MESSAGE 4

Graphic Communication Design Research

Call for submissions

**What are the politics of your design and what is the design
of your politics?**

In this issue we aim to provoke a dialectic in order to question, interrogate and if
possible, suggest alternatives to the raison d'être and practice of our discipline
within broader social, economic and political contexts. We would like to challenge
the fundamental role and agency of Graphic Communication Design by asking:

How do (or indeed should) Graphic Communication Designers

- engage with and change the broader social, economic, and political
  circumstances?

- address cultural colonisation, systemisation and appropriation?

- counter misdirection and falsehoods through illuminating meaning, knowledge
  and facts?

The largest proportion of Graphic Communication Design aims to indirectly or
directly sell more products, services and experiences. We would suggest that this
demonstrates the discipline's key role in underpinning the unsustainable Western
model of production and consumption and as a consequence, Graphic
Communication Design has a responsibility for the problems that may be attributed
to this model. The global adoption, adaptation and corporatisation of the Western
model of production and consumption, plus its modes of presentation and
coordination could not only be described as a form of colonisation, but also in
particular a form of visual colonisation.

The language of being human, i.e. having and expressing needs, desires, and aspirations, as well as traditions and ties to situation and place, can be said to have been hijacked by marketing and salesmanship and as a consequence, has this led to a point where communication is on the verge of a semiotic collapse? If so, are we at a time *'the early Anthropocene'* when clarity and quality of Graphic Communication Design could very well be called upon to enable humanity to address their growing and irrevocable damage to the planet?

Whilst Herman's and Chomsky's *Manufacturing of Consent* (1988) also begs for us, not only to question Graphic Communication Design's role as a key instrument that mediates 'falsehoods' and is employed to misdirect and veil the consequences of relentless production, consumption and waste, but also to question its role in the illumination and mass dissemination of knowledge and facts. Does contemporary Graphic Communication Design have public secrets in and of itself, and can it unveil its own public secrets as well as those powers others may have?

Graphic Communication Designers have a history of engaging with social, economic and political issues, from William Morris and his support for women's suffrage, socialism, heritage preservation, workers' rights & conditions (not least his own employees), through to early Soviet, subsequent Allied WW2 propaganda, to the First Things First Manifesto, Kalman's Fuck Committees plus his works towards unity and Fairey's Obama posters. All of these aimed to engage with and change the broader social, economic and political circumstances. Whilst the latter rather obvious examples may demonstrate a progressive narrowing of focus, do they also demonstrate the Graphic Communication Designers' loss of agency or are they our most popularised examples and as such obscure our view of more valid and recent examples?

Inspired by Tony Fry's *Becoming human by design* (2012) we would also like to reflect upon the uncertainty and complexity in a relational world consumed by systems that are serviced, supported and upheld by Graphic Communication Design:

> 'While forming specialist disciplines and divisions of knowledge claiming to produce universal knowledge, it [design] failed to make vital "horizontal connections". In so doing, it was blind not only to its own and wider causality but also to the inhumanity that accompanied its humanism and against which modern civilization was defined.' (Fry, p. 25)

Fry's words lead us to call for examples of deeper meaning and perception in a world where ideas and resources are usurped and muddled into a global system of consumption; where designs are made into shallow material symbols of status and power that ignore, or even belittle, other possible modes for human beings to achieve prosperity and a sense of humanity.

In light of the above, we ask you to reflect upon and examine, mine, unfold, and delve into where, why, and how diverse practitioners are focusing their energies and expose, illuminate, and illustrate the structures and configurations that lever and shape contemporary Graphic Communication Design.

Submissions may address the call at a macro or micro level, from an international or national, contemporary or historical, regional or local perspective. Indeed, submissions may be based around an individual/group experience, intervention or practice. Submissions that address the pedagogy of Graphic Communication Design are also welcome.

Intensions

The journal intends to capture contemporary and historical views and examples relevant to a changing visual communication landscape both nationally and internationally. An overarching aim of Message is to provide context for, as well as drive new and future cultural discussions and research alliances, together with capturing and publishing new experiences, environments, methods and outputs. Message should enhance our understanding of the nature of Visual Communication and in particularly Graphic Communication Design, presenting opinions across subjects, institutions, and boundaries.

To be published in March 2020

Submissions

The Message journal welcomes contributions from national and international Visual Communication researchers and practitioners from a variety of perspectives - theoretical, conceptual, educational, industrial.

