

Seminar by Prof. Matylda Krzykowski
Initiated with Prof. Dr. Annika Frye

Participating students:

Jakob Brand, Katharina Graff, Franziska Schneider, Benjamin Unterluggauer, Alex Niggemeyer, Leon Clausen, Sebastian Kommer, Henrieke Neumeyer, Hansol Kim

Introduction

A Contemporary Understanding of Design

The concept of the Werkbundkiste (Werkbund crate) was developed in the 1950s by the Werkbund (German Association of Craftsmen). The Werkbund was founded in 1907 as an association of artists, architects and entrepreneurs, at the suggestion of Hermann Muthesius et al., the eponym of our university, which was also founded in 1907.

The various Werkbundkisten contained mass-produced household goods; functional everyday objects such as tableware or kitchen appliances. About 80 of these boxes were distributed to schools as visual aids in order to anchor the utopian idea of the democratic *Gute Form* among future consumers in the period of upheaval that the economic miracle during the reconstruction of Germany constituted.

It is hard to imagine today that people believed at that time that they could convey a sustainable and democratic concept of design on the basis of a box full of household objects alone. For today the process draws more attention than the product in design. So what would be the current format of a Werkbundkiste?

'Muthesius Parallax' shows processes, methods, tools and attitudes instead of finished products. The spatial interface is a approach to mediating design education. This form of approach to process-based design aims to convey to visitors a conscious—today one would say contemporary—understanding of design.

In the course of the project, Prof. Matylda Krzykowski and Prof. Dr. Annika Frye found that there was no Wikipedia entry for the Werkbundkiste. However, there were entries on *Gute Form* and the *Werkbund*. On June 22, 2018 a page on the Werkbundkiste was made: <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werkbundkiste> (English version WIP)

#muthesiusparallax #spatialinterface #designhistory #werkbundkiste

Kimi Hansol

Uniforming Appearance

Workwear for Designers

Why are there work clothes for many practical occupations, but not for designers? Putting on a uniform means switching into work mode. Taking it off means ceasing work. A uniform could help to achieve a work-life balance. Even while studying design, the line between work and leisure is blurred. Based on the discourse around work-life-blending in the creative disciplines, Hansol Kim proposes the use of work uniforms.

The point of departure for this idea was his Erasmus semester at the Umeå Institute of Design. There, students wore a work coat. His design combines the cultural background of his native Korea with his experience in Sweden. He used a traditional Korean garment worn in everyday life, a *Hanbok*, as a model. The work coat comes in one size and is easy to wear. Since one often works in the workshop or studio as well as at the computer at a design school, the garment was supposed to be practical and provide many storage possibilities.

- Materials: 2 work coats, table, chair and personal belongings

Katharina Graff, Jakob Brand

I See Something You Don't See

Augmented reality station showing virtual models

What does the world look like from the perspective of the things we are looking at? 'I See Something You Don't See' is an inversion of our viewpoint. Augmented reality technology is used to digitally expand our perception. A surface printed with a special pattern—in this case a column in the glass foyer—serves as a trigger for the app on the

tablet. The pattern develops from a chaos of geometric shapes that dissolves towards the bottom, so that individual objects within the pattern become perceptible. The CAD models, virtually located all around the room, can only be discovered by the user through using the tablet, so that virtual and analogue reality overlap.

The graphic design is based on the Bauhaus *Formenlehre* (1922), which deals with the three basic geometrical forms and addresses spatiality. Thus the installation contextualises the Bauhaus' *Formenlehre* and its educational approach in relation to the present.

- Materials: paper printed with a special trigger pattern, tablet, AR technology, various 3D models.

Franziska Schneider, Alex Niggemeyer

Desert Desktop

Station for the interaction of analogue and digital material and reinterpretation of the classic computer desktop

In ancient Greece sand tables were used to impart knowledge. The so-called 'Abax', a table covered with sand, was used to learn geometry, writing and arithmetic. The 'Desert Desktop' is a translation of this ancient repository for knowledge into a contemporary context and at the same time a critique of the idea of the interface as a flat surface. As we interact more and more with digital surfaces, the haptic qualities of concrete materials take a back seat. And yet the design of digital devices as flat glass panels is by no means an irrefutable fact. The 'Desert Desktop' contrasts the paradigm of the flat glass panel with a computer desktop with folders, files and programs with which one can interact in three-dimensional space. By digging in the sand or shaping hills, one can open files, view folders and play Minesweeper, a game known from old operating systems. With this familiar gestures from current interactive media are translated into a new interface and new materials.

