Be Careful What You Fuel For

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The beginning of 2019 bears witness to many First World countries experiencing major political charge, with landscape and leadership being intensely challenged, often with great hostility. From the yellow vest social activism in France to the catastrophically dividing idea of Brexit in the UK, from the divisive act of government shutdown in the USA to the rise of far-right politics across Germany and Austria, among other European countries, to name but a few.

This everyday geopolitical lens allows us to immediately see that the world in which we are living is under considerable strain, as it attempts to navigate its way through the unchartered stormy waters of the twenty-first century. Its daily messages of unrest, of anger, of wrangling between polar positions of power and ego is hard to escape. With
this, a call to action for design is to mitigate against the superficial power with which the advanced communication technologies and media platforms allow us instantaneous access to these activities, as they fuel an ever-growing insatiable appetite for speed, silos, and ideologies. It is an invitation to consider geopolitics as a global challenge to which design might offer alleviation.

Global challenges are one of the themes being discussed in this second issue of the Design Journal of 2019, along with product and fashion design. We share research that is being conducted in Asia about an upcoming generation and their influence on fashion, culture and lifestyle. We draw attention to the issue of sustainable design from two perspectives, that of ‘psychologically durable design’ and, of activism and food. And, we look at the issue of well-being in terms of nurturing young design minds through new digital tools, as well as how we can enhance the experience of living life in care homes. What all the papers do is to acknowledge that the real world is a constant variable and its perpetual forward motion has been and always will be a major responsibility for design, its designers and researchers, when conceiving and mobilizing ideas for living.

Siwaree Arunyanart and Patcha Utiswannakul, from the Fashion and Creative Arts Research Unit at Chulalongkorn University Bangkok, bring a fresh paper discussing, ‘A Model for Generating a Lifestyle Fashion Brand from Cultural Capital for Generation Asia in Bangkok Thailand’. Generation Asia is an emerging group of young Asian consumers with high purchasing power, and the case study offers recommendations to designing lifestyle fashion brands from cultural capital for this consumer demographic. It references the significant rise of the global economy of Asia, details the research methodology and its analysis, and discusses two main points, namely, the component parts of developing guidelines and, secondly, the determining of Generation Asia’s lifestyle for fashion based on cultural preferences. This paper will be of particular interest to those concerned with design and consumerism, developing a lifestyle fashion brand for Generation Asia and more broadly, to those researching and making fashion in general.

‘Psychologically Durable Design – Definitions and Approaches’ by Anders Haug, at the University of Southern Denmark provides an explanation of the emerging term ‘psychologically durable design’ and elucidates its relationship to ‘emotionally durable design’ in the interest of arriving at more sustainable designs. How to create more psychologically durable products is a constant variable, and a perpetual work-in-progress for the discipline of design. This paper seeks to address this issue by offering characterization in terms of durable instrumental, hedonic and symbolic value with four types of durable product relationships. This research provides an interesting and relevant topic for the design community, particularly for researchers and practitioners interested in sustainable design.
‘Generation of Design Ideas using EDOS-Touch,’ by Taiwanese researchers Yuan-Bang Cheng, Teng-Wen Chang and Chuan-Kai Yang, brings to attention the development of a new digital collage tool for helping student designers to generate ideas during the problem-exploration phase within the concept development phase. It seeks to bring mind mapping and collage together and argues for two characteristics – that of intuitive manipulation and immersive experience – to be inbuilt in order to create a more effective digital collage tool. The paper details the quantitative experimental study and discusses its results from testing their new EDOS-Touch tool. This paper will be of interest to those concerned with teaching design students as well as those researching digital design in its myriad of forms.

The global challenge of food waste and how it threatens the sustainability of planet Earth is the focus of the paper by Daniel Cid, from the Winchester School of Art in the University of Southampton, UK. ‘Dress Rehearsal: Ephemeral Urbanism, Participation, the City and Food Sustainability’ exposes the strategic capacity of design through the idea of ‘rehearsal’. Placed in the context of city behaviour in harmony with today’s food production and consumption system challenges, it explains through reference to the project Dress Rehearsal – in Barcelona, 2016 – how design can facilitate environmental change and help reverse the environmental problems generated by food waste. The research will be of interest to practitioners and researchers concerned with sustainability and design as activism.

The PhD Study Report by Kai Kang outlines an ongoing investigation into design as a means of enhancing the well-being of nursing home residents. Housed at the Industrial Design Department at Eindhoven University of Technology in the Netherlands, the research about ‘Designing Interactive Public Displays as a New Form of Social Intervention in Nursing Homes’ adopts a Research-through-Design methodology. The enlightening report evidences four simple yet effective design studies with prototypes in situ. It closes with its expectations and contribution to knowledge of developing experimental systems in real-life locations and, in today’s world where the ageing population is a global challenge, this doctoral research is a welcome addition.

Closing this issue are two Book Reviews. The first is by Chamutel Leket on ‘The Fashion Forecasters: A Hidden History of Color and Trend Prediction’, by Regina Lee Blaszczyk and Ben Wubs (eds.). Textile business, textile design, fashion, and textile manufacturing remain pervasive elements of contemporary life. Leket’s review of this timely edited book, which derives from a three-year research project, offers a richly rewarding account of what to expect. The second review is by Artemis Yagou on ‘Childhood by Design: Toys and the Material Culture of Childhood, 1700–Present’, edited by Megan Brandow-Falle (2018). A welcome addition to art and design
history, with a relatively rare insight into the voice of the child. The book gifts a series of essays from across the globe giving insight into play and toy stories.

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