Faculty of Design - Current and Future Research (September 2024)

The Faculty of Design at the German International University (GIU), with its three majors: Graphic Design (GD), Product Design (PD), and Media Design (MD), is dedicated to advancing design education and research. Its particular focus is on intercultural design and designers' evolving roles, the integration of cultural differences, the social and cultural impact of design, the aesthetic values in design practices, and sustainability in design processes.

This research profile outlines our commitment to exploring how designers can bridge cultural differences, shape future societies and redefine their roles as mediators and creative leaders in a globalised world.

RESEARCH FOCUS AREAS

Intercultural Design

Understanding and incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into design processes and outcomes is crucial. Our research will investigate how design can serve as a tool for cultural exchange, learning, and integration.

Future Roles for Design and Designers

As the design landscape evolves, designers are increasingly expected to assume roles beyond traditional boundaries. This includes being mediators in cross-cultural contexts and leaders who drive innovation and social change. We also engage with the future of design as a practice, exploring the changing landscape of future tools, technologies and processes as they relate to the role of design, designers and design products and outcomes.

Methods for Evaluating Design's Role

Developing robust methods to evaluate the effectiveness of new designs is essential. This includes assessing the impact of design interventions in various cultural contexts and their contributions to societal and organisational goals.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC RESEARCH TOPICS

Graphic Design

- *Typography & Identity*: Language is the first medium through which we understand our world. But language isn't just the spoken word but a structure of differences in letters, words, and meaning. The forms and shapes of those letters matter. How do we interact in intercultural settings? How do typefaces influence the meaning of words? How does typography change

with an associated culture if new words and meanings are constructed? The research questions aim at a new understanding of the role of typography and language, through which habitual visual hierarchies can be challenged, and new, hybrid formats of cultural exchange and interaction can emerge.

- *Communication Design & Culture*: Graphic design is the interface through which we connect with society, form our identities, and communicate visually to the outside world. How do visual languages of hybrid cultures work? How can design be used for empowerment, self-realisation, and resilience? Projects within this research focus on analysing communication in public space by official bodies and civic agents. What is the visual materiality of our everyday culture, and what can we learn from analysing it?

Product Design

- *Culturally Inclusive Products*: How should products be designed to cater diverse cultural needs and preferences? The topic of intercultural and cross-cultural design strategies is inter alia addressed in the field of public design. With growing cities, public space becomes ever more important as the location accessible to everyone where people from diverse backgrounds and cultures meet. How should a space and its products be designed to invite people to reside and communicate with one another? How can design support in overcoming social and cultural boundaries? Projects within this research focus aim at analyzing public and participative designed public areas gaining knowledge for inclusive designed spaces.

- *Sustainability & Product Development*: Here the role and methods of product designers in supporting and triggering innovative and sustainable developments for start-ups and medium sized business is investigated. Designers often work in complex projects with versatile stakeholders and in interface positions linking industry partners, scientists and designers. The research focus lies here on the role of the designers and the specific design tools that are modified and "translated" in order to apply them also in these non-classical design contexts.

Media Design

Explorations of future creativity is a strand of applied research in Media Design that utilises a broad Research-Through-Design (RtD) methodology with a focus on qualitative evaluation. Situated in a prototype-orientated process, we address future roles and forms for media, design and designers asking two central questions:

- *Interactions with intelligent tools and devices*: What might the tools, practices and artefacts of tomorrow's creative people be?

- *Explorations of future media spaces*: How might we explore the future of media, and interactions with new kinds of media platforms, media types, and audiences?

This research contributes to the international discourse around technology, tools, creativity and creative practice. Engaging with HCI (Human Computer Interaction), Designing Interactive Systems, Media and cultural theory, and technological and social developments in the creation, distribution and consumption of (digital) media, products and devices.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND ARTISTIC OUTPUT

Books:

- Kosok, F. et al. (2024), WAS IST GUT 2023 - DDC Design-Wettbewerb - diskursiv, partizipativ, demokratisch, Frankfurt/Main: Verlag form. ISBN 978-3-943962-75-8
- Buzzo, D (2023) 'Signs of Surveillance' in Creativity in Art, Design and Technology: Editors Earnshaw, Liggett, Excell, Thalmann, Springer Series on Cultural Computing.
- Buzzo. D, Nada.l M, Editors (2023) Student works in Generative Design: Vol II, Forlaegger Fabrik. 9798210854117
- Buzzo, Gorgel, Andersen, Pohlers (2023) Design for Humanity: International Erasmus+ Workshop, Berlin 2023

Articles & Papers:

- Kosok, F.: »Taboo: KI und Camp«, in: TUSH 53, (2) 2023
- Kosok, F.: »Über's Fragenstellen – Design und Wert«, online veröffentlich im Designdiskurs des DDC, auf ddc.de/magazin, 2023
- Buzzo, D (2024) 'Feu Autonome Type 189: Untitled, One Dimensional Generative, Reconstructed, Found Object'
- Proceedings of the Eighteenth International Conference on Tangible, Embedded, and Embodied Interaction DOI: 10.1145/3623509.3635322
- Silva, Buzzo, Hernández-Ramírez, Ayanoglu, (2024): Understanding how undergraduate students perceive biases in AI-generated images – a Research-through-Design probe. DS 131: Proceedings of the International Conference on Engineering and Product Design Education (E&PDE 2024)
- Buzzo, D (2023) 'Performatics, creativity, conceptual art and YouTube tuts'. EVA Berlin 2023 Conference, Electronic Visualisation in the Arts (2023-12-30)
- Lara Piccolo, Daniel Buzzo, Martin Knobel, Prasanna Gunasekera, Tina Papathoma (2023): Interaction Design as Project-Based Learning: Perspectives for Unsolved Challenges. Proceedings of the 5th Annual Symposium on HCI Education, ACM SIGCHI 2023.

Supervised Master thesis:

- How to nudge houseplant killers in urban cities into being better plant parents through communication design?
- Urban sticker culture in Berlin as language and communication
- From Walls to Words: Exploring Graffiti and Street Art across Cairo and Berlin
- Exploring Non-Intentional Design: A Study of Everyday Designed Objects in Cairo and Berlin
- Inequality in Skateboarding
- Where Is the Sun: Exploring the Act of Manoeuvring in Print-Based Graphical Narratives in the Arab Region During Times of Turmoil 1960-2023.
- The Implementation of Artificial intelligence (AI) in the Design Thinking Process (still in progress)
- The influence of techno music on ravers' fashion styles and identities in Berlin (still in progress)

Artistic output:

— Creative Consultancy for the Start-Up Coldharbour Tiles. Special edition "One fish two Fish" was awarded with the German Design Award 2024