

托尼诺·帕里斯 著

林晶晶 译

设计

文本与语境



华东师范大学出版社

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ISBN 978-7-5675-8510-2



定价：58.00元

Texts and contexts

Naming design

Articulations > [...] We speak of design when we are referring to specific productive sectors, product design, fashion design, food design, transportation design, lighting design, but also architectural design, urban design [...] We speak of design when we are referring to specific activities within productive processes, interactive design, communication design, eco-design, retail design, brand design [...] And then we come to speak of design whenever there's any form of designing, even in the most disparate fields: sound design, floral design, wedding design [...] In so varied a scenario, one more complicated than complex, what exactly is design, then? And what is its role?

And there it is: whenever we wish to open a reflection on design, we inevitably run into a dual question. The first one, which is not new, is on the most consistent definition of the rules within its action; the second, a more contemporary one (and for this reason perhaps more substantial), of comprehending its external relationships with the cultural, social, and productive system. The first of the two questions — which we may summarize as “What is design?” — has been intrinsic to this discipline since its birth: one need only consider the dichotomy opened by the *Arts & Crafts* movement, or the dissemination work by *Deutscher Werkbund*, or the foundational commitment to the formation of *Bauhaus*, until arriving at the debate triggered in the second half of the twentieth century that attempts to outline the cultural role that Design, through the designing of articles of use, exercises in building social identity. We do not always recall that precisely in Italy, this debate had its starting point and also its most sound points of synthesis.

An initial definition (dating specifically to 1958) of design was offered by Gillo Dorfles, when he wrote that industrial design (and not design!) is (or, rather, was) “that particular category of design [...] of the objects to be mass-produced using industrialized methods and systems, where the technical side [...] is combined, ed.] at the outset with an aesthetic element.” But the “industrialized” nature of the method as described by Dorfles appealed exclusively to the physical aspects of the object, excluding a priori an additional nature of industrial design which, in another historic definition, this time by Enzo Frateili, was identified as the “theme resulting from the confluence of different disciplines, [...] capable, ed.] of summarizing in itself the complete production-distribution-consumption cycle.”

Therefore, to be able to consider an object the result of the design activity, according to Enzo Frateili it had to include two specific characteristics: seriality, due to the industrial and engineering-based nature of design, and an aesthetic quotient, due to its creative and socio-cultural nature. The definition most consistent with stressing this confluence remains that formulated some years earlier by Tomàs Maldonado, according to which industrial design (and again, not just design) consisted of “coordinating, integrating, and articulating all those factors that, in one way or another, take part in the process constituting the form of the product. And more precisely [...] Maldonado wrote, ed.] , allusion was made as much to the many factors related to the use, exploitation, and the individual or social consumption of the product (functional, symbolic, or cultural factors) as to those related to its production (technical/economic, technical/construction, technical/systemic, technical/productive,

technical/distributive factors); b) it recombines them in a new form, and c) transfers them again to the outside, in a virtually continuous cycle (if we non do not limit ourselves to considering the action of a single designer); it appears clear, then, that the new information technologies, in their deconstruction of the consequential processes of acquiring and transferring knowledge, modify the society-design-business-society cycle, making it substantially horizontal. We are referring in particular to the open-source phenomenon which, having begun in the IT field, is articulated today in many other cultural and productive settings [...] .

Loredana Di Lucchio, Design on-demand. Evoluzioni possibili tra design, produzione e consumo, in: "Lectures 2," Rdesignpress, 2014

Artefacts > [...] In *Artefatti*, Ezio Manzini writes: "the object has always been marked by a dual nature: that of object/prosthesis, which is to say an instrument that amplifies our biological possibilities, and that of the object/sign, a support signifying possible meanings, an integral part of a broader and more complex language of things [...] Today, this binary scheme is not enough; [we are witnessing, ed.] the appearance of a new family of objects capable of quickly performing complex functions [...] as multiplier of cerebral and sensorial activities, [thus defining, ed.] another possible nature of the object [...] ; it was to be the 1990s that consecrated the patinated design of cult objects, of the star system of great designers and of the culture of brand identity." Here, then, is the twenty-first century, opening with an exponential increase in the variety of available products in which, however, the differences appear, on the whole, increasingly irrelevant. It is a multiplication of new elements that do not represent moments of substantial change with respect to their typological precedent, but only a constant mutation that inevitably becomes habit. This phenomenon results in a trivialization of differences, in an instrumental use of novelty without any actual innovative value, in a uniformization of functions and languages. The artificial environment we live in becomes fluid, increasingly fed by the constant transformation of objects that appear newer and newer, while the environment, on the whole, undergoes no change that may be seen as evolution.

