

Intercultural Design Approach. Narrative Design for a Multicultural Society

Original

Intercultural Design Approach. Narrative Design for a Multicultural Society / Caputo, Irene; Bozzola, Marco; De Giorgi, Claudia. - In: DIID. - ISSN 2785-2245. - ELETTRONICO. - 1:(2023), pp. 248-257. (Intervento presentato al convegno Disrupting Geographies in the Design World tenutosi a Bologna nel 20-22 giugno 2022).

Availability:

This version is available at: 11583/2984766 since: 2023-12-28T21:34:20Z

Publisher:

Bologna University Press

Published

DOI:

Terms of use:

This article is made available under terms and conditions as specified in the corresponding bibliographic description in the repository

Publisher copyright

(Article begins on next page)

diid

disegno industriale
industrial design

theoria
pòiesis
praxis

diid.it

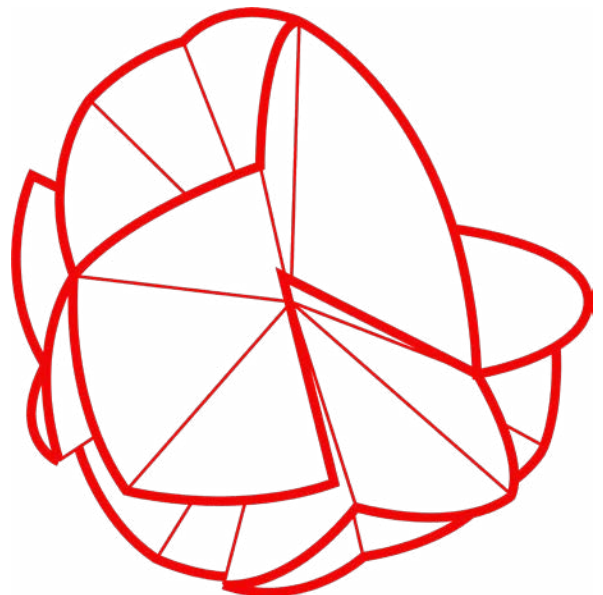
DIGITAL
SPECIAL
ISSUE
1

Disrupting Geographies in the Design World

Proceedings of the 8th International
Forum of Design as a Process

Alma Mater Studiorum — Università di Bologna

Editors
(Eds.)
Erik Ciravegna
Elena Formia
Valentina Gianfrate
Andreas Sicklinger
Michele Zannoni



Colophon

diid
disegno industriale
industrial design
Digital Special Issue 1
— DSI 1

Year
XXI

diid is an open access
peer-reviewed scientific
design journal

diid is published
three times a year

Registration at Tribunale
di Roma 86/2002
(March 6, 2002)

www.diid.it

Print subscription
(3 issues)
Euro 60,00
Subscription office
ordini@buponline.it

Editor-in-chief
Flaviano Celaschi
Alma Mater Studiorum
— Università di Bologna

**Deputy Editor-in-chief
and Managing Editor**
Elena Formia
Alma Mater Studiorum
— Università di Bologna

Editors
Erik Ciravegna
Elena Formia
Valentina Gianfrate
Andreas Sicklinger
Michele Zannoni
Alma Mater Studiorum
— Università di Bologna

Founded by
Tonino Paris

Associate Editors
Viktor Malakucz
Sapienza — Università
di Roma

Lorela Mehmeti
Alma Mater Studiorum
— Università di Bologna

Elena Vai
Alma Mater Studiorum
— Università di Bologna

Art Director
Davide Giorgetta

Editing Assistant
Olga Barmine

CC BY-NC-SA
Creative Commons
Attribution
NonCommercial
ShareAlike

Copyright © 2023
diid disegno industriale
industrial design

Publisher
Fondazione
Bologna University Press
Via Saragozza 10
40123 Bologna
Tel. (+39) 051 232 882
Fax (+39) 051 221 019
www.buponline.com
info@buponline.com

ISSN
1594-8528

ISSN Online
2785-2245

DOI
10.30682/diiddsi23

ISBN Online
979-12-5477-329-1

Scientific Board

Mariana Amatullo
Parsons School of Design
— The New School

Laura Badalucco
Università Iuav di Venezia

Alberto Bassi
Università Iuav di Venezia

Anna Bernagozzi
École nationale supérieure
des Arts Décoratifs, Paris

Paola Bertola
Politecnico di Milano

David Bihanic
Université Paris 1
Panthéon-Sorbonne

Andrea Boeri
Alma Mater Studiorum
— Università di Bologna

Olindo Caso
Delft University
of Technology

Manuela Celi
Politecnico di Milano

Erik Ciravegna
Alma Mater Studiorum
— Università di Bologna

Mirko Daneluzzo
Dubai Institute of Design
and Innovation

Claudia De Giorgi
Politecnico di Torino

Alessandro Deserti
Politecnico di Milano

Dijon De Moraes
Universidade do Estado
de Minas Gerais

Franco Fassio
Università di Scienze
Gastronomiche di Pollenzo

Daniele Fanzini
Politecnico di Milano

Luigi Ferrara
George Brown College

Carlo Franzato
Pontifícia Universidade
Católica do Rio de Janeiro
— PUC-Rio

Giuseppe Furlanis
ISIA Design Firenze

Claudio Germak
Politecnico di Torino

Valentina Gianfrate
Alma Mater Studiorum
— Università di Bologna

Miaosen Gong
Jiangnan University

Christian Guellerin
École de Design Nantes
Atlantique

Roberto Iñiguez Flores
Tecnológico de Monterrey

Çiğdem Kaya
Istanbul Technical
University

Giuseppe Lotti
Università degli Studi
di Firenze

Mario Losasso
Università degli Studi
di Napoli Federico II

Roberto Montanari
Università degli Studi
Suor Orsola Benincasa
di Napoli

Nicola Morelli
Aalborg University

Andrew David Morrison
Oslo School of Architecture
and Design

Spartaco Paris
Sapienza Università
di Roma

Daniela Petrelli
Sheffield Hallam University

Andreas Sicklinger
Alma Mater Studiorum
— Università di Bologna

Francesca Tosi
Università degli Studi
di Firenze

Ambra Trotto
RISE — Research
Institutes of Sweden

Michele Zannoni
Alma Mater Studiorum
— Università di Bologna

Reviewers

The Proceedings of the 8th International Forum of Design as a Process have undergone a rigorous peer-review process to ensure the scholarly quality of the contributions contained herein.

