



The
virtuous
circle

CUMULUS
Conference
June 3-7, Milan

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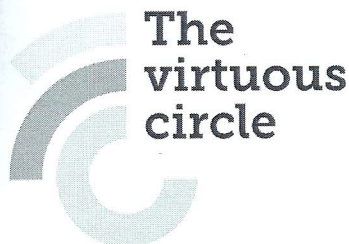
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The Virtuous Circle Design Culture and Experimentation

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Synaesthesia vs Semantics in the Visual Communication Of Food. The Encounter of Practice and New Ways of Thinking for Social Benefits

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The present paper investigates the verbal and visual representation of food, exploring relevant typographic, graphic, and photographic techniques and taking into account their levels of iconicity/abstraction in relation to the synesthetic capacity of the visual representation.

Starting from practice experimentation, namely the analysis of the works created in basic design classes held by the authors at the undergraduate course in Communication Design at Politecnico di Milano, the present research develops a theory that reverses – in the specific case of food representation – the high-abstraction = synaesthesia equation that has traditionally characterised synesthetic practices – artistic and non-artistic alike.

The project's results give rise to a new awareness of the applications and ways of representing food in communication design, with special focus on social campaigns targeting groups of subjects with Eating Disorders (ED), also showing the Virtuous Circle that is triggered in the relationship between practice experimentation and theoretical reflection for the creation of new ways of thinking and methods.

Keywords

Visual communication, Synaesthesia, Food.

THE VIRTUOUS CIRCLE

CUMULUS CONFERENCE 2015

DESIGN CULTURE AND EXPERIMENTATION

Design comes out of the interaction between a practice, which seeks to change the state of things, and a culture, which makes sense of this change. The way this happens evolves with time: practices and cultures evolve and so do the ways they interact; and the attention that is paid at different moments to one or other of these interacting polarities also evolves. In the current period of turbulent transformation of society and the economy, it is important to go back and reflect on the cultural dimension of design, its capacity to produce not only solutions but also meanings, and its relations with pragmatic aspects. Good design does not limit itself to tackling functional and technological questions, but it also always adopts a specific cultural approach that emerges, takes shape and changes direction through a continuous circle of experimenting and reflecting. Because the dimension and complexity of the problems is growing, it is becoming evident that to overcome them it is, above all, necessary to bring new sense systems into play. This is ground on which design, by its very nature, can do much. Indeed, the ability to create a virtuous circle between culture and practical experimentation is, or should be, its main and distinctive characteristic. However, for this really to happen it is necessary to trigger new discussion and reflection about the nature and purpose of design practice and culture.

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