As if they understand, as if they know. The conversations of the security guards echo in that huge space. The illusion breaks and I leave. I am interested, I know, I understand.*

The antique shop in Karşıyaka/Bostanlı on the other hand, is a small shop on the ground floor of one of the adjacent buildings. Located on a relatively quiet street, the shop is far from glamor with its black frames and white writing on the windows. It is a place that exists with its simplicity among the many shops around it that catch attention with their signs and colors. This is the antique shop of a man who continues this profession inherited from his elders.
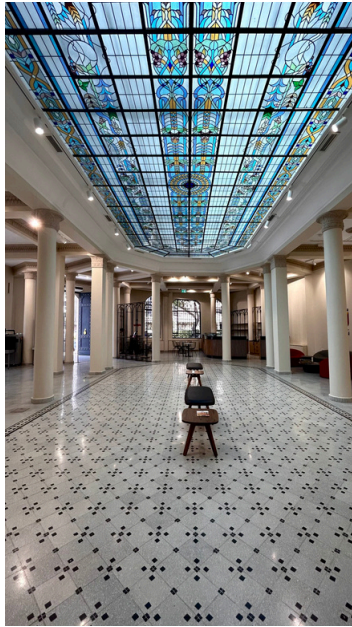
**Image 2.** Stained-glass ceiling. Source: Author.



**Image 3.** Directional signs. Source: Author.

**Image 4.** Corridor. Source: Author.
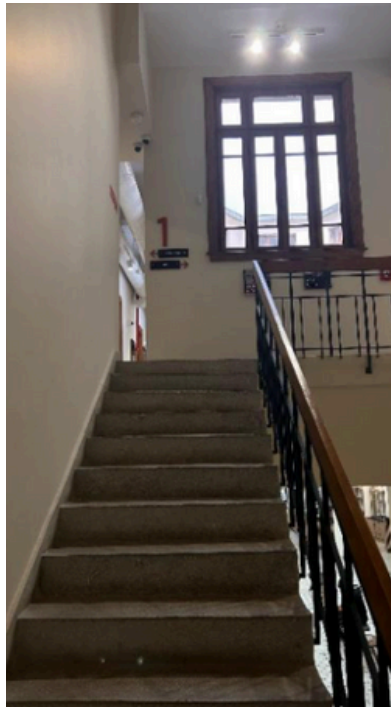


**Image 5.** Directional signs. Source: Author.

**Image 6.** Glass showcase. Source: Author.



**Image 7.** Digital art collection. Source: Author.

*There is no fancy signboard, no directional signs, nothing. Only "Antiques" is written on the window (Image 8). Of course, it is very difficult to recognize it among the many adjacent shops on the street. I walk in, and as soon as I do, a red carpet is spread under my feet. It was the great-grandmother of the owner of the shop, and stepping on history became an action at that moment. There were a few wall clocks opposite (Image 9), ironically all of them showing a different time. It was those clocks that made me feel that I was in a timeless place. There are so many objects on the floor, on the walls, in the showcase that one does not know where to look. The corridors created with objects are like a labyrinth of disorganized shelves, each corner offering a new discovery. I want to go through them one by one, I want to touch their dusty surfaces. The man tells me where some of the objects come from, their history, and the more he tells me, the more I live. Is it the object that makes history meaningful, that is the proof that we are alive? There are many accessories in the showcase (Image 10), who knows whose bodies they have touched, whose souls they have made happy. I understand the feeling of appreciation as they get older. I walk around this place with feelings, learning is not my main motive. I walk around the shop with my curiosity in my pockets. I do not feel out of place there, as if the cup there is my grandmother's and those small trinkets are from our house. It is not a cold place, but a place that warms with feelings. I leave the shop saying goodbye, goodbye to memories, time and experiences.*



**Image 8.** "Antiques" shop. Source: Author.

**Image 9.** Entrance of the Antiques shop. Source: Author.



**Image 10.** Accessories in the showcase. Source: Author.

Based on these spatial experiences, both the museum and the antique shop offer contrasting yet connected experiences that reveal the multifaceted relationship between space, memory and narrative. The museum, with its curated structure, polished surfaces and quiet authority, offers a controlled interaction with history. It is an interaction that emphasizes knowledge and formality but often feels disconnected and performative. In contrast, the antique shop creates an organic and intimate connection with the past, where objects tell personal stories and invite visitors to touch, imagine and interact. While the spaces of the museum resonate with the sense of preservation and respect, the antique shop resonates with the warmth of lived memories and spontaneity. Together, these spaces show how spaces can shape narratives and narratives can shape objects. Museums take us on an instructive language with visible signs, while the antique shop takes us on an emotional journey. Through these reflections, the interaction between formality and intimacy, structure and chaos, reveals how we experience and internalize the narratives of time, how we rewrite the narrative.

## 5. Conclusion

The museum and the antique shop offer contrasting yet related experiences that reveal the relationship between space, memory and narrative. This study aimed to explore narrative intersections and differences, examining how each space creates meaning through objects and engages the self with memory. The museum offers a controlled engagement with the past through its curated structure and quiet authority. However, visitors must explore the buildings containing the collections in order to experience the spatial arrangement of the objects (Choi, 1999). Thus, the interaction in the museum is often disconnected and performative. In contrast, the antique shop creates an organic and intimate connection with the past, where objects tell personal stories and invite visitors to imagine and interact. The experience of the Ziraat Bank Museum and Antiques shop, the interaction between structure and chaos, reveals how we experience and internalize the narratives of time and how we rewrite the narrative. While the spaces of the museum resonate with a sense of preservation and respect, the antique shop resonates with the warmth and spontaneity of memories. Taken together, these spaces show how spaces can shape narratives and how narratives can shape objects.