The Editors extend their sincere appreciation to the following Scholars who served as Reviewers for this Digital Special Issue.

Tarek Abdellatif	Valentina Frosini	João Nunes Sampaio
Cosimo Accoto	Rossana Gaddi	Boon Ong
Elena Alfaro	Vanessa Galvin	Giulio Palmitessa
Giulia Allegrini	Silvia Gasparotto	Anty Pansera
Margherita Ascari	Pamela Gatica	Veronica Pasini
Margarida Azevedo	Gionata Gatto	Amina Pereno
Laura Badalucco	Angela Giambattista	Merav Perez
Silvia Barbero	Valentina Gianfrate	Pier Paolo Peruccio
Luca Barbieri	Clara Giardina	Bárbara Pino Ahumada
Esra Bici Nasır	Carlo Giardinetti	Davide Pletto
Alessandra Bosco	Debora Giorgi	Gregory Polletta
Saveria Olga Murielle Boulanger	Michael Gray	Alessandro Pollini
Sabrina Bresciani	Pablo Hermansen	Shalini Prasad
Elena Brigi	Oscar Huerta	Diego Pucci
Francesca Calabrese	Çiğdem Kaya	Nathalie Rodríguez Estrada
Alberto Calleo	Elif Kocabıyık	Valentina Rognoli
Alfredo Calosci	Christopher Kueh	Maximiliano Romero
Serena Cangiano	Kristina Lamour Sansone	Ludovica Rosato
Stefano Capolongo	Jennifer Lane	Ilaria Ruggeri
Lina María Cárdenas	Carla Langella	Francesca Sabatini
Paolo Cardini	Lorna Lares López	Mariana Salgado
John Cardozo	Beatriz Leal Ramos	Jorge Sanabria
Giorgio Casoni	Margo Lengua	David Sánchez Ruano
Andrea Cattabriga	Ruth Maribel León-Morán	Romina Santi
Manuela Celi	Beatrice Lerma	Andreas Sicklinger
Gabriel Cereceda	Ami Licaj	Leila Signorelli
Simona Colitti	Lígia Lopes	Ricardo Sosa
Pietro Costa	Anna Lottersberger	Frank Spencer
Doriana Dal Palù	Stefano Luca	Chiara Sponza
Giorgio Dall'Osso	Patricia Mann	Laura Succini
Dolly Daou	John Martin	Ermanno Tasca
Antonio De Feo	Martina Massari	Martin Tironi
Vanessa De Luca	Mauricio Mejía	Umberto Tolino
Barbara Del Curto	Paula Melo Signerez	Florencia Toro Silva
Özgen Osman Demırbaş	Riccardo Mercuri	Beatrice Turillazzi
Carmelo Di Bartolo	Leonel Merino	Elena Vai
Loredana Di Lucchio	Giuseppe Mincoelli	Virginia Vignali
Amir Djalali	Katharine Mollenhauer	Paula Wuth
Alice Donferri Mitelli	Pierluigi Molteni	Burcu Yahız
Sergio Donoso	Carlos Montaña	Nélida Yanet Ramírez Triana
Seyedarshia Eghbali	Roberto Montanari	Michele Zannoni
Paola Fabbri	Edgardo Moraga	Carola Zurob
Daniele Fanzini	Alfonso Morone	
Anne Farren	Erica Isa Mosca	
	Federica Natalia Rosati	

14

**The Latin Network for the Development
of Design Processes**

16

8th Forum Main Partners

18

**Disrupting Geographies
in the Design World**

20

People

26

Impact

Track 1

There's No Plan(et) B: Sustainable Transitions to Systemic Planet-Centric Design

30

**There's No Plan(et) B.
Sustainable Transitions to
Systemic Planet-Centric Design**
Erik Ciravegna, Clara Giardina, Davide Pletto

40

**Beyond Collaboration: A Network Analysis
of Local Stances and Global Frameworks
in the Collective Design of the City**
Francesca Sabatini, Martina Massari,
Saveria Olga Murielle Boulanger

50

**Alter_Azioni: Designing
between Biological and Artifactual.
Scenarios for a Short-Term Future**
Pietro Costa, Raffaella Fagnoni

62

**(Systemic) Design for Sustainable
Territorial Transition: A Literature
Review of State of the Art**
Asja Aulisio, Silvia Barbero, Amina Pereno

72

**Dasein ist Design:
An Ontological Discussion of Design
in the Ecological Crisis Time**
Sabrina Lucibello, Carmen Rotondi

80

**The More-Than-Human Trend
in Design Research: A Literature Review**
Annapaola Vacanti, Francesco Burlando,
Isabella Nevoso, Massimo Menichinelli

90

**Being and Nature.
The Aesthetic Ecocentrism**
Adriano Pinho, Francisco Providência

102

**Forward to the Primitive.
New Sustainable Design Processes
Characterized by Primitive Aesthetic**
Jurji Fileri, Elisabetta Benelli

110

How Long Does It Take For a Paradigm Shift. A Design-based Critical Essay on Materials and Fabrication Processes
Guilherme Giantini, Lígia Lopes

