

insight<out

design studies research newsletter

The first issue of this newsletter recognised the importance of the dissemination of our research even within a small Department such as ours. The competing demands of teaching, administration and public service mean that research is frequently carried out at nights and weekends, and it is all too easy to consider its publication as conclusive. However, particularly in an emerging discipline such as Design, it is important to build as many communities of interest as possible.

2006 has been a productive year for research and coupled with the introduction of our new curriculum has been a challenging time. We are relieved to finally publish the second volume of Insight<out, the Design Studies research newsletter. After an ambitious proclamation of four issues per year – but only a single volume this year – we are committed to providing one comprehensive and beguiling issue per year in future.

Another stated aim of this newsletter was to create a history of our department's research. This prompted me to consider the Department's unique position in New Zealand as the only Design Studies Department and the only design programme located in a Science faculty. The history of both the Department and the term 'Design Studies' are revealing of major shifts in the field of design over the last 50 years and the wider cultural role it may play in the future.

Noel Waite, Editor

volume two issues one & two 2006

in this issue

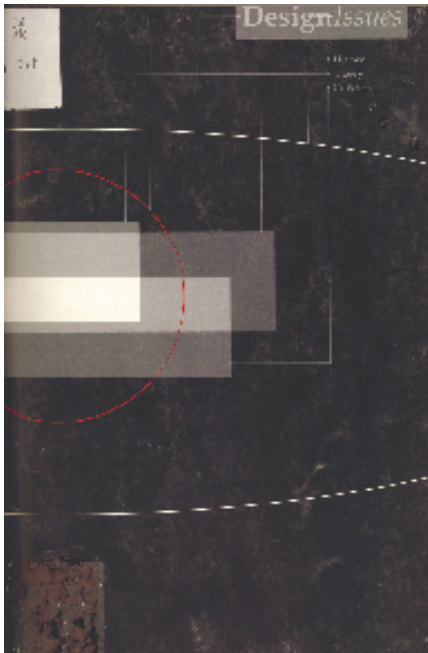
- **Noel Waite on Design Studies**
- **Interview with Richard Buchanan**
- **Distinguished guests**

a 30-minute read



The Evolution of Design Studies at Otago

Noel Waite



Design Issues 19.1
(Winter 2003)
Designer: Chris
Vermaas, 'Plantage'
The Netherlands.

The 2003 *Design Issues 19.1* cover (above) offers an effective piece of communication design that maps the relationship of history, theory and criticism to design practice and its place in the wider natural and artificial environment. In line with the brief of that particular journal, it identifies the centrality of history and theory to a critical understanding of design's role in society. If we were to imagine the model three-dimensionally, the planes might become volumes within the sphere of design, theory perhaps embedded in the centre, criticism jutting out either end providing a platform to reflect back on both the design process and outcome, and finally history, intertwined with theory, but extending above to provide the long view with its hindsight advantage. It is from this last vantage point that I wish to address the question of what we understand by the term Design Studies, and to provide some historical explanation of how it has evolved, both at Otago and internationally, in response to design developments in the 20th and 21st centuries.

A Daring Experiment at Otago

Design Studies at Otago University can be said to have arisen out of a tradition of subversion. The establishment of a special School of Home Science at Otago University on 1911 was described in the University's 1969 centennial history as 'a daring experiment' but in the *Otago University Review* of the day as 'this latest freak of theoretical explanation.'¹ Adapted from an

American model, the School sought to apply scientific knowledge to the domestic environment to improve society's health and wellbeing – which, according to Nobel Laureate Herbert Simon's 1969 definition, constitutes design. Otago was chosen because it was the first university in the British Empire to grant degrees to women and Home Science's status as a School, along with Medicine, Dentistry, Mines and Physical Education, acknowledged its applied or clinical nature. It also had an immersive character in that students stayed at a special Hall of Residence that enabled them to apply the theories offered by this innovative and integrative new programme.

Both the process and history and criticism of design were taught as aspects of the Household Arts. An extension or outreach programme funded by the Carnegie Foundation ensured these ideas made their way into the community. At the same time as architect Grete Schutte-Lihotsky unveiled her functional kitchen in Frankfurt, Home Science at Otago designed and built a model flat with demonstrations of labour-saving equipment for the 1925 New Zealand and South Seas International Exhibition.

