Thinking, design. A construct of (and for) change

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Thinking, design. A construct of (and for) change

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Abstract: Design philosophy has evolved; a cross-over of research and design. This paradigm shift incorporates philosophical thinking and qualitative research standards of replicable methods, informed ethical conduct and robust evidence to inform the ‘art’. We propose that such thinking-design is advantageous; not being instinctively nor egocentrically biased. An increasing compatibility between designer, user and researcher is resulting in, and from, participatory action research (PAR) methods that gather deep insight. But participation is not the same as autonomy and when working collaboratively, PAR presents empowerment in-balance between ‘researching-experts’ and ‘using-experts’; the latter’s needs motivated by aspiration and emotion, rather than professional rigour of the former. Thinking, design is focused by a lens of prospective and retrospective user-led enlightenment. This poster will illustrate that democratic design does not inhibit the artistry for which design is so famed but rather that embedded collaboration to address experiential problems is advantageous, and desirable.

Keywords: Prospective, Retrospective, Co-creation, Responsible, Design
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Semantically speaking, design thinking is easily misused, resulting in potentially exclusive decisions, and unintentional side effects. Conventional design thinking has evolved largely due to the need for flexibility in delivery of outcomes for a rapidly moving market and ideas methodology. A modern interpretation of the model suggests, a gradual movement of research and design (Hodgson et al., 2016). This paradigm shift incorporates philosophical thinking and qualitative research standards of methodological findings, exemplifies informed critical insight and robust evidence to inform the ‘tett’. We propose that such a design construct is advantageous, not being immediately nor effortlessly biased.

The traditional design process can result in complex context opportunities. Additionally, the balance of power to deliver opportunity seems to have changed with the democratization of design (IDEA, 2016). Democratic design whilst once associated with the analysis of Scandanavian workspaces, has transcended to the maker marketplace evident in the co-creating of new products. Selection of designs and solutions is according to stakeholder’s involvement preferences. i.e. the maker produces the options that are most fitting and consequently invested in, prior to reaching production variables and logistical expenses. It is showing that user interaction with designed products can result in successful, maintain and new propositions.

At the development of a proposition, an increasing compatibility between designer, user and researcher is resulting in, and from, participatory methods that gather design insights. Participatory Action Research (PAR) methods conceptualized around the North (Gough, et al., 1988); inspired in the participatory method as a subject for change. Rapid evolution of methods and application in 1960s social change has led to Co-creation, encouraging users in participatory with empathy and understanding (Barwise and Stappans, 2009) in seek mutually successful solutions. But participation is not the same as autonomy. Co-creation often require facilitation, with interaction during a typically short time frame. Consequently, unless responsibility to proceed with outcomes is established at the outset, propositions can remain conceptual with such progression and development for those involved. Co-creation can be a valuable tool with which to establish narrative, which can otherwise be difficult to express and is often poorly represented by static personas. A narrative can be expressed in a multitude of ways but a common favourite involves constructing experiential prototypes, i.e. a room layout, poster or storyboard with/based on projects in order to illustrate the narrative. The act of making something tangible introduces a sense of story, supported by the additional sense of narratives of empathy (Blumenthal et al., 2016) being addressed with personal experiences enabling an individual to re-tell narrative and make it easier to understand the context which underpins the experience.

Figure 1: The narrative process for definition of language and design for new health care posters. Co-created by men, for men. Development team led equally by men with Intellectual Disability, Designers and Researchers.

Researcher
Analysis, Repeatability, Ethical approach

Designer
Solution seeking, Creative methods.

Emerging convergent, empathetic-space

Co-creator
Experiential knowledge, Problem identifier.

References