It was in those years that Donald Norman, one of the most influential cognitive scientists in recent times, when reflecting on the role of design, stated, in his *The Design of Everyday Things*, that design does nothing more than deal with forms at times so superfluous as to become useless.

But while design continues in this sort of drift, in other fields of knowledge (and of doing), we realize that changes are bringing about a new configuration, in which it is no longer the physical resources that determine the wealth of a social, cultural, and economic system, but the intangible ones: the skills, competence, and above all knowledge of individual persons, of groups, and of the system itself.

The era of the "knowledge economy" is theorized, and the new capital in which to invest is intellectual and reputational capital-that is those kinds of capital that transform knowledge itself from a "given factor" to a "factor to be built." In the form of artefacts, services, and media,

knowledge is contextualized, passing from the places of its production to those of its consumption, and those professions capable of generating and regenerating new knowledge become determinant. This condition defines a landscape, in which there is a proliferation of organizational models (be they businesses, institutions, or social groups) that are no longer univocal, and can be neither repeated nor standardized any longer; they are, rather, changeable models that respond quickly to stimuli (social, cultural, and political), and are thus characterized by high flexibility and adaptability. The clearest consequence of the constant changeability of these organizational models is that the figures that act within them must be just as varied, changeable, and adaptable [...] .

Loredana Di Lucchio, Design on-demand. Evoluzioni possibili tra design, produzione e consumo, in: "Lectures 2," Rdesignpress, 2014

The biography of things > [...] Every object, which can quickly disappear or survive for a long time, has its own life cycle; it has what has been called the *biography of things*.

In the area of archaeology and from the standpoint of philosophy, biology is a recurring metaphor applied to the life of objects. From this perspective, we could study artefacts by following the path laid out between the two extremes: from our initial attraction or resistance to decaying interest. Often, once form is alienated due to the speed of consumption, things disappear; they become useless anti-goods, aged, unusual, and are then reborn after being rediscovered, and their history is questioned. A large quantity of things is left in wills, just as much is broken, thrown into dumps, left in basements, at junk shops, or with antique dealers. The causes, not always decipherable, that lead objects to fall apart are usually connected to the decline of their function of use; " [...] for things that survive and are adopted, there is a sort of metempsychosis corresponding to one or more life cycles." Essentially, things travel, adapt to environments and, if they survive, transmit to us signals of the past that can inform us of their multiple lives [...] The testimonies of the experience of some artefacts described in the text were introduced over time, superimposed upon the original structures: they are historically positioned and contribute towards defining the style of one or more periods, through the traits that mark them [...] Alongside the great stories of important objects, there are the stories of the modest, anonymous objects usually not taken into great consideration [...] The little things that inhabit the world of household practices — irons, brooms, scissors, soaps [...] — were recently studied by Francesca Rigotti and placed in history as real subjects for the purpose of valuing them with respect to the repetition of daily actions. Thus, the minimum systems, if freed of the wear and tear of use, become sources of storytelling: the journeys taken by the pages of a newspaper — from when they are printed until they are used to light an oven or fireplace — or the path that food takes, and all the meanings hidden in the many daily artefacts that go beyond identifying the thing with its mere support. Since time began, it has been commonly held that artefacts are bearers of symbolic nuance, the result of metaphorical projects not ascribable to technical aspects. In this sense, the objects were considered as "active presences" because they were "segments of a human universe" consisting of a complex of hard-to-qualify relationships. According

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

设计: 文本与语境: 汉英对照 / (意) 托尼诺·帕里斯著; 林晶晶译. —上海: 华东师范大学出版社, 2018

ISBN 978-7-5675-8510-2

I. ①设… II. ①托… ②林… III. ①设计学—汉、英 IV. ①TB21

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字 (2018) 第255583号

设计——文本与语境

著 者 托尼诺·帕里斯
译 者 林晶晶
策划编辑 阮光页
责任编辑 朱妙津 谢 莹
审读编辑 李贵莲
责任校对 邱红穗 王丽平
装帧设计 陈文皓

出版发行 华东师范大学出版社
社 址 上海市中山北路3663号 邮编 200062
网 址 www.ecnupress.com.cn
电 话 021-60821666 行政传真 021-62572105
客服电话 021-62865537 门市 (邮购) 电话 021-62869887
地 址 上海市中山北路3663号华东师范大学校内先锋路口
网 店 <http://hdsdcbs.tmall.com>

印 刷 者 上海盛通时代印刷有限公司
开 本 787 × 1092 16开
印 张 16
字 数 320千字
版 次 2018年11月第1版
印 次 2018年11月第1次
书 号 ISBN 978-7-5675-8510-2/J · 375
定 价 58.00元