However, it was not until 1946 that design was offered as a separate subject option, and two more years before a dedicated Senior Lecturer was appointed. The practice of design had a strong arts and craft focus, but this was to change in the 1960s as Home Science refined its pioneering interdisciplinary research approach to 'apply knowledge from sciences, technology and art to the benefit of everyday life.'² At the same time the New Zealand government had belatedly acknowledged the importance of design, passing the Industrial Design Act in 1966 and establishing the Design Mark accreditation scheme.

These internal and external developments provided a strong basis in the 1980s for a re-orientation towards a Design Studies programme modelled on Carnegie Mellon in the United States. This move was in line with the umbrella school's renaming as Consumer & Applied Science in 1988 which led feminist academic Jocelyn Harris to comment: 'The new name of school reflects the marvellous subversion by its staff and graduates of its original aims.'³ By this she meant that

a school intended to prepare women for home duties had become a broad ranging professional field dedicated to meeting the needs and desires of a constantly changing society. In 2001 Design Studies became a fully fledged department in the Division of Sciences.

Design Science to Design Studies

These New Zealand developments took place against a significant sea-change in design thinking and practice. The rise of design science⁴ in the 1960s raised the first serious intellectual challenge to the dominance of art as a central tenet of design education. In 1962, J.C. Jones and Peter Slann organised 'The Conference on Systematic and Intuitive Methods in Engineering, Industrial Design, Architecture and Communication.' Participants rejected individual craft models and sought a robust professional model that emphasised rigorous intellectual inquiry from collaborative cross-disciplinary teams to explore problems and seek improved solutions.

This culminated in Nobel Laureate Herbert Simon's landmark book *The Sciences of the Artificial* in 1969, where he called for 'subject matter that is intellectually tough, analytic, formalizable and teachable' to explore the artificial, or man-made environment. Simon distinguished between the natural sciences which 'are concerned with how things are' and design, which is 'concerned with how things ought to be.' He emphasised the importance of adequately framing and representing the problem through research and design thinking. His simple assertion that 'Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones'⁵ also indirectly challenged the notion of the avant-garde or heroic designer mystically outside of the culture for which he is designing.

Simon's positivistic science of design⁶ was itself challenged by Rittel & Webber's characterisation of design problems as 'wicked' in that they consist of a wide range of variables, human and material, that are not always amenable to scientific methods and techniques.⁷ Working from this premise, Donald Schön proposed in *The Reflective Practitioner* an exploratory process where design can be seen as a continuing and cumulative conversation with the materials of particular situations.⁸ Understood in this way design is a mode of inquiry and discovery that is well suited to 'wicked' problems.

Design Studies was initially proposed by Paul Rand during a visit to Carnegie Mellon in the 1970s as a series of courses to help students reflect on and under-

stand the principles of design. More recently, Richard Buchanan has argued that design is 'a new liberal art of technological culture,' providing an 'integrative discipline of understanding, communication and action'⁹ that bridges traditional disciplinary divisions in order to better shape the artificial world in which we live.

Emergent Design

This then goes some way to explaining Otago's unique position in New Zealand as, what I have called elsewhere, an emergent design school¹⁰ – that is the ethos of interdisciplinary learning and research differs from that of immersion-type art school programmes. This approach is also emergent in the sense that it takes account of the current state of the evolution of design from a craft to a profession to a discipline. Design Studies implies a critical and reflective approach to designing that does not simply respond to the needs of industry or the desires of the designer – nor does it ignore them – but seeks innovative ways to address and anticipate society's present and future needs and desires.

This requires an openness to join an ongoing conversation about what design is, what it can offer, and at what cost to society and the environment. This entails a willingness to move beyond simplistic binaries of theory and practice, art and science, commerce and culture and teaching and research in order to confront the complexity of designing for the human family in all its richness and diversity.

References

1. Morrell, W. P. *The University of Otago: A centennial history*. Dunedin: U of Otago P, 1969. 95-96.
2. Gregory, Elizabeth. *School of Home Science History 1911-1961*. Dunedin: School of Home Science, University of Otago, 1962.
3. *Bulletin of Home Science Alumnae* (1988) 53.
4. This term was first coined by Buckminster Fuller.
5. Cambridge, M.I.T. Press, 1996. 111-14.
6. See Nigel Cross's helpful distinctions in 'Designerly Ways of Knowing: Design Discipline Versus Design Science' *Design Issues* 17.3 (2001) 49-55.
7. Buchanan, Richard. 'Wicked Problems in Design Thinking' *Design Issues* 8.2. (1992) 14-19.
8. See Schön, Donald A., "Design as a Reflective Conversation with the Situation" in *The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Aldershot, Hants.: Arena, 1995. 76-104.
9. Buchanan, Richard. 'Wicked Problems in Design Thinking' *Design Issues* 8.2. (1992) 5-6.
10. See Waite, N. 'The Convivial Culture of Design Research' *IADe da Imagem* 3.2 (2005) 90-96.