118

Sustainability Needs Service Efficacy
Chiara Olivastri, Giovanna Tagliasco

126

Systemic Design Applied to Medtech. Guidelines for Corporate Training on Sustainable Healthcare
Enrica Ferrero, Giulia Ferrero

138

Reducing Waste in Healthcare: A Systemic Design Approach for Sustainable Disposables Manufacturers
Gabriele Maria Cito, Angela Giambattista

150

A Framework to Design Appliances for the Circular Economy Scenario
Chiara Battistoni

162

Digital Fashion Technologies & Practices: Design Driven Sustainable Transition in Fashion Industry
Ludovica Rosato, Alberto Calleo

170

Material Resources as a Contextual Complex System
Michele De Chirico

180

Diffuse Micro-Factory: Circular Distributed Production System for Microbial Nanocellulose
Lorena Trebbi

190

From Sea to Fashion. Seaweeds as Material for a Sustainable Transition
Paolo Franzo, Clizia Moradei

198

The Sound of Sustainability. Biomaterials and New Sensory Frontiers
Giovanni Inglese, Sabrina Lucibello, Carmen Rotondi

208

Unpacking Ceramic History in Asia and Europe: Contribution to New Reusable Packaging Design
Raquel Gomes, Cláudia Albino

Track 2

Intersectional Design for an Accessible and Empowering World

220

Intersectional Design for an Accessible and Empowering World: Views from the 8th Forum of Design as a Process
Valentina Gianfrate, Lígia Lopes, Margherita Ascari, Simona Colitti

226

Viva! Colinas. Service Design for Tourism and Reconciliation in Communities of Former Colombian Guerrilla
Beatriz Bonilla Berrocal

238

The Digital Archive as an Inclusive Tool for Knowledge Construction Through Design Practices
Alessandra Bosco, Fiorella Bulegato, Silvia Gasparotto

248

Intercultural Design Approach. Narrative Design for a Multicultural Society
Irene Caputo, Marco Bozzola, Claudia De Giorgi

258

**From Wayfinding to Placefinding.
Orientation and Alterity in Urban Spaces**
Daniela D'Avanzo, Salvatore Zingale

268

**A Meta-Analysis for an Interactive,
Intersectional and Inclusive
Exhibition Based on the SDGs**
Sergio Degiacomi, Francesca Zoccarato,
Simone De Pascalis, Pietro Crovari,
Fabio Catania

278

**From Empathy to Inclusive Design:
Multisensory Solutions for (Not Only)
Socially Sustainable Projects**
Federica Delprino

288

**Etnography in Sever Do Vouga:
Reality->Change First Step to Engage
a Creative and Rural Community**
Pedro Fragoso Lopes, Gonçalo Gomes

298

**The Implementation of U.D. in a Metal
Processing Plant of the Metropolitan
Zone of Guadalajara (MZG)**
Luis Erik Hernández Sánchez, Enrique
Herrera Lugo, Jaime Francisco Gómez
Gómez, Francisco Javier González Madariaga

312

**Towards Better Public Sector Innovation.
Co-designing Solutions to Improve
Inclusion and Integration**
Ilaria Mariani, Francesca Rizzo, Grazia
Concilio

322

**Creating Methodological
Design Processes for Empowering
Artisans of Cali, Colombia**
Edgar Andrés Martínez Muñoz,
Diana Marcela Giraldo Pinedo

332

**Empowering Through Design:
Regional Development Strategy
of Los Lagos as an Intersectional Case**
Daniel Moreno, Katherine Mollenhauer,
Arturo Orellana

344

**Inclusive Merchandising.
A Storyteller for an Accessible University**
Monica Oddone, Marco Bozzola,
Claudia De Giorgi

354

**Geopolitics of Fashion. Glocal Power
Evidence and Design Activism for Leading
Disrupting Textile Debris in Chile**
Bárbara Pino Ahumada

366

**Intersectional Design in Practice: A Critical
Perspective on Sustainability for All**
Alessandro Pollini, Pilar Orero,
Alessandro Caforio

374

**Empower to Care or Care to Empower?
The Theory Behind the Practice
That Transforms**
Marcia Santos da Silva, Gustavo Severo de
Borba

384

**Perspectives of Sound: Promoting
Social Inclusion Under the Principle
of "Access for All" in Museums**
Yi Zhang, Raffaella Trocchianesi

Track 2

Intersectional Design for an Accessible and Empowering World

Social positions and identities are multiple and seek to reveal the interconnected systems of subordination that together influence people's life chances. Extending beyond gender-specific and empowering categories of social identity (youth, old age, disabilities, non-heteronormative sexuality, despised ethnicity, income, religion and more), intersectionality focuses attention on a variety of multi-level interacting social locations, forces, narratives, norms, factors and power structures that shape and influence human life.

Intersectionality is increasingly suggested an innovative design framework with the potential to advance understanding of, and action, on inequalities, by highlighting processes of stigmatization, but mainly to encourage a critical reflection to move beyond singular categories, foregrounds issues of equity.

The track intends to collect design studies and practices which include the perspectives and worldviews of people who are typically marginalized or excluded, in which social justice and equity can be understood as a way of transforming how resources and relationships are produced and distributed to ensure a dignified and ecologically sustainable life for all. It also aims to outline in which way the dimensions of time and space, fluid, changeable and experienced through our interpretations, senses and feelings, influence different kinds of knowledge, through a deconstruction of the conventional social orders of meaning. Possible topics include concepts of accessibility, empowerment and people autonomy.