Museums and antique shops are very similar places in terms of being the narrators of history, supporting the narrative of space with objects, and being an extension of memory. Even if the memory offered by the objects and the memory of the space itself are not in the same theme, they are places that affect the self. Architectural differences and spatial organizations cannot make them opposites. This is how the argument that antique shops are also museums developed in the study. The transformation of historical buildings into museums leads to the development of a trilogy that includes museums, memory and space (Madran, 2022). As an example, Orhan Pamuk's "Museum of Innocence"[1] creates a real, tangible space that is shown as a result of the novel. Pamuk has made the objects belonging to the characters of the novel, imagined by the reader of the book, visible in this space. In other words, he interrupted the state of imagining and writing a narrative (Pamuk, 2012). But as Lefebvre's spatial triad states, space is produced by people and "they shape it continuously through their intentions" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 15). The Museum of Innocence, which is the real-life spatial representation of the novel, is created by the fact that this museum, where we can find the belongings of real-imaginary characters, is located in a residential building, which is also the place of the novel. Although Lefebvre believed that users should naturally have the right to play a leading role in the decision-making process of the production of lived space, anyone can visit the museum on their own. However, the production and reproduction of the museum only occurs in the minds of the visitors (Yuncu et al., 2022). This approach, which keeps readers only as visitors, leads to the questioning of space and time. It is possible to characterize this space as an antique shop rather than a museum with the objects that Orhan Pamuk collected and exhibited in a series of antique shops while writing his novel. The Museum of Innocence, which we take only as an example, is a great example for us to understand that museums and antique shops are intertwined spaces that do not have sharp boundaries. What distinguishes antique shops from museums is that they emphasize the spiritual aspect of memory spaces rather than the material value of an object with a historical narrative. These places of experience will always continue to constitute a triad that will feed the literary and the self.

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[1] The Museum of Innocence, created by Orhan Pamuk, is a museum opened in Çukurcuma, Istanbul in 2012, consisting of installations that tell the memories and meanings associated with objects from everyday life described in the author's novel of the same name published in 2008.

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# THEODORA PROJECT: NARRATING THE CITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A STREET LAMP

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## 1. Introduction

This article, starting from the paradoxical notion of reinterpreting real life through the fresh insights offered by fictional narratives told by non-human entities, proposes a reflective practice centered on the perception of urban spaces and various dimensions of human existence. Giving a voice to a non-human narrator, such as an urban artefact or an animal, can provoke deeper reflection or reaffirm existing thoughts about the essence of humanity and urban life. Fictional narratives encourage individuals to critically examine their propensity to empathize with fictional autobiographical narrators and their habitual approaches to constructing narratives about their own lives. On the level of meaning, non-human narration can be associated with a diverse spectrum of motifs, thematic elements, and narrative functions in particular narratives (Bernaerts et al., 2014).

Shklovsky (1965), while explaining the concept of "defamiliarisation," refers to the general laws of perception, stating that perception becomes automated as it turns into a habit. He adds that after encountering an object several times, we begin to recognize it, at which point we cease to truly see the familiar object before us and can no longer articulate anything significant about it. Consequently, Shklovsky argues that an image is not a fixed reference to the variable and complex aspects of life that emerge through it, meaning it does not serve to explain all aspects of life. Instead, he asserts that the purpose of the image is not to become a meaning that facilitates the "knowing" of the object but rather to offer, through a special perception, a "vision" of the object (Shklovsky, 1965). Thus, is it possible to narrate the city through the perspective of a street lamp that has gained consciousness? This essay discusses this concern through a research project that is shaped around a fictional narrative where a street lamp describes everyday urban atmosphere through unfolding events and users

engaged in these events. The idea behind the project is that the street lamp becomes alive and observes and interprets the area it can see. Even though the project is not only composed of a story but also has its own distinctive narrative through a story, there is a necessity for the existence of the story. The story's title is considered as "Through the Street Lamp's Eyes:[1] Theodora's Urban Story", with the method of research involving the selection of a highly frequented urban public space of Fahrettin Altay Tram Stop in Balçova, Izmir in Türkiye, and observing the area with a non-human eye as much as possible. Narrating through an inanimate object has some limitations. Because it lacks humanistic perspectives and notions, for this reason, some human terms, even if looked at as objectively, curiously and with an unknowing eye as possible, were transferred as the terms of a non-human object.[2]

The Theodora Project aims to explore the dynamic relationship between urban life and space from the perspective of a street lamp named Theodora. Leveraging the urban space theories of Lefebvre (1991) and Augé (1995), the project seeks to understand the interaction among living (human, animals) and non-living (urban elements) subjects. Through Theodora's observations and reflections, the project endeavors to unveil the essence of urban space while also probing into the relationship between the viewpoints of living beings and the existence of inanimate objects. In addition to this exploration, the project is concerned with addressing urban space's multifaceted nature and examining the impacts of spatial elements on user experiences and perceptions. Methodologically, the project employs storytelling to elucidate theoretical concepts such as Lefebvre's (1991) "lived space" and Augé's (1995) "place and non-place," utilizing short narratives for clarity.

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[1] Despite the fact that this project presents an urban narrative from the perspective of an inanimate object, it can be argued that the phrase 'street lamp's eyes' lends greater meaning to the story due to the literary tone required by the narrative.

[2] In his essay "What is it Like to Be a Bat?", Nagel argues that it is impossible to comprehend a being whose bodily experience differs fundamentally from our own due to the limitations of our imagination. However, rather than adopting the perspective of the experiencer based on imagination, he suggests that this challenge could be regarded as an opportunity "to form new concepts and devise a new method—an objective phenomenology not dependent on empathy or the imagination" (Nagel, 1974, p.449).

