

Azimuts

Research Art Design

A unique publication in the design landscape, the magazine is both a forum for reflection, discussion, and criticism on contemporary design and art issues, as well as a testing ground for graphic and typographic experimentation and research.

Publication notice

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Graphisme(s): Transmitting gestures, tools, thoughts and practices today

azimuts
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Issue no. 59 of Azimuts, commissioned from the IRD (Images-Récits-Documents) laboratory, is about graphic design and, more specifically, the ways in which it is passed on or conveyed. The notion of transmission is at stake, in the present but also in time and space, undoubtedly because there is a journey to be made. The environments in which transmission takes place need to be questioned, as well as its verticality. Why not rehabilitate sharing and communication, and take into account the social environment of visual productions? Signs, text and image obviously play a part in shaping the modes of visibility or invisibility that graphic design goes through. By examining the technical, manual, mechanical and digital tools used in a system of inscription, as well as the learning processes involved in acquiring the graphic gesture, what possibly turns this act into a praxis may be grasped.

Graphic thinking may be at work in the practice of graphic design, perhaps because it is already informed in many individual and collective teaching and didactic situations. Ultimately, the agentivity of graphic design is first and foremost what operates on the identity of the writing subject.

Jean-Claude IRD-Paillasson

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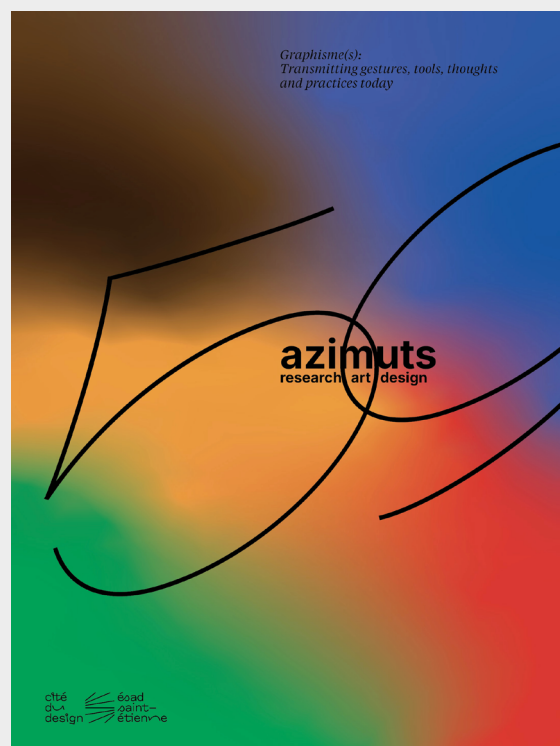
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la culture

assumptions

*
Jean-Claude
Paillasson
*

- 1 Graphic design is the territory of any inscription, or *graphein*.
- 2 By inscription, what is meant is anything taking place, in force, in counter-relief, in a material or a surface, material or immaterial.
- 3 The inscription is the result of a gesture, a passage, an action; it produces traces as well as signs.
- 4 The sign produced by the inscription may be intentional or unintentional.
- 5 The inscription is always a production of form, it is also a production of meaning; it may be detected, it may be read. When there is sense, there is a receiver of the sensitive.
- 5-1 Graphic design is undoubtedly present at the edge of the *cosmos*, even if it is not available to our perception. Even invisible, an inscription is still graphic design.
- 6 Graphic productions come from various types of movements. More or less elementary, more or less complex, more or less technical.
- 6-1 The inscriptions can be assembled – as in an arrangement – but they are inscriptions all the same.
- 7 Inscriptions are the consequences of gestures, tools, practices, thoughts.
- 7-1 There is nothing necessary for graphic design to happen, except that it is a consequence of a singular movement.
- 8 Inscriptions can be organised into systems of inscription. Each of these registration systems has its own strategies, lexicons, grammars, forms of agency, messages, modes of appearance.

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- 9 In human societies, graphic design can be used as a communication tool. It is both a necessity for the temporal and spatial cohesion of societies, and it is also an instrument for organising the world. This responsibility requires great vigilance regarding its evidence, its productions, and its modes of extension.
- 9-1 As a means of communication, graphic design conveys messages. As a medium, it will also be necessary to picture it as a message.
- 10 Before being an activity for experts, graphic design is everyone's business.
- 11 Graphic design is a mode of communication and transmission; it is logical to question both its modes of transmission and communication.
- 12 The multiplicity of coexisting graphic forms, engaging individual or collective, expressive, minor or hegemonic practices and uses, makes it possible to imagine that these multiple systems of inscription each have their own mode of existence, genealogy, processes of replication or transmission.
- 13 The transmission of graphic design (TGD) concerns both the learning of writing among the youngest, graphic practices that involve the body
- and space in school contexts, as well as the practical and conceptual teaching of graphics or graphic design within *creative* schools or any other educational institution operating in the fields of art and design, whether official or alternative.
- 13-1 Exercises, projects, manuals, treatises, courses, kits, workshops... are all links of knowledge, objects of propagation and sharing of various forms of acquisition locally distributed and often spread out.
- 14 The TGD is also carried out beyond schools, through the sharing of knowledge, in self-taught or vernacular forms, revitalised by digital technologies, tutorials, networks, platforms.