CHAIR

Lígia Lopes

University of Porto

CO-CHAIR

Valentina Gianfrate

Alma Mater Studiorum

— Università di Bologna

TRACK EDITORS

Margherita Ascari

Alma Mater Studiorum

— Università di Bologna

Simona Colitti

Alma Mater Studiorum

— Università di Bologna

Social justice

Empowerment

Diverse knowledge

Gendered innovation

People autonomy

220

Intersectional Design for an Accessible and Empowering World: Views from the 8th Forum of Design as a Process

Valentina Gianfrate, Lígia Lopes, Margherita Ascari, Simona Colitti

226

Viva! Colinas. Service Design for Tourism and Reconciliation in Communities of Former Colombian Guerrilla

Beatriz Bonilla Berrocal

238

The Digital Archive as an Inclusive Tool for Knowledge Construction Through Design Practices

Alessandra Bosco, Fiorella Bulegato, Silvia Gasparotto

248

Intercultural Design Approach. Narrative Design for a Multicultural Society

Irene Caputo, Marco Bozzola, Claudia De Giorgi

258

From Wayfinding to Placefinding. Orientation and Alterity in Urban Spaces

Daniela D'Avanzo, Salvatore Zingale

268

A Meta-Analysis for an Interactive, Intersectional and Inclusive Exhibition Based on the SDGs

Sergio Degiacomi, Francesca Zoccarato, Simone De Pascalis, Pietro Crovari, Fabio Catania

278

From Empathy to Inclusive Design: Multisensory Solutions for (Not Only) Socially Sustainable Projects

Federica Delprino

288

Etnography in Sever Do Vouga: Reality<->Change First Step to Engage a Creative and Rural Community

Pedro Fragoso Lopes, Gonçalo Gomes

298

The Implementation of U.D. in a Metal Processing Plant of the Metropolitan Zone of Guadalajara (MZG)

Luis Erik Hernández Sánchez, Enrique Herrera Lugo, Jaime Francisco Gómez Gómez, Francisco Javier González Madariaga

312

Towards Better Public Sector Innovation. Co-designing Solutions to Improve Inclusion and Integration

Ilaria Mariani, Francesca Rizzo, Grazia Concilio

322

Creating Methodological Design Processes for Empowering Artisans of Cali, Colombia

Edgar Andrés Martínez Muñoz, Diana Marcela Giraldo Pinedo

332

Empowering Through Design: Regional Development Strategy of Los Lagos as an Intersectional Case

Daniel Moreno, Katherine Mollenhauer, Arturo Orellana

344

Inclusive Merchandising. A Storyteller for an Accessible University

Monica Oddone, Marco Bozzola, Claudia De Giorgi

354

Geopolitics of Fashion. Glocal Power Evidence and Design Activism for Leading Disrupting Textile Debris in Chile

Bárbara Pino Ahumada

366

Intersectional Design in Practice: A Critical Perspective on Sustainability for All

Alessandro Pollini, Pilar Orero, Alessandro Caforio

374

Empower to Care or Care to Empower? The Theory Behind the Practice That Transforms

Marcia Santos da Silva, Gustavo Severo de Borba

384

Perspectives of Sound: Promoting Social Inclusion Under the Principle of "Access for All" in Museums

Yi Zhang, Raffaella Trocchianesi

Intercultural Design Approach. Narrative Design for a Multicultural Society

Irene Caputo

Politecnico di Torino

irene.caputo@polito.it

ORCID 0000-0002-8949-5171

Marco Bozzola

Politecnico di Torino

marco.bozzola@polito.it

ORCID 0000-0002-2119-3927

Claudia De Giorgi

Politecnico di Torino

claudia.degiorgi@polito.it

ORCID 0000-0002-9667-5330

Abstract

As part of an increasingly multicultural society issues concerning integration and relationships between ethnic groups and different communities are receiving a great deal of attention in the social and scientific debate.

The skills of design can be made available as a tool to systematise this multiplicity, promoting an innovation respectful of diversity, comparison, and interaction between people and cultures.

This article concerns practical product design applications, that explore the relationship between multi-cultural society and cultural accessibility. Moreover, this contribution aims to reflect on which and how methodological strategies could be implemented within a design process that focuses on an intercultural approach.

A series of case studies of narrative artifacts capable of bringing different cultures together and making them recognizable to different users will be analysed with the lens proposed in the methodological overview.

Keywords

Multicultural society
Intercultural design
Culture-driven design
Narrative products
Cultural identity

Stretching into the Mediterranean Sea, as a bridge between Europe and Africa, Italy has always been a land of migration, due to its peculiar geographical position, resulting one of the major countries for individual registration of new asylum seekers in Europe and in the world (UNHCR, 2022).

Then, as part of an increasingly multicultural society with a wide variety of lifestyles and cultural backgrounds – where the intertwining of lives and stories shape the territory and its material culture – issues concerning integration and relationships between ethnic groups and different communities are the subject of much attention in social and scientific debate. Especially in a society with a high level of immigration as in Italy¹, cultural diversity leads to new perspectives and new directions in different cultural fields, such as education, political and research agendas, museums (Nemo, 2015), art and design discipline.

As a result, a proactive way of thinking is required to create communication channels able to give value to people's experiences in relation to the territories they inhabit and their personal cultural identity. Identities that reflect a multitude of collective experiences, memories, and references that evolve constantly (UNESCO, 2009).

From a designing point of view, the rapidity and inexorability of these social changes impose an adaptation of educational and design practices, in order to effectively adapt accessibility policies aimed at the inclusion (social, cultural and economic) of people with a migrant background within territorial contexts often characterised by cognitive, affective and relational dynamics extremely dissimilar to personal cultural identities. In this context, the discipline of design can find diverse fields of experimentation and challenge, aiming to contribute through an aware and culturally evolved action able to narrate diversities, preserve identities and transfer knowledge through the objects that surround us "as a means to establish meaningful and emotional interactions" (De Mendeiros, 2014, p. 16).

Indeed, intercultural factors become important issues for the design field in the global and local economy (Lin et al., 2007), especially in the development of new products and services and in the definition of widespread graphic interfaces.

The skills of design can be made available as a tool to systematise this multiplicity, promoting an innovation respectful of diversity, comparison, and interaction between people and cultures Fig. 1².