The questions in the study are two-fold: (1) "If a street lamp were to come to life, how might its manner of perceiving the world, devoid of preconceptions and judgements, inform our understanding of urban interactions?" and (2) "To what extent would the world described by an inanimate object brought to life align with Lefebvre's and Augé's definitions of space and place?" Through exploring answers to these questions, the research's anticipated outputs encompass a broad spectrum, ranging from an alternative reading of urban space to the implications of the built environment on the urban experience. Following this introduction, the outlines of the proposed script will be delivered in the next section, which serves as a reference point for the narrative, inviting readers into a world where an inanimate object coming to life sheds light on aspects of urban existence.

## 2. Through the street lamp's eyes: The underlying narratives of Theodora's urban story

Shang (2022), critiquing anthropocentrism, argues that narrative studies should develop new methods that consider not only the traditional triad of text, author, and reader but also all relevant agents and factors contributing to a given text—whether they are beings, spaces, or historical, natural, textual, cognitive, or social processes. He points out that narratology has not paid sufficient attention to nonhuman agents and factors, citing Fludernik's statement: "[i]n my model there can therefore be narratives without plot, but there cannot be any narratives without a human (anthropomorphic) experiencer of some sort at some narrative level" (Fludernik, 1996, p. 13). He suggests that a noticeable anthropocentric bias is evident in current narrative theories. At this point, Shang refers to Haraway's (2015) view that the way figures are employed can significantly affect both stories and storytelling.

While reading the story, observing the relationship between citizens, among themselves, and urban spaces is possible. The relationship between animals and urban spaces can also emerge within a fictional context. The adequacy and functionality of a space can be measured, even within a fictional narrative. Furthermore, the relationship between Augé's (1995) "place and non-place" within the

observed space can be examined even within fiction. Moreover, all of these aspects can also be associated with Lefebvre's (1991) concept of "lived space." Outputs regarding the essence or character of the space may emerge from this exploration. During storytelling, the approach of policymakers and designers to Lefebvre's (1991) concepts of "conceived space" and "perceived space" can be elucidated. Lastly, through short stories, spaces can transform into literary spaces accompanied by a new realm of imagination. All in all, The Theodora Project aims to deeply explore urban life from an observer's perspective through a street lamp, inviting readers to reassess their understanding of the urban environment:

Prologue:

*"Deep sigh… The street lamp took a deep breath and said, "What is happening to me?" Now aware that it had become a sentient being, the lamp began to ponder its existence: "But how can I think? Do I even have a name? Where exactly am I?" It blinked its eyes. In that instant, the street dimmed momentarily before lighting up again. "This is a gift!" it thought. "Then my name should be 'Theodora'," it said. From its graceful and bowed posture, it concluded it must be female."*

The name of the street lamp was chosen, Theodora, because of its meaning and etymology. From the Greek name Θεόδωρος (Theodoros), which meant "gift of god", from the Greek θεός (Theos), meaning "god", and δῶρον (doron) meaning "gift". The name Dorothea is derived from the same roots in reverse order (Campbell, 2007). Considering the concept of the lamp coming to life, envisioning this as a gift is a thoughtful idea. On the other hand, it is an appreciable notion that the lamp possesses a feminine gender due to its swan-like neck shape. Consequently, the name is Theodora rather than Theodore, the latter being the masculine form of Theodoros.

*"I cannot speak, smell, or hear. I lack the necessary faculties for these senses. But I can see everything when the sun lights up the world during the day, and I can illuminate everything at night. Most importantly, I know how to think! So, what should I do? I should start by learning to think probably. To think, I must begin by learning about things I do not know!*

*What are these? Hmm… Clearly, I must first carefully examine my surroundings! Oh… My back is bent over… And because of this posture, I can see only what I am looking at. No matter, I want to learn everything I can see!"*

Theodora begins her dialogue by first recognizing that she lacks certain capabilities. Furthermore, her awareness of the limited possibilities of her posture, as she begins to observe, helps the reader—or, in other words, the observer of the narrative—grasp the boundaries and limitations of the story.

## 2.1. Through It-narrative[3]

*Let's start with the left. To my left, some complex things and boxes are standing on two round hoops. Like me, they are made of metal, but some parts of them have a softer covering. They cannot move unless someone approaches them. However, when vertical bodies get on them, the round hoops start to turn, and they rapidly move out of my sight.*

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[3] The definition of this title derives from (Blackwell, 2007, p.10) the following quotation: "(…) in eighteenth-century Britain comes in an odd subgenre of the novel, a type of prose fiction in which inanimate objects (coins, waistcoats, pins, corkscrews, coaches) or animals (dogs, fleas, cats, ponies) serve as the central characters. Sometimes these characters enjoy a consciousness—and thus a perspective—of their own; sometimes they are merely narrative hubs around which other people's stories accumulate, like the stick around which cotton candy winds. Variously called "it-narratives," "novels of circulation," "object tales," and "spy novels,"(…)".