3

Jean-Claude Paillasson

- 14-1 It is even conceivable that, in the manner of Tarkovsky's bell founder *Andrei Rublev*, graphic design can be rediscovered outside of a tradition or a transmission, depending on what could then be identified as emergency graphic design.
- 15 If there was such a thing as emergency graphic design, then its context should be clarified.
- 16 Without making it a postulate, one hypothesis will circulate — the transmission of technical gestures, manual know-hows, manufacturing, and mastery of tools can prove to be inseparable from conveying graphic design.
- 16-1 The modes of transmission of graphic design in Kafka's *In the Penal Colony*, although they are radical, nonetheless illuminate the confines of the territories of inscriptions, as well as the diversities of message writers, with regard to all possible situations.
- 17 It will ultimately prove inevitable to draw up a genealogy of the modes of transmission, the gestures of transfer, the situations, in order to participate in the development of true didactics.
- 17-1 An anti-didactic approach may also be used.†

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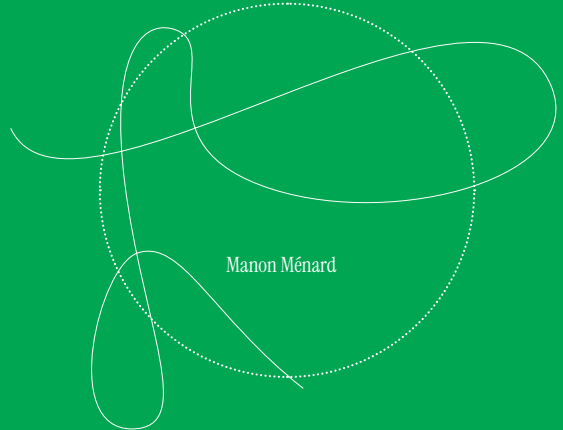
love from...

Sandrine Binoux & Fabrice Gibilaro



Technique: digital photography.
Instructions: stage a portrait of yourself using an accessory to disguise yourself.

The problematising and dialogical gesture: what graphic practices can be used to situate an issue, and oneself?



Manon Ménard

Introduction – tensions and complexity

The evolution of the profession of designer in the social, public, health, and other sectors questions the presence of designers within projects beyond the traditional fields of application, often prone to a binary, *a priori* simplistic reduction between market logics and democratic values (Pater, 2021). The

implication of design as a “restorative agent” (Cuzzolino, Quinz & Szanlecki, 2022, p. 169) within politically, culturally and socially complex situations is ambivalent, since it intervenes as both a component of the problem and the solution (Del Gaudio, 2022; Manzini & Tassinari, 2022). Specifically in the field of graphic design, Rick Poynor’s 1999 update of Ken Garland’s *First Things First* manifesto

(1964) highlighted the stakes of a profession in tension between its involvement in capitalist economic mechanics and the perspectives for a “sustainable” graphic practice (Beirut, 2007; Phillizot, 2014).

Confronted with these tensions during a doctoral research project concerning the issues of inclusion of autistic students at university, I took up graphic practice as a reflective and

Correspondence with the help of Graphic Design

Interview conducted by
Pauline Aignel & Gabriela Simon Flores
on 23/04/2024

Lucile Bataille
Sébastien Biniek

The concept of transmission is very widespread in today’s speeches and texts dealing with education and graphic design. Certainly, graphic design can be defined as a field of visual practices that brings together the skills which act on the conditions of transmission, reception, and appropriation of information and knowledge, from structuring, formatting, and visualisation.

Since we finished our studies, our work has been largely nourished by exchange, collaboration, and pedagogy. When we talk about our practice, seeking to explain it, to define it, we frequently summon the notion of transmission, by reflex. And yet, when we recently had the opportunity to write a text to outline our approach to education, we agreed with several authors that we needed to distance ourselves from this concept of transmission, or even oppose it, and favour the concept of communication.