Regarding the many levels of action at which design operates, it is possible to consider a wide variety of design contexts, including products, services, and strategies - not always strictly separated - for which design assumes the role of a multidimensional operational tool (Dal Palù et al., 2018).

Many of the products we use in our daily lives allow us to perform functions and satisfy needs in a various way related to different places and cultures, but performing similar experiences. Artefacts made from a local or global availability of materials and manufacturing techniques that have specific variations in different contexts, handed down over time and generations. Products, materials, and techniques, starting therefore from a common matrix, find specific declinations and create different traditions and customs.

1

According to the Atlas of migration, a report edited by the European Union offices, Italy in the last decades experienced strong immigration flows, resulting in approximately 5 million foreigners living in the country (Tarchi et al., 2021).

2

Fig. 01 provides a graphic summary of several potential design initiatives for cultural accessibility that involve various intervention scales. Although it is by no means a complete list, it illustrates the variety of tasks that a designer might investigate and include in its approach.

The meanings that products assume need to be read in the process of dialogue between culture, design, and users (Moalosi & Popovic, 2006). This might enable designers to develop products that fit the cultural context of their users and translate and simplify the multiplicity of narratives and stories present in specific multicultural scenarios.

And in this perspective, it can be observed how a kind of new designer figure is emerging: an *intercultural-mediator designer*, able, by collaborating with figures from the social sciences, to navigate cultural complexities and create spaces of design interaction between one's own culture and foreign cultures, working on their mutual influence in the form of acquisition, fusion and overlapping³ (Nemo, 2016).

In an interesting analysis developed by Jan Carel Diehl in 2006, the influence of culture on product design comes to the fore in many aspects, which can be categorised into two main groups: practical and theoretical Fig. 2. In his study, he distinguishes seven areas regarding cultural diversity that can influence the development process of product design. The practical group is made up of elements related to the design process (methodology, procedures), design education (transfer of design knowledge among other cultures), strategic (business strategy and product marketing in other cultures), and designers (cultural influences on the designer himself). It is substantially based on the physical interaction between products and contexts (De Mendeiros, 2014). The theoretical group is made up of the elements of aesthetics (preference for design in different cultures), semantics (interpretation of design and function) and human-product interaction (the actual use of products in different cultures).

Methodology

Starting from the theoretical framework outlined by Diehl, the reflections explored in this contribution, which is part of an ongoing Ph.D. research project, concern practical product design applications, that explore the relationship between multicultural society and cultural accessibility, especially using an intercultural approach – a social transformative perspective that investigates the points of interaction between different cultures and tries to create new narratives around them. Moreover, we intend to propose a methodological strategy to be implemented within a design process that focuses on an intercultural approach⁴.

The development of this approach consists, given a design topic, in extracting distinctive *intercultural markers*⁵ from specific cultural contexts and then translating these characteristics into highly representative products or services (Lin et al., 2007). Starting from these reflections, we try to define a possible methodological process Fig. 3 that allows designers to develop effective intercultural projects.

Indeed, the designer within these processes assumes the role (direct or indirect) of a “pro-active mediator” of knowledge and experience: a facilitator capable, by collaborating with other disciplinary figures involved, of navigating cultural complexities and creating “safe spaces” (Bustamante Duarte et al., 2021) of interaction - participatory and iterative - during the entire design development cycle.

3

Boundaries between cultures are continuously being relativised and redrawn. According to the concept of interculturality, intercultural dialogue between two or more cultures in society is characterised by mutual understanding and respect, which results in mutual influence (Nemo, 2016).

4

In this contribution we try to stress the difference between cross-cultural and intercultural design. The term *cross-cultural* refers to “the communication process that is comparative in nature” (Ting-Toomey, 1999). This approach, more investigated also from a methodological point of view, underlines the differences between cultures adapting the design choices to these diverse features. The term *intercultural*, instead, refers to the interactive “communication process between members of different cultural communities” (Ting-Toomey, 1999). It focuses more on the reciprocal exchange of ideas and cultural norms. It is a more active and social transformative perspective that investigates the points of interaction between different cultures and creates a new design narrative around them.

5

The *intercultural markers* are elements that are most prevalent within a particular cultural group and are considered surprising and remarkable by another cultural group (Bruns et al., 2012). Such as aspects related to appearance, modes of interaction, associated values and meanings, rituality, material culture, gestures, functional and behavioural factors, etc.

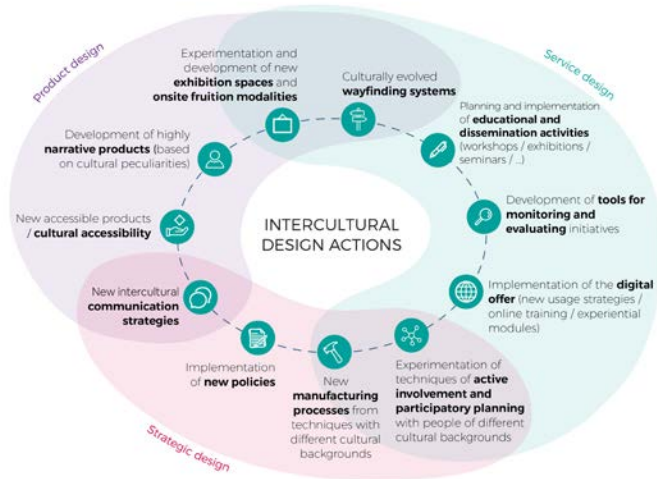


Fig. 1

Fig. 1 Possible intercultural design actions. Credits: authors.

Fig. 2 Mapping of areas on cultural diversity and design, 2006. Credits: Jan Carel Diehl.

Fig. 3 Methodological approach. Credits: authors.