*The vertical bodies I mentioned are actually the most exciting things that I see in my view. They move by swinging their rods back and forth. These entities have spheres on top of them. Once, when one of them moved the sphere upwards, I saw that inside the large sphere, there were two smaller moving spheres side by side, a triangle below them, and at the very bottom, a hollow that sometimes appeared dark when opened. I observe that these moving entities can give commands by moving the dark hollow in their spheres. Sometimes, the rods on their upper bodies move and sway. I understand that they have been conscious far longer than I have. Honestly, that makes them lucky… I will call them "Sentients." Smaller versions of the Sentients also pass by me from time to time.*

*On the other hand, there are also horizontal Sentients. They move closer to the ground. Occasionally, the Sentients lean over these ground-level four-legged ones and use the small rotating palettes from the rods on their upper bodies. These tiny four-legged ones move more nimbly when compared to the Sentients, but their movements lack meaning. The four-legged ones also come in different sizes. They appear briefly and then disappear.*

*The place where I stand is a cold grey surface. Actually, I am positioned on the line between two different cold surfaces. One side of the line is patterned and has indentations in places. I can see some Sentients stumble and fall from time to time. The other cold side is slightly darker, with white lines in some areas, and the boxes on the round hoops I mentioned earlier move here. Besides, they are very bright.*

*Moreover, where the two grey areas meet, there is a dark-striped hollow in front of me. They look like strange patches, somewhat misshapen. Something blows in the windfall into these holes. Round ones like this but with no gaps sit on the dark grey surface. I see some writings and signs on poles like mine, but they are thinner. Sentients occasionally look at these. From this, I understand Sentients are important in the world I see. Everything else operates when they touch it.*

*Continuing to look around, the first thing I noticed was actually my own reflection on the cold grey surface. It was often changeable, sometimes shorter and sometimes taller than me, almost black but slightly translucent. Later, as similar marks appeared wherever light shone, I realized everyone had a black and translucent twin like mine. When we get back to Sentients, they sometimes turn their rods in the same direction side by side. Sometimes, they approach each other and blend together. Sometimes, small Sentients (I can tell from their black twins on the surface) move in the same direction after a larger Sentient.*

*Frankly, I find the Sentients somewhat amusing. Sometimes, they curl up on the vertical surfaces next to the grey ground. Sometimes, they touch the green reflectors with the dynamic palettes at the ends of their upper rods. Occasionally, they pluck one off. But the greens are very numerous and bright, and one of their absence goes unnoticed. Sometimes, I think it's a good thing they can't reach me. I say this, but occasionally, they lean against my pole. Then, they act as if they are tired of the drapes on their bodies and leave.*

Theodora creates her own conceptual vocabulary through forms, shapes, and colors. These elements, much like the concepts in our world, enable her newly emerged imagination to generate patterns that serve to define her observations. Her way of perceiving, which is more shape-oriented and akin to an infant's early cognitive state —simplistic and devoid of intellectual depth—results in definitions that resemble abstract literary projections of the real world. This distinctive way of seeing and interpreting thus provides us with new insights. These new insights also give us new perspectives on how an inanimate presence thinks. For example, Theodora named human beings "Sentients". Even though she doesn't have any evaluative, preconceived, earthly, or human thoughts, she perceives that the living bodies of humans are different from all the others.

According to David Herman's account, Genette (1972/1980) referred to this narrative technique as internal focalization, while Stanzel (1979/1984), using a different analytical framework and terminology, described it as figural narration. He highlighted that this method includes a narrator who is more or less fully developed as the source of the narration and a reflector or center of consciousness through whose perspective the events are conveyed (Herman, 2018). In this regard, Theodora's impartial reflections on her observations are both intellectually stimulating and potentially challenging. Her impression of what she sees sometimes can be considered novel ideas about the earth. Apart from human consciousness, she views "sentience" as a quality that enables dominance over other objects. On the other hand, due to her formalistic approach and interpretation of every dynamic object's movement, she creates various movement patterns. She associates shapes and their combinations according to their movements and forms.

## 2.2. Spatial representation in Theodora's narrative

Theodora's spatial representation is also interesting. Because of her interpretation of forms, shapes, and colors, she does not have any idea what they are in reality. Thus, her idea is unlike human interpretation and more like purified assets. In that sense, the notion of de Certeau, in The Practice of Everyday Life, can be discussed in relation to the "spatial trajectories". He explains these words about it: "Stories could also take this noble name:  every day, they traverse and organize places; they select and link them together; discuss out of them" (Certeau, 2008, p. 115).  What Theodora is doing is different from the human being's consciousness in which she gives things new meanings, as a Turkish word is "mana", which includes the spirit of the things we see in reality. In this way, the new links create a new world apart from us. It is a differentiation from human reality and opens a new morphological earth to us. Even though the earth part is the same, we gain an ability to look at different aspects of it through her lenses. In addition, we can be reminded of Augé's words: "…of all who speak the same language, and thus recognize that they belong to the same world" (Augé, 1995, pp. 77-78). Thus, it can be said that Theodora has a different language, and even if she belongs to our world, she has the ability to change its context.

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*This is a strange place. Looking from above, the grey grounds and bright greens never change. But I never see most of the Sentients again. Actually, I find these dense green reflectors interesting. More black twins are around them, and Sentients most often stand next to them while waiting to board the boxes.*

*The larger metal boxes move more slowly, and many Sentients emerge from them. Then, others take their place. Some small yellow boxes change places frequently throughout the day. There is also an open-top box in the corner with empty brown rings on top of it. This one particularly attracts the Sentients' attention in the mornings. The Sentient standing by this vehicle is practically my friend. Like me, it stands still for hours. It does not move back and forth in front of me like the others.*

Epilogue:

*"Yes… I am one who waits with others who do not move in a place where no one stays long," thought the street lamp. It blinked its eyes. The street dimmed momentarily before lighting up again…*

In the story's epilogue, Theodora expresses that she is among the other immobile elements in a place where no sentient being stays for long. At this point, Augé's definition of a non-place should also be considered. He claims that "If a place can be defined as relational, historical, and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (Augé, 1995, pp. 77-78). In this point of view, we can say Theodora may also create some kind of non-place because of the place's lack of history or real relations with each other. On the contrary, even if she creates new definitions of places, she also complains about people who pass by with these words: "Yes… I am one who waits with others who do not move in a place where no one stays long". Thus, it is possible to say Theodora has some insight about relations, so she has some concerns about belonging to spaces.