interview

Richard Buchanan



Richard Buchanan is Professor and Director of Doctoral Studies at the School of Design at Carnegie Mellon University, editor of *Design Issues*, and President of the Design Research Society. After presenting a thought-provoking Keynote lecture entitled

'Design and the Common Wealth of Nations' at Otago University, Richard Buchanan kindly agreed to be confined to a crib [a southern New Zealand term for a holiday home] and interviewed by Noel Waite. In this extract from the interview, he discusses the role of history and criticism in design education, with particular reference to the programme at Carnegie Mellon.

NW - Can you tell me what does the Design Studies programme constitute and then what does that contribute?

RB - Well I'll tell you about the structure of the whole curriculum. Our beginning of course is the design studio. That is fundamental. That's where everything is integrated in practice and that's distributed over a 4-year period for the undergraduates, And it holds for graduate students as well but the fundamental idea is that all of the elements of practice come in there, everything from the planning of projects, individual and group, to all the studio practices. Beyond the studio we have what we call Ideas and Methods in Design. And that's where we pull out special features that are relevant to practice but are supporting of the studio. For instance, human and cultural factors would be studied there, and some issues of mechanics and electronics - how mechanical systems work and so forth. We do special topics. We have some areas of branding or logo development and so forth. Those are all supporting courses though. When you take a project in the studio you need supporting knowledge. Things like time, motion and animation for instance, would be covered in one of those Ideas and Methods courses - so wherever an idea or a method and a technique are relevant. The third part is Design Studies itself and Design Studies is about history, theory and criticism of design and in a sense for us it's the liberal education component seen from the point of view of a designer. And then the fourth part of our

curriculum is really courses taken outside the school of design and they're also liberal education or general education. We would like to see it that way but Design Studies for us is the bridge between the University's version of liberal education and the design version of liberal education. So we're practising a general education process with, as I said, history, theory and criticism, past, present and future, but a lot of reading, writing, some project work - a little bit, when it's relevant. I teach a course, for instance, a course in reason and the emotion in design and the students will do a substantial essay but the second project in the course is indeed a project where they have to explore it in concrete form. So it does have a studio element to it sometimes, but different from our fundamental design studio. So Design Studies is a special bridge for us.

...

we've always felt that the students are the ones that make the connections across the disciplines. Whether it's within design, communication design or industrial or interaction or their other subjects of study, it's the students that make the transitions among the disciplines. But, to be honest, one of the problems of education is the difficulties students have in connecting. You know we're buried in facts and data - that's the character of our time. We're given tonnes of data, gazillions of facts and the problems we face are how do we connect them and how do we find what is significant in that flood. So the problems are not data; in fact the problems are connections and principles, significance. And so, with that in mind, I'd say that'd we find that it's actually a part of the educational problem teaching students to make connections. So in the beginning they don't make connections. They have to learn how to make connections. The really bright ones will make those connections by themselves - it's in the nature of their minds but the disciplines of thinking, or the capacity, is cultivated. It's a developed capability, and that's what an art is: it's an acquired way of thinking and practising, and doing things. So our students gradually learn how to make the connections and make the connections across the course but it comes slowly. That's the educational challenge to make connections.

...

N - What is the role then of historical understanding and you talked last night about the four orders of design. That operates in a number of ways but one of the ways it operates is to explain a history of 20th-century design, not a progression but just to go beyond ...

RB - Not a history – there are many histories. There are many ways of telling the story – you know this very well – and I'd prefer that students understand that there are many ways to tell the story. So it's a creative enterprise.

N - I think the four orders works well in that sense it provides one interpretation but it also gets to the fundamentals of, well, the fundamental principles about the developing, changing nature of design.

RB - I have to stop you on this point. I don't think it provides an interpretation. I think it provides a theme, and a place. The interpretations are quite open with the four orders. You can tell the story of the four orders in many different ways. I'm very big on this difference between topics, categories, themes and thesis. A theme is a connective and art is a theme. There are formal themes in art and if you teach a student an art then they have the ability to make connections. But there are many kinds of connections we can make. So the four orders are places around which you might tell stories and I think there are quite different stories to be told and I'm anxious that there not be any orthodoxy of any particular account. I will give an account in one lecture and then I will tell an account in a different way in another lecture using the four orders again. They're the places to discover connections.