Fig. 2

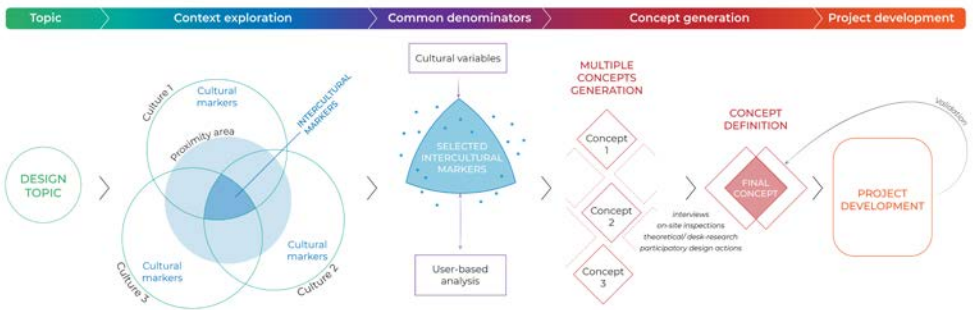


Fig. 3

And in the activation of these processes capable of generating projects that are aware of and truly based on intercultural dialogue - understood as a reciprocal exchange of skills and expectations - the technical actions of involvement and inclusive approach typical of Participatory Design (Binder et al., 2012), as well as the adoption of certain qualitative methods derived from social research, come to the aid of these processes⁶.

The current considerations, developed by combining a review of existing literature related to intercultural design, are prevalently applied to the graphic communication sector (for instance, Lipton, 2002; McMullen, 2016; Radtke, 2021). This essay intends to extend these reflections to the field of product design, thus creating a more inclusive approach that seeks to embrace different scales of design intervention.

Context exploration. First of all, a careful analysis of the contexts and the stories related to the identified topic needs to be implemented, also mapping and analysing international case studies, where necessary, alongside the territorial analysis. The creation of this basic framework is essential to understand the subjective interpretations and the social role of the possible cultural behaviours referred to some specific elements present in the environment and to adequately know some key principles shared by the cultures that cohabit a specific area in order not to fall into conceptual blunders. Regarding the overall scenario, it would be important to be able to create a cross-disciplinary research approach (Muratowsky, 2016), involving other skills alongside that of design, such as sociologists and anthropologists, in order to be able to define a coherent and complete requirement system.

Common denominators. The second step consists in the identification of a common denominator system, which is represented both by the cultural markers (tangible, intangible or behavioural) shared by two or more cultures analysed – the aforementioned *intercultural* markers – but also by all those which, although similar in certain respects, take on nuances of meaning depending on the culture of reference (elements that we could place within an “area of proximity”). Based on these cultural features, in the construction of this scenario should be considered the overall environment such as economic and social issues, as well as the technologies available.

The different meanings that the identified cultural markers assume in the context of different cultures and the related social implications were further investigated. In this analysis, the designer needs to pay close attention to social and cultural variables that can radically influence the outcomes of the project, such as differences in behaviour, outlook, and values between people from different societies or cultural groups⁷.

So, based on the defined scenario and the relevant element extracted from the intersection and the connections between different cultural features, this step focuses also on a user-based analysis to explore the interaction between culture and technology, dialogue between users and designers, and understanding the user’s needs related to the cultural environment.

6

Such as, for instance, participant observation, discursive interviewing, and focus groups (Dovigo, 2005).

7

G. Hofstede (1984) proposed four dimensions on which the differences among national cultures can be understood: Individualism, Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance and Masculinity. Furthermore, E. Meyer (2014), analysing how culture influences international business collaborations, has identified eight independent dimensions through which cultural differences can be conceptualized: Communicating, Evaluating, Persuading, Leading, Deciding, Trusting, Disagreeing and Scheduling.

Concept generation. This stage consists of the development of different conceptual responses through the definition of possible solutions and approaches through theoretical research, interviews, on-site inspections (where needed), feedback, discussions, participatory design actions. These concepts arise from the various combinations of the different intercultural markers, as defined in the previous steps.

Project development. Once the most representative concept has been defined, the project development starts, so from the preliminary design to the execution phase. In this methodological step, the quality check of the project (validation process) is also initiated by comparing the performances offered with the requirement system.

This re-evaluation operation allows finally to define the more appropriated concept – or a combination of some of them – and to start the development phase of the design process. This requires an understanding of how other cultures interpret images, layouts, colours, symbols, forms, textures, patterns, and other symbolic elements (McMullen, 2016).

Discussion about Intercultural Experiments in product design

The material and immaterial culture of a specific community, however, although rooted, is not a static entity, whose symbolic systems are limited to crystallizing into timeless objects.

A world in motion, made up of human migrations and shifting, also brings with its repercussions on value systems, on daily dynamics, and also on the world of design.

Humans carry with them their intangible assets, their world-views and, in some cases, even some objects of daily or symbolic use. Italy, and more in general the Mediterranean basin, has always played a crucial role in this scenario, as a middle sea and a place of exchange and confrontation (Tosi et al., 2015).

In this section, we will discuss some case studies of intercultural projects to reflect on the strategies and approaches applied by designers, who internalize values and meanings of cultural contexts and try to redesign traditional objects from their point of view.

We decided to adopt a qualitative research framework, collecting data from various documentary sources (research articles, project reports, official designer websites, etc). It has been limited to a specific sector that seems to be almost “naturally” suited to intercultural experiments: the food topic.

The design *about* and *for* food should be expected to play a prominent role also in cultural and intercultural processes: food and eating are symbolical parts of a social system, they address rituals and belief systems (Bruns et al., 2021). They represent a valuable opportunity for the exchange of memories, knowledge, and stories, as well as for the development of intercultural skills. Through the analysis of cultural habits and consumption practices, it is possible to understand a series of meanings associated with the production of identities, the establishment, and maintenance of social relationships, as the cultural changes in society.