De Certeau says, "A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus, space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it" (Certeau, 2008, p. 117). In that sense, in the story, we can see that our observer, Theodora, distinguishes between the moving and the non-moving.

Some of the story's parts can also be read with Lefebvre's spatial triad. But mostly, it is possible to read representational spaces -or lived spaces- actually because of Theodora's subjective perspective. He says, "Redolent with imaginary and symbolic elements, they have their source in history". Of course, there is no history in Theodora's story, but it has imaginary and symbolic elements from her inanimate mind. Although Theodora lacks knowledge of some ordinary concepts, she creates her own distinct and endowed approach to exposition. In this way, it provides the place both a new look with a non-judgmental perspective and a new identity. Lefebvre suggests that we look at history in a new light (Lefebvre, 1991). Thus, this kind of story can bring us in "a new light" with those elements.

## 3. Conclusion: Redefining urban space through a non-Human narrator

Considering the entire story, aside from the fact that the narrator is an inanimate entity, the most striking concept is observation. As Klaske Havik states (2014), in order to describe something, whether through text or drawing (or even scratching), one must first be able to observe and perceive the object in all its complexity. To understand spaces and places and how we "live" them, one should begin by closely observing them, identifying their spatial characteristics, as well as their atmosphere and the activities and paths of those who inhabit them. In the story of the street lamp named Theodora, the most critical parameter for an urban narrative is not only her role as an observer but also her ability to perceive, comprehend, and interpret what she observes. Furthermore, the fact that this street lamp serves as both the narrator and the protagonist adds value, as she conveys the world she perceives as an observer. Consequently, the descriptions provided by the lamp within the literary narrative contribute to rendering the urban narrative more layered and multifaceted.

Havik refers to Lefebvre's statement, "Representational space [lived space] is alive: it speaks." (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 41-42) and, by pointing to the dynamic and changing nature of lived space, emphasises how it seems to "speak" through the interactions of its users, inhabitants, and passers-by, in its multifaceted form (Havik, 2014). To illustrate that space is alive, Lefebvre refers to the often overlooked social practices, such as childhood memories, dreams, or uterine images and symbols (Lefebvre, 1991). As seen in these social practices, the primary focus is on consciousness and social relationships. Therefore, when considering a non-human entity, it is possible to argue that the absence of the human tools mentioned here in the narrator will have a distinctive role in the redefinition of urban space. Evaluating a space as a non-human entity, without being part of the relational context as a human would, will inevitably cause a shift in the meaning of the narration, regardless of its structure. However, even though the narrator's nature changes and thus alters the discourse, the space still speaks.

When it comes to a non-human narrator that is not in motion, as in this text, the space becomes what Certeau (2008) refers to as a "practiced place." At the same time, however, it also comes to represent Augé 's (1995) non-place in contrast to this. However, as the reader of the story will also reflect upon, in Augé's (1995) definition of non-place, the space is described as being devoid of relational, historical, and identity-related elements. Yet, even though our narrator is lacking in these contexts, through its acquired nature and new relational notions, it creates an alternative space and establishes a new relational network. Moreover, with this newly acquired identity, the narrator remains constantly present in the space, unlike the other living beings that pass by and are never seen again. Therefore, the fact that the narrator is a fixed element in this space and continues to exist within it with a consciousness that, in some way, deviates from the ordinary renders the nature of this transit space—constantly abandoned by genuinely conscious humans and living beings like animals—ambiguous.

In conclusion, the Theodora Project is structured in a way that lends itself to various readings, including those concerning spatial relations, spatial forms, and occasionally social practices. It offers the reader several insights into the concepts of space and place while also providing an opportunity to reflect on how place can be evaluated by shifting methods and restructuring contexts. Furthermore, the narrative, created through a non-human narrator, holds the potential to guide the reader towards a new perspective, creating both positive and negative provocations. Therefore, the Theodora Project can be regarded as an urban narrative that is open to various discussions, conducive to brainstorming, and intellectually stimulating.

## *Acknowledgments*

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# PART VI
# **EXHIBITION**
# *DIALOGUES*

# ACTIVISM TAKES ON DESIGN ….

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## 1. Introduction

Activism takes on various forms, including speaking, walking, writing, running, doing, filming, and designing, all falling under its domain. Despite the diverse forms, activism shares a common goal of mobilizing public consciousness to exert social pressure on values and practices beyond legal and economic systems' reach. Viewed from this angle, activism emerges as a political force, challenging prevailing political decisions and practices and striving to promote ethical behavior. It addresses a range of issues, from planetary and social boundaries to women's, animal, and children's rights, as well as social and global crises and the impacts of economic, creative, and industrial sectors in the Anthropocene era, drawing the attention of activists.

As Alastair Fuad-Luke, the author of the book *Design Activism* (2009), the history of design can also be seen as the history of activist design. However, some pivotal moments in design history fed the activist character of design. The Arts and Crafts movement, which developed as a response to crafts's irreversible decline due to the industrial revolution caused by deskilling and workplace alienation (Adamson 2010, p.2), advocated for total work of art through Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles.

Manifested by William Morris and John Ruskin, The Arts and Crafts movement proposed a craft-focused understanding of art as a form of social reform, not just an altruistic form of aestheticism fed by backward-looking idealism but also modern and political. Likewise, a decade after the Bauhaus school integrated art, design, and craft with a functional design approach, it became the last cry of the century against the anticipated social and ecological crises of the Anthropocene era.