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Visual Communication at Harvard

Charles Gautier

*

Nüshu is a syllabic writing system found in a small remote province in the southwest of China. Besides being syllabic in



Marie-Caroline Terenne

a context where ideograms were the mainstream, and having stood the test of time in a country where the unification of writing was the subject of several successive policies, the most notable characteristic of Nüshu is that it was only used by and for women. In a society where men were fully aware of the advantages of women's illiteracy, or did not see the point, a silent rebellion took place. As a local dialect writing system, Nüshu was often associated with embroidery.

The social life of text and image



Teaching the visual ecology of graphic design

Blücherstrasse Food is also for thought, especially when thoughts are overwhelmed by disproportionate images of food saturated with colour. Advertisers and restaurateurs figured that out.

Olivia is walking home in the city, after a day spent in the uncomfortable seats of room A23 at the Berlin Faculty of Arts, where she has been studying Graphic Design for three years now. The first days of September are still long, but her daily journey will soon be dimmed by the gathering darkness of late autumn afternoons. That won't stop her from indulging in her favorite activity: observing. The path she has been walking for the past three years still makes the same impression on her: her Graphic Design classes do not end when she leaves university, they continue in this urban environment where all kinds of loud posters,

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30 PC The creative process of graphic design before computers

Pauline Aignel

Note: Unfortunately, inclusive writing was not used in the first part of this text, as the graphic designers and printing press workers of the time were men.

WYSIWYG

Though it may sound like a magic formula, it is actually an acronym that stands for *what you see is what you get*. WYSIWYG, which appeared at the same time as the computer and desktop publishing software, implies the ability to manipulate the layout of a document from the program directly. This may seem trivial today, as computers now allow us to edit text and calculate or automate tasks, but it was not always the case. This article is an attempt to give an overview of the printing industry and the graphic designer profession before the great digital revolution.



Worker composing a line of type using a compositor. Excerpt from the documentary *Farewell: ETAOIN SHRDLU*, 1978, at 03:07. Source: printingfilms.com



Worker composing a line of type. Excerpt from the documentary *Hand Composition at R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co*, 1978, at 02:16. Source: printingfilms.com

WHOLE WEB CATALOG

An exploration of digital practices in graphic design

Elsa Aupetit
Benoît Montigné

One reference:
the *Whole Earth Catalog*

An emblematic publication of American countercultures, the *Whole Earth Catalog*, founded by Stewart Brand in the late 1960s, is an essential reference in web and internet culture. Its ambition to catalogue and share knowledge, via DIY thinking, echoes the educational forms often used in artistic or design studies, borrowing from alternative pedagogies.

The reference has been established, now its framework remains to be defined. *Earth* has become *Web*. The ambition is therefore no longer to take on the world, but to define a field of action. So, the subject is the web and its related practices? Almost. Here, the word Web is not used so much for the reality it covers, but rather to make a reference (in a brief, somewhat exaggerated, poetic manner above all) to all the interactive practices related to graphic design and their links. The reference is particularly played out in the desire to catalogue, document, and pool current, living and perennial, constantly evolving practices, and to encourage their development within a school, the National School of Decorative Arts in Paris, and its Graphic Design department.

Those practices are multiple. The disciplinary fields involved cover graphic design, interactive design, creative coding, new media,

(1) In the sense of using hypertext links to browse the Internet.

(2) In order not to digress too much, we will quote these two extracts from the collective work *Jean Widmer, une traversée*, summarising the pedagogical reform developed by Rudy Meyer in 1989 and echoing the project we are dealing with, and its objectives. The role of the school and the teaching staff is in fact to "Develop [the student's] individual capacities for 'reflection': these capacities concern intelligence in the sense of an ability to understand the relationships that exist between the elements of a situation, and to adapt to them, in order to achieve one's own ends." This approach is a creative activity which consists of understanding and inventing, in other words building structures, arranging reality in action or in thought, and not simply copying it." Some other relevant

WRITING FOR THE LETTER,
BETWEEN CALLIGRAPHY,
SPEECH THERAPY
AND GRAPHIC ATTENTION.

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Philippe Garsault

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My first name is made up of ten letters: 6 consonants and 4 vowels. Being dyslexic, I used to mix up the order of the letters, pronouncing my first name was painful in itself, so imagine writing it.

Around the age of six, I attended Chinese calligraphy classes. I enjoyed them, and it opened me up to another type of word construction: the writing chart, the order in which characters are drawn, the reading direction, and above all the unveiling of a concept through the arrangement of signs. All these particularities shaped my attraction to the Chinese language, for which I first changed schools and then cities to be able to continue studying it in class. What struck me was that writing with characters therefore amounted to tracing, to drawing symbolic thoughts (eye, tree, fire, etc.).

It was from their relationship in the space of the page that meaning was born – the word becomes an image, and vice versa: there you go, I loved writing. I just had to figure out how to write “properly”, so to speak.