- Materials: AR technology, kinetic sand

Leon Clausen

Eris—Discover a New Era of Creative Freedom

Mockumentary of a fictitious innovation that questions our enthusiasm for technology in design

Imagine computers and 3D printers were a thing of the past. There would be only one technology left, which could create everything. It would be the end of the endless spiral of innovation that has been revolving ever since humanity started making things. A white sheet of paper on which the rules of the game of production are remixed. What do we want to produce and why?

Rapid technological developments and the start-up culture have triggered blind enthusiasm for technology and forced the questions 'what', 'why' and 'wherefor' to take a back seat. Our task as designers is to shape the future. However, better products alone do not change much. We must encourage cultural and social change, which requires brains, critical thought and good questions.

The mockumentary adopts the stylistic devices of start-up videos to exaggerate and clarify the promises of their products: There will never be a machine that does all the work for us. Therefore, we should get over our obsession with miraculous new manufacturing processes and define new priorities in design that will drive society forward. All of the statements used in the video are quotes from crowdfunding videos and online articles from design and tech magazines, adapted to 'Eris'.

- Materials: video, screen, product mock-up

Annika Frye

Design Patterns

A Virtual Reality station, in which design patterns sourced from a generative design process form a landscape

What if we could dive into the design process? In the installation 'Design Patterns', Prof. Dr. Annika Frye takes up the idea for a native language by Christopher Alexander. The theorist had developed his design method in his dissertation, 'Notes on the Synthesis of Form' in 1962 at MIT to make complex design problems manageable. He divided design problems into systems and subsystems, which in turn were represented by structural diagrams, the *patterns*. These same patterns in turn could be linked to new forms in different contexts. Christopher Alexander's design method, inspired by cybernetics, anticipated the principles of generative design. 'The Pattern Language' achieved some recognition in the Design Methods Movement. Until today it is a canonical part of design education.

As digital pre-products, however, the forms developed by Annika Frye with the Grasshopper algorithm editor remain virtual. The virtual landscape shows the almost infinite possibilities of combining and recombining patterns in virtual space, and makes a certain unmanageability, which especially characterises generative design, spatially perceptible. All forms can always be further developed, combined or changed in an unfinished process.

- Materials: VR-glasses, sensors and gaming computer; digitally printed needle felting, wooden frame, paper background, digital projection.

Benjamin Unterluggauer
The Figurative Approach

Ten objects that help designers tackle *wicked problems*

Horst Rittel published his essay 'Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning' in 1973. In it he formulates the term *wicked problems* and their ten characteristics. Horst Rittel's idea is also frequently used in design education to describe the indeterminacy and complexity of design, which is particularly challenging in undergraduate studies. There are many *wicked problems*: we usually encounter them several times a day. Design problems are treacherous per se, argues Rittel, since there can never be a complete and 'perfect' solution for them. The designer's task is therefore to define the best possible approach using the time and energy available.

In the exhibit, Benjamin Unterluggauer contrasts each of the characteristics of *wicked problems* observed by Horst Rittel with a tool. The tools are meant to help tackle the problems in a very concrete way—beyond design theory. However, as designers often face bigger problems than they are aware of, the tools have been upscaled and become objects. Thus, the attempt to design a suitable tool is in turn a *wicked problem*.

- Materials: wood, metal, paper, foam, sacking

Henriette Neumeyer, Hansol Kim, Benjamin Unterluggauer
Visual Identity

A draft for a post-digital space

How would the post-digital space of the present be designed? We have visualised this imaginary space in our poster as well as on the website, the e-invite and Instagram. As every design is preceded by a long development process, our visual design has constantly evolved. We have made this processuality visible for 'Muthesius Parallax'. One essential element here is the grid. This could be seen as a fixed structure that all students go through in their studies. In this respect, the grid should also be viewed critically. At the same time, grids also form the virtual space of 3D programs with which we create something new. We have represented this newness with green spots that act as interruptions of the grid. In the case of posters, the spots are simply spray-painted over the print, resulting in a combination of accurate digital and random analogue shapes. The contrast is additionally emphasised by the use of the complementary contrast violet/green. This juxtaposition runs through the entire installation. The connection to the historical reference—the Werkbundkiste full of everyday objects—is established by contrasting this with today's smartphone and its apps.

- Materials: wood, metal, paper, foam, sacking

Translated from German by Zoë Claire Miller

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