A series of case studies of narrative artifacts capable of bringing different cultures together and making them recognizable to different users were analysed with the lens proposed in the methodological overview, in order to reflect if this approach can be considered effective and scalable to different areas of intervention. They were collected and analysed and categorized according to four macro-categories corresponding to different scales of intervention (material hybridisation, production processes, gestures and rituals combination, merging of preparation methods) Fig. 4.

Some of these analysed case studies will be discussed below to evaluate their effectiveness and the type of design operation implemented Fig. 5.

The first project is *Mest*, a Turkish coffee service that sees an explicit conceptual material hybridisation between ceramic and copper, belonging to two different material cultures of coffee preparation - one more Middle Eastern/North African and one more European.

The *ibrik*, the chiselling of the cups (*zarf*), and all the accessories associated with the service and the typical preparation of Turkish coffee are usually produced in copper and brass, materials that are widely used due to the great experience of Anatolian artisans in the handcrafted production of tableware.

On the contrary, it is quite unusual in European countries to see these materials used in coffee preparation, where instead ceramics are widely used: a clear example is the coffee cup (*demitasse*), produced in this material almost throughout Europe.

Also from a value perspective, the project focuses on the common rituals associated with coffee consumption in Middle Eastern/North African and European countries, traditionally connected with meanings of sharing and hospitality (Oğut, 2009). Moreover, the material culture associated with coffee and the variety of experiences created around it establish strong and lasting bonds between users, both on a rational and emotional level (Chapman, 2005), generating a sense of belonging and continuity between the individual and the group, as well as between present and past (Ozge, 2012).

Another project is *Me - dinner set*, a versatile set of mobile kitchen equipment for food preparation and transportation during picnics, resulting from a collaborative exchange programme between international designers, the MTic-design⁸.

The concept is based on the identification of a common leisure activity (the picnic) between the Dutch and Colombian cultures.

Indeed in Colombia, the picnic is associated with a tradition, particularly prevalent in rural areas, called the "Pot Gathering" ("*Paseo del holla*"). This popular ritual encourages Colombian families to gather by the local river and share the traditional Colombian dish: *sancocho*, which is usually prepared on-site, as are many of the dishes consumed during this event.

Differently in the Netherlands, picnics, which are very popular as soon as summer arrives, are mainly practised inside city parks - often in conjunction with certain festivals: cooking with an open flame is not always allowed in these public places, except in special barbecue areas. The *Me* project brings together these different rituals and ways of preparing picnics - the Colombian way of bringing



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

Fig. 4
Collection and categorization of the various case studies analysed. Credits: authors.

Fig. 5
Selected case studies: Mest (Elsi Alovi, 2005), ME-dinner set (Emma van Eijkeren, Moak Studio, 2017), Grand Commis de Cuisine (Daniela Ciampoli, Marco Marseglia, 2018). Credits: authors.

food to cook and the Dutch way of bringing everything ready-made – and creates a set in which it is possible both to have a small grill in a small, controlled space, and to bring along food that has already been prepared beforehand.

Another case study is *Grand Commis de Cuisine*, a couscous-pot born as part of an Italy-Morocco cooperation project, aimed at enhancing the craftsmanship of the two countries (Ciampoli & Marseglia, 2018). Couscous is a particular dish, widely consumed in both cultures and with strong material and symbolic value of aggregation, sharing and a sense of community.

From the analysis of the traditional way of preparing Moroccan couscous, by steaming and not by direct absorption of water, a design phase began aimed at the formal and functional identification of an object suitable both for this preparation and for the most common ways of serving at the table. The couscous pot designed is composed of three elements: a basic pot in which to cook meat or fish and vegetables, a bowl in which to steam the couscous, perforated at the bottom to allow the steam to rise and flavour it, and a lid functioning as a serving dish.

The strength of this project, however, lies in the designers' attempt to create a blend of production processes and materials from the two countries. The production phase was entrusted to an Italian ceramics craftsman, Alfredo Quaranta, who, guided by Italian and Moroccan designers, experimented with a hybridisation of decorative and formal devices from the two cultures.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the extensive literature linked to culture-driven design and the examples reported here show how the realm of food represents one of those particularly effective areas for the construction of an intercultural narrative.

In general, however, following the analysis of the case studies, it emerges that product design experimentations within this theme are still in their nascent stage and that there is certainly still a long way to go to achieve design maturity.

The examples proposed present obvious limits in terms of the depth of the design action. The experiments are presented as more *cross-cultural* than *intercultural*: hybridisation occurs mainly through the “juxtaposition” of elements (material or process) from territories with different cultural backgrounds rather than proposing true and coherent design reworkings. They appear more as speculative design operations: with their intrinsic value in terms of critical analysis and initiation of research reflections, but which at the same time do not necessarily respond to real territorial and social needs.

This paper aims to provide a first methodological approach to be applied in the field of intercultural design, paving the way for reflections on the possible design actions on this peculiar topic: experimenting, for example, new ways of preparing food, new ritual, new participatory actions of culinary hybridisation, new strategies of cultural dissemination, new utensils, etc.

Irene Caputo

Systemic designer particularly keen on relations among cultures, and enhancement of territorial identities. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Architecture and Design of Politecnico di Torino, with a research project on the improvement of cultural heritage and cultural accessibility.

Marco Bozzola

Associate professor in design at Politecnico di Torino, where he teaches Concept Design and Design for Cultural Heritage at the bachelor degree in Design and Communication. His research field is design for crafts and territory, design for cultural heritage and packaging design.

Claudia De Giorgi

Full professor of Design at Politecnico di Torino. Her research field is sustainable innovation in products, processes and materials. Head of MATto, innovative materials archive open to SMEs, and of national and international research projects on this topic.