During this same period and until middle school, I also began to follow speech therapy sessions, aimed at taming the spoken language through written exercises.

The speech therapist taught me to draw vowels in red and consonants in blue. To help me differentiate them, I wrote the syllables alternately on two levels, thus creating red and blue crenellations with large

exercise. visual test. project. case study.

Reflections on different courses and their impact on a singular practice of graphic design. Text written from conversations, interviews, subjects, and thirty-one red notebooks written between 2013 and 2024. Paris-Lyon-Brussels-Quito.

A. The modes and forms of production of graphic design have evolved over time. No doubt, it is fair to think that there has also been an evolution in reflecting upon how the discipline is taught. Training in graphic design thus varies from one country to another. Even within the same country, there is a vast array of options. In Ecuador, higher studies in graphic design are supervised by two types of institutions: universities, providing theoretical and practical education, and institutes, whose teaching leans towards technique. When I arrived in France, I had to unravel many abbreviations and acronyms:

Gabriela Simon Flores

对称 SYMMETRY

对称 SYMMETRY

The aesthetic of symmetry, deeply rooted in Chinese culture, finds its place in a multitude of creations, from the oldest architectures to traditional objects, such as porcelain, embroidery, cut paper, Chinese knots, kites, and even masks. Invisible but omnipresent, symmetry also guides the structure of writing, the balance of four-character idiomatic expressions, and even poetry. But it is not limited to the horizontal; it widens vertically, like the reflection of an object in water. This quest for symmetry harmonises with the philosophy of “yin and yang”, a symbol of balance, justice and harmony.

Jiajing Wang

Librairie Arc-en-Ciel

Aurélien Uberti

The “Librairie Arc-en-Ciel” project is an educational tool which consists of a set of stencils compiled in books/binders in order to generate hopscotch in public spaces, more particularly in playgrounds. In these hopscotches, the usual numbers have been replaced by letters, in order to allow children to learn words, and more particularly to identify the digraphs (pairs of letters forming a single sound), represented by the two adjacent boxes into which the child must jump simultaneously.

The presence of digraphs is known to slow down the process of learning to read (because it contradicts the alphabetical principle learned in kindergarten, which implies that each letter corresponds to a sound). However, digraphs are very present in English and especially French spelling (this is called orthographic depth). The project lists

the most used digraphs in French in alphabetical order, alongside single letters. On each page, there is a digraph, or two simple letters (a “normal” letter and its silent version signified in drawn lines) to be drawn separately or together, in the form of stencils which can be seen when unfolding the page.

The page works on a two-tier system, with bold illustrations that are attractive and stimulating for children so that they can make them their own by colouring them in pencil, while the more technical and finer part is left to the teachers with word ideas, diagrams, and references to the pages necessary to make the hopscotches. The number of illustrations per page is related to the number of ways to pronounce a letter.

The process involves learning through movement and play, which reinforces memorisation by being active.

PRÉ
lettres

a typographic system for the pedagogy of writing

Éloïsa Pérez

Typography
at the service of education

Typography is part of the material culture of writing. Originally describing a technique of mechanical printing using movable types, it now brings together a vast spectrum of practices that are deployed in the fields of printing and digital technology. The history of education bears witness to typographic systems

dedicated to the transmission of written language, focused on the composition of texts and the discovery of reading. Typographic systems also support the teaching of handwriting, as a model and a stabilised form. Naturally, the pedagogy of writing is a subject of exploration for literary specialists. In France, in the 1980s, the CERT drafted recommendations regarding writing and typography in nursery schools, specifying that "from the start, it is

BLURRY UBIQUITY, AVATAR, FIELD WORK, Graphic Design in DNMADe Graphisme AND DUAL PEDAGOGY

web
to

collective practices
and emancipation
in graphic design



[02]

Lucile Haute
Quentin Juhel

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Graphic design training in French schools and universities is in the grip of a dilemma — should pedagogy embrace professional expectations and transmit immediately valuable technical skills, or should it support ongoing changes, pay attention to minority practices, and anticipate their development?

Some regret that employment has become the only perspective of training, and that school time is less and less emancipated from social expectations (Huyghe, 2017; Haute, 2018). Others take these expectations into account while recalling that technical, applied know-hows are perishable, particularly when using digital tools. Following this perspective, the challenge of training is necessarily elsewhere than in technical mastery — what is at stake is to develop a reflexive relationship with tools which is, on the one hand, rooted in a cultural and social analysis, and on the other hand, oriented towards experimentation. Educational mock-ups reflect a negotiation between these two polarities. In the field of learning editorial work and in the tradition of the book, these issues crystallise around the practices of web to print

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