N - Well, you have talked about that in terms of the doctrine of placements and using that as a tool too. And I have found that a really useful one in terms of explaining to students to focus on problem framing first, to look at what the problem is and calculate ...

RB - Finding is the biggest challenge. I am so tired of design programmes that see the work of designers simply as problem solving, the bigger part is problem finding. To talk with Herb Simon, from our school too, and we're agreed on this, we both come from the University of Chicago and have that same Chicago education and both agree, very deeply, that problem finding is what it's about. We worry a lot that in our University that if we limit it to problem solving we come out with technically competent but not leaderly individuals.

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N - What do you see as a role for the understanding of history in terms of design practice? Because I've used a term called 'precedent' before, where you look at the past as precedents for future actions – not something you need to follow – but some designers will reject that as saying all design is innovation.

RB - Well, there are many ways of practising design and I don't have a harsh judgment. Whatever seems to work is fine, but I would say that history plays a valuable role if it's understood properly. John Dewey is the guide in this, as in so many things I think, for designers. Whether we know it or not Dewey's ideas play a deep role in design as it's unfolded in the 20th century. And Dewey said that history is always told from the standpoint of the present. And he got into a lot of trouble. There were a lot of debates around this but he'd give a very powerful argument that it's our current interests, the problems that strike us today, that lead us to go back and tell the story of the past, and so we're constantly retelling the story of the past from the standpoint of current problems. Now what this means to me is that we looked to the past to find how they solved problems – not to replicate their solutions but to see how they dealt with problems. And then we find our problems, that may be different, may be similar, who knows, but we learn from what has been done. Doesn't keep us from doing other things but it's valuable to see that. And frankly I think it's woven into human culture as a whole that we have this continuity with the past and the future.

N - It does help you understand your sense of place in the present then as well if you understand the history of that kind.

RB - Of course the danger is that history becomes a lead suit. It becomes your father's suit and you put on your father's suit and you can't do anything that your father wouldn't approve of and that's not what this is about. It's good to know where your father has been and what your father's done but you have to know how to be your own person.

...

History is a kind of interrogation, it's a way of interrogating the things we see around us and so much of what we see around us doesn't yield its understanding in our immediate context. Everything around us has some historical link, and so understanding that history is a way to interrogate our surroundings to understand where they've come from, what they mean and I think it frees us to create new meanings personally.

N - ... design is a future oriented activity... There's a sense with historians that they won't touch the last 20 years because it's too recent to have developed a significant amount of hindsight, but I think design historians haven't got that luxury of letting the last 15 years go because that brings us to the present day. And if you don't deal with that then you're not dealing with a significant movement.

RB - This comes back also to the difference between history and criticism. History, I think, does deal with the past, maybe from the standpoint of the present, but with the past, but criticism deals with the present. It deals with an assessment of the qualities of things as they are for us today, for critical interpretation of a building or a product around us. It's not necessarily design history but it's a critical read in the context of contemporary meaning and use and value. Theory is something different. I think theory is oriented towards the future, toward what could be, toward the possibilities. You would discover principles in order to understand the future. No doubt principles are key to understanding the past but history is a future enterprise too and we will tell histories in the future. Oh, this is very complicated stuff. But if you just scratch the surface of any topic you'll find philosophic problems just below the surface. People like to run away from those, don't want to deal with them or pretend they aren't there, but they're there. They're there and we make those decisions about philosophy knowingly or unknowingly, but we make them.

N - We'll just duck and sort of take it away from my particular interest in history... do you agree that design is an emerging discipline and then what does it mean for design to be a discipline?

RB - Those are two fundamental questions aren't they? ... In any case, yes, I think design is an emerging discipline or disciplines. There are emerging, well let's go back to ... Raymond Williams. He's done a wonderful book on culture and one of the sections deals with how Marxist theory can account for changes in cultural periods, and he developed the concept of dominant, emergent and recessive elements of culture. I found this to be a very powerful tool and good dialectical distinction but I'd say that there are recessive practices in design. Practices that are really outdated in many ways. They're comfortable, they're here with us and they have some value for us, but they really belong to times of the past. To devote too much time to them is perhaps a mistake. But there are dominant practices and we find the dominant practices of design varying from country to country,