The Arts and Crafts movement was not only a critique of industrialization but also of the masculine and feminine dichotomy that separated design from craft. With the professionalization of design as a discipline, the craft is considered a non-

professional, traditional, and anonymous field of production framed in the domestic site of female production, which failed to create an exchange value (Baydar 2015, pp. 91-92; Buckley 1989, p.255). On the other hand, design belongs to the 'masculine' realm of professionalism, intellect, technology, action, and progress; craft bears the feminine marks of amateurishness, staticity, repetition, and domesticity (Baydar ibid) While women's skills are associated with crafts-based skills, the history of industrial design excludes craft production, hence excludes women from the history of design (Buckley ibid).

The Civil Rights Movement and anti-war protests directed designers to address social and political issues. The Memphis style led by Ettore Sottsass, an advocate of the Radical design movement, emerged in the 1960s along with groups like Archizoom and Superstudio, challenged consumer culture and approached design as a political discourse and aesthetic field as a critique of dehumanized modernism and rigid functionalism (Neuman 2008, p.325). That was also the time when the environmental movement emerged, influenced by the Vietnam War and shaped by the ethos of the Hippie subculture, reminded us of the urgency of sustainable and responsible design with design theorist and historian Victor Papanek's book Design for the Real World (1971).

When design's ecological and social impacts, especially surrounding the textile and fashion industry, came to light, the 2000s witnessed the development of the active craft movement called Craftivism. As an anti-capitalist, environmentalist, and third-wave feminist form of activism, craftivism focuses on making, incorporating elements of craft that were traditionally originally associated with "domestic arts." Aiming for a social process of collective empowerment, craftivism is a political craft that challenges, provokes, and transforms our world. Craftivism is also the conscious subversion of methods of making that have been unchangeable.

"If there are specific elements, you need adjusted, linked to gender, exposing deeper and more damaging gender assumptions," as stated by CRAFT CARTEL (Rayna

Fahey and Casey Jenkins) (Greer 2014). Feminists undertook revaluation of amateur - domestic and unpaid- crafts historically practiced by women, such as spinning, quilting, stitching, knitting, embroidery, lace making, and crochet- against the understanding of the craft as a trivialized and degraded categories of women's work outside of the fine arts (Parker 2010, p.491). Hence, historical female creativity was neither celebrated and appreciated, nor created an economic value within the patriarchial system that created oppression on women. Likewise womens' connection to nature and environment was also underestimated and supressed; ecofeminism linking ecology and feminism, interprets womens' repression and exploitation patriarchial system in to that of the environment; unites nature and culture. Being a leading proponent of ecofeminism Vandana Shiva (2010) claims that women have a special connection to the environment through their daily interactions and this connection has been ignored by capitalist patriarchial system.

## 2. Design Activism

Design activism involves creative endeavors aimed at fostering ethical and sustainable design paths in response to social fragilities stemming from the design industries' influence on the planet and the society. No matter the influences are varied, the design approaches which remarks the evolution of activist design along with their manifestos share a common goal is to challenge the status quo and conventional design knowledge, aim for change, create counter-discourses for positive social, economic, and environmental changes, raise awareness about values, and act as catalysts for behavioral change.

Julier takes design activism both as political and social agency (2008, p.814) while Markussen (2011) views activism as a disruptive aesthetic practice that challenges the status quo with a dissenting attitude. Ann Thorpe (2008; 2012) sees it as an intentional action aimed at purposeful change on behalf of a group or community that has been excluded, neglected ,deprived of social rights, and subjected to injustice. Design activism aiming to develop a counter narrative to demonstrate alternative proposals for the future and provide impetus for their implementation (Bieling et al. 2014a).

Fuad-Luke (2013) questions *"the difference between alturism and activism in design"*. Activism can actually be seen as a philanthropic act, such as doing good without expecting any profit or benefit for another person. However, the critical element here is that the people and communities helped must be vulnerable and in need of change. However activism would also focuses on society and its transformations toward a more sustainable way of living, working and producing as a means of "socially active design" (Fuad-Luke, 2009, p.78).

Beyond the oppositional stance of activism, design activism creates a ground where individual and collective design practices are reinterpreted in harmony with the current paradigm. Different activist methods may be preferred for different contexts and purposes. For example, slow design resists the quantity-focused temporality of the fashion and design industries by revaluing local against the global and prioritizing sensoriality and longevity of the products (Clark, 2008), craftivism as an active craft opposes the exploitation of the planet and humans by subverting domestic crafts, collaborative design challenges the linear hierarchy between designer, producer, and consumer, open-source and hacktivist design that questions the concept of ownership; participatory design aims to involve diverse groups equally—designers, users, and other stakeholders—who each have an interest in the design's development and outcomes (Sanders, 2013 in Bieling, p.10) while social design considers design beyond functional, economic, and aesthetic development in terms of social welfare and societal contribution and critical and radical design using speculative design proposals to challenge narrow assumptions, preconceptions, and givens about the role of design disrupting the status quo (Raby, 2008, p.95). Although within the current sustainability paradigm circularity as a method accepted and implemented by industry, can actually be considered an activist design movement that resist the linearity of economies of scale.

In searching its ethos, design can learn from an ordinary event in daily life referred by Dilnot as reconception of the *"achievement of the ordinary"* that adresses the relations

situations and contexts that constitute everydaylife  which  adressed by Nietzsche as the realm of the nearest things (Dilnot, 2009, p.187). The examples are popular; *#blacklivesmatter* movement which promoted diversity and inclusivity and the Fridays for Future movement by young climate activist Greta Thunberg which started in the streets and expanded to social media, becoming regionalized and creating a transformation wind aimed at industry and inspired children and young people at the grassroots level called out to parliaments and the United Nations, asking, *"How dare you steal our future?".*

The power of discourse in activism is embraced by a generation that follows and learns about the world through social media, as well as by individuals and collectives who are in solidarity on their ethical journeys through social media. In the media, information is more valuable than the product and the capital; thus, information activism has recently assumed a role that both raises awareness and inspires about ethical issues and possible solutions. Along some activist groups and collectives which communicate through social media through a powerful visual design language, documentaries on ecological and social issues related to design system can create a platform for information activism and awareness towards the real problem.