It is intended that the methodology proposed in this paper – which is under development with a view to being verified, tested and refined – also has an educational potential in the perspective of defining a new figure of *intercultural-mediator designer*.

Certainly, the practice of learning, improving, and applying this methodology also needs to evolve and develop in response to the changing of cultural and global trends. (Lee & Bain, 2016)

References

- Bruns, M., Tomico Plasencia, O., Kint, J. M. L. (2012). Applying intercultural markers obtained from cooking in the design process. In Zampollo F., Smith C. (Eds.). *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Designing Food and Designing for Food* (pp. 140-155).
- Chapman, J. (2005). *Emotionally Durable Design: Objects, Experiences and Empathy*. Routledge.
- De Mendeiros, W. G. (2014). Meaningful Interaction with Products. *Design Issues*, 30, (3), 16-28. https://doi.org/10.1162/DESI_a_00275
- Diehl, J. C. (2006). Globalization and cross-cultural product design. In *Proceedings DESIGN 2006, the 9th International Design Conference*, 503–509.
- Bustamante Duarte, A. M., Ataei, M., Degbello, A., Brendel, N., Kray, C. (2021). Safe spaces in participatory design with young forced migrants. *CoDesign*, 17, (2), 188 – 210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2019.1654523>.
- Dovigo, F. (edited by) (2005). *La qualità plurale. Sguardi transdisciplinari sulla ricerca qualitativa* [Plural quality. Transdisciplinary perspectives in qualitative research]. FrancoAngeli.
- Hofstede, G. (1984). *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values*. SAGE Publications.
- Lee, D. Y., Bain J. (2016). Developing a Cross-Cultural Design Methodology: A study of UK-South Korean Collaboration in Higher-Education Design. In *The global eLearning journal*, 5(2).
- Lin, R. Sun, M.-X.; Chang, Y.-P.; Chan, Y.-C.; Hsieh, Y.-C.; Huang, Y.-C. (2007). Designing "Culture" into Modern Product - A Case study of Cultural Product Design. In *Proceedings of the Usability and Internationalization HCI and Culture* (388-397).
- Lipton, R. (2002). *Designing Across Cultures: How to Create Effective Graphics for Diverse Ethnic Groups*. HOW Design Books.
- McMullen, M. (2016). Intercultural Design Competence: A Guide for Graphic Designers Working Across Cultural Boundaries. In *The International Journal of Visual Design*, 10(3), 19-30.
- Meyer, E. (2014). *The Culture map*. Hachette Book Group.
- Moalosi, R., Popovic, V. (2006). Culture-driven product innovation. In *Proceedings DESIGN 2006, the 9th International Design Conference* (573–578).
- Muratovsky, G. (2016). *Research for designers. A guide to methods and practice*. SAGE Publications.
- NEMO. (2016). *Museums, migration and cultural diversity: Recommendations for museum work*. Network of European Museum Organisations, Berlin.
- Oğut, Ş. T. (2009). Material Culture of Tea in Turkey: Transformations of Design through Tradition, Modernity and Identity. In *The Design Journal*, 12(3), 339-363.
- Ozge, M. C. (2012). Tradition and innovation: A study on reconfiguration of product language through innovative approaches. In L.-L. Chen, T. Djajadiningrat, L. Feijs, S. Fraser, S. Kyffin, & D. Steffen (Eds.), *Design and semantics of form and movement. DeSForM 2012: Meaning, Matter, Making* (150-159).
- Radtke, S. (2021). *Intercultural Design Basics*. BIS Publishers.
- Tarchi, D., Sermi, F., Kalantaryan, S., McMahon, S., Kaslama, P., Alvarez Alvarez, M., Belmonte, M. (2021). *Atlas of Migration – 2021*. Publications Office of the European Union.
- Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). *Communicating Across Cultures*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Tosi, F., Lotti, G., Follesa, S., Rinaldi, A. (Eds.). (2015). *Artigianato Design Innovazione. Le nuove prospettive del saper fare* [Craftsmanship Design Innovation. The new perspectives of savoir-faire]. DIDApress.
- UNESCO (2009). *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*. UNESCO Publishing.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2022). *Global trends. Forced displacement in 2021*. UNHCR Statistics and Demographics Section.

The 8th International Forum of Design as a Process, themed “Disrupting Geographies in the Design World” was held in Bologna from 20 to 22 June 2022. The event was organised by the Advanced Design Unit of the Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna, Department of Architecture, in collaboration with two partner universities: Tecnológico de Monterrey (TEC) and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

The Forum engaged speakers from the Global Design community, expanding the original vocation of the Latin Network for the Development of Design as a Process to include researchers and designers of the Mediterranean Area, Middle East, IOR (Indian Ocean Region), and Global South regions. The goal was to share new perspectives on imagining design futures in a responsible and just perspective, at the forefront of change, while building strategic partnerships and creating accessible knowledge.

Structured around three pillars — seminars, workshops, and exhibitions — the Forum hosted meetings, reflection opportunities, networking activities. It involved designers, scholars, young researchers, design entrepreneurs, in an experimental format.

Speakers’ contributions not only inspired the practices of the designers’ community, but also resonated with students and the broad audiences. The presentations explored intersections of materiality and culture, post-coloniality, decoloniality, gender studies, and other areas of human thought and action which seek to analyse, question and challenge the disruptive geographies in the world, today.

The papers submitted to the five tracks proposed are published in the Digital Special Issue 1 of *diid. disegno industriale – industrial design*, celebrating during those days its 20th anniversary and serving as the fourth partner of the event.

The Editors

Erik Ciravegna, Elena Formia, Valentina Gianfrate,
Andreas Sicklinger, Michele Zannoni

DSI No. 1 — 2023

Year XXI

ISSN 1594-8528

ISSN Online 2785-2245

ISBN Online 979-12-5477-329-1

**DIGITAL
SPECIAL
ISSUE**
1



Bologna
University Press