but there are dominant practices. But I'm interested in the emergent practices, and there are two ways that Raymond Williams deals with this. He talks about novelty and separates that from emergent. Novelty will come and go; novelty is around us all the time; we're in a culture of the new, whatever's happening now, but true emergence – these are the things that are new, that will become dominant in their time and will move us forward in different ways. And I would think about design as a mixing of dominant, recessive and emergent practices. Emergent practices today ... well I've mentioned some organization design as an emergent. Service design - emergent. Interaction design, I would say, is still an emergent practice but it's very close to becoming mainstream dominant. Certainly it is in the computer area. There is no question that there is an orthodoxy that's settled in, but even within Interaction's uses of user research I would say that it is still an emergent practice. There are so many design schools that still don't understand the importance of user research. These are schools often that are dominated by their art origins, the art school origins, who think of design as a kind of self-expression. There are many bad consequences to follow, and some good, but mainly bad I think. So user research is an emergent practice in design, and an emergent practice in design education too – not a novelty – it is emergent ... I can look back a long way and see residual practices that survived today that were dominant in the past and helped to illuminate where design has come from. But I see new practices – for instance, the convergence of graphic/communication design, converging with industrial design and interaction design frankly. So these are things that to me give a very complicated set of threads of past, present and future.

20 August 2006, Karitane

distinguished guests

Information Design

David Skopec

Monday March 6, 2007

David Skopec is founder of the Berlin design studio Kognito, Head of Visual Communication at HGKZ, Zürich, and author of *Digital Layout for the Internet and other Media* (AVA Publishing, 2004).

He argued that information design's primary concern should be to create a better understanding between people, but this is complicated by the competing goals, behaviours, perceptions and experience of the actors involved. Achieving clarity of communication means designers must have regard to context, globalised visual languages that accommodate diversity, strategy and ethical responsibility.



Design as Brokering of Languages: The role of designers in the innovation and strategy of Italian design firms

Roberto Verganti

Friday, March 31, 2006

Roberto Verganti is Professor of Management of Innovation and co-Director of the Master in Strategic Design, Politecnico di Milano, Italy.

The perennial evangelist of radical design-driven innovation provided a dazzling array of insights into the success of Italian design and manufacturing. In elevating designs by Kartel and Artemide, Roberto questioned the use of market analysis and ethnographic research. He concluded that truly new design meanings "are not pulled by the market but pushed by a vision of a possible future."



Design and the Wealth of Nations

Richard Buchanan

Friday, August 18, 2006

Some of Richard Buchanan's many roles are described on page 4 as a prelude to an interview where he explains some of his ideas about design and its role in education and society. His Open Lecture confirmed his reputation as an insightful and provocative design theorist and philosopher.

Addressing himself to the philosophy of Adam Smith, Buchanan observed the recent recognition of design as a core intellectual property, not just of corporations but of nations. This view, he argued, is held in 3 spaces: in industry, in schools and in government. He then proceeded to question the extent to which design is held to be a core intellectual property by the New Zealand government.



abstracts

Mick Abbott

Fostering Heritage

Landscape Review 11.2. (2006) 1-4.

This article contests the World Conservation Union's emphasis on spatial typologies in defining heritage landscapes through an application of de Certeau's analysis of the city, and asks if heritage landscapes might be better conceptualised as a web of practices whose relative densities, proximity, and connective heterogeneity operate in a combination of temporal and spatial scales. It concludes by considering alternative strategies to enable practices that foster, rather than merely protect, heritage landscapes.

The Creative Practice of Heritage Landscapes: Designing futures for historic stonewalls and walking tracks.

Landscape Review 11.2. (2006) 31-41.

This article investigates planning-based approaches by the Dunedin City Council and The New Zealand Historic Places Trust to preserve historic stonewalls and walking tracks. The design theories of Jonas, Corner and Buchanan are applied to suggest forward-looking outcomes that emphasise performance over interpretation and encourage the creative participation of local communities.

Designing a Place in Wilderness for People.

XIV International Conference of Society for Human Ecology, 18-21 October 2006, Maine, USA.

This paper examines the opportunity for multiple forms, particular to specific locales, to be designed so visitors might engage in a range of cultural relationships with wilderness. This would place people and their technologies as integral components of natural landscapes, and towards a position in which the creative exchange between people and place is as considered, and appealing, as its scenic qualities.

Why the Conservation Estate Matters...

Landfall 212 (2006) 156-61.

This review of Geoff Park's *Theatre Country*, an exploration of the history of New Zealand's conservation estate, examines the tension between the rhetoric and practice of preservation and tourism. It considers how contemporary interpretative lenses, especially landscape, sustainability and design, could prompt innovative and forward-looking modes of understanding and participation in the conservation estate.

Beyond the Visitor in New Zealand's Public Conservation Estate.