It seems that activism is now beyond merely burning down, destroying, sabotaging life, or advocating a fictional and idealized utopia. It has a more popular character thanks to design that is participatory, facilitative, mediatory, mobilizing collective consciousness, creating new and shared values, and democratizing (Fuad-Luke, 2013). Today, with this growing awareness, we are even in search of more activist brands and designers. Real change can only occur along a path where the system is transformed by criticizing itself and avoiding the traps of greenwashing.

## 3. Activist projects in the intersection of art and design

With these considerations the student projects developed at the culmination of the Ethics and Social Responsibility in Design course within the  Design  Studies  Master

program aim to raise awareness about environmental, social, cultural, political, and gender-related issues associated with the design industry's impact. These projects, presented with real-scale in the form of artistic installations and manifestos, employ activist design methodologies such as circular, ecological, ecofeminist, slow, hacktivist, craftivist, and collaborative design, addressing a wide array of environmental, social, cultural, political, and gender-related concerns.

Since 2011, students have been required to read academic articles related to the concepts covered within the course flow. At the end of the semester, students coming from different field of studies who present project proposals on topics aimed at raising awareness also define the theme of the activist project exhibition prepared as a final project. They also create the poster design by themselves. These themes have the quality of uniting different ideas in a shared space and are indicative of the current trend toward responsible design.

The exhibition titles on the posters co-created with students also call for action as activist propostions;

"Bitter Green"
"e.consumption: Don't be Coned!"
"If Only You.."
"Bio-politics"
"Ex-habit"
"Surface Active"
"Pomegranade"
"Common-Censor"
"Make the World Green Again"
"Ain't No Waste!"…

Below some of the selected projects.

Ethi(Q)uette by Selin Gülden, 2011

As a part of the Bitter Green exhibition in the first edition of the Activist Project Exhibition of the Ethics and Social Responsibility on Design Course, the student created an installation with a critical approach to conspicuous consumption and waste related to luxury fashion items/label development an installation from a large scale etiquettes in a way reminiscent of the products displayed and offered for sale on hangers in a fashion store. Etiquettes of the luxury fashion brands also represent barcodes with keywords such as hedonism, desire, addiction, and narcissism.

Designer: Selin Gülden. Date 2011. Material: Corrugated cardboard, Clothes' hanger taken from fashion studio lab.

Ecological Footprint Challenge by Ersan Çeliktaş, 2012

An interactive installation as an ecological footprint challenge game is designed by the student within the frame of the "e-consumption: Don't be Coned" exhibition. The manifesto of the project also calls for action to act more ecologically responsible to reduce the carbon footprint caused by the everyday habits of individuals.

Designer: Ersan Çeliktaş. Date: 2012. Material: Printed cardboard.

Flesh as Crime by Elif Tekcan, 2013

This installation was created in the frame of the Bio-politics exhibition, which took its inspiration from Michel Foucault's concept. The work entitled Flesh As a Crime narrated how the body- in particular, innocent yet accused individuals - has been subjected to oppression and violence due to a humanitarian crisis caused by war and civil resistance to repressive political regimes.  A video presentation as editing of the related movies supported the installation, which strikingly remind us that most of the people sentenced to death and tortured remained other than their struggles and personas.

Designer: Elif Tekcan. Date: 2013. Material: Cardboard, wood structure.

If Only the time is to Act is Now by Gökhan Keskin, 2015

In the frame of the "If Only You…? " exhibition, the students explored restorative and repairing creative methods as opposed to linear, destructive, and growth-oriented design systems. One of these projects was a spatial installation from waste plastic bottles, which were colored and brought together in a rhythmic and dynamic composition held with strings.

Designer: Gökhan Keskin. Date: 2015. Material: Plastic water bottles, string.
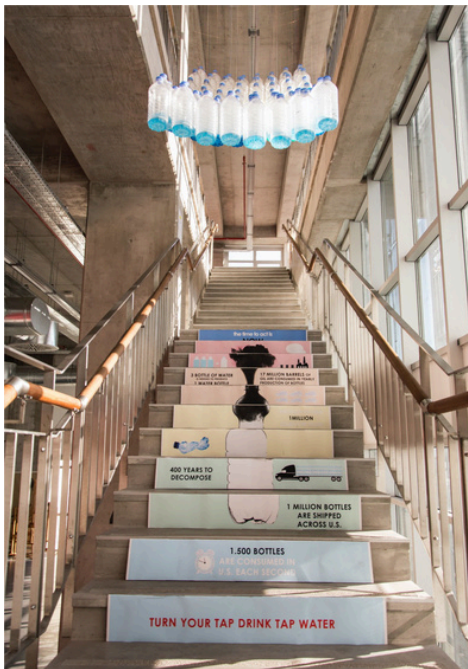
Waste Man by Joao Castro, 2015

The other work of the same exhibition was an artistic project describing a "Waste Man," which the designer created by collecting trash paper by following its path on his way home every day. He documented three different routes of trash paper with maps. The papers he found became the canvas of the manifesto, map, and the artworks in the exhibition.