Contributions can take the form of:

Research papers
(4000–6000 words)
A critical analysis and contextualisation of initial stages, on-going or completed practice-based research projects (to include research question(s), methods and where appropriate outcomes and findings).

Position papers
(4000–6000 words)
Put forward and debate a position on a particular issue.

Reports
(4000–6000 words)
Reports that document advances in the field for example new collaborations, technological developments, processes, methods etc.

All papers are considered with the understanding that they represent at least 80% original material and have not been previously published. Papers/reports that exceed the stated length should be discussed with the editors prior to submission.

Scholarly submissions are invited for consideration in Message 4 – an international open access journal published by the University of Plymouth Press. Message Open Access is an open access journal where all materials, once published will be freely available. Published papers/reports will remain the copyright of the author.

Dates
Abstract submission (300–500 words)
22 March 2019

Notification of abstract acceptances
22 April 2019

Paper/report submission (4000–6000 words)
31 July 2019

Full submission must include: abstract, written paper or report, images (with evidence of permissions), captions, and three-sentence biography with contact details (affiliation, address, email).

When submitting a full paper/report, contact details from authors should be included on a cover sheet only and have authors details (name/s etc.) within the paper or report removed.

It is essential that all authors provide a thoroughly proofread and checked manuscript.

Images
- within papers/reports should be 300 DPI and sent via wetransfer.com or similar.
- should be properly referenced plus proof of copyright permissions cleared by the author. Evidence of this needs to be sent via email to the Editors.

Delivery
Submissions (abstracts/full paper/report), images, and permissions should be emailed to the editors via: peter.jones@plymouth.ac.uk

Receipt of your submission will be made within 5 working days.

Peer-review
Papers and reports selected by the Editors will be peer-reviewed by international professionals and scholars—all material will be "blind" read and reviewed by at least, two reviewers.

The peer-review of each paper or report, will concentrate on whether the research paper or report relates adequately to the call, is sufficiently well conceived, has potential to be well executed, and is appropriate to be included in Message 4.
- Reviewers will be invited to consider submitted papers and reports within their expertise.
- Each submission will be reviewed against clear editorial criteria. Feedback will be provided.
- After consideration by the Message editorial team a decision will be sent to the author within a specified time frame.

Editors will respond to authors according to the following

- Accepted without revision
- Accepted with minor revision
- Rejected

Selection of peer-reviewers

The Message editorial board will in the first instance identify appropriate reviewers for a particular paper or report. Reviewers will be chosen according to factors including their expertise, reputation and knowledge. As part of our editorial procedure, the Message team will brief potential reviewers before sending them papers/reports to review and all correspondence will be treated confidentially. Reviewers will remain anonymous during the peer-review process and impartiality will be our aim.

Feedback

All comments from reviewers to the editors will be treated confidentially.
A good review would answer the following questions:

- What is the thematic relevance to the call for papers?
- Are the main aims of the paper/report clearly stated?
- Is the paper and its aims well situated and referenced in the context of other research around the subject?
- Does the paper offer new insights and contribute to the development of the subject?
- Is the article clearly written and well organised?
- What are the potential directions for further research?

Confidentiality

The review process will be seen as confidential by the Message editorial board and reviewers. As the author may have chosen to exclude some people from this process, the reviewer should not discuss nor consult other colleagues or experts about the review unless this has been agreed with the Message editorial team. Where appropriate we will request any feedback that might help to strengthen the paper or report to send to the author. The Message editors may edit comments made by reviewers. In their comments to authors, reviewers are encouraged to be honest but not offensive in their language. It will be the responsibility of the Message editorial team to send the decision to the author with any reviewers' comments. The Message editorial team makes final publishing decisions. In the event that these are different from the reviewer's recommendations this will have been the result of a robust process of consideration.

Message journal - background

Message is a peer-reviewed academic journal that consists of blind reviewed academic papers plus occasional commissioned essays and articles. It is dedicated to the development and discussion of contemporary Visual Communication research particularly within Graphic Communication Design with an emphasis on practice, outputs and artefacts. The aim of the Message journal is to explore and expand the boundaries of Graphic Communication Design through an experimental and developmental ethos; challenging the practitioner, the development and use of technology, as well as questioning the discipline's social, ethical and sustainable practices and values.

The Message journal was established by founding members of the Message research group at the University of Plymouth. We are also now very happy to announce, the co-editorship of the journal has been expanded to include colleagues Åse Huus and Dóra Ísleifsdóttir, from the University of Bergen.
A warm welcome to Åse and Dóra,

Publisher

University of Plymouth Press

Website

https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/message/message-journal