ATLAS Asia-Pacific International Conference: Tourism After Oil, 3-5 December 2006, University of Otago.

In New Zealand all people in the public conservation estate

are defined as visitors. Recent theoretical work emphasises the dynamic characteristics of landscapes and how they are continuously formed and reformed by the perceptions and behaviours of people. This is explored through the case study of a design-led proposal to generate a landscape of participation at Sandfly Bay on the Otago Peninsula.

Mick Abbott, Mark Miller & Rachel Ruckstuhl-Mann **Connective Ecologies: a proposal for the URBAN VOIDS**

Philadelphia International Design Competition, USA.

<http://www.vanalen.org/urbanvoids/gallery/Gallery/main.swf>

This design proposal encourages urban regeneration through the interweaving of the urban and the biological in an open-ended network of leaf-forms and paths. It promotes the growth of communities and amenities by connecting neighbourhoods and the wider city and providing shared spaces. These rhizomatic elements are connected to each other at any point and time regardless of particularities and become sites of mutation, dynamism and community-led innovation.

Michael Findlay

So High You Can't Get Over it

'NZ Architecture in the 1930s', Centre for Building Performance Research, Victoria University, Wellington.

New Zealand architect Amyas Connell (1901-1980) was regarded as a leading figure in British modernism. His first commission, 'High and Over' (1929-31) for Bernard Ashmole occupies a place where the traditions of classicism and the emergent features of modernism intersect. This paper establishes a New Zealand context for 'High and Over' by comparison with other projects by 'colonial' architects in Britain.

Mark McGuire

New Zealand Communities Online

in *Living Together: Towards inclusive communities* Thompson-Fawcett, M., and Freeman, C. (eds). Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2006. 123-134.

Recent discussions of Internet-based "virtual communities" have focussed on their potential for supporting, or supplanting, geographically situated communities. This chapter traces the growth of New Zealand's Internet Service Providers, using Telecom's Xtra site as a case study to illustrate the contradictions that arise when a virtual community is contained within, and serves the objectives of, a privately owned company.

The Digital City: Public façade, private space

'The City: A Festival of Knowledge' 2006 Annual Meeting of the Society for Digital Humanities (SDH/SEMI), York University, Toronto.

During the digital "revolution," the conversion from public space to private domain, and the shift in emphasis from the public good to individual consumer choice, has attracted less attention than the shift from analogue to digital. This paper compares urban planning projects to Internet case studies to show how the displacement of public space and democratic process by private ownership and control is masked by misleading language, images, and metaphors.

Assemblers, Aggregators, and Accumulators: Extracting value from the podosphere

Re-Assemblage: 5th Annual Symposium, Cultural Transformations Research Network, University of Otago, 30 Nov-2 Dec 2006.

This paper explores Podcasting and the process of re-assemblage from the point of view of three agents. The assembler manipulates data and creates texts, the aggregator compiles lists and archives, and the accumulator profits from the trade in profiles and portfolios. Podcasting is both a space and a practice that illustrates the tension between public expression and private control through the manipulation, collection and circulation of both Podcasts and their producers.

Gavin O'Brien

The Hayes Permanent Wire Strainer: Its origins and evolution

in *Design and Evolution: Design History Society Conference* Eds. Timo de Rijk and J.W. Drukker, Delft 2006. CD. ISBN 978-90-5155-032-0

The Hayes Permanent Wire Strainer is an icon of the New Zealand rural landscape. Its invention has long been attributed to Otarehua farmer and millwright, Ernest Hayes. However, rather than a revolutionary invention of an isolated genius, the Hayes Permanent Wire Strainer presents a text book case of design as an evolutionary process.

Noel Waite

The Lay of the Case: Putting New Zealand communication design on the map

The National Grid 1 (2006) 40-7, 65.

This article discusses recent efforts to establish a global design history and examining recent New Zealand initiatives and the relevance of a strong bibliographic tradition. It presents a case for a functional history of communication design in New Zealand that establishes local precedents and encourages designers to knowingly develop or subvert them.

Denis Glover: Printer's devil or an affair with angels?

Script & Print: Bibliographic Society of Australia & NZ Bulletin (2005) 341-55, 367-8.

Denis Glover (1912-80) is acknowledged as one of New Zealand's leading poets and publishers, but this article argues

that he played a pivotal role at the intersection of text and image and the emergence of a graphic design profession in New Zealand. It discusses the influence of Eric Gill and his time with John Johnston at Oxford University Press, but focusses on his contribution to typography in New Zealand.