Designer: Joao Castro. Date: 2015. Materials: Collected waste cardboards.
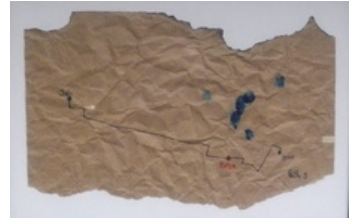
Repurposed by İklime Polat Yalçıner, 2016

As a part of the exhibition called "Active Surface," a circular design project that was executed by upcycling and repurposing used furniture was developed.

Designer: İklime Polat Yalçıner. Date: 2016. Materials: Used furniture, leftover wood pieces.

D SLOTH IT ! (Slow Fashion Awareness Campaign) by Maheen Riaz Siddiqui, 2017

As a part of the Pomegranate exhibition, the imbalances between textile and garment production and fashion consumption, along with the social inequities and environmental degradation due to excessive production and consumption of the fast and global fashion industry, are represented ironically in one of the student's projects.

Designer: Maheen Riaz Siddiqui. Date: 2017. Materials: Cardboard, textile, and clothing waste, mixed media illustration.
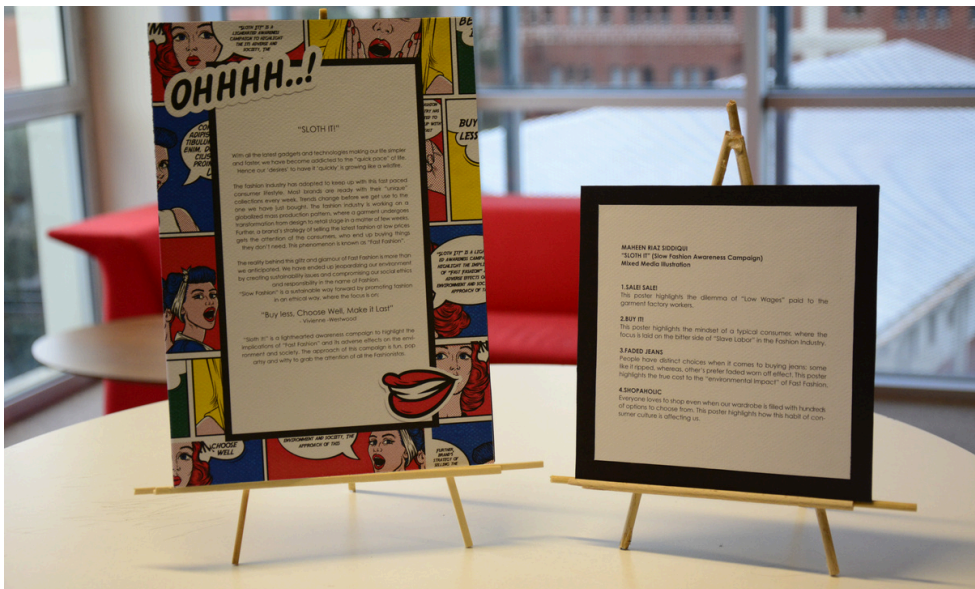
DCIO (Daily Collaborative Illustrative Opinion Platform) by Homero Garcia, 2017

Common Censor exhibition aimed to raise awareness of concepts such as democratic rights, equality, gender discrimination, and freedom of expression. One of the designerly responses to these issues was about fighting public opinion censorship, which proposed a daily collaborative illustrative opinion platform to make everyone express themselves by drawing in times of the difficulty of speaking out against censorship.

Designer: Homero Garcia. Date: 2017. Materials: Paper, pencil, and social media.
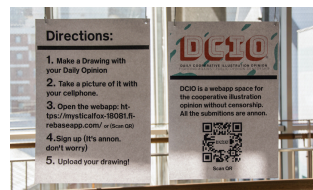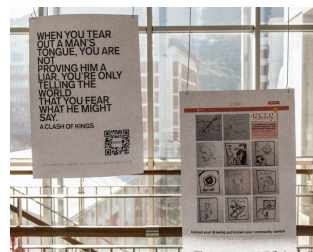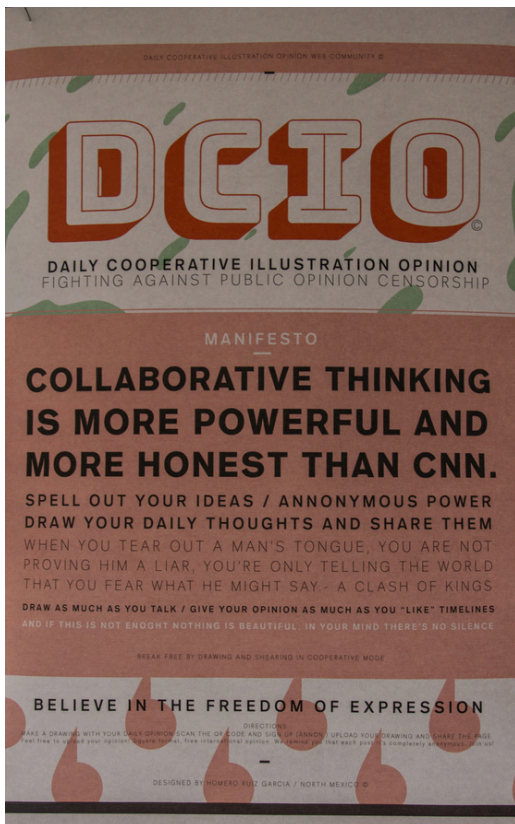
Plasticated Fashion by Cemkan Özkan, 2022

EX-HABIT exhibition brought the projects that were creating awareness against worker's exploitation, waste, and excessive consumption. One of the students' works about this theme, entitled "Plastication of Fashion," brings an ironical critical approach to the association of overuse of plastics, fast fashion, and its glamorous package mediated through fashion magazines.

Designer: Cemkan Özkan. Date: 2022. Material: Nylon, printed paper.

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