The Octopus and its Silent Teachers: A New Zealand response to the British book trade

in *Worlds of Print: Diversity in the book trade*. Eds John Hinks & Catherine Armstrong. New Castle, DEL: Oak Knoll & British Library, 2006. 13-30.

Founded in Christchurch in 1882, Whitcombe & Tombs became New Zealand's first truly national printer, publisher and bookseller. The company made its reputation supplying educational textbooks to meet the specific needs of the new colonists. This chapter examines the origins of the business, the role of its patriarch founder, George Whitcombe, and the company's relations with the British book trade.

Back to the Future: Typographical mutagenesis in New Zealand

in *Design and Evolution: DHS Conference* CD.

This paper examines the New Zealand typographic journal *Typo* (1887-97) and the series of articles 'Design and Typography'. *Typo* was central to the evolution of a print culture in New Zealand and the way in which various ideas about competition, labour relations and design mutated in response to the local context. *Typo* also undermined linear colonial models of design influence, with its references to, and synthesis of European, North & South American design.

Noel Waite & Tony Rasmussen

Houses outside the Museum: "Savage Crescent: Designing the Future of State Housing"

Te Ara: Journal of Museums Aotearoa (2006) 31.1 15-20.

This article describes the collaboration between Otago Design Studies and Te Manawa, Museum in Palmerston North on an exhibition to celebrate the centenary of State housing in New Zealand. It addresses the collaboration (which also included Design Studies Masters student Alice Lake-Hammond and a number of organisations) and exhibition in terms of curation, design and community engagement.

Sarah Wakes & Chris Brown

Numerical Modelling of a Hand in Water

ASME, Pressure Vessels and Piping Division, Conference, Vancouver, 23-27 July 2006.

The pressures of modern competition swimming have increased the desire for the use of technology and science in the pursuit of a speed advantage. Attention to technique and minimising drag have had a less prominent profile, partly because a swimming stroke is very complex action and determining precise angles and orientations is necessary before drag and lift calculations can be undertaken. This work explores the use of CFD for determining hydrodynamic forces on a hand during a swimming motion.

completed theses

Mark Göllner

'Addressing Complexity in Product Design: Guidelines for product designers'

PhD, Design Studies, 2005

Modern product design projects are often challenged by their interdisciplinary nature, increasing product complexity and time pressure. The challenge for product designers is to recall all relevant design aspects that are potentially applicable and important for the product to be designed at the right time. The negligence of certain design aspects may result in increased development costs and in inferior products. A recommended way to handle complexity in the design process is to work systematically, with checklists and guidelines offering a possibility to support product designers in this task. However, design guidelines that provide a comprehensive and generically content that support product designers holistically in their design projects are not readily available. Moreover, in-depth evaluations of the role, use, usefulness and usability of design guidelines are quite rare in the current literature.

The findings suggested that the use of guidelines as a tool in the design process is generally not very prevalent due to the designers' lack of knowledge about the benefits, location and accessibility of useful product design guidelines. Furthermore, it has been found that the designers used the generated guidelines sporadically and driven by their interest or demand in the design aspects applicable to their projects. In terms of the guidelines' usefulness it has been identified that the guidelines evaluated were generically applicable to different projects and provided a specific in-depth content. The guidelines have also been found to be quite useful as educational, planning, management and evaluation tool for novice and professional designers.

Megan Brassell-Jones

'Design for People and Planet: The experience of visual communication designers addressing social responsibility'

MCApSc, Design Studies, 2005

This thesis examines the experiences of visual communication designers in New Zealand and Australia to explore the principal modes of implementing social responsibility and identify key issues, benefits and limitations of such an ethical approach. While some designers address social and environmental responsibility through their work, there remains a lack of practical instruction on how to effectively implement such an approach to visual communication.

Six case studies of visual communication design companies showed the main focus of their ethical practice was on materials, clients, content, information accessibility, education and suppliers. By analysing their experience, the reality of addressing issues of ethical responsibility became apparent: implementation is constrained by external factors such as poor availability of materials, supplier indifference and insufficient access to information. Nevertheless, they demonstrated that visual communication designers can still serve social and environmental interests in small, incremental ways.

Dylan Martyn

'Rethinking Audio Products: Designing sound experiences'

MAppSc, Design for Technology, 2006

Audio product businesses have been typically focused on competition and market dominance led by technological advancements. This thesis concept-mapped audio products and music service industries in context with a design-research methodology that incorporated strategic and user-centred design processes. It then investigated technological, market and social cultural forces to identify markets trends, which informed ethnographic investigation to identify the needs of audio product users. These qualitative tools revealed unmet and unarticulated needs of audio product users, pointing to future opportunities for business innovation.

The findings suggested several directions for the future of audio products, music services and their respective users, including increased commodification and ubiquity, and a growth in social networks.

profiles

Ralf Hebecker

Lecturer, Interaction Design

Joined the Department July 2006

1. What is some good advice when things go pear-shaped?

Don't panic. Check if a good cup of tea is available. If not: panic.

2. Who in the design world has influenced your view on design (or some things about mentors etc.)?

I have always respected Oswald Wiener for attempting to include as sources for [either] one of his books/his book "die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman"[sic, small caps] pretty much everything he ever had read, saw and heard from Donald Duck to landscapes to shop fronts. I'd like to follow him there since I believe that our thinking and ideas are probably way more built on and influenced by these fragments than by the clearly defined works. Anyhow, my liner notes would include Battista Pininfarina, Adrian Frutiger, Walt Disney, Jan Tschichold, Neville Brody, Bill Atkinson, Gui Bonsiepe, Robyn Miller, Mies van der Rohe, J.M. William Turner, Goya, Picasso, Shigeru Miyamoto, Norman Cook, Michael Erlhoff, Uta Brandes, Liam Howlett, Saul Bass, Hans Gugelot, Dieter Rams, Otl Aicher, Thomas S. Bley, Heinz Bähr.

3. What is the bible in design for you?

Better no bibles, but evidence of what I like to refer to is covered by Marvin Gaye's album "Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)"; Jan Tschichold's "Erfreuliche Druck-sachen durch gute Typografie"; the 1973 Mercedes Benz 280 SL Pagoda and its User's Manual, and the movie "Magnolia" by P.T. Anderson.

4. Name three essential items you need on your desk at all times to function?

Paper. Pen. Tea.

5. Mac or PC?

Macintosh PC.

6. What is your research focus?

To avoid too much focus, because scientific research has maybe sometimes already too much of that. I am still and hopefully will ever be redefining my research focus, but I feel best right between interaction and information design, with some media theory and games design in the mix and other disciplines like music, theatre, computer sciences, film or psychology in-

volved. Alongside that I am working on an inquiry into whether personal computerisation is not, perhaps, the strangest, funniest and most counterproductive accident in the history of technology, especially for creative disciplines.

7. What is your research philosophy?

Keep your mind open and the internet browser closed.

8. What does design research mean to you?

The constant struggle not just to imitate other disciplines in their established research methods because I think design has the chance – and the responsibility – to deliver research that balances doing and reflecting. And it should never forget to address real and hopefully broader audiences.

9. How about words of wisdom or generic advice for other researchers in the department?

Hopefully somebody sets me out somewhere deep in Central Otago before I start to give generic advice...

10. Recommend an influential book you have read lately?

"The Inmates Are Running The Asylum" by Alan Cooper. An introduction into the oppositional motives of software engineers versus designers.

11. Are there any myths about research you wish to dispel?

Research writing doesn't have to be a pain to read, poorly typographed and designed and ridiculously complicated. Footnotes are no indicator for research quality. A larger audience is probably good, not bad.

12. Morning or evening person?

Preferably evening to morning.

13. What brain/energy food works for you?

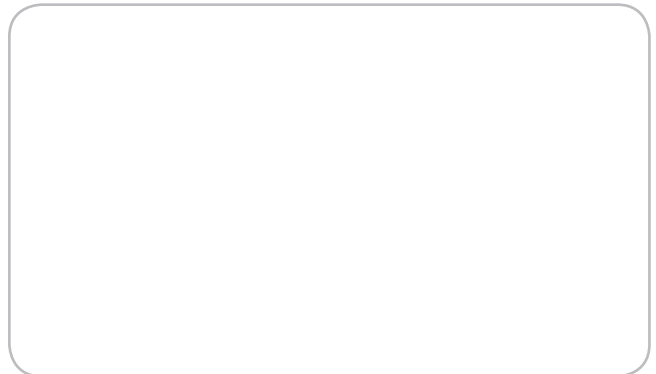
Same as for Edgar from "Men In Black": sugar... - more sugar!

14. What's the best start to a day of research?

"Keepin' The Faith" by De La Soul.

insight<out

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in this issue

- **Noel Waite on Design Studies**
- **Interview with Richard Buchanan**
- **Distinguished guests**

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Dunedin International Airport (courtesy Callum Floyd, franchise consultant).

